

Immediate Release

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Local Refuge Employee Named NOAA Climate Stewards Education Program Regional Leader

After being involved with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Stewards Education Program for the past year, Visitor Services Specialist Cindy Heffley from Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges will be serving as the Southern Region Leader for the 2012 program. The main goal of the position is to foster more communication and collaboration among program participants in closer geographic proximity to one another. A variety of activities including webinars, wiki pages, and personal meetings will enable participants to share information about regional climate change and collaborate on mutual interests. NOAA's Southern Region includes FL, GA, NC, SC, TN, AL, MS, LA, AR, OK, TX, NM, and PR. Since many of those states are in the Southeast Region of US Fish and Wildlife Service, Heffley hopes to be able to connect the Climate Steward participants with refuge personnel here and in the Northeast Region. Interested teachers should contact Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge or another national wildlife refuge near you to explore possible partnerships.



The program provides opportunities for local, state, and regional education partners to work with NOAA in responding to environmental challenges and inspire our youth to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. It also brings science and education efforts together in a cohesive plan to provide educational opportunities and rewards for environmental stewardship actions. Environmental stewardship actions include things like Climate Stewards educating themselves and



others, as well as working within their communities to reduce their carbon footprints or develop plans to "go green."

Heffley is currently conducting a four-year climate steward's action plan with students at First Flight High School in Kill Devil Hills, NC. In addition to learning about climate change and

ecological footprints, the Outer Banks Climate Stewards students are involved with phenology and Project Budburst observing plants at the Alligator River refuge and a local learning garden near their school. This project also allows the students to hear guest speakers who have careers involving climate change. End-of-year presentations will enable students to share what they have learned. If you are interested in accessing the group's Facebook page, contact Heffley at cindy_heffley@fws.gov.

Photo caption: Outer Banks Climate Stewards

Photo caption: Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Specialist Cindy Heffley was named as the Regional Leader for NOAA's Southern Region, which includes FL, GA, NC, SC, TN, AL, MS, LA, AR, OK, TX, NM, and PR. Persons interested in participating in the Climate Stewards Program should contact Heffley at cindy_heffley@fws.gov or 252-475-4180.

Photo credit: USFWS

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