Conservation District Hold Environmental Field Day for Kids & Youth

The Snyder County Conservation District (SCCD) held an Environmental Field Day on Monday, August 12, 2013, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for youth ages 5 to 12 at its 10542 Route 522, Middleburg office. The SCCD's goal was to establish a culture of environmental conscience in the local youth in a fun and informal setting.

Kathy Weller, Snyder County 4-H Youth Development Coordinator, Penn State Cooperative Extension, (standing in center, left photo) helped organized participants into their respective groups.

Forty-three participants visited six stations on half hour intervals. Each station included at least one hands on activity or an item to take home. The six stations were as follows:

Wildlife Station: Participants got the chance to look at actual owl pellets, the indigestible material an owl regurgitates out of its mouth. Kim Smyre, Pheasants Forever/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist *(below left photo, upper left)*, and James Kauffman, Pheasant Forever Private Lands Biologist *(below right photo, left)*, helped the kids explore the pellets showing what owls typically eat and "spit" out.

Fish Station: Youth were able to see pan fish and other fish species inside an aquarium collected from the local area. Mike Bilger, Aquatics Analyst from EcoAnalysts, Inc. of Selinsgrove, PA *(in tan polo shirt in both photos below)* offered his knowledge during the presentation. Jason Winey, SCCD Watershed Specialist, helped Mr. Bilger collect the fish for the demonstration.

Tree Station: PA Bureau of Forestry staff used "tree cookies" to talk about the age of trees, and how to determine the age counting the rings. Each student made and decorated a tree cookie take home. John Portzline, Assistant District Forester *(standing in both photos below wearing goatee)*, and Joe Polaski, Forest Technician *(standing left in right photo below)*, helped lead the activities.

Soil Station: SCCD staff helped participants learn about what is in soil and its uses. Participants made an edible soil profile to eat and another soil profile tube consisting of different soil layers to take home. Rachel Naylor, Nutrient Management Technician *(left photo, standing in back)*, and Barry Spangler, Ag. Conservation Technician *(right photo, standing right)*, led the activities.

<u>Water Station:</u> Jeanette Blank, Penn State Cooperative Extension Intern *(standing and wearing light blue shirt in both photos)*, used the Enviroscape® to demonstrate how streams, lakes and rivers can be contaminated by human activities and explained ways in which water pollution can be prevented. Point and non-point source pollution were key concepts demonstrated at this station.

<u>Maggot Painting:</u> SCCD and other conservation districts have held this activity in the past. SCCD Administrative Assistant Renee Swineford *(standing in both photos wearing pink shirt)* talked about the value of organisms that break down waste in the environment such as the fly maggot. Kids dipped the maggots in paint, placed them on paper and watched them crawl. Shane Eia, NRCS Civil Engineering Technician *(standing in both photos wearing gray shirt)*, assisted Mrs. Swineford.

Each participant also received a back pack bag, a water bottle, a magnifying glass and six rub on temporary tattoos.

Inquiries about the event should go to Jason Winey, SCCD Watershed Specialist at 570-837-3000, extension 112 or Renee Swineford, SCCD Administrative Assistant, at 570-837-3000, extension 110. The SCCD has held other activities for children, youth, adults, farmers and community groups over the years. Check out our website (www.snyderconservation.org) for details.

Special thanks go out to our guest speakers and staff members from NRCS, PA Bureau of Forestry, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Pheasants Forever and EcoAnalysts, Inc. Without them, this event would not have been as successful.

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