

## Oasis students design moon project

### Group named finalists in NASA competition

BY MAE YOUSIF-BASHI • mbashi@news-press.com • March 14, 2010

It's not likely six of Oasis Middle School's seventh-graders will be traveling to the moon anytime soon.

But their wastewater recycling design could.

The group, which calls itself Eclipse, is one of 20 national finalists in the NASA Waste Limitation Management and Recycling Design Challenge.

They have until April 9 to fine-tune their project, make a PowerPoint presentation and send it to NASA.

"(NASA) is looking for an environmentally friendly, low-cost way to recycle water on the moon," said Oasis science teacher Nancy Dunn. "We could actually see a version of this come to life."

NASA is preparing for a future moon base and will need some sort of recycling system for the water astronauts bring with them, Dunn said.

The winning team will be brought to Kennedy Space Center for an all-expense paid trip and meetings with NASA experts.

Eclipse sent its idea to NASA in the form of a sketch and photograph of their engineered project along with a written report. The group will make a few changes to its project before the presentation is reviewed over the phone by NASA on April 13 and 14.

Dunn assigned the project to students in her science research elective class. Eclipse worked on the project for about six weeks.

The team of girls collaborated and came up with a solution using three two-liter soda bottles. They cut the tops off and created one long tubular structure held up by wooden posts. The girls made a simulated wastewater by combining salt, baking soda, salt, vinegar, ammonia and baby shampoo.

The solution was poured through a filtration system including charcoal, sand, gravel, coffee filters and a paint filter. After its cycled through, the liquid sits in a bunch of crushed Moringa seeds. Moringa is a vegetable tree with a variety of potential uses.

And through the design process, Danielle Gabhardt, 13, remembered she learned about one of those uses through a trip to ECHO in North Fort Myers.

"Third-world countries use Moringa seeds and pour them into water in order to have a stable water supply," Gabhardt said.

Dunn noted that through the process, the seeds can take out 99 percent of the bacteria in water where there is no filtration system.

Even if they don't win the contest, the group members said they've been intrigued with the engineering process.

"We're proud of ourselves," said Brittany Skinner, 12. "This project isn't that easy to do."

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