



Conservation in the Classroom

A Newsletter for Lucas County Educators to learn the latest in Conservation Education

JANUARY-
FEBRUARY
2024



A Note from Patrick



Is it me or did 2024 come out of nowhere?! The weather may have suddenly gotten cold, but things are moving in the world of Environmental Education! There is a lot of good information in this newsletter that you do not want to miss.

First, April will be here before we know it and so will our tree seedlings! See below for more details on how to reserve FREE seedlings for your students! HS Teachers: Area 1 Envirothon is also coming up in April, see page 2 for details. Lastly, check out two amazing Professional Development opportunities coming up you can take part in!

Yours in education,
-Patrick

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2024 Lucas SWCD Tree Seedling Donation



In honor of Earth Day and Arbor Day later this spring, Lucas County students have the opportunity to receive a tree or shrub seedling, free of charge, compliments of Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District!

As part of this giveaway, students receive a seedling pre-packaged with instructions on how to care for it along with a fun program where they learn all about the needs of trees.



If you would rather do a class tree planted at the school, nearby park, etc. we can do that too! Supplies are limited.

To reserve your trees, please contact me via phone at (419) 280-6827 or email PTroyer@co.lucas.oh.us by **Friday, March 22nd at 5pm.**

LUCAS SWCD

Joey Warner
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To Schedule an Education Program:

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

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO STAY UP TO DATE! @LUCASSWCD

Upcoming Events / Contests

Professional Development Opportunities

Get GOING **Get OUT** **Go TEACH**

TEACHER WORKSHOP

Help your students get their hands on nature! Motivate, inspire, and create young scientists. Join us as we explore activities that can be used inside and outside the classroom.

2 Locations/Dates to choose from!

JUNE 26-27
Northwest State Community College
Archbold, OH

JULY 16-17
Defiance College
Defiance, OH

SAVE THE DATE

Registration forms and agendas will be available at your local Soil & Water Conservation Districts in March.



WETLANDS
CRITTERS & SOIL
USE WHAT YOU HAVE
HOW TO EXPLORE YOUR CAMPUS

HABITAT RESTORATION
SMALL OR LARGE SPACES
PROJECT LEARNING TREE
PROJECT WILD

CEU's or Grad Credit Available!

Vernal Poolooza

WETLAND SCIENCE CONFERENCE

March 7, 8 & 9 2024

Camp Oty'Okwa

24799 Purcell Rd

South Bloomingville, OH 43152

\$185 Full Conference 3-Day Registration
\$165 Ohio Wetlands Association 3-Day Member Registration
\$100 Full-time Student 3-Day Registration

\$100 Conference 1-Day Registration
\$90 Ohio Wetlands Association 1-Day Member Registration
\$55 Full-time Student 1-Day Registration
1-Day Tickets also included the Saturday Field Trip

To learn more about Vernal Poolooza, check out the Ohio Vernal Pool Network Website by [clicking here](#)

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. Once you let Patrick know of your intent to participate, a you will be provided a link to a Google Drive Folder with study resources to help your students prepare!

For more information, visit the Area 1 Envirothon Website 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
Phone: 419-893-1966 Ext. 2#
www.area1envirothon.com



Program Highlight of the Month: Invaders!



What would your reaction be if someone came to your house, took over, and didn't want to leave? This program will introduce invasive species (both plants and animals) looking at what they are, how they are transported between ecosystems, and the damage they can present to the native species that have been in that ecosystem all their lives. We will examine how introduction of invasive species can often be accidental, however, there are instances where it is intended such as the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) stocking a lake with fish to create better fishing opportunities.



In this activity, students will participate in a full-body movement "musical chairs-style" game where they will simulate competition for habitat and resources.

Academic Standard: 5.LS.1 Organisms perform a variety of roles in an ecosystem.

Academic Standard: 5.LS.2 All of the processes that take place within organisms require energy.



Academic Standard: Geography Strand-Human Systems #7: The variety of physical environments within the Western Hemisphere influences human activities. Likewise, human activities modify the physical environments.

Estimated Time: 35 Minutes

Grant Corner: *Highlighting Grants of Interests For Local Educators*

PLT Greenworks Grants

Description: Greenworks grants encourage the "outside of the box" thinking for students in addition to enhancing teamwork skills. Projects incorporate the motto of "learning by doing" and using STEM to introduce students to green careers.

Grant Award: \$200 to \$2,000

Fund Preference- Projects Must:

- incorporate service learning
- exemplify student voice
- involve at least one community partner
- secure at least 50% matched funds (in-kind acceptable)
- be completed in one year.

Learn more by visiting the [Project Learning Tree Website!](#)

Lowe's Outdoor Classroom Grant

General Info: Lowe's Outdoor Classroom Grant Program was created to provide outdoor, hands-on science education to students in grades K-12 and assist schools in enhancing their core curriculum in all subjects. This grant program was created to provide schools with additional resources to improve their science curriculums by engaging students in hands-on experiences outside of their classroom.

Eligible Applicants: All US K-12 Public Schools

For More Info/Apply: Visit the [Toolbox for Education Website](#)

Fun Fact of the Month



Did You Know?
Animals in the Winter



- Ladybugs hibernate in the winter! They hibernate in large clusters in any place they can find warmth such as a hollow log, pile of leaves, and sometimes in your house!
- Polar bears migrate so they are always close to sea ice.
- Squirrels do not hibernate during the winter months, however, they do sleep more in the winter compared to other parts of the year. They store up their food (nuts, berries, and seeds) prior to the arrival of winter and do not come out of their den to find food.
- The Artic Fox has a very good sense of smell and will locate dead animals during the winter and eat this but will migrate in hopes of finding food as well. Foxes adapt and migrate when they need to just like we do!



Also, each session should be well structured with a specific start, middle, and end. That doesn't mean no fun, flexibility, or down time, but schedules and goals should be stated at the start of each session and results summarized at the end with each member doing their own job in-between.

So, now you have a mission statement, assigned roles, and an organizational structure for each meeting. It is time to draw up (or pull it out of the closet) and post the list of activities you and your students want to accomplish and prioritize it. Once prioritized, develop a plan of attack and follow through.

At this point it might be time to point out your potential role. You probably have had a very noticeable presence in this club thus far. However, in order to foster independence and collaboration, you could start to encourage students to take more responsibility and to move forward with less and less guidance from you. Your role, ultimately, will be as a mentor and guide, helping them to dance among the daisies with as little input from you as possible :)

As an aside, there are a few additional points I would like to make. First, some group leaders find it beneficial to have more than one adult involved. Also, some of you out there may have a super successful club and may follow none or only some of the key points above. Of course, that is fine and wonderful and I, as well as many other group leaders I am sure, would love to hear how you successfully run your club; it is not a one-size-fits-all situation. And lastly, I am here as a resource and will do my best to answer (or find answers to) your questions.

Penny's Ponderings Organizing Your Environmental Club By: Penny Bollin, Urban Conservation Technician

ENTHUSIASM

How fun! You've decided to start an environmental club. Or... you've already started one with all the enthusiasm of a bull dancing through a field of daisies. In other words, you and your students are excited. You have all these amazing ideas: start a prairie; get a greenhouse; install raised bed gardens; bring in the art class students for creativity; get the whole school on-board for composting; add water bottle filling stations; test water quality; go on field trips; count biodiversity, and more; and yet, there is no progress and all the daisies are simply getting squished!



Penny Bollin is the Urban Conservation Technician with the Lucas Soil & Water Conservation District.

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pbollin@co.lucas.oh.us*

WHAT HAPPENED?

For example, did you draft a mission statement? This would be an over-arching statement of what you and your students think is the reason for your club. This mission statement will help guide you through your future activities. Can it change over time? I would think so. As you grow and learn you might realize that it is, for example, too limiting or too broad. You could vote to make a change and then work it out together.

Additionally, each person in the club should have specific responsibilities or roles. That's not saying they can't share but without a specific role, they might feel unneeded and as a result their attendance might drop and little will be accomplished. Also, similar to a board structure, you could set term limits. Example positions include, chair, vice chair, secretary, etc. Of course, there will be other functional roles depending on your current project as well. Someone might be assigned to make phone calls or to draft a letter to the principal or keep track of materials, to take attendance, etc.



Activities of the Month:

PreK-2 Self-Paced Changing Seasons Module

Why do animals hibernate? How does ice form? Answer these questions (and more!) using self-paced learning paths from PBS KIDS and explore ways to integrate media-rich lesson plans in your classroom. Empower your students to tap into their natural curiosity and understanding of the seasons with hands-on STEM activities.

Check out this awesome resource by [clicking here](#)



What Is A Habitat?

Age Level: Grades K-2



HEALTHY HABITATS:
CLIMATE CHANGE
ACTION FOR K-2

Background: Students are introduced to their local habitats and use their five senses in the process. Focusing on local habitats and the organisms in those habitats will allow students the opportunity to connect to their local environment and think about how climate change affects them.

Materials:

- Pencil for each student
- Nature journal or clipboard with paper
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Cotton string or yarn
- Hand lenses or pocket microscopes
- Ball of yarn
- Chart paper and markers

Explore (15 min)

1. Take students on a walking field trip to the habitat area you will be studying. Give students time to observe the area and talk with a buddy about what they see, hear, feel, and smell (no tasting). Give students time to write and draw their observations in their nature journals.

2. Then, bring students together to share their observations. Ask students questions like, "Did you observe different kinds of plants? Animals? What did they look like? How did you know which were plants and which were animals?" and "What did you notice that was living here? What was non-living?" If possible, add to the class T-chart things that they discovered were living and non-living in the habitat. Encourage students to identify human or built characteristics of their environment as well. How are they interacting with the natural environment? In first grade particularly, you may want to have students note where the sun is in the sky and the patterns in plant and animal features to support NGSS standards.

3. Take a deeper look at a small part of the habitat. Give each pair of students a loop of string. Stretch the loop out to form a square or circle on the ground. Give each student a hand lens and instruct them to take a closer look at the area defined by the string. Encourage them to look carefully under leaves and rocks that might be within the string circle (putting the leaves and rocks back where they found them). Check in with students to get a sense of what they're excited about and what they're thinking. Give students time to record their learning/ observations in their nature journal.

Want to see the complete activity?
Let Patrick know!
ptroyer@co.lucas.oh.us

