

Harford Glen Field Experience

Havre de Grace Elementary - Third Grade

The Environmental Center, with help from Bruce Russell, Fawn Palmer, and Logan Poore, hosted Havre de Grace Elementary Third Grade classes for their Harford Glen Field Experience. Over 80 kids and 25 teachers and chaperones came to the Environmental Center on Tuesday. We had two activities planned for them, both relating to the Upper Bay.

The first activity was an introduction to water quality testing. Bruce and Fawn took the kids around the facility and the Concord Point waterfront testing and comparing the water quality around the area. The kids were taught the basics of water quality testing, such as the meaning of turbidity, how nitrates and phosphates affect the health of the Bay. The students went to several different locations, and worked with Bruce and Fawn to test turbidity, nitrates, total dissolved solids, temperature, and pH. They then recorded this data, and as a group discussed the results. As a group, they discussed ways in which we can help improve water quality, and why some areas that were tested might have been better than others. The students also got to experience different engineered methods that can help improve water quality. They went and toured both the Riparian Buffer project, the Living Shoreline project, and the Concord Point storm water restoration project. These representations are typically projects that many can only read about, so we were excited to be able to show the students these projects in person.

The second activity was in the lab, using microscopes to examine Submerged Aquatic Vegetation, and critters found in our display tanks. First, the kids got a short lecture on SAV, how it affects water quality, and why it is so important to our local ecosystem. They then got to examine different SAVs under microscopes. They also got to take a closer look at some algae, grass shrimp, and snails. During their time in the lab, they were asked to record their observations, where they either drew or wrote about what they saw. After they had gotten to

see the different samples, the kids then got to go out and explore our wooded wetland area. They were given the task to find a sample of their own. Many discovered bugs, berries, and different plants, which they brought back in to the lab to take a closer look. The majority of the students had never used a microscope before, so we were thrilled to be offering them their first experience here at the Environmental Center. Their screams of excitement echoed through the lab.

The kids all enjoyed their time at the Environmental Center exploring, investigating, experimenting, and observing. We are hoping to develop these activities into a reoccurring curriculum that we can offer for other school groups.