

Create an Outdoor Classroom: Stream Restoration and Maintenance

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Subject Area: Science

Grade Level: 7

Our Service Learning activities include building an outdoor classroom and study area near the stream in front of our school, and performing stream cleanup, maintenance and restoration. The project has been funded each year by the *Chesapeake Bay Trust*. The students work in groups to brainstorm project options for the area each year. These projects could include: construction of an outdoor classroom; construction of animal habitats (bat and bird houses); construction of steps and retaining walls; sampling and study of fish, water, and plants; compass course construction; and trail construction and maintenance. The project meets MSPAP objectives, state goals, and our school and county goals for problem solving, and the application of critical thinking skills. The involvement of parents and the community is highly recommended.

Preparation: Students are introduced to the service-learning project through brainstorming and problemsolving activities. Needs assessment surveys, speakers, group discussions and research are all used as background. Students submit a written plan of action to the teacher.

Action: Students select a project and work towards the completion of that project as a group. The project time lines range from two days to two months, depending on the group commitment.

Reflection: Students share results and project successes with other students. The sharing is done through science fair/project exhibits, skits, videos, dialogue journals, scrapbooks and project walk-throughs. Celebration Students announce and share their success! This could be done as a field day, outdoor lunch, class party, news coverage and /or T-shirt and button making days.

