



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

## **Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board**

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Area High School Classes Write “Student Friendly” Environmental Documents**

**Oak Ridge, Tenn. - June 27, 2002** - It's often said that the best way to learn something is to teach it to others. That's what two groups of area high school students have done by writing summaries of two reports on long-term environmental stewardship at the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Oak Ridge Reservation.

Students in Nita Ganguli's advanced placement sciences classes at Oak Ridge High School recently completed a summary of *The Oak Ridge Reservation Stakeholders Report on Stewardship, Volume I*. At Roane County High School, students in Kristin Baksa's advanced placement sciences class wrote a summary of the companion document, *The Oak Ridge Reservation Stakeholders Report on Stewardship, Volume II*.

The original reports were written by the Oak Ridge Stewardship Working Group in 1998 and 1999 to foster public understanding of the roles and responsibilities involved in maintaining an active stewardship program for the DOE Oak Ridge Reservation.

The Stewardship Working Group was sponsored by the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB)—a federally chartered citizens' advisory board to the DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program.

The SSAB asked the classes to write the summaries as a way of getting the word out to students about stewardship. Even though the original reports were written by citizens of the community, the documents were still above the heads of many young people. The summaries, which run 10 pages, were written with student vocabularies in mind.

Before the students could write the summaries they needed to understand stewardship themselves. As defined in the original reports, stewardship is acceptance of the responsibility and the implementation of activities necessary to maintain long-term protection of human health and the environment from hazards posed by residual radioactive and chemically hazardous materials.

Awareness of stewardship has increased throughout the nation in recent years. As the environmental cleanup at DOE's facilities has progressed, it has become apparent that removal of some contaminants will be too risky or costly to undertake. Some hazardous materials will remain in place for many years, and in the case of certain long-lived radioisotopes, virtually forever. Stewardship addresses how people and the environment will be protected from these hazards, by what organizations or entities, and for how long.

Once the students understood the concept, they were better able to summarize the documents in terms that made sense to their generation. The experience also made them more aware of civic issues in general. Roane County teacher Kristin Baksa said that by summarizing the document the students were forced to

think about stewardship and to be aware of what's going on in the community. "I think it created a desire in many of the students to become more involved. We had a couple of students who expressed an interest in participating on the SSAB Stewardship Committee next year."

Ganguli's Oak Ridge High School class had a similar "eye-opening" experience writing their document. "Working on the summary made the whole subject of environmental cleanup less abstract for the students," she remarked. "It also made them realize that it would be up to them one day to take responsibility for their community and for stewardship of the environment."

Members of the Oak Ridge High School writing team are Jenna Carignan, Jessie Foster, Lorien Gilbert, Jasmine Kline, Bonnie McBride, Kathleen Padgett, John Trujillo, Elise Watson, and Rebecca Xiques.

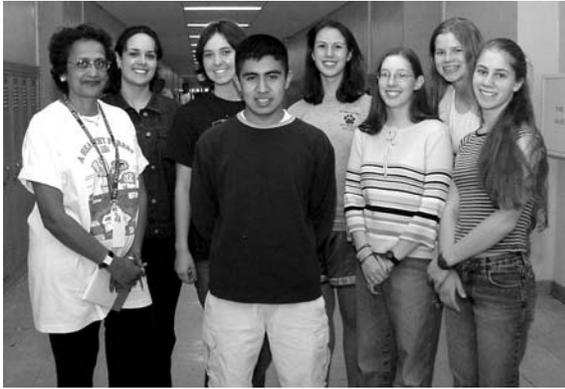
Members of the Roane County High School writing team are Chabli Balcom, Ryan Burton, Linda Choate, Brent Dooley, Jonathan Hagy, James Hall, Ben Herwehe, Elijah Hixson, Alan Knauth, Darren Langley, Lloyd McDonald, Katie Monroe, Jacob Platfoot, Erik Seaman, and Erica Stanley.

The SSAB has been working to increase ties with area students since 1999 when the board added its first student representative. Each year since then, the board has seated one student from Oak Ridge High School and another, selected on a rotating basis, from a high school in the surrounding area. Ryan Burton from Roane County High School was selected to serve as a student representative this past year.

The summaries will be distributed to area middle schools and high schools this fall as part of an educational resource kit to help teachers introduce the concept of environmental cleanup to their students. The summaries will also be available on the SSAB web site at <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab> or by calling the SSAB office at (865) 241-3665.

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*Oak Ridge writing team, left to right: Nita Ganguli, Jenna Carignan, Lorien Gilbert, John Trujillo, Elise Watson, Kathleen Padgett, Jasmine Kline, Rebecca Xiques. Not pictured: Jessie Foster, Bonnie McBride*



*Roane County writing team, left to right: Katie Monroe, Lloyd McDonald, Erik Seaman, Erica Stanley, James Hall, Kristin Baksa, Alan Knauth, Linda Choate, Jonathan Hagy, Ryan Burton, Chabli Balcom, Darren Langley, Brent Dooley, Ben Herwehe, Jacob Platfoot, Elijah Hixson.*