



# 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.

## ShoreRivers and Talbot County Public Schools

### Students for Streams: Sturgeon Discovery



Students reached: 450

Workshops: 6

Native plants installed: 100

Pounds of trash removed: 100

This project embedded a Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) program into the third grade curriculum at Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS). Students investigated how human actions on land impact aquatic habitat through the lens of the endangered, native Atlantic sturgeon. Students conducted background investigations to learn about the history of the sturgeon through classroom lessons, collected water quality and land-use data, and analyzed data to plan and take action in their communities. To ensure every third grader at TCPS would have the opportunity to participate this project also focused on building the capacity of the teachers to deliver the MWEE including in-depth training, a field experience to University of Maryland Horn Point, and ongoing support throughout the year.



## Funding

Award Amount: \$36,907

Match Amount: \$7,279

**Total Impact: \$44,186**

## Essential Elements

- **Issue Definition** – During the project, every third grader investigated the driving question: why are Atlantic sturgeon indicators of healthy rivers and the Chesapeake Bay; and how do human actions impact their habitat?
- **Outdoor Field Experience** – Each class had the opportunity to “adopt” and “track” a sturgeon as ShoreRivers integrated Maryland Department of Natural Resources sturgeon data into classroom lessons. Students also collected data through a schoolyard assessment to make the connection that human actions on land impact river health and the creatures in that ecosystem. Then every student visited the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences to observe and analyze data from sturgeon while meeting scientists, collecting water quality data, and exploring the campus.
- **Action Project** – The project culminated in students taking action inspired by their investigation and analysis. Examples include Easton Elementary students creating seed balls with individualized informational baggies that were shared during “Parent Night”; White Marsh Elementary students designed a Chesapeake Bay blacktop mural designed by students with assistance from a local artist; and Chapel, Tilghman, St. Michaels Elementary students planted natives in areas where they found increased runoff.
- **Synthesis and Conclusion** – Throughout the experience students reflected on their experience. In class they synthesized what they learned and made claims which inspired the action projects. Students also shared the conclusions to the entire student body at their schools through school announcements and posters.



## Project Partners



SHORE RIVERS



Talbot  
County  
Public  
Schools



MARYLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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