



## A Note from Patrick



The fall season has indeed been a busy one full of classroom programs, festivals, and much more. My calendar has certainly filled in for the year. I will do my best to see what arrangements we can work out for this school year, but also plan to send out an "Early Bird" registration for the next school year in May if you would like to pre-plan. From there, we can adjust dates and times as needed as time draws closer.

As always, the activity kits for my classroom programs are available for loan for use with your students. I typically do a two-week loan and provide you with the lesson plans and materials to do the activity.

Warm wishes this holiday season to you and your families!  
-Patrick

## 2023 Educator of the Year- Lianne Genzman!



We are excited to present the 2023 Conservation Educator of the Year Award to Lianne Genzman, a 5th grade science teacher at Ottawa Hills Elementary School. Apart from inviting Lucas SWCD into her classroom on a regular basis for programming, Lianne and her students are annual participants in the TMACOG Student Watershed Watch (SWW) and Student Watershed Summit.

Through the SWW, she partners with The Nature Conservancy to remove invasive species and discusses ways to improve the overall health of our watershed with her students. When asked why she does what she does, Lianne said, "I love establishing partnerships with local groups to help my students see connections in the environment and their own backyard".

Prior to teaching, Lianne worked as a Restoration Technician for two separate Conservation Authorities in Canada and she is a founding member of the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy. Her background includes an undergraduate degree in environmental science, a post-graduate degree in restoration ecology and an additional masters degree in mathematics education.

Join us in congratulating the 2023 Lucas SWCD Educator of the Year, Lianne Genzman! Keep up the fantastic work!



## What's Inside:

Upcoming Events-Contests	2
Program of the Month	3
Grants of Interest	3
Resource Connection	4
Fun Fact of the Month	4
Activity of the Month	5

## LUCAS SWCD

Joey Warner  
District Manager

Patrick Troyer  
Education Specialist

Penny Bollin  
Urban Conservation Tech

Matthew Browne  
H2Ohio Tech

DJ Mears  
Agricultural Tech

Jessica Grisier  
Communications/Outreach

To Schedule an Education Program:

Patrick Troyer, Education Specialist  
Phone: 419-893-1966 Ext. 2#  
Email: [ptroyer@co.lucas.oh.us](mailto:ptroyer@co.lucas.oh.us)



## Upcoming Events / Contests

### Caring For Our Watersheds

Are you looking for a way to get your students involved in their community? This contest is for you! Caring For Our Watersheds is an education program that engages students in preserving and improving their local watersheds through student-led solutions.

This program is curriculum-based and an excellent way to bring project-based learning to the classroom. Plus, students and their schools can win cash-prizes! Check out the informational flyer below and feel free to reach out to Patrick Troyer (ptroyer@co.lucas.oh.us) with any questions!

Additional information is posted on the Lucas SWCD Website at [www.lucasswcd.org/caring4watershed](http://www.lucasswcd.org/caring4watershed)

**HOW IT WORKS**

Answer the question:  
**What can you do to improve your watershed?**

**Identify the Problem**

- Research your watershed and identify an environmental concern
- Work in a group of up to 4 students

**What's your Solution?**

- Come up with **one realistic solution**
- Explain your idea in approximately 1,000 word proposal (include visuals)
- Solutions are judged on innovation, impact potential, comprehensive scope, communication, budget, realistic solution, visuals, and connection to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Submit Online**  
Proposal Deadline:  
**January 26, 2024**

- Every student gets a gift
- Judges select 10 finalists

**Finalists Competition**

- Community mentor provided
- 5 minute presentation
- Chance to win **\$1,000** for yourself and \$1,000 for your school/club

**\$10,000 Implementation Funding**

All realistic entries are eligible  
If you want to take action,  
**we can help make it happen!**

Free watershed presentations, mentorship and funding is available.  
Proposal guidelines can be found at [CaringForOurWatersheds.com](http://CaringForOurWatersheds.com)

### 2024 Area 1 Envirothon

The Envirothon Competition is designed to stimulate and reinforce the student's interest in our environment and our natural resources while encouraging cooperative decision making, team building, and problem solving. This is a great opportunity for your students to apply the knowledge they have gained in the classroom in real world situations.

Cost for the contest is \$50 per team (5 person teams) and Lucas SWCD will pay for the first 10 teams that register! If you are interested, please contact Patrick Troyer at Lucas SWCD of your intent to participate.

For more information, visit the Area 1 Envirothon Website [www.area1envirothon.com](http://www.area1envirothon.com).

**Save the Date!**  
**April 24, 2024**

**Area 1 Envirothon**

Ohio State University  
Lima Campus  
Allen County, OH

The Envirothon is a competitive outdoor academic team event testing knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a current environmental issue.

Lucas SWCD will pay the \$50 registration for the first ten (10) teams from Lucas County!

Registrations due March 21, 2024

Open to students in grades 9-12

Contact us to learn more!

Patrick Troyer, Education Specialist  
Email: [ptroyer@co.lucas.oh.us](mailto:ptroyer@co.lucas.oh.us)  
Phone: 419-893-1966 Ext. 2#  
[www.area1envirothon.com](http://www.area1envirothon.com)

# Program Highlight of the Month: Wetland Enviroscope



Students will gain an understanding on the characteristics of wetlands as well as learn about and appreciate the vital functions wetlands serve to the environment for both humans and animals. To illustrate the services wetlands provide, students will take part in an activity called “Wetland Metaphors”. This program involves a demonstration of the Enviroscope Wetlands Model where students will learn about the services wetlands provide, the various types of wetlands that exist, and how we can restore a wetland.



By the end of this program, students will be able to describe major changes in Ohio’s environments over time and the organisms supported in each, such as wetlands, and learn about many of the wetlands near them!

Estimated Time: 40 Minutes



*Thank You to the Ohio EPA Environmental Education Fund for supporting the purchase of this education model!*

## Grant Corner: Highlighting Grants of Interests for Local Educators

### Ohio Soybean Council Foundation

The Ohio Soybean Council Foundation received a \$55,000 grant from Battelle earlier this year to make the connection between entrepreneurship and Ohio’s number one industry, agriculture. This is the second year of funding from Battelle for the program designed to introduce youth in afterschool programs to agriculture and entrepreneurship with engaging, project-based learning culminating in a pitch event. Benefits to youth include fun activities, career exploration, and strengthening inquiry and communication skills. Benefits of this program include connecting with community members and hosting a unique family engagement event all through the lens of agriculture. Afterschool programs serving upper elementary and middle school students are invited to participate and will receive:

- Curriculum featuring bees, goats, chickens, and other agriculture products
- Materials
- Training
- \$500 stipend

This opportunity is made possible by support from Battelle, the Ohio Afterschool Network, Education Projects, VentureLab, and the Ohio Soybean Council. If you have any questions, please contact Madi Layman, Communications Coordinator, Ohio Soybean Council Foundation, by phone at (614) 476-3100, or by email at [mLAYMAN@SOYOHIO.ORG](mailto:mLAYMAN@SOYOHIO.ORG).

### Ohio Environmental Education Fund

**Description:** OEEF supports innovative projects that increase public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues, and provide the skills to make informed decisions and take responsible actions.

**Grant Award:** Mini Grants (\$500-\$5,000) , General Grants (\$5,000 - \$50,000)

**Fund Preference for 2024:** Projects that encourage habitat restoration efforts, encourage exploration in environmental careers, innovative stormwater management methods, reducing nutrient loading to prevent harmful algal blooms, reducing emissions to improve air quality through conservation of energy and alternative fuels

Learn more by visiting the [Ohio EPA Website!](http://OHIO.EPA.WEBSITE!)



## Fun Fact of the Month



Did You Know?  
Fun Holiday Facts



- Alaska has twice as many Caribou as people. There are 600,000 people but over 1,000,000 caribou.
- Reindeer have a strong sense of smell, and it's that sense of smell that assist them in finding the plant material even under 2 feet of snow.
- Trees and plants such as evergreens that remained green all year long have held a special meaning to many in the winter for thousands of years. Evergreens were believed to have helped keep away unwanted spirits, witches, ghosts, and illness. It was also believed that the sun was a god and winter came due to the fact that the sun god became sick and weak.
- Evergreen boughs reminded ancient people that all green plants would in fact grow again and spring would come again.

Happy Holidays!

## Resource Connection of the Month

### Environmental Club Corner

By: Penny Bollin, Urban Conservation Technician

Wow, I can't believe it's been such a long time since I last contributed to the Environmental Club Corner. Workloads kept piling up and I lost focus. You know how it is! However, no more excuses, it is time to re-start this worthy endeavor!

Whether you are simply mulling over the possibility of starting an environmental club or you have administrators, parents, or even students to win over, let's take a look at the myriad of reasons for starting an environmental club while touching on hints for convincing others it's a good idea.

1. You love the environment and you want to share this with your students
2. You want to help students become more knowledgeable and aware of their natural world
3. A well run environmental club can help students improve leadership and critical thinking skills; promote student collaboration and a sense of belonging; and improve student self-esteem

Let's break this down a bit a look at each point one – by – one.

#### #1: Sharing your love of the environment:

There are numbers people and there are people who require the reinforcement of an emotional connection. And then there are people who fall in between. This is okay and good. Each of us are different. For example, my love for the environment came from camping, climbing trees, catching frogs, saving worms from puddles, and holding dandelions under chins to find out who loves butter. Yes, you guessed it, I am primarily driven by my feelings! Also, I truly believe that providing these emotional connections and experiences will help you reach many of your students at a visceral level. Just look at all the literature out there that shows how green spaces helps people be calm and think more clearly. And if they are already on board in this arena... great! If, however, you have to convince people who rely and facts and figures, make sure to pull some out of your hat... well researched ones of course.

#### #2: Increasing knowledge and awareness:

With the climate changing at such a precipitous pace, as well as with rapid losses of natural areas and wildlife, this point becomes even more critical. Fortunately, there are many students who either are already aware or who, once they become aware, want to take action to improve their environment. Fortunately for you and for them there are many local groups that you can turn to in order to help increase their level of knowledge while also providing opportunities to hone their critical thinking skills and foster collaboration. (See how I sneaked #3 into there?) For example, they can participate in the Student Watershed Watch through TMACOG (<https://tmacog.org/water/student-watershed-watch>) or help Partner's for Clean Streams in one of their stream clean-ups (<https://partnersforcleanstreams.org/>), just to name a couple of well-known local opportunities.

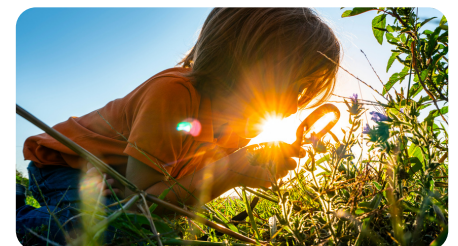
**#3: Improve leadership and critical thinking skills; promote student collaboration and a sense of belonging; and improve student self-esteem:** The first two have already been discussed. However, as a teacher, I am sure you are aware that, if the students are truly collaborating, if they successfully follow through projects, and if they make a difference, then generally their self-esteem will automatically be improved. Not only will they will know they made a difference but that they can continue to do so. It might take time, but it is worth it!

Also, even though it is not on the list... they will have fun!

For questions or comments feel free to reach out at [pbollin@co.lucas.oh.us](mailto:pbollin@co.lucas.oh.us).



*Penny Bollin is the Urban Conservation Technician with the Lucas Soil & Water Conservation District. She is happy to assist you with your environmental club, gardening questions, and much more!*



## Activity of the Month: Fun Winter Classroom Activities

*Outdoor activities for learning about animals adaptations to the snowy season*

by Gareth Thomson

**Grade levels:** 4-5

**Subject areas:** science, physical education

**Key concepts:** behavioral and physical adaptations to survive winter

**Skills:** nature interpretation, winter survival

**Location:** outdoors in a park or natural area

**Time:** 1-2 hours, depending on weather



Illustrations by Tom Goldsmith

### Migration Headache Game

Migration Headache is a lively game that illustrates the various threats to the survival of migrating birds as their habitats are destroyed or altered by human activities

1. In an open outdoor area, create a playing area resembling a tiny football field with two "end zones." Clearly delineate the goal lines by telling students that they are imaginary lines between two objects, such as branches or knapsacks, placed on the ground.
2. Tell students that they will play the role of migrating birds as they travel between their summer and winter habitats (the two end zones). Have them begin by standing in the summer habitat, and ask students to name the kind of bird they have chosen to play.
3. Tell students that in order to succeed they must avoid being caught by players who will represent bird-killing hazards.
4. Ask for a volunteer to be a catcher. Tell students that this catcher represents an early winter storm that kills late migrants.

5. Shout "Go!" and let the students "fly" from the summer to the winter habitat.
6. Gather the students who got caught during that round and tell them that, in the next round, they are to become hazards such as lighted high-rise buildings (which kill many night-migrating birds), a pollution spill in a pond, a human-caused or natural drought, etc.
7. Ask students to migrate from the winter to the summer habitat. You can either continue the game until all birds are tagged or you can replenish the ranks of the successful migrants by moving some birds from the hazards group to the bird group (this move represents reproduction).
8. Conclude by asking the students to suggest ways in which we can help migrating birds.

This activity was adapted from the Project WILD activity of the same name in *Project WILD Activity Guide* (Canadian Wildlife Federation, 1990).