ExPLORE NC
LEARNING OUTSIDE THROUGH PLACE-BASED WATERSHED EDUCATION

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ExPLORE NC: Program Objectives

- Increase teacher knowledge of current watershed science and local ecosystems, using content-integrated, place-based lessons aligned with required curriculum.
- Increase teacher confidence in using the outdoors and local natural resources for instruction.
- Increase teacher awareness of local environmental education resources in their watershed.
Objective D2: **Conduct targeted environmental education efforts** regarding sustainable use, habitats, and ecosystem services

- **Action D2.2:** Provide **environmental education training** opportunities for educators in the region.

- **Action D2.1:** Provide and promote **opportunities for outdoor experiences** that connect individuals with the Albemarle-Pamlico ecosystem.

Objective D1: **Foster environmental stewardship**
Why teach outdoors?

Real world
Relevant connections provide context for learning

Benefits whole child
Emotional, social, cognitive, & physical development

Future stewards
Fostering stewardship behaviors
Barriers to teaching outside

2016 Office of EE/UNC IE survey, n=440

53% of respondents statewide NEVER or RARELY take their students outside
70% in Tar-Pamlico river basin

WHY?

- Lack of resources
- Curriculum standards
- Lack of time
- School grounds
Overcoming barriers

Evidence-based, high-quality professional development

Long-term format

Modeling desired teaching practices

Peer network
ExPLORE NC Components

- Summer Institute
- Weekend Outdoor Science Immersions
- Peer Network
- EE Center Network
- School Field Experiences
Curriculum

7 Original Lessons
Observing Ecosystem Response to Human Activity
Here’s to the Land of the Longleaf Pine
Mills and the Changing Landscape by EGRET Fellow Toni Stadelman

Nature Journaling
Writing Prompts
Event Mapping
Field Sketching

Citizen Science
iNaturalist
Nature’s Notebook
NASA S’COOL
CoCoRaHS
Getting to Know Your Watershed

Falkland Elementary School, Greenville

Images from store.usgs.gov
Program Impacts

Pilot program participants demonstrated:

† Knowledge of local ecosystems and watershed science
† Confidence in using the outdoors to teach required curriculum
† Awareness of local EE resources

Stay tuned! We expect similar results from ExPLORE NC participants.
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Thank you!

Questions?

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