

Halls students get environmentally friendly

Students at Halls High and Halls Middle schools spent an afternoon out in the beautiful, warm sunshine last week while the rest of their peers were inside the walls of the school buildings doing class work.

So were these students. The classroom, however, just happened to be the wet weather stream located behind the softball field. Students in Mike Blankenship's forestry class at Halls High used the knowledge gleaned from class and put it into action.

Alex McGhee was busy planting seedlings along the bank of the stream. "The trees that we are planting today will help hold the bank in place so the creek will not flood as much," Alex said.

AmeriCorp members Megan York and Brenna Fisher have spent many hours working with the high school and middle school students educating them on the importance of the project.

Before the sixth grade students in Mike Horner's science class were able to begin work, they went through a quick review.

"What are we doing today by planting seedlings?" asked AmeriCorp volunteer Megan York. One student quickly answered: "Helping the environment." The class was encouraged to dig deeper.

Teachers Horner and Cindy



Halls Middle School students Miranda Wolfe and Alison Cross plant a seedling at the watershed site located behind Halls High. HMS teacher Mike Horner assists the students during the planting.



Josh Graves and Brian Dumas prepare the site for planting and get ready to put a seedling into the ground. The seedlings will serve as a sponge to soak up excess water in this flood area and to add beauty to the environment.

Zachary are involved with the Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed program. Horner and AmeriCorp volunteers have spent many class hours educating the students on the importance of protecting and preserving the environment.

Once in the field, the students paired up to dig holes in designated areas, plant the seedlings

and cover each with compost.

The efforts of each student will not go unnoticed. As the seedlings grow, these water-loving species will not only provide beautiful trees where asphalt once laid, they will also help control the flood area.

The seedlings planted next to the riparian (stream side) zone will help prevent erosion at the site and after a heavy rain, the stream water will remain cleaner.

Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed coordinator Ruth Ann Hanahan was on hand supervising the project and offering words of encouragement to the group.

The seedlings were donated by TVA. Daniel Horne with the Knox County Soil Conservation District donated a table full of refreshments for the students.

"Marvin Hammond, with HPUD has (also) been absolutely wonderful to this project and has done so much for us," said Hanahan.

— Ruth White