Fall 2015 was open season for High School science outdoors! Students from a number of high schools in Florence and Williamsburg counties came to the PDREC to conduct experiments and learn about the Pee Dee’s abundant natural resources such as water, wildlife, native plants, and soils. Wilson High School’s IB Biology class from Florence collected and analyzed data for their senior research project, focused on ecosystem assessments. Biology and chemistry students from Williamsburg Academy in Kingstree conducted water quality tests and met with REC research scientists to learn about agricultural science topics such as integrated pest management, plant breeding and genetics, natural resource management, and more. Students from the Florence School District 1 Environmental and Natural Resources Career Curriculum learned about biodiversity, soil health, and water quality.
PDREC is partnering with area schools to enhance Ag Ed and outdoor learning. In December 2015, we held our first class of a pilot project to introduce more field- and research-based labs into environment and natural resource programs in local high schools. We plan to work with more high schools to foster hands-on learning and team skills. Pictured below is a class from Florence School District 1’s Environmental and Natural Resources Career Curriculum conducting soil and water quality experiments, and learning about biodiversity in different habitats.

Garden Science Program in its Second Year. Our Garden Science program was a big hit last year with Florence and Darlington County 5th and 6th grades, who planted wheat gardens at the Pee Dee REC to learn more about plants and their many needs. Classes were also given the option of starting their own gardens at their schools. Hands-on learning programs inspire more interest in science and technology at an early age. Please contact us if your middle school is interested in participating in this program.

Our New Education Website is up and running! Find out more about our programs and upcoming events at: http://www.clemson.edu/peedeerec/education/
You can also find the latest news on Pee Dee REC events and educational science facts on our public Facebook page, www.facebook.com/clemsonpdreced
**Community Involvement:** Outreach Coordinator Sarah Nyikos introduced the PDREC and the many educational opportunities the REC provides to the Pee Dee Kiwanis Club on November 2, 2015. Please contact us if your community or civic group is interested in learning more about our activities or collaborating with the PDREC in community education efforts.

Photo courtesy of the Pee Dee Kiwanis Club

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**Upcoming Events:**

**Spring 2016** Our main building is still under construction, but tours of the Outdoor Education Trail will continue, starting in late March. Sign up soon if you would like to visit the Trail this semester!

**April 13-14, 2016** During the second week of April, we will again host the “Grow Your Own Future” Science and Career Day for 6th graders, in partnership with the SC Department of Commerce and S²TEM Centers SC. We’ve “grown” to a 2-day event this year! Interested teachers should contact us at the email listed below.

**May 7, 2016** is the date for our annual Pee Dee Outdoor Discovery Day, open to the public free of charge. All of our nature, rural history and craft exhibits are back, plus much more. The annual *Run for Brighter Days* 5K/10K benefit races and Family Fun Walk organized by The Jonathan Foundation will be held immediately before the event. For more information, call us or check out the event on Facebook. See you there!

**June 4-5, 2016** the PDREC will be hosting the 2016 *South Carolina Ag + Art Tour* on our Outdoor Education Trail. We will be open to the public during this free weekend event. Come out to learn about nature and agriculture, and meet local artists.

For more information about activities and events on the Outdoor Education Trail, please contact: Miss Sarah Nyikos, Outreach Coordinator: 843-519-0469, snyikos@clemson.edu