

Oysters in the Chesapeake Bay

By Angela Asmussen

Students completed an interdisciplinary unit on oystering on the Chesapeake Bay. Throughout this unit they learned about the oysters and the current conditions that have impacted the oyster population. Lastly, they developed a plan that allows students to improve the conditions surrounding the oyster population. The students used their classroom knowledge and go to the Maritime Museum where they actually worked with the oysters by gathering data on the spats' growth and the water quality of the Miles River. While at the museum, the students took an ecology cruise and a guided tour of the museum to enhance what they had learned in the classroom. After the trip was over, the students created posters, fliers, PowerPoints, etc. to share with the community surrounding St. Michael's.

Best practices:

- The students gathered oyster spats, which they grew during the school year, and planted them on a protected oyster bar in the Miles River, in order to improve the oyster population.
- This was interdisciplinary unit, which met the curricular objectives in Math, Science, and Language Arts. By participating in this interdisciplinary unit, students were able to learn about the metric system and the oysters from scientific perspective, and read a novel that described what it was like to oyster during the late 1800s.
- Throughout the unit, students discussed the impact the oysters have on the community that surrounds them. Students discussed how they could create adverse reactions to the oyster population through their actions. They also explored how they could educate the public to advocate for the protection of the oyster population. The students ended the unit by completing a culminating oyster project that surveyed the community of their knowledge on oysters. They then discussed other ways in which they could personally help the oyster population.
- Students were responsible for nurturing and planting the oyster spats, as well as generating other ideas for protecting the oyster population.
- The project was started with the assistance of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.
- Several faculty members had to work together in order to plan this interdisciplinary unit.
- The students were able to identify the causes of the decrease in the oyster population. In order to promote saving the oyster population, the students created posters, fliers, PowerPoint presentations, etc. to share with the community that surrounds the school.

