

## Young scientists presented research on climate change

Last week, I was honored to be audience to presentations by a group of local middle-school youth, students of the summer's Young Scientist Academy. The research presented by these young folks was on topics regarding urban sustainability, climate change, and public health.

My 12-year-old red-headed granddaughter Lucy was among the presenters, sharing her findings on urban flooding as part of the urban sustainability research. "Pops" was quite proud, given my interest in promoting innovative stormwater solutions as part of my Cooperative Extension program.

Jayla and Mikila presented data on the urban heat effect, concluding that less concrete and more greenspace is better. Some of the conclusions presented to potentially address the problems presented were quite clearly solutions that need to be managed with ordinances, relevant laws and government policy and practice.

It was fortuitous to have two city of Wilmington council members in the audience, extending an invite to the students to present their findings to city council. Our leaders do need to listen to our children; decisions made now will greatly impact their future.

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scientific research experiences.

Their mission centers on "empowering youth of all backgrounds to be ambassadors of science and technology." Science is a powerful tool for solving many issues in our community; we must provide Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) opportunities to kids that need it.

The program was titled the "Youth CAUSE Initiative," with the middle name an acronym for "Climate Action Urban Sustainability Emissaries."

Jellyfish polyps, weather balloons, wet-bulb thermometers, and thermal cameras were among the many tools of research employed by these young scientists. Led by Rob Condon, the motivation for starting the academy was to engage the next generation in real world

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**Lloyd Singleton**

Guest columnist

federal government requirements (bill Section 12.16(a) page 365; can be found at [www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2021/SB105](http://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2021/SB105)).

When I started my job as director of Cooperative Extension nearly three years ago, only 10 days before Hurricane Florence struck, it was as if nature conducted a "needs assessment" survey for me; enhanced tree canopy and improved stormwater management were obvious needs in our community. Several well-respected local organizations (Alliance for Cape Fear Trees, Cape Fear River Watch, and Island Wildlife - Cape Fear Region) are calling for

Young Scientist Academy is a unique organization, providing its programs free of charge without any financial or racial barriers (our programs support 75% Black and Latinx youth and 75% of the students are girls). If you want to know more or get involved, visit the website at [www.youngscientistacademy.org/](http://www.youngscientistacademy.org/). The organization relies on donations, sponsorships and grants to run its programs. And folks can also get involved in volunteering, fundraising and serving on the board.

These youth truly serve as emissaries; serving a special mission to raise awareness of problems and propose solutions, which brings me to share a concern about some political maneuvering at the state level. Hidden in a 670-page appropriations bill are numerous planning related provisions, including limitations on local government rules requiring tree protection (bill Section 5.14(a) on Page 39) and limitations on any local stormwater ordinances that prohibit local stormwater control requirements from exceeding state or

change to this bill to remove the local prohibitions. I suspect our young, local “Climate Action and Urban Sustainability Emissaries” would agree.

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