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LDEQ creates Nonpoint Source Pollution demonstration to continue outreach efforts during COVID-19

BATON ROUGE – With COVID-19 restrictions limiting outreach efforts, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ) Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution group created a video demonstrating the EnviroScape model. The EnviroScape model effectively communicates the shared responsibility for the environment, specifically water quality, to people of all ages.

The three-dimensional EnviroScape nonpoint source model focuses on problems caused by nonpoint source pollution and how some of those problems can be mitigated. LDEQ's NPS group usually visits classrooms throughout the year for in-person demonstrations. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the postponement or cancellation of many outreach events.

In order to continue the agency's commitment to education and outreach, LDEQ Nonpoint Source Division created this resource that can be used anytime, anywhere to teach students about nonpoint source pollution. The video can be found at <https://youtu.be/2WHW3F5qG18>, and the worksheet, with the corresponding answer key, can be downloaded at <https://deq.louisiana.gov/page/nonpoint-source>.

"The Nonpoint Source division has always been committed to education and outreach. In the past, we have participated in events throughout the state, including Earth Days, STEM Days, classroom visits and so many more. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our regularly scheduled outreach events were postponed or canceled," said India Ambeau, Environmental Scientist in LDEQ's Nonpoint Source Division. "In an effort to keep up with these changes, we had to figure out how to continue to reach our young learners without being able to physically be there with them. So, we decided to do a short video explaining the model, similarly to the way it would be done in person. We also created a short test that can be used with the video so that educators can ensure that students have a better understanding of the concepts discussed."

Louisiana's Nonpoint Source Pollution Program is managed by the LDEQ and is a collaborative effort that includes many partners. NPS is a type of water pollution that is not generated from a discrete conveyance, such as a discharge pipe, but is generated during rainfall events. NPS pollution is the largest remaining type of water pollution to be addressed within Louisiana and across the nation in order to restore the designated uses to the impaired waterbodies. LDEQ's NPS Pollution group's goal is to educate the public about NPS pollution and best management practices (BMPs) that can be implemented to reduce and control this type of pollution.

"We know that there is nothing that can compare to physically being at outreach events and interacting with students, their families, and other educators, but it is our hope that this video will help us continue to reach audiences who need environmental education materials until it's safe for us to participate in-person again. If this video is effective, we may be able to produce similar educational videos on different environmental topics," Ambeau said.

Learn more about LDEQ's Nonpoint Source Pollution Program at <https://deq.louisiana.gov/page/nonpoint-source>.