



## Paradise Creek is Now One Step Closer!

### *Outstanding Volunteers Finalize a Great New Rain Garden*

Generous sponsors, unbelievable volunteers and a creative Elizabeth River Project (ERP) staff met the challenges (and there were many) to accomplish this latest piece of the Paradise Creek restoration plan...a promising new rain garden to purify runoff into the creek from a major highway.



Thirty volunteers gathered with ERP board members, staff and guests of staff on December 18 to put in the final layer--a planting of native trees, shrubs, grasses and herbaceous species. "These volunteers were so good at what they were doing that we finished 2 hours ahead of schedule!" said Lyle Jackson, project manager. Staff member

Robin Dunbar added an enjoyable, hands-on educational dimension to the project so that volunteers could understand the long-term impact their work would have.

The \$90,000 project at old Cradock High School involved excavation of 300 cubic yards of soil (26 loads), and replacement with layers of sand, gravel and other material that will filter runoff from busy George Washington Highway before it reaches the Paradise Creek tributary to the Elizabeth River.

The project is the latest in a series of efforts to restore the environmental quality of Paradise Creek by 2007, as a model for improving the Chesapeake Bay--one creek at a time.

Major sponsors of the rain garden were the **Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation**, the **City of Portsmouth** and the **Portsmouth School Board**, and four civic groups that agreed to maintain the site weekly for a year! They are **S.N.E.H.A.** (Student National Environmental Health Association) of ODU, **Cradock Helping Hands**, the **Cradock Civic League**, and the **Cradock Lions Club**. "This is the most maintenance work ever committed for one of our plantings," said appreciative ERP staff member, Amanda Ackiss.

Congratulations and kudos to all the sponsors, volunteers and ERP staff!

If you'd like to take part in these exciting and worthwhile projects, contact Lyle Jackson at (757-399-7487). Just think...each year, you'll be able to see your efforts grow. How cool is that!