

[From Fall 1999]

## **Environmental Education at CNWR**

Outdoor Recreation Planner Ray Pattera is changing the face of environmental education (E.E.) at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Since his arrival in late 1997, Ray has correlated all E.E. activities to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL's).

He has been successful in converting a garage into an E.E. lab equipped with chairs, tables and various educational tools. In addition, a one mile trail has been cleared below the lighthouse. This trail will incorporate five distinct habitats to be studied and explored. There are also plans to develop a learning station along the trail to inform visitors about the once present Assateague Village. This project will take a great deal of time and research, Therefore, anyone with knowledge or stories to share is encouraged to call Ray at (757)3366122.

There are also plans to expand the E.E. program through school outreach programs. Refuge staff will visit area schools before the class visits the refuge. This introduction to the refuge will help students gain a better understanding of how and why the refuge is managed.

Another aspect of the outreach program is the development of traveling wetland discovery kits to be used by local elementary schools. Two of the seven prototypes have been developed and are awaiting field testing. Once all the prototypes are completed and tested they will be revised, built and ready for use. Anyone interested in contributing to the evaluation process is encouraged to stop by sub-headquarters and test the kit. Remember these lands belong to all of us, but the future belongs to the children.