



HRSD NEWS RELEASE

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Water U Doing for the Earth? --HRSD Hosts Earth Action Day at Virginia Beach Treatment Plant--

Science instruction will move onto a farm and inside a wastewater treatment plant Saturday, April 24. HRSD's Atlantic Treatment Plant and Progress Farm will become an outdoor classroom when 125 Virginia Beach high school science students and scouts participate in hands-on learning activities that will enhance environmental awareness through action. The young people will measure water quality, build nesting sites for endangered species, plant a wildflower garden and tour HRSD's Atlantic Treatment Plant. Guest speaker Reese Lukei will start the day with a presentation about birds of prey in Hampton Roads.

A lunchtime program will feature recognition of the winners of the Earth Action Day art contest. Virginia Beach high school students were invited to submit designs that reflected the theme, "Water U Doing for the Earth?" Mayor Meyera Oberndorf and HRSD Commission Chair Bill Pierce will present the grand prize to Stephen Suratos, a senior at Salem High School. Receiving honorable mention awards will be Hallett Connor and Cheli Scott, tenth graders at Princess Anne High School; Meredith Ross, a tenth-grader at Tallwood High School; and Evan Sokol, a tenth-grader at Salem High School.

Special exhibits and activities available for viewing before the activity sessions include the HRWET trailer and a demonstration by the City of Virginia Beach Rapid Tap Team.

The nesting boxes constructed by participants will be mounted for endangered birds and bats. These habitat restoration activities teach the importance of ecological balance and how to improve the capacity of open areas to support wildlife.

The students will also learn how to conduct Environmental Protection Agency standard analytical tests and practice the procedures with real lab equipment and samples. HRSD water quality professionals will explain the importance of each parameter measured. While touring the treatment plant the students will learn how wastewater is collected by the City of Virginia Beach and treated by HRSD to ensure clean, healthy waterways.

Joining HRSD as sponsors of the Earth Action Day are Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Ocean Lakes High School, the City of Virginia Beach Department of Public Utilities, Norfolk Botanical Gardens and the Virginia Water Environment Association. Other participating public agencies include the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office and the US Navy Dam Neck Medical Corps. Erwin Bonatz, manager of the Atlantic Treatment Plant, is the program coordinator.

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HRSD, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, was created by public referendum in 1940 and currently serves 1.6 million people in 17 cities and counties in southeast Virginia. Our mission is to prevent pollution, protect public health, and support community development by providing wastewater collection, treatment, and related services.