

Teacher's Conservation Corner

John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District

What is a MWEE? (and why you should care)

You may or may not have heard the term MWEE floating around over the past few years. What is a MWEE? It is a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience. In Virginia, students are required per the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement (CBA) to participate in a MWEE in Elementary School, Middle School, and in High School. A MWEE is an investigative or experimental project which engages students to think critically about the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

A MWEE includes four phases: a preparation phase, an outdoor action phase, an action project, and a reflection phase. The goal of the MWEE program as stated in the 2014 CBA is to "Enable every student in the region to graduate with the knowledge and skills to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watershed."

MWEEs should be related to a specific issue associated with the Chesapeake Bay. Students will focus their investigation on this

locally relevant issue. Topics should also be grade-level appropriate.

The John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District can help you plan and conduct your MWEE. A copy of "An Educator's Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience" is [available online](#). The District also has PowerPoint presentations which may be correlated to your MWEE topic. PowerPoints include: An Introduction to Watersheds, A Virtual Tour of Your School's Watershed, Biological Monitoring, Chemical Monitoring, and Visual Stream Assessment.

MWEEs can be done at any grade level; however, they fit well with the science SOLs for 4th Grade (4.1, 4.5, and 4.9), 6th Grade (6.1, 6.5, 6.7, and 6.9), and 9th Grade (ES.1, ES.6, ES.8, and ES.10). MWEEs are intended to be multidisciplinary and investigations can easily cross into civics, language arts, mathematics, and other disciplines.

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Conservation Discovery Day

On October 7, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) will be hosting a Conservation Discovery Day for middle, high, and college students. SCBI supports the Smithsonian's National Zoo's wildlife conservation programs on their property located in Front Royal, VA.

The event will be held from 9am-4pm and will feature a career panel with Smithsonian scientists, keepers, and veterinarians as well as hands-on activities and research demonstrations on conservation topics. This facility is normally not open to the public, so it is a unique opportunity to see potential career opportunities.

Tickets are \$30 per car, \$50 per small school bus/van, or \$100 for a school bus/chartered bus and will go on



The campus at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal.

sale in early September. The event will be held rain or shine. For more information, visit <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/cdd>.

New Program Guide Available

The John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District has published a new guide with information on all of the educational programs we offer. This includes water/soil programs for all grade levels including adult programs. Other opportunities for students such as scholarships, summer camps, and poster con-

tests are listed. This guide also includes professional development opportunities, online resources, and library references for teachers. The guide can be found on the John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District's [website](#). It can also be emailed to teachers upon request.

Project Learning Tree, WET Workshops Available

The John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District currently has two employees trained to perform educational workshops for three different curriculum: Project WET, Project Flying Wild, and Project Learning Tree (including grades K-8 and grades 9-12 modules: Focus on Forests, Forests of the World, and Southeastern Forests and Climate Change).

Project WET focuses on water and watersheds, Project Flying Wild is all about birds and their roles in the

environment, and Project Learning Tree's focus is on trees and all of their benefits to us and the environment.

We are considering holding a workshop sometime this winter, but if you are interested in having a certain workshop conducted, please contact Michael Trop at michael.trop@fauquiercounty.gov. Based on response, this will give us a better idea as to which workshops have the most interest.