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Organizations Kick Off RiverSmart Campaign to Educate Citizens About Tennessee Rivers!

Tennessee Clean Water Network kicked off the statewide RiverSmart campaign along with a number of local partner organizations (listed below) to educate Tennesseans about the importance of protecting rivers and what they can do in their everyday lives to prevent pollution of our rivers. RiverSmart, the nation's leading public education campaign for clean rivers and drinking water, addresses water quality issues and demonstrates for individuals the simple things that can be done around the home and in the yard to improve the condition of America's rivers. Tips include turning off the water while you are brushing your teeth and washing the dishes, buying and using environmentally friendly products, and taking care when changing your car's motor oil, and disposing of the oil safely.

RiverSmart aims to combat the public's misperceptions that "big-pipe industrial and municipal polluters" are the only cause of pollution and to help educate individuals on their role in creating and preventing water pollution. **Most of the public is unaware that the majority of water pollution comes from runoff or nonpoint source pollution.** Precipitation run-off from farm fields, roads, parking lots, and lawns has now become a leading cause of water pollution in America today and is expected to increase in magnitude. The availability of clean and safe drinking water is also a growing problem across the state causing increased conflicts between local communities. The per capita water use in Tennessee for off-stream uses is a staggering 1,920 gallons per day. Off stream uses include water that is removed from streams or the ground-water reservoirs for use. The major categories of offstream use are for the generation of power at thermoelectric plants, industry and mining, domestic and commercial purposes, and agriculture.

The RiverSmart campaign recognizes that **Americans routinely identify clean and safe water as a top environmental and health priority.** But many do not realize that their daily activities have a substantial impact on water quality. The lack of understanding about the major causes of water pollution – particularly the role of individuals and small businesses – stands as an impediment to community-based action and clean water.

In Tennessee almost one-third (or 4,000 miles) of the state's waters are polluted by siltation. "Most people don't think of silt as a source of pollution but when it becomes excessive, you can kill fish and other aquatic life, lose stream banks, clog drinking water intake pipes, and completely alter watersheds," said Danielle Droitsch, Executive Director of Tennessee Clean Water Network.

TCWN will work to place media public service announcements with newspapers, radios, and television stations. These professionally produced advertisements are geared to remind citizens of how their daily habits can help or hurt rivers.

More information is available at www.riversmart.org.Tenn

Tennessee Organizations Participating in the Campaign Include: Tennessee Clean Water Network, Tennesse Environmental Council, Little River Watershed Association, Emory River Watershed Association, Harpeth River Watershed Association, Friends of the Clinch and Powell Rivers, and Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association.

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