

HIGHLIGHTS and INITIATIVES

**Energy, Environment and
Resources Center**

*Jack Barkenbus,
Executive Director*

**Center for Clean Products
and Clean Technologies**

Gary A. Davis, Director

Office of Communications

David Brill, Director

**Center for Geography and
Environmental Education**

Rosalyn McKeown-Ice, Director

**Oak Ridge Technology
Research and
Development Program**

Sheila Webster, Director

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Institute**

Donald Alvic, Director

Pro-Dialogue

*Mary R. English and
David L. Feldman, Directors*

**Water Resources
Research Center**

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Projects. Through the Saturn Land-use Project, EERC Research Scientist **Jack Ranney** and Research Associate **Karen Lorino** are devising ways to manage land surrounding Saturn Corp.'s buildings, roads, parking lots, and agricultural fields. In partnership with Saturn's advisory group and grounds maintenance contractor, the team has established ecological landscaping and widened stream-side buffers to provide better habitat for native wildlife. The project aims to reduce Saturn's grounds maintenance costs while improving aesthetics and environmental conditions.

Jack Ranney and Graduate Research Assistant **Laura Wilks** are coordinating a Waste Management Research and Education Institute (WMREI) project that examines the effects of development on streams and riparian habitat. The project has inventoried on- and off-site effects of development. In addition, researchers have recorded the type, condition, and adequacy of stormwater and sediment/erosion-control features at sites in Blount, Knox, Loudon, and Sevier counties. The study will identify opportunities to help developers make decisions that will improve small stream and riparian sustainability.

Meetings. In April, EERC's Center for Clean Products and Clean Technologies (CCPCT) hosted representatives from Saturn Corp., General Motors Corp. and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In a meeting designed to illustrate the power and value of CCPCT's Life-Cycle Design Toolkit, CCPCT Director **Gary Davis** presented an overview of the toolkit, Research Scientist **Mary Swanson** explained the impact assessment part of the toolkit, and Research Associate **Jonathan Overly** demonstrated how life-cycle assessment practitioners and designers would use the toolkit. Other CCPCT staff contributed to the dialogue as well. Typically, industry has addressed cost and performance concerns; CCPCT's toolkit, which analyzes and compares processes used throughout a product's life cycle, adds an environmental dimension to the equation.

Publications. Research Leader **Mary English** wrote a chapter in the recently released book *Better Environmental Decisions: Strategies for Governments, Businesses, and Communities* (Island Press, 1999), which is based on her work with the National Center for Environmental Decision-making Research. **English's** chapter, "Environmental Decision Making by Organizations: Choosing the Right Tools," provides an assessment of information gathering and analysis tools and emphasizes the importance of choosing such tools based on the nature of an issue and its social context. The book integrates findings from multiple perspectives and seeks to identify fundamental barriers to—and workable solutions for—environmental decisions.

Research Scientist **David Feldman**, Senior Research Assistant **Ruth Anne Hanahan** of EERC's Water Resources Research Center, and independent consultant Dev Joslin coauthored *How Policy Makers and the Public Use Risk Information in Environmental Decisions*, a report prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Center for Environmental Assessments and the Joint Institute for Energy and Environment. The report examines how the character of risk information and the roles and responsibilities of information-users may affect the use of such information. The authors uncover lessons that confirm some claims—and challenge others—made in the risk communication and risk management literature.