



Watershed School Programs

Walker Nature Center, Reston Association

Reston Nature Center served 925 students as part of this DCR grant sponsored project. Staff training, field trips, Young Naturalists Camps, stream workshops and special events were held that focused on watershed education.

The Environmental Education Supervisor at the Walker Nature Center, attended the National Association for Interpretation annual conference in November, gaining insight and training from fellow environmental educators from around the country. They also attended a facilitator training for DWR's Project Wild with the purpose of being able to offer training opportunities to local teachers and environmental educators. Both opportunities provided new techniques and insight into watershed education that were implemented in Reston.

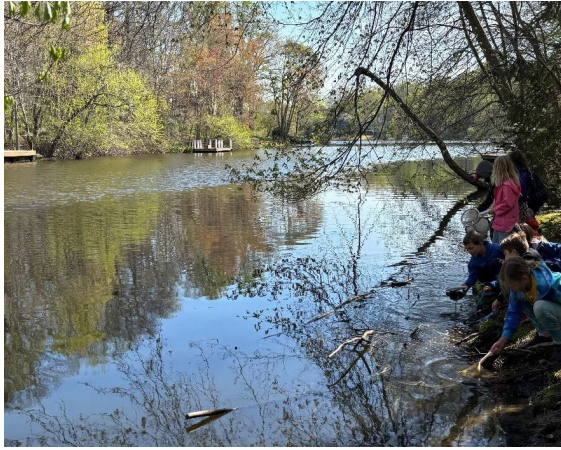
Reston Nature center staff led two weeks of Young Naturalists Camp for students ages 10-12. Campers collected water quality data from a local stream focusing on chemistry testing and macroinvertebrate sampling. Campers also interacted with a watershed model and explored both lake and pond habitats.

School groups from kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classes visited Reston to learn about habitats. Field trips included investigation and exploration of stream, lake, and pond habitats. Students learned responsible ways to use dip nets to scoop critters from the lake. They learned that invertebrates found in the lakes and streams help to determine the water quality and health of the ecosystem. During these trips students observed tadpoles, larval salamanders, dragonflies, damselflies and more. Habitat field trips were completed during both the fall and spring seasons. In addition to habitat field trips, students participated in Earth Cycle field trips. This program included a focus on the water cycle. Additional field trips were offered that focused on watershed field trip.

A STEAM Workshop was offered during a teacher workday focused on watersheds. Students walked in the stream to collect invertebrates and measured water quality through water chemistry testing. Students also used a watershed model during this program.

Watershed lessons were taught by Reston in elementary classrooms. In those lessons, students learned about the effects of various point and non-point source pollutants including pesticides, fertilizers, and road salt on our local streams, lakes, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Special events offered at Reston, Trout Fishing and a Spring festival, included watershed education this year.



In the future, Reston will be offering programming in the stream and at the lake for ages ranging from toddler-middle school and hosting a Young Naturalists camp for ages 10-12 with a watershed theme. New materials, nets, tables, water quality monitoring equipment, and watershed models will be utilized again for these programs.

Thank you DCR for supporting our mission at the Walker Nature Center to inspire and engage children in nature and watershed education. We will continue using our equipment along with new skills and knowledge gained through training well into the future.



Students dip netting at Lake Audubon on a field trip.



Students learning about pond life in a STEAM Workshop.



A camper exploring Snakeden Branch Stream during Young Naturalists Camp.



Campers scooping up critters and exploring Snakeden Branch Stream at Young Naturalists Camp.





Young Naturalist Campers are learning how to assess nitrate levels in the stream from nature center staff.



Young Naturalist Campers exploring Lake Audubon.