Merry Lea
Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College

Wonderful Wetlands

3rd - 5th

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	3rd - 5th
Program Length	4 hours
Maximum # of Students	80 Students

Standards Correlations

3.LS.2 Plan and conduct an investigation to determine the basic needs of plants to grow, develop, and reproduce.

4.LS.2 Use evidence to support the explanation that a change in the environment may re- sult in a plant or animal will survive and reproduce, move to a new location, or die.

4.LS.3 Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external struc- tures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction in different ecosystems.

5.LS.2 Observe and classify common Indiana organisms as producers, consumers, decomposers, or predator and prey based on their relationships and interactions with other organisms in their ecosystem.

See Standards Correlations for Wonderful Wetlands for more academic connections.

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