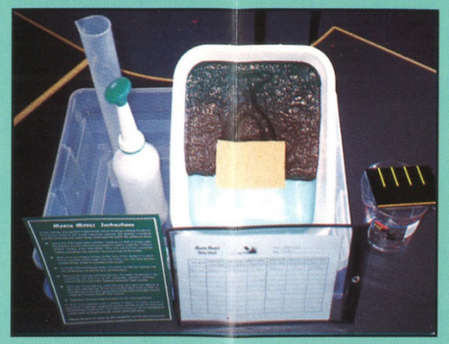
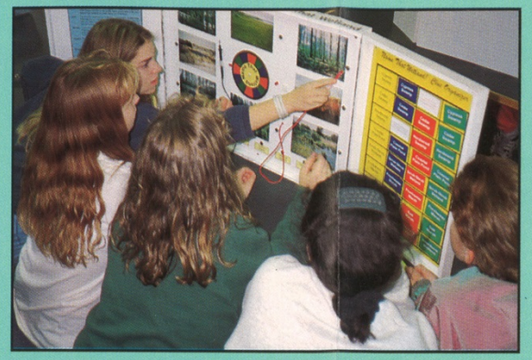
Wetland Activities for the Delaware Estuary

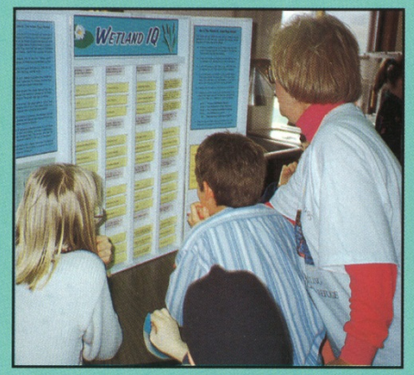
Marsh Metaphors challenges students to match clues relating wetland functions and values with the metaphoric attributes of twelve objects on exhibit. Two games and clue sets are provided to reinforce the message that wetlands are valuable!



Marsh Model involves students in a simple experiment that demonstrates the water-holding function and flood-protection value of wetlands. A follow-up experiment, in which a sponge (representing a wetland) is replaced with a plastic brick (representing a parking lot), reinforces those messages.



Name That Wetland! is a wetland types identification game. Working together, students select clues to use in identifying eight illustrated wetland types. The activity features a magnetic clue organizer, game scorecard, and an electric quizboard to validate right or wrong guesses.

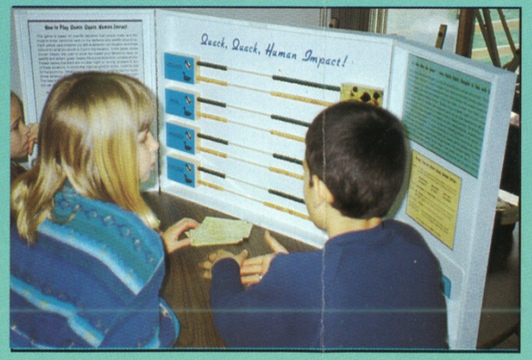


Wetland IQ combines a Tic-Tac-Toe-type format with multiple choice wetland trivia questions to teach students basic facts about the state of wetlands locally and throughout the nation. Flip-up answer cards allow students to learn from incorrect answer choices. Directions are given for both one-player and more-than-one-player venues.

Build-a-Bird engages users in assembling any of twelve wetland birds pictured, based on clues about how, where, and what, the bird eats in wetlands. Separate head, torso and leg pieces are provided for constructing the bird models.

WetQuest instructs students to apply knowledge of local geography to locate key wetland habitat areas in their state. Two clue sets - one combining geography, natural history and cultural heritage content, and the other relating those locations to the habitat needs of selected rare or threatened wetland species - are provided with this activity.

Wetland Cafeteria utilizes plastic chains and rhyming food chain event cards (such as: "Mummichog, mummichog, what do you eat? Oodles of mosquito larvae juicy & sweet") to direct construction of a Delaware Bay salt marsh food web.



Quack, Quack Human Impact presents a series of wetland use dilemma situations to students. Each action results in two kinds of consequences, one for wildlife (ducks) and the other for humans and the economy (dollars). Colored beads are used to score the consequences of decisions.

Background on the WADE Project

The Wetland Activities for the Delaware Estuary (WADE) Discovery Kit began with an in-depth survey of educators in Delaware, which indicated a strong need for hands-on wetlands education activities for use in the classroom. Responding to that need, the state's Aquatic Resources Education (ARE) staff intiated the WADE project to provide grade 4-8 educators with a ready-to-use, hands-on tool for introducing students to the wealth, wonders and values of wetlands.

The eight stations were designed for ease of set-up and use. Each comes in a fold-open box or tub, containing all the instructions, clue cards, props and other materials needed to do the activity. The components may be used as separate demo or learning centers or set-up for rotational use by small groups of students within a large class.

Contributors to WADE

In 1994, teams of students from Delaware's Milford, Smyrna, Wilmington and Tatnall high schools, working with scientist/educator "mentors" from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, developed the rough models that became the templates for each station.

Following rough model activity piloting in selected classrooms during 1995, Delaware ARE staff adapted/improved each activity into "prototype" form. Artists, craftsmen, educators and scientists contributed much to this phase of the project.

The final challenge of reproducing the WADE kits was addressed in 1996, when Public Service Electric & Gas of New Jersey generously offered to produce ten finished kits for use in schools throughout Delaware and Southern New Jersey.

What You Get With WADE

Along with the eight activity stations, the WADE kit also features a well-stocked supplementary tub of videos, activity books, magazines and other materials for wetlands ed. enrichment. An Educator's Guide, offering lesson plans, kit use tips, and assessment ideas is also provided.

How & Where to Get WADE

In Delaware, kits are distributed through the Aquatic Resources Education Center (302-653-2883). Teachers must first attend a six-hour WADE Workshop to be eligible for borrowing the kit.

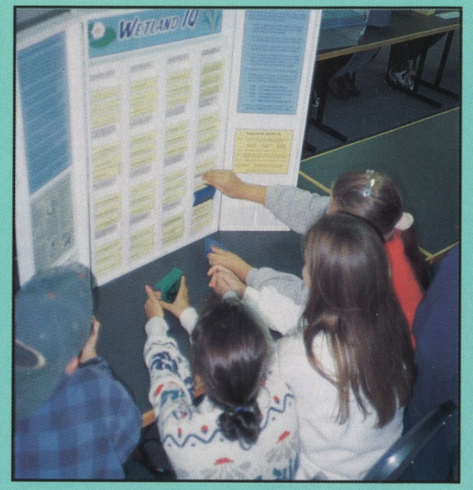
In New Jersey, teachers may borrow kits by contacting any of these County Educational Resource Centers:

Cumberland County: (609) 451-0817
Cape May County: (609) 465-1289
Salem County: (609) 769-3031

Please direct kit design inquiries to: Delaware Aquatic Resources Education Center, 4876 Hay Point Landing Road, Smyrna, DE 19977 (telephone 302-653-2882).

DNREC is an equal opportunity employer.

WADE into Wetlands Education with the:



WETLAND ACTIVITIES for the DELAWARE ESTUARY

Discovery Kit