



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**  
New York District

***Corps of Engineers Supports Environmental Events in Elizabeth, Union New Jersey  
Provides Environmental Staff and Educational Tanks to Display Estuary Habitat***

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NEW YORK- October 4, 2005- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New York District spoke to more than 600 area students about the importance of the New York and New Jersey Harbor Estuary, recently.

On Sept. 23rd, the Corps set up educational water tanks that displayed the various biological habitats and organisms which thrive in the harbor for National Water Day in Union, NJ. Four hundred local elementary students joined nearly 50,000 others nationwide to celebrate *Make a Splash with Project WET (Water Education for Teachers)*, the largest water education day in the nation.

Corps biologists and staff discussed the importance of the ecosystem as well clean water and environmental stewardship. Other participants included the U.S. Coast Guard and the Arthur Kill/Elizabeth River Watershed Association.

“As environmental stewards, this is the Army Corps of Engineers opportunity to energize our future environmental leaders about the health of their own estuary in the New York and New Jersey Harbor,” said Col. Richard J. Polo, Jr., New York District Engineer. “Through the Corps and other partner agencies, we are able to reach these students directly and provide a hands-on classroom to discuss important topics like pollution, water quality and how to protect habitat in the estuary.”

On Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, the Corps participated in the third annual Estuary Day 2005 activities in Elizabeth, NJ. The event took place in the Peterstown Center and provided mobile exhibits relating to the New York and New Jersey Harbor Estuary. The event featured more than 200 area students.

“It's important that you leave here today with an understanding of how important it is that we work on protecting our natural resources and become active in caring for our environment,” said Mayor J. Christian Bollwage of Elizabeth, NJ in his opening remarks.

Area students were able to visit five learning stations staffed by the Army Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, Keane University, the New York/New Jersey Baykeeper and the Harbor Estuary Program's New Jersey Sea Grant.

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At the Army Corps station, students touched and viewed creatures such as sea squirts and hermit crabs, and viewed a tank with a sand shark, and variety of fishes such as robin, porgies and black fish that were fished out of the estuary by Corps employees the day prior.

At other stations, students were also able to perform water quality testing, learn about the life of the oyster, and see how pollution –from oil spills to trash- affects the habitat and overall health of the ecosystem.

“The environmental educational workshops like Earth Day and Estuary Day are tangible manifestations of a year round commitment to environmental education and stewardship within our watershed school consortia,” said Michelle McBean, CEO of Future City Inc., the non-profit organization that sponsors Earth Day and Estuary Day.

“The reason why this process was so successful is because for more than three years the Corps has made an active working partnership resulting in substantial inter-agency relationships that have created sustaining, complementary environmental education and stewardship programs for the Arthur Kill/Elizabeth River watershed communities.”

Editor’s note: Photos are available at <http://www.nan.usace.army.mil/harbor/photos.htm>. For more information or to inquire about educational events contact Carolyn Vadino at [Carolyn.j.vadino@usace.army.mil](mailto:Carolyn.j.vadino@usace.army.mil) or 917-790-8306.