



September, 2004

Dear Teachers:

Your local Soil and Water Conservation District is celebrating Natural Resources Conservation Week with activities for all ages. This year's theme is "Our Living Soil."

Soil is a basic resource relied upon for most of society's food, fiber and national economy. Protecting and conserving soil is important for several reasons. When it erodes from yards, construction sites or farm fields, it is deposited in the state's waters as a leading form of nonpoint source pollution: sediment. Human land use activities result in a greater rate of erosion and sedimentation than would occur naturally. Loss of soil means reduced levels of basic plant nutrients needed for crops, trees and other plants.

People can be better soil stewards through a few easy actions in their own backyards: protect soil from wind or water erosion by keeping healthy plants growing on the surface; restore and maintain organic matter – such as grass clippings or leaves – in the soil; and use the least amounts and least toxic materials to control pest problems.

The federal, state and local partnership of natural resource agencies are entrusted with helping citizens enjoy and properly use our natural resources. Since today's students will make tomorrow's conservation decisions, we want them to be educated, concerned and pro-active in their choices.

Enclosed are classroom activities that will be an educational and enjoyable way for your students to learn the importance of soils and the role conservation plays in the availability of food for our future. These activities have been correlated to the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Your local SWCD also has videos, posters, booklets, and games that teach conservation concepts. District staff and the conservation partners can assist with presentations, demonstrations and hands-on activities.

Please contact the District Office and let us know how we can be a resource for you.

Sincerely,

District Contact Person