

Celebrate Earth Day with local activities

By LETA PARKS
News Herald Staff Writer

Local organizations will observe the 20th anniversary of Earth Day with an extravaganza of activities before, during and after the official April 22 date.

Burke County residents will be able to participate in both recreational and educational activities, as well as efforts to keep the county cleaner.

"April 22 will mark the 20th anniversary of Earth Day, an event aimed at raising environmental awareness and activism," said Reagan Ammons, Burke County Extension director.

The first Earth Day, held in 1970, involved about 4,000 high schools and 1,000 college campuses, he said.

On that date, "an estimated 25 million people marched, sang or simply became more informed about the environment in activities ranging from survival marches to a 'trash-in,' where garbage was returned to corporations responsible for it," said Ammons.

Several activities to celebrate Earth Day are scheduled throughout the county.

Students at Western Piedmont Community College will be involved in many of the activities to celebrate the occasion.

"The type of activities we're doing are fun, but there's a little more to it than that," said Paula Leonard, coordinator of WPCC Student Activities and state media coordinator for the Sierra Club as well as local publicity chairwoman.

"It's an opportunity to have a really good time and learn some things along the way," she said.

Some of the Earth Day celebrations will take place on April 21, which is also the birthday of Sierra Club founder John Muir.

The South Mountains group of the Sierra Club and the WPCC Student Government Association will sponsor a canoe trip down the Catawba River April 21.

Participants should bring their own canoes and equipment to Judge's Riverside Restaurant at 1:30 p.m. for launching.

On the canoe trip, the participants will see sites marked to indicate clean water hazards that threaten the life of the river, said Leonard.

The ride down the river will probably last about 1½ hours, and the group will then pull over at Riverview Apartments for a cookout, she said.

The cost for the cookout will be \$4 except for children under 10, who will be served free of charge. Those who are planning to attend the cookout should contact Leonard at 438-6047 or 437-4260 by Wednesday to make reservations.

At the cookout the group can take fishing lessons from members of Trout Unlimited, play volleyball, take nature walks by the river and see Earth Day displays.

A shuttle will be available to take participants back to the restaurant where they launched the canoes into the river.

Those who are more interested in traveling on land than on water can contact Rusty Triebert at 437-7959 for information about a bicycle trip which will also be held on April 21.

Anyone who wants to celebrate the earth by working on the "Mountains to the Sea Trail" can meet at 8:30



Photo by Mark Hannan

FHS student Sean Crook plants a white pine to commemorate the day.

a.m. April 21 at the K-Mart parking lot in Morganton.

The trail is an effort to provide a way to hike from one end of the state to the other.

Participants should bring a lunch and gloves, and the group will meet later with the canoe riders at Riverview Apartments for the cookout.

Those who plan to take part in the cookout should call Leonard for reservations by April 18.

For more information on the workday for the trail, contact Bob Benner at 438-6063.

Other people will be working at South Mountains State Park April 21 to help clean up trails there. The park is located off Highway 18 South from Morganton.

The group will meet at the park office at 10 a.m., and "everyone should bring gloves, sturdy shoes or boots and a lunch," said Allen Rogers, the park's chief ranger.

"Plan to come and volunteer a little of your time to help your local state park," he said.

For more information contact Rogers at 433-4772 from 1 to 5 p.m.

Meanwhile, the Paralegal Association at WPCC will sponsor a trash pickup day at the college, meeting at the tennis courts at 9 a.m. April 21.

On Earth Day itself, April 22, the Christian Ecology Connection will sponsor a worship service from 6 to 7 p.m. outside Moore auditorium on the campus of Western Piedmont Community College.

The Rev. James A. Johnson, a member of the Chesterfield/Hartland Environmental Protection Association, will speak at the service.

The worship service will be open to all denominations, said Betty Lou DeLaughter, chairperson of the Christian Ecology Connection.

The service will follow an afternoon of picking up trash beside a road the group has adopted through the "Adopt-a-Highway" program.

Some local students will find out

whether or not they won a poster contest sponsored by the ecology group when the winners are announced by telephone the morning of Earth Day.

The winning posters from the kindergarten through sixth-grade and seventh through 12th grade divisions will receive \$25 and a tree to plant, said DeLaughter.

"We feel that as Christians we're called to be caretakers of the earth," she added.

Earth Day activities will be going on throughout the nation and the world.

"It's exciting," DeLaughter said. "You feel connected with other people working for the environment."

Also on Earth Day, South Mountains State Park will host an Earth Day Hike beginning at 2 p.m.

"Come and celebrate Earth Day at the park and help kick off National Celebration of the Outdoors Week, which runs from April 22 to 29," said Rogers.

The group will hike to High Shoals

Falls "and enjoy the plant and animal life we encounter along the way," he said.

The hike will be about three miles round trip, and participants should wear sturdy shoes or boots.

But the official Earth Day will not mark the end of the celebrations in Burke County.

On April 25 the WPCC Student Government Association will celebrate both Earth Day and the National Celebration of the Outdoors with a hike for the college's students and their guests.

The group will meet at 2 p.m. at the WPCC tennis court parking lot and take a trip to South Mountains State Park for a hike to the park's waterfall.

Those who plan to go on the hike should call Leonard by April 24 to make reservations.

Also, a group of North Carolina School for the Deaf students in an environmental studies class DeLaughter teaches will plant two trees on April 25 in front of the high school building sometime between 11 a.m. and noon, said DeLaughter.

Burke County officials will take April 26 to spread the word to officials from other counties and to anyone else who is interested on how to take better care of the environment.

"We feel like Burke County is further along than a lot of other counties in North Carolina," said DeLaughter.

"This is for other counties to bring officials and community leaders to see what we have going on here in Burke County and, hopefully, they can pick up ideas for their county," he said.

The Western North Carolina Solid Waste Seminar will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 26 at John's River Waste Management, which is the Burke County landfill, Ammons said.

County officials will give speeches describing the county's waste management and recycling programs.

Participants will hear a description of "morgantite," sludge which has been processed to use for mulch, and will go on a tour of the new tub grinder.

A noon luncheon will help demonstrate that a landfill does not have to be an unpleasant place, he said.

"One purpose will be to have it on site, so people will see how neat and nice it is," he added.

Speaking at the luncheon will be Ernie Carl, deputy secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources.

Also at the luncheon, Bob Rubin, extension specialist with the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service, will speak on composting and alternative systems of handling solid waste.

State recycling coordinator Mary Beth Powell will speak immediately after Rubin.

In addition, the afternoon program will include a discussion of Senate Bill 111, which sets guidelines for what can go into landfills.

The seminar is open to anyone who is interested, and a \$10 registration fee should be sent by April 23 to the Burke County Agricultural Extension Service, P.O. Box 949, Morganton, N.C. 28655.

Even though the big day is still one week away, local celebrations of Earth Day have already started

(Continued on Page 8C)

Activities planned in Burke to commemorate Earth Day

(Continued from Page 1C)

happening.

At Freedom High School on Thursday students planted white pine trees to celebrate Earth Day a little early.

"It feels kind of insignificant for one person to do it, but if everybody does it, it will add up to one great whole," said Sonny Smith, president of Freedom's History Club.

The club members have been as active in environmental issues as historical activities, he said.

"I think that we as youth should strive to preserve history and the world because if we don't, no one else will," said Darren Patton, a member of the History Club.

"We want to preserve a more healthy environment for ourselves and future generations," said club member Chris Carrier, who hopes to show the trees he planted to his own children some day.



"I think we need to make the community more aware than they are," said Donette Willis, club member. "We can recycle paper almost as easily as we can cut down trees."

A way to limit the number of trees cut down is to avoid eating so much fast food, said Smith. The fast food industry uses beef from cattle which grazes on fields that used to be part of rain forests.

Other members of the History

Club are: Becky Crump, Cyndi Miller, Sean Crook, Carrie Berrong, Kim Woodard, Gwyn Revis, Stewart Robinson, Mindy Hungerford, Jody Clark, Ron Faulkner, John Culbertson and Ben Hardy.

Later on Thursday, the students said the Earth Day 1990 Green Pledge:

I pledge to do my utmost to recycle, conserve energy, save water, use efficient transportation, and try to adopt a lifestyle as if every day were Earth Day.

I pledge to buy and use only those products least harmful to the environment. Moreover, I will do business with corporations that promote global environmental responsibility.

I pledge to vote and support those candidates who demonstrate an abiding concern for the environment.

I pledge to support the passage of local, state and federal laws and international treaties that protect the environment.