

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

B-WET BAY WATERSHED EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAM



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. The NOAA B-WET Chesapeake Program supports hands-on environmental education to students and related professional development for teachers to foster stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

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 also supports the goal 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 goal and advance MWEEs on a broad scale, B-WET maintains a set of priorities that are implemented through grants to eligible organizations. These priorities include:

Systemic MWEE Implementation

Systemic MWEE programs strive to reach the entire student and teacher population in one or more grades in an entire school system or recognized sub-unit of a school system. This requires substantial involvement of the school system that can come in the form of mandating MWEEs, schoolyard habitats, or other relevant topics in the curriculum; providing funding for teacher substitutes, resource teachers, equipment, or buses; mandating MWEE professional development; and more. Under Systemic implementation, teacher professional development is combined with long term K-12 classroom-integrated MWEEs for the students of these trained teachers.

Capacity Building

These projects build the capacity of agencies and organizations to develop, deliver, and sustain comprehensive 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 often links education and natural resource agencies and other organizations in a state or region.

Funding

Funding for B-WET Chesapeake ranges from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million annually, and reaches an estimated 14,500 students and 2,000 teachers. Applicants may apply for up to \$150,000 per year for up to 3 successive years for a single project.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are K-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.

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: A Systemic Approach to Schoolyard Habitat

Submitted by: Dr. Stacey Adamiak, Frederick County Public Schools Maryland, February 16, 2012

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://education.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!

