

Cacapon Institute

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Sign Up NOW for the 5th Annual Stream Cleaner Environmental Forum
Lessons are available and on-line now. Dialogue will run from March 15 through April 22, 2010.

Cacapon Institute is pleased to announce the 5th Annual Stream Cleaner Environmental Forum, a free, curriculum-based internet activity available 24/7 to high school classes throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. To date, more than 900 students in biology, chemistry, environmental science, and vocational agriculture from four states have participated.

The SCE Forum is a Project Based Learning exercise in which students seek solutions to the complex problems of non-point source water pollution. Through an extended, collaborative process, students investigate the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort, a regional issue relevant to their lives. They engage their peers across the internet and role play as stakeholders, problem solvers, and consensus builders to formulate solutions. Students strengthen their critical thinking abilities and decision making skills, and are given an opportunity to not only investigate, but also become actively engaged in watershed restoration efforts.

"With your knowledge and determination, we can find solutions to our habitat, wildlife, and water woes. The answers are inside each and every one of you. Through your participation in the Stream Cleaner Environmental Forum, you are contributing your part to the solutions. You are the Chesapeake Bay's hope for the future, and this Forum is a sign of progress towards that future."
Jeffrey Lape, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program

Educators, we invite you to encourage your school to join us in what one teacher called a "life-changing opportunity!" **Watershed leaders, volunteers, and natural resource professionals**, please suggest the SCE Forum to a school near you. Better yet, use the the SCE Forum as a curriculum-based platform to introduce students to your organization and local issues related to Chesapeake Bay restoration. Take a few hours to coach a class on consensus building, or act as a mentor on the importance of conservation and civic engagement in problem solving.

"Watershed leaders and environmentalists should reach out to students to teach stewardship. Adult mentors lend a real-world sense of importance to classroom learning." Laura O'Leary, Science Teacher, North Harford H.S., MD

The SCE Forum is open to 9th-12th grade classes -- urban, suburban, or rural – anywhere in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The lessons are available on line now and the dialogue runs from March 9th through April 10th. The background reading takes 2-3 hours (in class or as homework) and the dialogue requires a minimum of three 45 minute class periods.

For schools in D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia the SCE Forum, coupled with a hands-on activity, meets the Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) requirement. For WV schools, the SCE Forum will help meet 21st Century Learning guidelines. Please visit our Teachers' Lounge (<http://www.cacaponinstitute.org/teachers.htm>) for more information, including a lesson plan. Click on the ["eForum Information & Sign up"](#) and follow the link to ["Why should teachers participate?"](#) to learn more.

We offer technical and material resources to help participating schools continue the SCE Forum lessons by implementing their own watershed stewardship project. Classes might plant a riparian buffer, establish a watershed friendly schoolyard management plan, control erosion, or do any number of best management practices (BMP). Schools don't need to be near a stream - terrestrial projects like controlling rooftop and parking lot runoff are also watershed BMPs. Education and community outreach are important BMPs too, so, if a class produces posters or flyers we can help with costs and materials.

The SCE Forum is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife, MARPAT, NOAA-BWET, & Virginia Environmental Endowment Foundations, and the members of Cacapon Institute.

The peer-to-peer dialogue brings the lessons to life for participating students. This is a chance to engage youth as future leaders in watershed stewardship. Look what some had to say:

"There are about 150 major rivers and streams that run into the Chesapeake drainage basin. It is our job to keep these rivers and streams clean, so that we don't lose the Bay forever." High School Stakeholder, Petersburg, WV

"Believe it or not this forum isn't just some stupid assignment your teacher decided to do because he/she didn't feel like making lesson plans. This is something you have the privilege to partake in ... It's real. We really are losing the Bay and fast.....So, grow up a little and actually put forth your best ideas because who knows, you just may save the Bay." Seniors from Broadway, VA, to 9TH graders from Jefferson, WV

To see the lessons and format of the SCE Forum visit www.cacaponinstitute.org/high.htm and **click on the phone**, for more background click on the **eForum Information & Sign Up**. We look forward to hearing from you and welcome your comments and questions.

For more information or to sign up contact **Frank Rodgers** (304) 856-1385 or frodgers@cacaponinstitute.org.

The SCE Forum was profiled in the April 2007 Bay Journal:
<http://www.bayjournal.com/article.cfm?article=3056>.