



WOONY NEWS



December/January 2009/10

Woony News is a bi-monthly newsletter produced by the Narragansett Bay Commission. It is geared towards helping students learn about and have a better appreciation for their environment. It includes fun activities, interesting facts, educational stories and more. Students can log onto www.narrabay.com to read Woony News, or sign up for a mailing list and receive a copy at home, by calling the NBC at 401-461-8848 x351. Students can also email Woony with their questions at Woony@narrabay.com.

Tips for Making Any Holiday Green!



* Wrap presents in usable, or reusable items, like blankets, scarves, handkerchiefs, newspapers, or even put them in reusable bags or boxes!

* Give a green gift! Buy someone a reusable lunch bag, drink cup, or even give them a recycled toy that was fixed up!

* If your family is having a party, ask the adults to use real dishes and silverware instead of the disposable kind. If you are offering guests soda in a can or bottled water, make sure to have a recycling bin clearly marked where guests can put the empty cans and bottles.

WHERE DID ALL THE AMPHIBIANS GO ?

Woony would like to take a minute to explain where all of his family and friends go during the winter. Since amphibians like frogs, toads, salamanders, and newts are ectotherms, which means that their body temperature is close to that of their environment, when it's cold, they need to move to a warmer place. If you are an amphibian living in Rhode Island, you just can't pack your suitcase and fly to Florida! You have to find a place in your environment where it's warm. For most amphibians, this means that you need to hibernate. Many amphibians dig down deep into the mud near ponds, and streams, and they stay there until the spring when sun warms the ground and they know it's time to wake up!!!

WATERSHEDS

A watershed is any area of land that catches precipitation like rain, snow, sleet, or hail and drains that water into a common place like a body of water, or even into the ground. The important idea to remember about watersheds, is that everyone lives in one, so they are extremely important!

In November, the NBC Woon Watershed Explorers participated in a Build a Watershed activity in their classrooms. Here are a few pictures from that lesson.



Photo at right: Reservoir Avenue, third graders with their watershed

Photo below: Anna McCabe, fifth graders with their watershed



Critter Corner

Meet the Quahog (KWO-hog, KWA-hog, KO-hog), as you can see there are several different ways to pronounce the name of this interesting critter. Quahogs are part of the family Veneridae which includes over 400 species of clams.



Rhode Island is known for its quahogs. Narragansett Bay is a perfect home for quahogs, because it's an estuary. Estuaries are water bodies where the freshwater from rivers meets the saltwater from the ocean. Quahogs prefer estuaries more than oceans, because they like a little salt in their water, but not too much!

Quahogs are known as bivalve critters. Bivalve means that when you open a quahog up there are two halves or valves, that connect in the middle. Quahogs are extremely helpful to the waters where they live, because they are filter feeders. Filter feeders take in water and filter out little organisms from the water which they eat. While they are filtering out little organisms, quahogs also filter out toxins from the water which may be harmful to the environment so in a sense they clean the water while they eat!

What am I?



Answer:
I am a dragonfly nymph. Dragonflies go through what is known as incomplete metamorphosis. They hatch from eggs into a nymph, and spend this part of their life in the water. Once they are ready to become adults, which takes anywhere from a few weeks to five years, they crawl out of the water, shed their skin, dry their wings, and then fly off into the sky.

NBC WELCOMES ITS 2009/10 WOON WATERSHED EXPLORERS

The Narragansett Bay Commission's (NBC) Woon Watershed Explorers Program is a hands-on water quality monitoring program that teaches students and teachers about the health of the water in their local watershed. Over 500 students from ten schools in Rhode Island will participate as junior scientists with NBC this year. NBC would like to welcome the following schools:

Agnes E. Little in Pawtucket

Anna McCabe in Smithfield

Ashton in Cumberland

Centredale in North Providence

Flora S. Curtis in Pawtucket

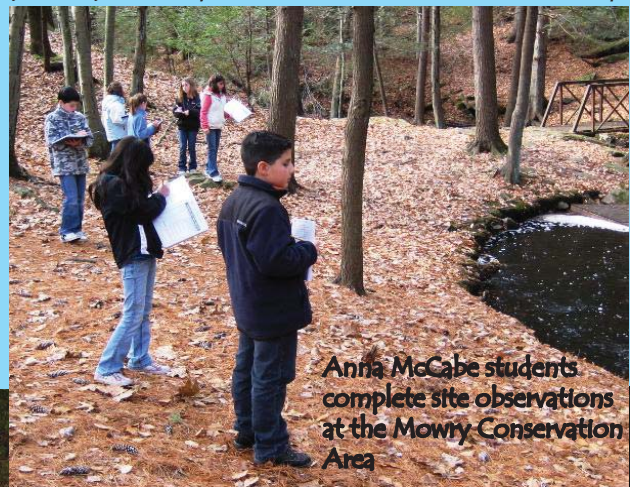
Reservoir Avenue in Providence

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Academy in Central Falls

St. Matthews in Cranston

Sarah Dyer Barnes in Johnston

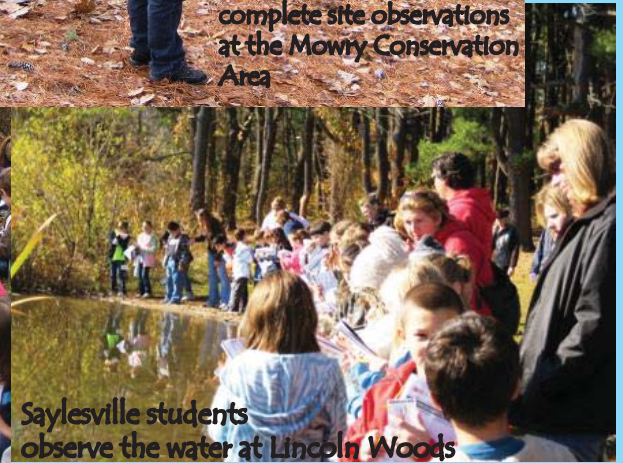
Saylesville in Lincoln



Anna McCabe students complete site observations at the Mowry Conservation Area



Ashton School students record water data taken from the Blackstone River



Saylesville students observe the water at Lincoln Woods