

Gone fishin'!

Gibbs guy B.F. Dalton had some kids over to his fishing hole Nov. 13. A group of 16 students from Halls High, Gibbs High and North Knox Vocational had a chance to get their feet wet and get hands on with nature as TVA, AmeriCorps and the Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed program teamed up to give the students a close up look at ecology.

"What we are doing here is an IBI (Index of Biotic Integrity)," said Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed coordinator Ruth Anne Hanahan. "We are doing an assessment of the fish community to determine fish health."

Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed guy Roy Arthur was on hand, saying the exercise was a perfect way for students to learn how to conserve the environment.

"I think this is just wonderful," Arthur said. "These kids are going to be graduating from high school soon and many of them will live in this community. They will have an appreciation for Beaver Creek that they never would have had. We're going to lose it as a resource if we don't start teaching. This is the way to start."

Students from Mike Blankenship's agriculture education class at North Knox,



Halls High, Gibbs High and North Knox Vocational students go fishing in Beaver Creek at B.F. Dalton's farm Nov. 13. The students helped TVA biologist Charlie Saylor conduct an Index of Biotic Integrity of the creek. The program was coordinated by TVA, AmeriCorps and the Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed program. Dalton's grandson, Alex Berry (in the orange jacket) had previously caught a carp too big to get out of the creek, Dalton said.

Ashley Whitmire's ecology class at Gibbs High and Kerrie Coley's ecology class at Halls High helped TVA biologist Charlie Saylor and AmeriCorps volunteers chase fish into a net (seen above) to study the fish and the diversity of the creek. The Adopt-A-Watershed program's

goal is to "bring real life experience to school curriculum, making it relevant to the students' everyday lives."

Blankenship said the project is teaching students a valuable lesson.

"It's teaching ecology through hands-on activities," Blankenship said. "It's instilling in our students an environmental ethic. It teaches them good stewardship of the land and to take care of what you've got."

Dalton, who is a member of the Beaver Creek Watershed Association, called Arthur to volunteer his land for the students to use.

"It's through good community people like (B.F.) that this program is able to succeed," Blankenship said.

Beaver Creek Watershed is the largest in Knox County, covering 86.5 square miles. The creek itself, which begins in Corryton near the Dalton farm, runs to Solway and is 44 miles long.

"It has an elevation fall of 300 feet," Arthur said. "That's why it floods all the time."

The Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed program is coordinated by the Tennessee Water Resources Research Center at UT. For more info, contact Ruth Anne Hanahan at 974-9124 or visit www.adopt-a-watershed.com.

- Jake Mabe

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News

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