Merry Lea
Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College

Wonderful Wetlands
6th - 8th

Program Description

Immerse students in a wetland ecosystem by putting on waders to dip for small animals, identifying these critters and hiking around the wetland. Throughout each activity and game, students recognize physical and biological components of each wetland type and the important functions of wetlands.

Program Objectives

Students will:

- Explore a marsh ecosystem and discover the plants and animals living there
- Sample for aquatic macroinvertebrates, learn to identify them and utilize this data as an indicator of water quality

Program Outline

Students rotate in groups through four different activity stations:

1. Wetland Dipping: Students use waders and nets to dip for aquatic macroinvertebrates in a wetland ecosystem.
2. Wetland Lab: Students use microscopes and field guides to identify aquatic macroinvertebrates. Then students explore how this data can be used to determine the water quality of the wetland at the time of the program.
3. Hike: Students hike around the wetland participating in various age-appropriate activities.
4. Game: Students play a tag game to understand how water quality impacts macroinvertebrate populations.

Vocabulary

- Wetland
- Macroinvertebrate
- Invasive Species
- Pollution Tolerance Index

Quick Facts

Season Fall: September - November
Spring: April - May
Summer: June

Grades 6th - 8th

Program Length 4 hours

Maximum # of Students 80 Students

Standards Correlation

LS2.B: Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems: Food webs are models that demonstrate how matter and energy is transferred between producers, consumers, and decomposers as the three groups interact within an ecosystem. Transfers of matter into and out of the physical environment occur at every level. Decomposers recycle nutrients from dead plant or animal matter back to the soil in terrestrial environments or to the water in aquatic environments. The atoms that make up the organisms in an ecosystem are cycled repeatedly between the living and nonliving parts of the ecosystem. (MS-LS2-3)

LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience: Ecosystems are dynamic in nature; their characteristics can vary over time. Disruptions to any physical or biological component of an ecosystem can lead to shifts in all its populations. (MS-LS2-4)

LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience: Biodiversity describes the variety of species found in Earth's terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems. The completeness or integrity of an ecosystem's biodiversity is often used as a measure of its health. (MS-LS2-5)

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