



Environmental Education

The well-being of the Chesapeake Bay watershed will one day rest in the hands of its youngest residents. This program seeks to empower students in Maryland with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions to ensure the health of their local environment and communities. Funding supports PreK through 12th grade environmental literacy programs that use the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) model.

MWEEs are a blend of best practices in education. Students investigate a local environmental issue through a combination of classroom and outdoor learning which culminates in students taking action to address the issue in their school or community.

Prince George's County Public Schools

Wild Rice and the Changing Landscape of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed



Students reached: 9,395

Teachers receiving professional development: 80

Native plants installed: 10,240

Wetlands restored: 14,000 Sq. Ft.

Prince George's County Public Schools worked in collaboration with local environmental organizations to develop and integrate a MWEE into the 7th grade curriculum.

Through this MWEE students investigate habitat use on their schoolyard, take part in an ongoing restoration project of wild rice in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and develop a habitat restoration awareness campaign at their school or in the community.

PGCPS successfully established partnerships, trained teachers to use the outdoors for learning, and embedded an environmental literacy program into the middle school curriculum allowing every 7th grade student to learn about and take action to support local habitat restoration.



Funding

Award Amount: \$70,870

Match Amount: \$44,250

Total Impact: \$115,120

Essential Elements

- **Issue Definition** - Students investigate school and personal impact on the environment and analyze the relationship between human and earth's resources answering the questions: How can we help sustain the viability of the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland's watersheds? What action can we take on your school grounds to support native habitat? How do humans impact the Chesapeake Bay?
- **Outdoor Field Experience** - Students use their schoolyard to gather data related to habitat use and habitat degradation within their watershed. Students propagate wild rice in the classroom using grow stands and/or wet beds outside on their schoolyard.
- **Action Project** - Students develop habitat restoration awareness signage that is used off-site or on their school grounds. Others include: schoolyard restoration, nesting boxes, bird feeders, school awareness assembly and letters to local officials.
- **Synthesis and Conclusion** - Students share their gained knowledge about wild rice and the changing landscape throughout the program as well as reflect through journaling. Following the outdoor experience, students share the findings in a habitat report card with school administrators and the PTO or other community partner.

"Teachers throughout the district have shared stories of increased engagement from their students because of this unit. Exploring their schoolyard and learning about the benefits of wild rice on the ecosystem provides students with knowledge and skills that can be taken beyond the classroom. The expansion of this incredible program from 15 schools to a fully embedded MWEE at all 41 is a proud accomplishment for Prince George's County Public Schools." Rhonda Scott, Outreach Educator, PGCPSS



Project Partners



For more information visit: <https://cbtrust.org/grants/environmental-education/>