Report To The People

The Cooperative Extension Staff in Currituck is pleased to introduce to you “Report to the People.” With this issue of our annual newsletter, we hope to provide you with some highlights of our education programs and give a glimpse of what goes on in our agency. There is no way this will reflect the many efforts or outcomes that our service generates. So, if you are interested in more information you can check our Plan of Action from our web page and see the updates of information on each of our educational objectives and the impacts.

Going Green

Environmental stewardship was ranked as the number one priority for Currituck County citizens in a recent needs assessment. Growing concern for our natural resources and renewable energy continues to rise. A population increase of 31.7% over the last 7 years in Currituck County increases the consumption of natural resources. Public awareness must be raised to combat the problems of environmental issues such as, storm water management, renewable resources, recycling, hazardous waste management, and the greening of our surroundings. An integrated program for Environmental Education and Conservation of Natural resources is being conducted by the entire staff. In January of 2008 the Cooperative Extension Staff kicked off the first ever “Going Green” initiative featuring a trade show of environmental resources. Some 225 citizens attended and 32 vendors provided resource information. Educational Seminars and activities added to the awareness effort. 105 individuals signed Green Pledges indicating the changes they would make in the coming year to preserve the environment. The initiative will also chronicle some 70 on site demonstrations with Currituck families and farms. Contracts have been signed by home and farm cooperators to apply the recommended practices and collect data on a number of conservation measures. Groups will be monitoring; energy conservation, recycling, water conservation, and pesticide container recycling. Data will be collected for a year and used to promote best management practices. In addition, ongoing training and educational strategies are being conducted.

Currituck Extension Staff Goes Green

Message from the Director

Welcome to the information packed world of Cooperative Extension. It’s true; the local center for North Carolina Cooperative Extension is a clearing house of information that can be useful in finding solutions to a wide variety of issues. Historically, we were referred to as “the County Agent.” Today, we are known as Extension Educators and our areas of expertise are driven by the issues within our communities. Our job is to extend the educational resources of NC State University and NC A&T State University to Currituck County citizens. We deliver researched based information through informal educational opportunities to provide technical assistance to people, businesses and governments. Our slogan, “Empowering People, Providing Solutions,” reflects our desire to help people find the answers that will improve the quality of their lives. The key components of our mission reflect targets of our programs which include priorities for:

* Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources
* Protecting the Environment
* Maintaining Viable Communities
* Developing Responsible Youth
* Developing Strong, Healthy and Safe Families

To find out more about our programs and services visit our website: Currituck.ces.ncsu.edu, call 232-2261 or drop by our center at 120 Community Way in Barco, NC.

M. Rodney Sawyer, Jr
County Extension Director
Going Green Consortium

Extension is partnering with the Planning Department to provide leadership to a county Environmental Initiative. A consortium of agencies, industry experts, professionals, and county officials has been established to develop a comprehensive plan for the moving Currituck to becoming a premiere green county. The strategic plan for the effort includes: Sustainable Development Models, Establishment of Demonstrations and Trials, Environmental Resource Mapping, Public Awareness and Education, Training and Development for Staff and Industry Professionals. The mission for the “Going Green” council is:

To provide leadership, education and opportunities that help government, staff, citizens and businesses operate to conserve and protect our environment and natural resources.

Current representation on the council includes:

- NC Cooperative Extension Currituck County Center
- Currituck County Planning Department
- Currituck County Economic Development
- Currituck County Geographic Information Systems
- Currituck County Public Works
- Currituck County Chamber of Commerce
- County Management
- Soil and Water Conservation Service
- UNC Coastal Studies Institute
- ECU Department of Geology
- NC Coastal Federation
- NC Sea Grant
- NCSU Biological and Engineering
- NCSU Forestry
- NCSU College of Design
- NCSU Horticulture
- NC Solar Center
- Bank of Currituck
- Private Contractors
- Citizen Representatives

Historic Architectural Survey

Currituck has become reliant on a tourism based economy. Destination and cultural tourism are ranked high according to a study by tourism consultants. A priority for tourists includes historic attractions. Currituck County is the oldest area in the state with few historic attractions preserved. In an effort to capitalize on funding and complete the requirements for the Board of Commissioners to become certified in historic preservation, Cooperative Extension in partnership with the County Historian conducted a comprehensive study of historic structures. 400 data files on historic structures were submitted and approved by the State Office of Archives and History. After jury of applications for a National Register Nomination, 15 structures have been approved for the study list and eligible to seek certification. This will add to the attractions for historic significance and enhance preservation of structures. GIS mapping and records were established as the State’s first ever digital records.

Educational materials were distributed as requests for information

19,306

Report To The People

Total program contacts by Extension staff in 2008 - 54,426

Sherry Lynn
Administrative Secretary

Vanessa Moore
4-H / SOS Site Coordinator
Currituck County Middle

Eric Benson
Custodian

Jennifer Butler
4-H / SOS Site Cooridnator
Moyock Middle School
Agriculture and Natural Resources - 2008

Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture Systems

Field Crop Production Agriculture contributes $8 million annually to the Currituck economy. During 2008, 108 agriculture producers attended production programs and the Northeast Ag Expo Field Day on new technologies and cropping systems that will reduce their production cost and increase profits. Three variety trials were conducted by Extension cooperators, that produced excellent data for farmers to make sustainable crop decisions. In addition, 125 producers were reached through personal contact on the farm with information related to their farm operations.

Farms and the Next Generation – Forty-six farm family members and landowners attended a Farms-In-Transition program. These families were able to learn what they should do to make future plans about the family farm, such as setting goals, estate planning and inheritance taxes. As a result, several farm families have begun estate planning, and are interested in attending future programs on this topic.

Youth and Livestock – Nine youth with livestock projects learn the responsibilities of caring for livestock animals and the showmanship skills for exhibiting livestock at shows. These 9 youth exhibited 13 animals for Albemarle Livestock Show and Sale, and recorded a total sale of $8,230 for their livestock projects.

Best Practices for Ecosystem Services

Pesticide Disposal – Fifteen agriculture producers and residents disposed of 4,485 pounds of old and unwanted pesticides in a program sponsored with NCDA&CS. Pesticide disposal collection is a great program that prevents risk to the environment and danger to humans and domestic animals who might come into contact with these pesticides.

Pesticide Container Recycling - Seven agriculture operations recycled over 5,200 pesticide containers, saving landfill space and the environment. Besides saving approximately $100 in solid waste cost, recycled pesticide containers are made into new products such as drain pipes, speed bumps, parking bumpers, and conduit pipe.

Pesticide Education – Eight pesticide educations safety programs were conducted, and 27 private applicators were re-certified, and 123 commercial pesticide applicators earned continuing education credits.

Natural Resources Conservation

Soil Conservation – One hundred third grade students gained knowledge on the importance of the soil for food production, and its value as a natural resource to preserve water quality. The students learned about the particles that make up soils and ways they can be involved in soil conservation.

Environmental Field Day allowed 70 4th grade students to gain knowledge of potential harmful pests in our environment, and how they can be good stewards of nature and the environment around their homes.

4-H Day Camp Youth – Twenty-seven youth learn the importance of the water cycle, and the things they can do to conserve water, and ways they can protect water quality.

Rain Garden – Master Gardener volunteer worked with Currituck County personnel to start a rain garden in an area near the Currituck Historic Courthouse.

Donna Keene
Extension Secretary
Urban and Consumer Agriculture

Fire ants became a major pest of the landscape during 2008 with over 100 clients being consulted by telephone concerning this pest. A fact sheet on the Management of Fire Ants was prepared and distributed throughout the county. Twelve personnel from elder care facilities were made aware of these pests and how they can control fire ants to prevent their residents from being seriously stung.

Emerging Agricultural, BioEnergy, and Value-Added Enterprises

Agri-tourism and niche markets – Wine grape production continues to increase, with the potential of one new grower, and new winery came into production at Sanctuary Vineyards. One new grower began the production of organic vegetables during 2008, and an agri-tourism farm added features to its tour for school children. Niche market opportunities for Currituck tourism base offers promise and profits for many small farm operations.

Master Gardener Program – Fifteen new volunteers were recruited and trained in the 2008 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program.

Consumer Horticulture programs including educational programs, one-on-one field visits and tours instructed over 900 county residents on plant selection for the landscape, pest management, water conservation techniques and various other relevant horticulture topics.

Volunteers

Farm Volunteer Cooperators – Three Currituck County farmers served cooperators for field research plots during 2008. Two were involved in soybean variety trials and one assisted with a corn variety trial.

Extension Master Gardener Volunteers – Assist with Extension educational programs, sponsor the Currituck Flower and Garden Show, and work on various beautification projects throughout the county. Seventy-Seven Master Gardener volunteers contributed 5,500 hours of volunteer services which equates to a value $107,305 to Currituck County.
Leadership & Volunteerism:
Situation:
Research has shown that volunteerism is often connected to other forms of engagement, and among youth, volunteering plays a valuable role in shaping how youth learn to interact with their community and develop the skills, values, and sense of empowerment necessary to become active citizens.

Program/Impacts:
In Currituck County, volunteers fill many roles to contribute to the success of the total 4-H program. This year, 197 youth and adult volunteers increased their knowledge of volunteerism by completing service projects and participating in trainings offered by the NC Extension 4-H staff. 4-H volunteers are recognized for outstanding service at the State 4-H Volunteer’s Leader’s Conference. 4-H Volunteer’s contributed over 780 hours of service as they fulfilled their duties as club members, club leaders, members of advisory groups, and officers in local clubs or groups at a value of $15,217 to the citizens of Currituck County. Adult volunteers made 1,427 face to face contacts with youth.

4-H Horse Club members are captured waiting to enter the Show Ring at the State 4-H Horse Show.

K-12 Academic Achievement: 4-H
Situation 1:
In the most complete international study of schooling ever conducted, US High School seniors ranked near the bottom in math and science, reflecting what educators call a crisis in American education. Youth in public schools are given little opportunity to participate in hands-on experiential learning related to science. Extension has resources in many science related curricula that meet the specific competencies being taught in elementary classrooms.

Program/Impact:
Sixteen teachers were trained by Extension staff in 4-H school enrichment curricula and delivered programs that reached over 314 students. Eleven of the teachers recruited were new to Extension and have found Extension a valuable resource to assist them in their classrooms. One hundred eighteen students who participated were reported to have increased their grades in science and improved their class participation as a result of their work in these projects.

Situation 2:
In America today, millions of young people are alone and unsupervised in the hours after school, before parents return home from work. This situation places children and teens at grave risk for juvenile crime, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and other problems.

Program/Impact:
In Currituck County, the 4-H/Support Our Students (SOS) Program is a community based after school program. Our major goal is to provide support and guidance to middle school students by involving them in fun educational activities. The program is offered at no cost to citizens. Activities provided keep students focused and out of trouble during after school hours. In 2008, the Currituck County 4-H/SOS Program enrolled 120 students, a 29% increase in enrollment from 2007.

Students from Currituck County Middle school and Moyock Middle School SOS Programs attend an educational field trip to the NC Aquarium in Manteo.
Natural Resources Conservation

Situation: Natural resource conservation is important to all citizens. Young people are unaware of how depletion of these resources affects them and their families. If young people are made aware of environmental issues and learn how to best conserve and manage resources, they will be able to have an impact on their communities as they grow into adulthood.

Leadership Development-Policy Making and/or Civic Systems

Situation: Research provides some evidence that partnering with youth and respecting their ability to contribute may provide important protective factors for young people. The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (a division of National 4-H Council) conducted one of the few existing studies on the effect of youth-adult partnerships. The study found that involving young people in decision making provides them with the essential opportunities and that are consistently shown to help young people achieve mastery, compassion, and health.

Program/Impacts: Teen Council Representatives

The county 4-H program works with youth in an effort to help them develop leadership skills that can help them mature into community leaders. This is done through leadership opportunities including serving on the 4-H county council and acting as teen representatives to local boards. Youth involved in these opportunities have developed problem solving and decision making skills which they utilize in service projects in their respective communities. This year, teens completed over 1,000 hours of service to local communities. Teen leaders on local boards have inspired others to serve in these roles.

Life Skill Development:

Situation: To be successful in college and in the workforce, young people need to possess good communication skills, learn to set goals, make decisions and solve problems. Theories of human development and adolescent behavior find these specific skills to be essential components of healthy development, and the skills that define a resilient child. Results of program evaluations find that life skill development can delay the onset of drug use, prevent high-risk sexual behaviors, teach anger management, improve academic performance, and promote positive social adjustment.

Program/Impacts: Currituck County 4-H helps youth develop life skills through many special interest programs including horse and livestock shows, summer camps, project record keeping and public speaking contests. In 2008, one hundred twenty one youth were enrolled in 4-H clubs and demonstrated an ability to use appropriate goal setting and communication skills. One-hundred eighty youth completed project record books. Twenty-seven youth successfully delivered public speeches at local and state contests. Twenty-seven adult volunteers helped deliver over 150 hours of programming through 176 face to face contacts with youth that helped them develop life skills. Based on the current volunteer rate, the time contributed by 4-H volunteers is valued at about $3,000.

4-H & Youth Committee

The 4-H & Youth Committee which is comprised of adult volunteers assists the 4-H Department with program planning and implementation. This year, the committee planned a countywide State of the Child Conference which was provided free to citizens of Currituck. The event was sponsored by the County Board of Commissioners and the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council at a cost savings to citizens of $4,500.

2008 4-H Statistics

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961 Volunteers devoted 280,963 hours to provide Extension programming

Riley Dowdy-Green received a gold medal for her State Entomology presentation entitled “The Ants Go Marching”.

Don Roberts of WAVY-TV delivered the keynote address to citizens attending the State of the Child Conference.
Family & Consumer Sciences - 2008

BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES

Improving health through nutrition and wellness education - Each year, problems that stem from people being overweight and obesity cost North Carolina $2 billion – and the toll continues to rise. To reverse the trend, Cooperative Extension delivers educational programs that get people of all ages – from preschoolers to senior citizens – eating smarter and moving more.

Albemarle Partnership funded Eat Smart Move More program is for childcare centers, preschools and childcare homes. “Read Me A Story” and “Color Me Healthy” are nutrition and fitness education programs offered by Erline Jones and Sheila Gregory, Family and Consumer Science Program Assistants. They present lessons on healthy eating habits, MyPyramid, participate in fun physical activities, learn new songs and taste new foods. Twenty six childcare providers attended two Read Me A Story training sessions and received 52 Division of Child Development contact hour credits that will help promote healthy eating for preschoolers.

Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less – The FCS agent provided a thirteen week weight loss fitness program for 12 adults who adopted healthy eating habits, increased their physical fitness, received pedometers to track the number of steps made daily. Individuals lost 67.25 pounds, 6.75 inches in the waist, and improved their BMI by 5.4. Eight additional monthly support programs were conducted with an additional 16 pounds reported lost.

Obesity Prevention - Healthy eating was promoted through 7 community health fairs/events reaching over 1,000 individuals. Three youth nutrition classes were conducted for 391 youth. Six sessions on Give Your Heart a Healthy Beat and Dining with Diabetes were conducted for 70 adults and 8 other nutrition classes for 194 adults.

FCS Promoting Healthy Eating Across NC – Twenty one senior adults participated in 210 educational contact hours and 100% reported improved knowledge of nutrition; 85% reported positive behavior change related to nutrition; 94% intend to eat more fruits & vegetables; 65% intend to engage in more physical activity.

Know Your Numbers Train the Trainer – NC Cooperative Extension collaborated with Healthy Carolinians of the Albemarle to train lay leaders to extend their educational outreach to church members, clubs and organizations by conducting 5 trainings reaching 45 adults.

$91,560 In grant funding provided to support programs

BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES

Parent Education – Parenting is the most challenging job most of us will ever have. Court and Social Service referred parents were recruited to attend an 8 session series Parenting Matters course reaching 11 parents. 100% of parents reported increased knowledge and utilized behavior management skills. 32 youth attended three babysitting courses (24 hours training) with 100% being American Red Cross CPR & First Aid certified by passing 5 written tests and completing 20 skills. Twenty received American Red Cross Babysitting certification.

Child Care Education – North Carolina statutes require that all child care providers receive annual professional development. Research shows that higher education improves quality child care. Child care providers are underpaid, can’t afford college costs and have family obligations that will not allow them to attend much training. NC Cooperative Extension provided 34 training opportunities for 345 (including duplicates) child care providers who received 467 Division Child Development approved contact hour credits on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Food Safety, Star License, Food Allergies, Play-ground Safety, CPR, First Aid, Professionalism, Stress Management, Osteoporosis and Fire Safety.

Child Care Conference - NC Cooperative Extension coordinated the 12th annual regional child care conference. A total of 175 providers received 5.5 hours of training for a total of 962 contact hour credits presented. The evaluations noted that learning objectives were met by 94% and 98 percent reported they would attend a future conference. Over 3,000 children will be reached by the providers attending.

Erline Jones Program Assistant Family Consumer Sciences
FOSTERING RESILIENCY FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

Financial Management – Collaborated with Agriculture staff to conduct a Farms in Transition program for 43 participants and shared basic Estate Planning information. Nineteen different senior adult educational programs were conducted for 378 (including duplicates) adults on Medicare, Prescription Drug Plans, Low Income Subsidy, Aging with Gusto, Diet/High Blood Pressure, Cholesterol Education and Medicare Prevention Services.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY CAPACITY

There continues to be a need for volunteer involvement in communities. In Currituck the Extension & Community Association provides many services through its educational and community service mission. The 73 members focus on strengthening families through education, leadership development and community service. ECA event sponsorship is an important source of cost reduction for many community events such as the Annual Christmas Tree Illumination, Holiday Festival, donation of $250.00 for books for foster children, Food Collection for the needy, quarterly roadside cleanup, $550 worth of donations for Operation Santa Claus and 35 Christmas Shoeboxes, as well as numerous educational programs.

PROMOTING SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Food borne illness affects 76 million Americans each year. Family & Consumer Science Extension Agents partnered with Environmental Health Specialists from the local health department to deliver two 16 hour food safety certification programs. Fifty Seven food service managers representing 42 foodservice establishments attended. Food borne illness is nearly 100% preventable if safe food handling practices are applied from the time food is received until the time it is served. If an outbreak results, the National Restaurant Association estimates that it could cost an establishment $75,000. Multiply this cost times the 42 restaurants for an estimated $3,150,000 savings from preventing a food borne illness outbreak. Thus, knowing and applying safe food handling has the potential to not only decrease the likelihood that food borne illness will result but to also keep a business open.

School Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) – School food service personnel serve some of the most vulnerable population, our young children. USDA required all schools to implement a food safety program based on HACCP beginning with the 06-07 school year. A four hour HACCP training was presented to 33 school cafeteria staff. 100 percent of participants reported knowledge gain and planned to incorporate one or more food safety skills in their daily work to help implement the state HACCP plan.

Energy Conservation – Currituck has selected an Environmental Initiative for their countywide integrated program. 2008 has been a year of re-tooling so our staff could be retrofitted and prepared to assist our audiences with this initiative. Staff has participated in 4 trainings/events, conducted an extensive web search and began implementing green initiative to recruit 10 families to become 10 percent more energy efficient. Three educational presentations on Energy conservation was presented to 32; green cleaning was presented to two groups of 29; a tour of the NC State Solar Home and NC State Fair “green” exhibit for 4. Georgia Kight serves on the Environmental Round Table and serve on its Education/Public Awareness subcommittee.