

C H E S A P E A K E B A Y

B-WET BAY WATERSHED EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAM

The NOAA B-WET Chesapeake Program provides hands-on watershed education to students and teachers to foster stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay. NOAA recognizes that environmentally literate citizens who have the skills and knowledge to make well informed environmental choices are key to sustaining the Nation's ocean and coastal environments. To meet this challenge, the B-WET Chesapeake Program was established in 2002.

Priorities

Using the environment to help advance student learning and problem solving abilities is at the core of the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE). These experiences have been shown to increase academic performance, enthusiasm for learning, and environmental stewardship. B-WET Chesapeake supports the Elementary and Secondary Environmental Literacy Strategy of the Chesapeake Bay Program—a partnership for watershed restoration—to ensure that every student in the region graduates with the knowledge and skills to make informed environmental decisions. To accomplish this, B-WET recognizes two main priorities:

Integrated MWEEs

These projects combine teacher professional development with multiple K-12 classroom-integrated outdoor experiences for the students of these trained teachers. This kind of in-depth professional development reinforces a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources and ensures that the concepts of watershed education are reinforced throughout the school year.

Capacity Building

These projects build the capacity of agencies and organizations to develop, deliver, and sustain comprehensive STEM or environmental education programs that advance the MWEE at the state or regional level. Capacity building may include establishing, developing, or implementing a state environmental literacy plan; training pre-service, in-service or non-formal educators; or developing curriculum, resource guides, or workshops where a demonstrated gap in content can be demonstrated. Capacity building requires networking among educational organizations and to the extent possible should aim to coordinate and link major education and natural resource agencies and organizations throughout a state or region.

Funding

Funding for B-WET Chesapeake ranges from \$1.5 million to \$3.5 million annually, and reaches an estimated 14,500 students and 3,300 teachers. Applicants may apply for up to \$200,000 per year for up to 3 successive years for a single project.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are K-through-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, community-based and nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, interstate agencies, and Indian tribal governments in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

To learn more about the B-WET Chesapeake Program contact Kevin Schabow, Kevin.Schabow@noaa.gov, or visit our website at:

<http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bwet>



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Regional Highlight: Building Capacity! A Systemic Approach to Schoolyard Habitat

*Submitted by: Dr. Stacey Adamiak, Frederick County Public Schools Maryland,
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Frederick County Public Schools has worked for more than 6 years to engage students, teachers, schools, and the community in maximizing school grounds for meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEE). A 2009-2012 grant allowed us to leverage our resources over the last 3 years. The Schoolyard Habitat (SYH) model included 4 key components: Teacher Professional Development, Student Stewardship, Authentic Partnerships, and Public Outreach and Education.

- Teacher Professional Development reached over 500 teachers at 23 schools. The program facilitated teacher leadership in sustainable SYH projects with students participating in preparation, action, and reflection. Capacity was built through multi-disciplinary SYH teams that completed a preparatory course for credit and continued to plan together in site-based professional learning communities.
- Student Stewardship focused on action-oriented learning. A Growing Learners Program was implemented at 10 school sites that invited cadres of students to explore leadership opportunities as watershed stewards. More than 8,000 students participated in the overall program.
- Authentic partnerships took several different routes. A key action that supported success was collaboration with school custodial teams to design and implement a SYH Maintenance Template. School teams were encouraged to facilitate the involvement of a variety of local stakeholders.
- Public outreach and education was expanded to include a website documenting projects and resources for schools (<http://sites.fcps.org/schoolyardhabitat/>). An annual Schoolyard Habitat Celebration event highlights projects as displayed by students and teachers from each school site. The event was also attended by community partners and supporting businesses.

NOAA B-WET grant funds have helped establish a strong commitment to watershed education for the communities in Frederick County Maryland. Thank You!

