

# *Haw River Assembly*

*P.O. Box 187 Bynum, NC 27228*

*(919) 542-5790*

*hra@emji.net*

*www.hawriver.org*



## **Ideas for Classroom Activities**

Here are some ideas for classroom activities to get your students interested in the Haw River. Feel free to use them in any way that you choose, and as a springboard for your own class curriculum.

1. **Ask students what they know** about the role of the Haw River or other local streams and rivers in the life and history of their communities. As a homework assignment, have the students talk to family members or neighbors (especially older ones) about their own experience or knowledge of the Haw River. Have the students take notes as they conduct their interviews and then share their stories in class.

- Have they ever seen, walked along, or fished in the Haw River?
- Have they been through floods on the Haw?
- Have they helped with bridge construction over the Haw?
- Have they worked in the mills along the Haw?
- Have they had any interesting wildlife sightings in or around the Haw?

2. **Geography is a wonderful way** for the students to get oriented and learn about where they live. Post a large map of the county or photocopy the enclosed watershed map and discuss students' direct relationship to the river:

- Where is your school in relation to the Haw River? Is it near a tributary?
- Do students live near the river or one of its creeks?
- Where does your drinking water come from?
- Where does your sewage go?

3. **Take a walk outside** and list or draw all the different plants and animals you see, including trees, flowers, insects, birds, and mammals. Give students observation journals (a few pieces of paper folded book-wise) and magnifying glasses if possible, so they see up-close details they may otherwise miss. Have students focus on looking, listening, and smelling as they observe the world around them. Expand on this list by talking about plants and animals that may live along the Haw River, like

turtles, frogs, dragonflies, toads, crayfish, great blue herons, pollywogs, minnows, catfish, and snakes. Using their outdoor exploration as inspiration, have students write a poem or draw a picture about their experience.

## Environmental Action Projects

The goal of these projects is to develop students' understanding of environmental issues and their skills in researching and expressing their beliefs, making decisions together, using community resources, communicating with each other and the larger community, and becoming leaders. They can make a positive impact on the environment and a difference in the world in small but measurable steps.

- **Research** the uses of solar energy in your community. Build your own solar collectors, terrariums, tin foil ovens, or other solar structures. Contact JJ at 919-542-5790 or [hra@emji.net](mailto:hra@emji.net) for more information about these kinds of projects.
- **Organize** a community river cleanup or adopt a waterway through the River Watch Project sponsored by the Haw River Assembly. Contact Elaine Chiosso at 919-542-5790 or [hra@emji.net](mailto:hra@emji.net) for more information.
- **Recycle:** Find ways to reuse and recycle paper in the classroom and school. Investigate an alternative to Styrofoam or other toxic/wasteful food containers in your school's cafeteria. Students can make lists of the throw-away products they use and brainstorm reusable replacements (i.e. sponges for paper towels, cloth bags for plastic, etc.). Students can also partake in "creative recycling" projects such as making art from scrap materials. Patchwork quilts are a wonderful North Carolina tradition in the spirit of recycling. Start a collection of the students' old cloth materials, and make a patchwork quilt together to build team skills.
- **Voice** environmental concerns to appropriate agencies or representatives. You don't have to be an expert to write a letter to your town council, state legislator, or even the President of the United States. This can be a wonderful lesson in participatory democracy for young people. Consult the following links to find out who your district's representatives are in the state and federal government:

[http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/Representation/Who\\_Represents\\_Me/Who\\_Represents\\_Me.html](http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/Representation/Who_Represents_Me/Who_Represents_Me.html)

<http://www.house.gov>

- **Create** plays, songs, poems, stories, dances, or visual art that address environmental issues. Share them with the community in a public venue.

• **Consult** the website of the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, Office of Environmental Education for more resources and information:  
<http://www.ee.enr.state.nc.us>

Good luck! We'd love to hear about your projects!