

## **Conservation District Teaches Mid-West 5th Graders about Environment at Camp Mt. Luther**

Members from the Snyder County Conservation District (SCCD) were invited to Camp Mount Luther (west of Mifflinburg, PA) to teach fifth graders at three out of seven Thursday stations held during Mid-West School District's annual Outdoor Education program. All presentations were held on October 5 and 19, 2023, to 145 fifth graders from Middleburg and West Snyder Elementary Schools.

At one station, students learned about the importance of bees and other pollinators as well as the usefulness of soil.

Most of the foods we eat would not be available at all or very limited and more expensive for consumers without pollinators. Renee Swineford, SCCD Administrative Assistant (*topmost photo*), and Courtney Raker, SCCD Conservation Technician/PA Envirothon Executive Director (*2<sup>nd</sup> from top left photo, standing, far left*), gave presentations identifying foods we eat that require pollinators.

Honeybees and other bees need a food source (flower nectar) and habitat (flowering plants and clean environment). To reinforce that, students (*2<sup>nd</sup> from top right photo*) made "seed balls" by mixing clay, potting soil, and wildflower seed mix. After the "seed balls" dry, they can be planted anywhere. The "seed balls" will break down and wildflowers will sprout, giving bees a suitable food source in the future.

At the same station, the fifth graders listened to a presentation on the importance of soils from Barry Spangler, SCCD Ag. Conservation Technician (*not shown*). Each student had the opportunity to make his/her own soil profile tube (*bottom right photo*) with the help from their camp counselors and SCCD staff. A soil profile tube (*bottom left photo*) is a miniature cross section of the soil profile. The soil profile starts from the organic matter and topsoil horizons (layers) to the bedrock at the very bottom.



At a second station, students were able to learn about aquatic (stream) life along a stream section running through Camp Mount Luther. Students were given nets to try to collect fish and other living things swimming in the stream. When a student collected something (*top & middle left photos*), a SCCD staff member [Jason Winey, District Manager (*middle left photo, center, back row*) and Lauren Cheran, Watershed Specialist (*not shown*)] explained what it was and its place in the aquatic world. All animals collected in the nets were returned safely back to the stream unharmed.



*Aquatic life found in or near stream: Center Middle Photos: Spotted Salamander; Right Middle Photo: Case Building Caddisfly Larva.)*

There was a third station in which students learned about Pennsylvania wildlife and their habits from Josh Glace (*bottom photo, standing far right holding pelt*) from Lason Design Group, Inc., of Selinsgrove, Tim Hornberger, SCCD Resource Conservation Technician, and Dan Brundage, SCCD Watershed Specialist, (*both not shown*). During the talk, students viewed and touched actual animal tracks, pelts and mounts while explaining each animal's preferred habitat and behaviour. (*Mounts, pelts, pre-cast tracks, and simulated feces were supplied by the SCCD.*)



*Note: The SCCD thanks Josh Glace of Larson Group Design for taking time from their busy schedules to help us with the wildlife station on October 5..*

For more information regarding this event and other environmental educational opportunities for youngsters, call the Snyder County Conservation District at 570-837-3000 or email us at [sccd@snydercd.org](mailto:sccd@snydercd.org).

Check what else we do by visiting our website at [www.snyderconservation.org](http://www.snyderconservation.org).

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