Impact Project Report

Master Naturalist helps update educational program for 7-9th graders

Issue

The Haw River Assembly's (HRA) Stream Investigation Program (SIP), originally implemented in 2011, was designed to educate 8th grade students at schools located within the Haw River Watershed, about the impacts of pollution, development, and urban runoff on the health of streams.

Revising the program's material and scope in time to re-launch it in spring 2025 is an ambitious undertaking for the HRA's six-person staff. Master Naturalist student Rieppe Hendrick volunteered to help with the research, development, and implementation the new SIP program.

Project

The forthcoming SIP builds off of the successful Haw River Watch Program, and has expanded its scope to engage 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students. Participating students will learn how to assess their stream's health by collecting data on water pH, temperature, and transparency, as well as conducting visual assessments of stream bank erosion and algae growth. They will be empowered to collect, identify and assess macroinvertebrate diversity as an indicator of stream health.

Hendrick helped identified schools located within walking distance to known impaired streams, these students will learn about their school's ecological address, water intake, and output, including its drinking water. The overarching goal is for SIP to be a comprehensive and engaging educational experience that will encourage the next generation of environmental stewards through their understanding of the science behind water quality, stream health, and biodiversity. Students will have a platform to contribute to the health of the watershed, ensuring that future generations inherit a cleaner, healthier environment.



Haw River Assembly's Executive Director, Emily Sutton teaches Master Naturalists to identify macroinverterbrates. Photo: B Roper

Student

This project, in conjunction with Hannah Welborn-Lewis – HRA Events & Volunteer Program Manager, is the current and future work of Master Naturalist student Rieppe Hendrick. She is filled with excitement to see the program in action in the spring of 2025.

Impact Projects

Beyond classwork, a key feature of the Master Naturalist Volunteer program are the Impact Projects students develop. These projects integrate course concepts and benefit a Partner Organization.

Highlight

Partner Organization

Haw River Assembly

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