

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Adkins Arboretum Awarded Environmental Education Grant from Chesapeake Bay Trust

Adkins Arboretum has been awarded a three-year environmental education grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust in support of its “Eating the Sun” project. The goal of this project is to embed a systemic, Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience in Caroline County Public Schools’ seventh grade life science curriculum. The project will support curricular development, teacher professional development, school ground visits, field experiences at Adkins and action project support for approximately seven teachers and 1,200 seventh graders over the three-year period.

Through a combination of classroom lessons, schoolyard exploration and Adkins field experiences, students will find answers to the driving question, “How do native plants transfer energy to other living organisms and contribute to healthy ecosystems?” Projected activities include conducting experiments to observe how leaves release oxygen and water as part of photosynthesis, identifying native plants and wildlife in a forest food web scavenger hunt, making inferences about whether an animal is a carnivore, omnivore, or herbivore based on its skull structure and collecting data about keystone and indicator species in the Arboretum’s forest and wetland.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “The Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) is a learner-centered framework that focuses on



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Photo by Mike Morgan.***

investigations into local environmental issues and leads to informed action.” MWEEs actively engage students through hands-on, outdoor learning in order to connect students with their local environment and empower them to take actions that contribute to stronger, more sustainable communities.

A 400-acre native garden and plant preserve, Adkins Arboretum offers five miles of paths that showcase more than 600 species of native plants. Admission is free thanks to member support. The Arboretum’s mission is to provide exceptional experiences in nature to promote environmental stewardship. Youth education programs like “Eating the Sun” are a key component of this mission and engage approximately 4000 students each year. To learn more, visit [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org).

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*Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County. For more information, visit [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org) or call 410-634-2847, ext. 100.*