

Environmental & Natural Resource Issues Newsletter

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Contact Information:

Mailing Address:
N122 Ag Science North
Lexington, KY 40546-0091

Phone: 859-257-2505

Fax: 859-257-3655

Email:
ashley.osborne@uky.edu

Website:
www.ca.uky.edu/enri

About this newsletter... This newsletter is available on the ENRI web site in PDF format. This newsletter is coordinated by Ashley Osborne, Extension Associate for Environmental and Natural Resource Issues.

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Environmental Tip:

Needless vehicle idling wastes gas & money, & causes increased vehicle emissions. A good rule to follow is that if you plan to be parked for longer than 10 seconds, turn your engine off.

Expanding Opportunities for Biomass in Northeastern Kentucky

By Tom Keene and Ray Smith
Hay Specialist and Forage Specialist, University of Kentucky

In 2007, the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council (KFGC) teamed up to determine the feasibility and sustainability of perennial bioenergy crops in Northeastern Kentucky. The project was funded by the Ag. Development Board with a primary goal of teaching farmers how to grow switchgrass on their farms. Switchgrass was chosen for the project because it was a native warm season grass in KY before European settlers arrived. Therefore, it will not only survive the range of environmental extremes common in Kentucky, but it also survives and produces high yields with relatively low inputs of nitrogen and other nutrients. Twenty farms are being selected within a 60 mile radius of Maysville, KY and UK along with KFGC will work closely with each farmer to establish, maintain, and harvest 5 acre plots of switchgrass. If these farms can successfully establish and grow switchgrass, then it will be much easier for these farmers or their neighbors to increase acreage rapidly as markets develop.

The product produced from these 20 farms will be used to test the market potential of the perennial grass crops. East Kentucky Power is interested in conducting trial burns of the harvested product for electricity production. This project will also research the transportation logistics of moving a bulky biomass product to the end user. Some of this product will also go into research scale ethanol production in collaboration with Biosystems and Ag. Engineering. More product will go to demonstrations with Forestry to use a pellet press to create a user friendly fuel product for consumers.

This project has many added environmental benefits. As a native grass, switchgrass provides much better wildlife habitat than introduced cool season species like tall fescue. Actively growing switchgrass also provides a tremendous “sink” for carbon dioxide in that the deep root system provides a large storage pool for organic carbon. With the emerging market for carbon credits switchgrass and other native warm season grasses may be just the ticket. Switchgrass stands, once established, have an almost indefinite lifespan.

News to Use & Ideas to Share

Big Blue Goes Green

Submitted by Jennifer L. Frederick, College of Agriculture Intern

These days, it seems like the terms “green” and “sustainability” can be heard or read about pretty much everywhere you go. The University of Kentucky is certainly no exception. In fact, many people are probably wondering what the university is doing to promote green culture and behaviors that promote sustainability. Many people are probably still unsure as to what all the hype is about, anyway.

So what is sustainability and what is UK doing to promote it? *Sustainability refers to the capacity of a society to meet current needs without degrading the ecological, social, and economic systems on which the society will rely for meeting future needs. (Berea College website)* This is one of the quotes that appeared throughout the day at UK’s free event “Big Blue Goes Green: A Sustainability Showcase” which took place Wednesday, October 17, 2007. The purpose of the event was to try to increase the university population’s awareness about the different ways UK is involved in sustainability efforts. There were over 36 booths set up in the Student Center Ballroom from three different colleges within the university, ten different departments, Student Affairs, Human Resources, and Campus Services, just to name a few! Each booth highlighted what is being done in a specific area within the University to promote sustainability, which covered everything from renewable fuel research, water quality, recycling, and textiles. There were also different speakers present throughout the day that gave presentations about various aspects of sustainability.

Everyone who attended the event left with a greater knowledge of what steps the University is taking to become more environmentally friendly. Being environmentally aware is really becoming a way of life at the University.

One Family’s True Life Adventure in the Global Economy **by Sara Bongiorno**

Book Review Submitted by Elizabeth Robb-Schmitz,
Kentucky Division for Air Quality

This entertaining read was written by a journalist who is otherwise an average wife and mother of a young boy, just before all of the recent news stories about poor quality control of items imported from China.

Looking around the living room in the aftermath of Christmas morning, the label on the bottom of a toy catches her eye. “Made in China,” the label says. Suddenly, she wonders how many of the toys in her living room come from China, and how many come from the rest of the world, especially the U.S. After conducting a quick inventory, she decides to boycott products made in China for one year, “just to see if it can be done.”

The rest of this book chronicles her often hilarious, and very earnest attempts to live for one year without purchasing items that come from China. From the moment she begins trying to convince her husband that this is a good idea, to her misadventures in the toy aisle, to her hunt for electronics, sunglasses, and shoes, you may well find yourself laughing out loud.

Despite the often comical tone, this book does seriously consider issues of globalization, international trade, our dependence of foreign imports, and outsourcing of U.S. jobs. The book addresses how our purchasing habits impact the above, and also addresses consumption in today’s culture. Do we buy items because we need them, or because they are cheap and catch our eye in the store?

Taylorsville Lake Clean Sweep

Submitted by Angela Kessans, Salt River Basin Coordinator

Since 2000 the Taylorsville Lake Conservation Association (TLCA) and more than 600 volunteers have helped remove almost 400 cubic yards of trash from the area around the lake. With the mission “to protect the natural beauty and quality of life in the Salt River Basin through environmental improvement efforts,” the TLCA has successfully held 7 annual fall clean-ups in the watershed.

Construction of Taylorsville Lake, situated in Spencer, Anderson and Nelson Counties, began in 1974. The dam became operational in 1983. The US Army Corps of Engineers operates the 3,050 acre project for flood control, quality water storage, outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife preservation. The Taylorsville Lake State Park, operated by the Kentucky State Parks, offers a wide variety of recreation including fishing, camping, boating, hiking, and more. With a growing attraction of visitors also comes an increased revenue base for the community, and unfortunately, more litter to deal with also.

The first two Clean-Sweep events in 2000 and 2001 were organized and carried out by the US Army Corps of Engineers and Taylorsville Lake State Park. These two events brought together over 100 people with an interest in cleaning up the lake. In 2002, a committee made up of interested citizens along with the Corps of Engineers and the State Park was formed to plan the third annual Clean Sweep. The committee incorporated as the Taylorsville Lake Conservation Association, TLCA, in 2003 and attained recognition as a 501c (3) non-profit organization in 2004. The work and determination of this group didn't stop there.

The third annual event, this time hosted by the TLCA, drew in 150 participants. With donations of cash and in-kind donations of food, dumpsters, door prizes, etc., from local businesses and governments, the Association was able to provide the participants with trash bags and gloves, give away several door prizes,

raffle off a canoe to raise money, and provide a free lunch and refreshments to all. For the next few years the number of participants grew as did the amount of trash that was removed from the watershed and the number and size of the door prizes given out. Flashlights, fishing poles, pontoon rentals, free camping, bikes, gas cards, dinner give-aways and much more has been given away, and boats, trailers and trolling motors have been raffled off since then. The TLCA also began providing the participants with a free educational demonstration at lunch. Some of the past demonstrations included Rapture Rehab and an animal presentation by the Louisville Zoo.

2007 was by far the biggest and best year yet. The Association was able to pull together 269 people that collected over 45 cubic yards of trash from around the lake. Not only did the participants receive a free t-shirt, educational demonstration, and free lunch like the years past, but the participants also had a chance at winning more raffle prizes than before, and groups with 10 or more got \$100.

With the hope of making this a twice a year event and also moving in some new directions, the TLCA is always looking for new members and expertise. If you are interested in signing up to participate in the Clean Sweep or if you are interested in learning more about the TLCA please contact the Corps of Engineers Office at (502) 477-8882 or visit the website at www.tlca.us.



KPPC Wins Water Efficiency Leaders Award

The Environmental Protection Agency recognized six winners for the Water Efficiency Leaders Award for 2007. These winners were recognized for their leadership and innovation in water-efficient products and practices.

The Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center (KPPC) at the University of Louisville won the Water Efficiency Leaders Award for the Non-Governmental Organization Category.

EPA stated that "...KPPC works with industry to find profitable pollution prevention solutions for the metal industry to reduce the need for, and cost associated with, end-of-pipe controls. One example includes KPPC's assistance that resulted in a 30 percent net water savings, valued at \$50,000 annually, while production at the metal finishing plant increased 50 percent."

For more information about the Water Efficiency Leaders Award visit www.epa.gov/water/wel/.

Reforest the Bluegrass Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Reforest the Bluegrass is a cooperative effort between the Lexington Urban Fayette County Government's Water Quality, Urban Forestry, and Parks and Recreation management programs. The goal of this program is to recreate streamside forests that were once native to the Bluegrass area. Since the first planting of Reforest the Bluegrass at Coldstream Park, over 160,000 trees have been planted and approximately 6,000 volunteers have been trained. This year Reforest the Bluegrass will be planting approximately 10,000 trees and, in addition to trees, 6,000 wetland plants at Jacobson Park on April 12. For more information, visit www.lfucg.com/streets/reforest.asp.



May is Kentucky Water Awareness Month

Each May individuals across Kentucky celebrate Water Awareness Month. This program first began in May of 1996 as an educational program of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. The program promotes overall water awareness for the citizens of Kentucky. Each year, program materials are developed by a committee at the state level, and distributed to each of the 120 county Extension offices in the state. Counties across the Commonwealth celebrate Kentucky Water Awareness Month by participating in activities such as afterschool programs, environmental day camps, and homemaker club meetings.



In addition to Water Awareness Month in May, National Drinking Water Week is also celebrated during the first week of May. Numerous citizens throughout the United States celebrate National Drinking Water Week by participating in activities such as water tasting contests, touring water treatment facilities, and storytelling. National Drinking Water Week will be observed May 4 through May 10 this year.

For more information on Kentucky Water Awareness Month or National Drinking Water Week visit www.ca.uky.edu/enri or contact Ashley Osborne at 859-257-2505 or ashley.osborne@uky.edu.

Upcoming Events

January 10-11

Facilitator Training Project Learning Tree and Project WET

Kentucky Leadership Center, Jabez, KY

Registration fee of \$125 includes lodging, meals, and supplies. For more information or to register contact Jennifer Turner at JenniferL.Turner@ky.gov or 800-866-0555.

January 18-19

Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference and Trade Show

Galt House Hotel, Louisville, KY

For more information please visit the website at www.ssawg.org or contact Sara Waterman: 828-777-8262, sarawatergirl@gmail.com.

January 29

Composting 101 Workshop

The Arboretum, State Botanical Garden of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

This training will focus on how to successfully construct and maintain a home composting bin. Agents, assistants, volunteers, and other educators are welcome to attend! A small fee will be required to cover costs of material and lunch. Contact Ashley Osborne at 859-257-2505 or ashley.osborne@uky.edu for more information.

March 9-15

Groundwater Awareness Week

For more information visit <http://www.ca.uky.edu/enri/groundwater/index.htm>

March 17

Kentucky Water Resources Annual Symposium
Griffin Gate Marriott, Lexington, KY

More information will be available at www.uky.edu/WaterResources/events. Keep checking for details.

April 12

Reforest the Bluegrass

Jacobson Park, Lexington, KY

Reforest the Bluegrass will be planting approximately 10,000 trees and, in addition to trees, 6,000 wetland plants at Jacobson Park. Everyone is invited to attend. Free t-shirts, snacks, and lunch will be provided for all volunteers. Visit www.lfucg.com/streets/reforest.asp for more information.

April 13 - 19

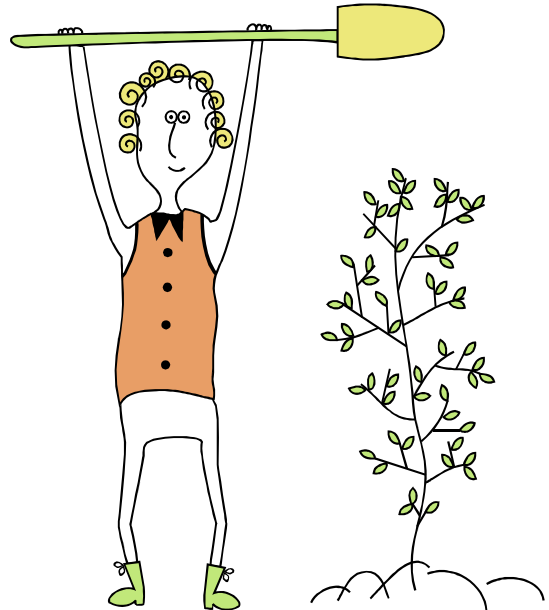
National Environmental Education Week

To learn more about National EE Week and how you can get involved visit <http://www.eeweek.org/>.

April 22

Earth Day

More information will be available at www.ca.uky.edu/enri/earthday/.



Upcoming Events continued...



April 23
POW! The Planning of Wetlands
Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery,
Jamestown, Kentucky

Interesting in creating a living, breathing wetland? POW! takes you through the process of building a schoolyard wetland from start to finish using 25 exciting student activities in lesson plan format. A registration fee of \$50 includes the POW! guide and all course materials. To register or for more information contact teachwetlands@wetland.org or 410-745-9620.

April 26
Project WILD and Project Learning Tree Certification Training
Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery,
Jamestown, Kentucky

This training is a great opportunity for anyone interested in environmental education. Registration fee is \$25 and includes programming, materials, and books. To register contact Amanda Patrick at Amanda_Patrick@fws.gov or 270-343-3797.

May is Water Awareness Month!

Counties across the Commonwealth celebrate Kentucky Water Awareness Month by participating in activities such as afterschool programs, environmental day camps, and homemaker club meetings. Visit www.ca.uky.edu/enri/kwam.htm or contact Ashley Osborne at 859-257-2505 or ashley.osborne@uky.edu.

May 4-10
National Drinking Water Week

Numerous citizens throughout the United States celebrate National Drinking Water Week by participating in activities, such as water tasting contests, touring water treatment facilities, & storytelling. Visit www.ca.uky.edu/enri/upcomingevents/index.htm for more information.

May 16
Leopold Education Project Workshop
Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery,
Jamestown, Kentucky

The Leopold Education Project is interdisciplinary, and includes a conservation ethics curriculum for students grades 6-12. The curriculum focuses on the importance of social, collaborative, and critical thinking skills and increases student awareness of land related issues. Registration fee is \$35.00 [includes a copy of *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold; *Lessons in a Land Ethic: Teacher's Guide and Student Activities*; LEP Task Cards; and Blue Ribbon Quotes (14 laminated posters of quotes) by Aldo Leopold]. To register contact Amanda Patrick at Amanda_Patrick@fws.gov or 270-343-3797.

Last year's Earth Day (April 22, 2007) encouraged citizens throughout the Commonwealth to take the ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Pledge. Currently, in Kentucky over 15,000 people have taken the ENERGY STAR Pledge! Kentuckians have pledged to change over 87,000 bulbs which means that we will save over \$2,305,000 in energy costs and prevent over 35,960,000 pounds of greenhouse gases! If you would like to take the ENERGY STAR pledge visit www.energystar.gov/.



Surfing the Web



Catalog Choice

<http://www.catalogchoice.org/>

Catalog Choice, sponsored by the Ecology Center, is a free service that allows individuals to decide which catalogs they receive in their mailbox. The mission of Catalog Choice is to reduce the amount of unwanted mail thereby saving our natural resources.

Overview of Kentucky's Waters (KY Division of Water)

http://www.water.ky.gov/homepage_repository/overview.htm

Kentucky Division of Water created a webpage that provides information about Kentucky's water resources. Information includes average annual rainfall, state surface area, miles of rivers and streams, acres of wetlands, private and public water percentages, and much more.

Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools

<http://greenschools.ky.gov/>

Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools is a new, voluntary program to empower students and staff with the tools they need to improve their school's environment. Several schools throughout Kentucky are already involved! Visit the web address above to find out more!

Kentucky Environmental Education Council's Instructional Materials

<http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/envred/publications.htm>

The Kentucky Environmental Education Council (KEEC) has created several instructional materials that can be downloaded for FREE! Materials include information on water, solid waste, creating, using, and maintaining outdoor classrooms, developing outdoor learning areas, and watershed activities related to the Enviroscape model. KEEC will also provide hardcopies of these instructional materials if requested. Call 800-882-5271.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services ~ Indiana Bats, Kids, and Caves – Oh MY!

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/curriculum/index.html>

The Indiana Bats, Kids, and Caves – Oh MY! 157-page activity book for educators is available online in PDF format for FREE download. Included are hands-on activities, worksheets, story starters, and more.