

Conservation District & Others Teach Kindergarteners about Nature

The Snyder County Conservation District (SCCD) was invited to Middleburg Elementary School to coordinate and teach five kindergarten classes about several aspects of nature. The topics were as follows: soils, trees, song birds, birds of prey and aquatic life. Each student took home a tree, a magnifying glass, a “Sammy Soil” that grows grass “hair,” a bag of bones from an owl pellet, a bird call, a box to hold aquatic insects and other activity books inside a draw string backpack.

Jason Winey, SCCD Watershed Specialist, coordinated the event held on the morning of April 21, 2016. Several of his fellow colleagues and individuals from USDA-NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Susquehanna University, Penn State Extension and PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources’ (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry helped with the five activities. Approximately 100 kindergarteners participated that day.



Above: Craig Bingman (center), SCCD District Manager, points to an owl during a presentation about birds of prey while Shane Eia (right), NRCS Civil Engineering Technician, looks on before the students open up owl pellets. Owl pellets consist of regurgitated food items such as bones, fir and feathers that cannot be digested and are coughed back out.





Above: Kathy Weller (left), Snyder County 4-H Coordinator, points to a Baltimore Oriole during a presentation teaching kindergartners about song birds before she and Renee Swineford, SCCD Administrative Assistant (right), help them decorate their bird calls. Below: John Portzline (sitting in chair, right), DCNR Assistant District Forester, holds an evergreen seedling while explaining the value of trees to the environment and what products come from trees. Not shown in photo: Kyle Seyler, DCNR Forest Technician, helped out with the presentation.





Above Left: A kindergarten student holds a crayfish during a presentation given by Mike Bilger, Aquatic Ecology Research Scientist at Susquehanna University. *Above Right:* Barry Spangler, SCCD Agricultural Conservation Technician, reads a story about the adventures of a soil particle names Sammy to the students. At this station, they created their own “Sammy Soil” to take home and water. Not shown in the photo but co-taught the soils station was Tim Hornberger, SCCD Resource Conservation Technician.

SCCD has given presentations to young people in schools, at school sponsored events and at other events for many years. For more information regarding this event and other potential environmental educational opportunities for youngsters, call the Snyder County Conservation District at 570-837-3000 or email us at sccd@ptd.net.

Check what else we do by visiting our website at www.snyderconservation.org.

Note #1: These sessions coordinated by the Snyder County Conservation District were funded in part by an environmental educational grant through the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Note #2: A special thanks goes to those who helped out with this educational activity:

- Shane Eia, NRCS Civil Engineering Technician, Middleburg Field Office
- John Portzline, DCNR Bureau of Forestry Assistant Forester, Bald Eagle Forest, Laurelton
- Kyle Seyler, Forest Technician, Bald Eagle Forest, Laurelton
- Kathy Weller, 4-H Coordinator, Snyder County, Penn State Extension
- Mike Bilger, Aquatic Ecology Research Scientist, Susquehanna University

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