August 21, 2015

Dear Fifth-Grade Teacher:

On behalf of the Delaware Sea Grant College Program and the University of Delaware’s College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment, I am pleased to extend an invitation to your fifth-grade classes to participate in the Coast Day 2015 essay contest. Coast Day offers students and teachers a unique opportunity to learn more about the ocean and coastal environments as they take part in hands-on research demonstrations, tour ships and laboratories, see and touch marine life, and enjoy numerous other activities, from marine science lectures to seafood cooking demonstrations. This year’s theme is “Discoveries on Land, in the Air, and at Sea,” and the festival will be held Sunday, October 4, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the UD Hugh R. Sharp Campus in Lewes, Delaware.

Our Coast Day essay contest follows the day’s theme this year, with students being asked to describe how they discover the land, air and water around Delaware. The enclosed materials are designed to help guide classroom discussion of the topic. Our intent is to create awareness about coastal issues in Delaware and to help teachers meet state standards through teaching about coastal ecosystems and the roles they play in our lives. Student essays must be postmarked or hand-delivered by close-of-business Friday, September 18, 2015.

Awards will be presented to the students and their teachers in a special ceremony at Coast Day, and the winners will be recognized in photos and press releases issued to the media.

While this essay topic does require some thought, the judges also will be looking for accurate descriptions that show students have researched the topic. A copy of a judge’s scoring sheet is included in this packet, so you can see how different areas are weighted. If you have any questions, please contact me at 302-645-4308, or by e-mail at petrone@udel.edu. Visit www.decoastday.org for more information.

Sincerely,

Christopher Petrone
Marine Education Specialist

Enclosure
Coast Day 2015

Theme: Discoveries on land, in the air, and at sea

Discoveries can happen at any time, by any person—scientist, business person, teacher, or student. Many of our medicines and items we use every day were discovered either by accident, or after lots of testing and redesigning. Discoveries can be big, like finding a new species of deep-sea shark and uncovering a shipwreck, or small, like finding a cool rock or seashell on the beach, and trying a new delicious seafood recipe. Regardless of their size, discoveries open our minds to new ideas, concepts, cultures, and most of all, more questions!

Whether you realize it or not, you discover something new every day—a faster route to school, a new fact about the ocean, or a new place or game to play outside. With this in mind, we want to learn how YOU make outdoor discoveries around Delaware.

Do you hike or bike at one of Delaware’s amazing state parks, stopping to examine the bugs and plants? Do you walk the beaches of Delaware Bay or the Atlantic Ocean, taking a minute to watch the shorebirds or look dune grasses? Do you kayak the rivers, or canoe the millponds, letting the current move you downstream?

We want to know your ideas for “Discovering the land, air, and water around Delaware.”

1. Start by identifying your favorite outdoor areas in Delaware, how you and your family explore them, and any discoveries you have made there, then

2. Explain how you help keep your favorite discovered areas special, and your ideas for how you can help preserve them for future generations.

*Note: Please include student’s name, teacher’s name, school name, and word count on each entry.

Word Count: Up to 400 words. Please include the word count at the bottom of the essay.
Deadline: Postmarked or hand-delivered by Friday, September 18, 2015
Mail entries to: Coast Day Essay Contest
Delaware Sea Grant – Marine Advisory Service
700 Pilottown Rd
Lewes, DE 19958

Prizes will be awarded to the winning essayists:
First prize: $100 bookstore gift card
Second prize: $75 bookstore gift card
Third prize: $50 bookstore gift card
Essay writers receiving honorable mention and teachers of winning students will also be recognized!

Questions? Contact Christopher Petrone at 302-645-4308 or petrone@UDel.edu
Teacher’s Aids:

The books and websites below are a great starting point for both teachers and students.

This contest can also be used to meet Delaware state Science and English/Language Arts standards. A few examples of standards related to this essay theme are highlighted below.

Sample Vocabulary
community, conservation, cooperation, discover/discovery, ecosystem, environment, explore/exploration, habitat, investigate, legislation, nutrients, regulation, restoration, runoff, sustainable, water quality, watershed

Web Resources

Delaware State Parks
http://www.destateparks.com/

Delaware National Estuary Research Reserve

Delaware Sea Grant – 10 Things You Can Do to Help Our Ocean
http://www.deseagrant.org/products/10-things-you-can-do-help-our-ocean

National Geographic Society – 10 Things You Can Do to Save the Ocean
http://ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/take-action/10-things-you-can-do-to-save-the-ocean

Smithsonian Sant Ocean Hall – What You Can Do
http://www.mnh.si.edu/exhibits/ocean_hall/what_you_can_do.html

Thank You Delaware Bay – What You Can Do
http://www.tydb.org/whatucando.php

Thank You Ocean – Take Action (California-based, but list relevant nationwide)
http://www.thankyouocean.org/take-action/

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Exploring Estuaries
http://www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries/kids/

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Marine Ecosystems
http://www.epa.gov/bioiweb1/aquatic/marine.html

Climate Change in Delaware Impact Assessment summary report
http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/energy/Pages/The-Delaware-Climate-Impact-Assessment.aspx

Useful Publications — Books

Ecology (DK Eyewitness Books), Brian Lane, (ISBN: 0756613876)
Everything Kids’ Environment Book: Learn how you can help the environment — by getting involved at school, at home, or at play, Sheri Amsel, (ISBN: 159869670X)


Ocean (DK Eyewitness Books), Miranda MacQuitty (ISBN: 0756637767)

Pond & River (DK Eyewitness Books), Steve Parker, (ISBN: 0756610850)


Delaware/Next Generation Science Standards & Common Core Content Standards

5-LS2 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics
LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems
LS2.B: Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems

5-ESS2 Earth’s Systems
ESS2.A: Earth Materials and Systems
ESS2.B: The Roles of Water in Earth’s Surface Processes

5-ESS3 Earth and Human Activity
ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems

3-5-ETS1 Engineering Design
ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions
ETS1.C: Optimizing the Design Solution

Common Core English Language Arts Standards – Writing – Grade 5
Text Types and Purposes
• CC.5.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
• CC.5.W.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing
• CC.5.W.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
• CC.5.W.5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
• CC.5.W.7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
• CC.5.W.8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards – Language – Grade 5
Conventions of Standard English
• CC.5.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
• CC.5.L.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language
• CC.5.L.3.a. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
• CC.5.L.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition).
Coast Day 2015

5th Grade Delaware Student Essay Contest

Name:

School:

Teacher:

5 = Excellent  4 = Above average  3 = Average
2 = Below average  1 = Poor  0 = Did not attempt/show

Content (25 points)

____ Essay shows overall understanding of subject matter and clearly and accurately addresses the topic. (5)
____ Main idea is clear, focused, and well supported. (5)
____ Student has met and followed requirements and criteria of the writing prompt. (5)
____ Student has included information from suggested/relevant resources and sample vocabulary. (5)
____ Essay includes only factual, accurate information—scientific, historic, etc. (5)

____ Total

Organization (15 points)

____ Essay has a strong beginning that draws the reader into the text. (5)
____ Paragraphs are focused, idea-centered, and transition smoothly, connecting ideas and creating a sense of flow. (5)
____ Essay has a logical order and leads the reader through the text, including a clear beginning, middle, and end. (5)

____ Total

Grammar and Spelling (10 points)

____ Essay demonstrates correct use of sentence structure and punctuation. (5)
____ Student uses correct spelling and capitalization. (5)

____ Total

Originality & Creativity (15 points)

____ Student creates a meaningful connection to the reader. (5)
____ Student takes fresh approach to subject, addressing topic in a creative way. (5)
____ Student uses interesting organization or storytelling techniques to examine topic in an original manner. (5)

____ Total

____ Final Score (65 points possible)