Conservation District Teaches Midd-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 Midd-West School District's annual Outdoor Education program. All presentations were held on October 8 and 22, 2026, to 148 fifth graders from Middleburg and West Snyder Elementary Schools.

Aquatics & Streams:



At one 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 *(photo above)*. When a student collected something, Jason Winey, SCCD District Manager, Sarah Lauver, SCCD Watershed Specialist, or Lauren Cheran, SCCD Program Administrator, 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.

Plants & Soils:
At a second 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 *(photo below left, standing)*, 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 made "seed balls" by mixing clay, potting soil, and wildflower seed mix. After the "seed balls" dry for roughly three weeks, 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. Each student had the opportunity to make his/her own soil profile tube with help from their camp counselors and SCCD staff *(above photo)*. A soil profile tube 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.

Wildlife Creatures:
There was a third station in which students learned about Pennsylvania wildlife and their habits from Tim Hornberger, SCCD Resource Conservation Technician or Courtney Raker, PA Envirothon Executive Director. During the talk, students viewed and touched actual animal tracks, pelts and mounts while explaining each animal's prefered habitat and behaviour. *(Mounts, pelts, pre-cast tracks, and simulated feces were supplied by the SCCD.)*



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.

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

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