



Press Release

To: Media List

Date: March 25, 2019

From: Bethany Wilkinson, Director of Communications & Alumni Relations
Hilton Head Preparatory School
bwilkinson@hhprep.org, 843-715-8508

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

HILTON HEAD PREPARATORY SCHOOL ADVANCES TO THE REGIONAL NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC GEOCHALLENGE COMPETITION!

Last winter, Prep's sixth grade students worked in teams under the direction of Prep middle school science teacher Sarah Benedik to create a solution to help combat pollution in global waterways for the 2018-19 National Geographic GeoChallenge. All five projects were submitted in early January and in mid-February we were informed that three of our teams had progressed on to the regional competition in Jacksonville, FL being held on March 29, 2019!

The GeoChallenge is a project-based competition that empowers student teams in grades 5-8 to address a critical issue and change the planet, just like National Geographic Explorers. Student teams create and present real-world solutions to real-world problems. Students gain skills in research and storytelling, collaboration, videography, innovative design, and mapmaking. This year's competition challenged students across the country to learn about and take action on the urgent issue of single-use plastic pollution in our waterways. This year's theme connects to National Geographic's multiyear effort Planet or Plastic?--which is raising awareness about the global plastic trash crisis.

HILTON HEAD PREP'S THREE TEAMS WHO WILL BE COMPETING:

***The Plastic Police:** (team members) **Agnes Gross, Lila Ferne, Luke Eanes, and Tommy Fernandez**

- This team focused on "Trash Island" located in the Maldives Islands in the Indian Ocean. They have created a net solution to contain the trash that's being dumped on this island from neighboring resorts.

*** The Sea Savers** (team members) **AJ Franseen, Anders Askeland, Izzy Bauer, Elise Sullivan, and Shelby Kline**

- This team is looking to re-purpose used straws collected from area Hilton Head restaurants and create mats that can be used in people's homes. By doing this it will help prevent plastic straws from entering the waterways around Hilton Head.

*** 84.3 The River** (team members) **Colin Paris, John Platt, Bella Johnson and Kat Eberly**

- This team has focused their solution on the Ohio River. They have designed and created a prototype for a turbine that would be placed in various locations along the river underwater and would gather plastic pollution as it spins.

The three Hilton Head Prep teams will advance to the Florida regional GeoChallenge competition where they will be competing against other teams in the region. First-place teams from the 16 regional GeoChallenge competitions will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and support for the team members and their coaches to travel to the national competition in Washington, D.C., on May 19-22, 2019. The winning team of the national competition receives a \$25,000 team prize plus support and guidance from National Geographic staff to implement their GeoChallenge solution. Learn more at NatGeoEd.org/GeoChallenge.

In addition to the GeoChallenge, National Geographic Society offers classroom resources, student experiences, and professional development opportunities for educators.

We want to congratulate our students and also wish them luck as they travel next week to compete!

About the National Geographic Society

The National Geographic Society is a leading nonprofit that invests in bold people and transformative ideas in the fields of exploration, scientific research, storytelling and education. Through our grants and programs, we aspire to create a community of change, advancing key insights about our planet and probing some of the most pressing scientific questions of our time while ensuring that the next generation is armed with geographic knowledge and global understanding. Our goal is measurable impact: furthering exploration and educating people around the world to inspire solutions for the greater good. For more information, visit www.nationalgeographic.org.

###