Connecting Kids to Coastal Watersheds: Identification and Characterization of Gulf Habitats through Environmental Education

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Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

This project was designed to:

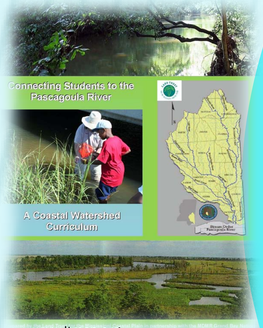
- expand upon an earlier UUP pilot program conducted in Moss Point, MS
- establish an unforgettable, meaningful connection between each 250 fourth grade student in the Moss Point, Mississippi public school district and several coastal habitats found within Mississippi's coastal watersheds in order to promote environmental stewardship; and
- experientially reinforce the science standards that the students were to be tested on in the following year.

Outcomes included:

- professional teacher development workshops on coastal watersheds
- a regional watershed *curriculum- Connecting Students to the Pascagoula River*
- excited and engaged students
- a closer relationship with the teachers and administrators of Moss Point East Park Lower Elementary School

Pilot the Curriculum

Regional Teacher Workshop



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Curriculum Development

Students Mentor Students

Watershed Festival Hosted by Students

Preliminary Teacher Workshop

Statistical comparison of pre- and post-tests for teacher and student activities.

Activity	Significance P Value	Score Percentage Increase
Teacher Workshop	P<0.03	24.60% or 25% (based on 5 pre and 5 post tests ranging between a 5 and 45% increase) *Avg Pre 54%* (based on 8 pre tests) *Avg Post 80%* (based on five post tests)
Beaches and Marshes	P<0.000	9.63% or10%
Grand Bay NERR Trip	P<0.000	27.69% or 28%
Pascagoula Trip	P<0.000	30.14% or 30%
Over All Project	P<0.000	19.32% or 19%

Pre- and post-tests were conducted during most phases of this project. Dr. Shelia Brown from the University of Southern Mississippi compared the pre and post test data for the project by using statistical T-Tests throughout the project. Results were significant in all instances for all the student and teacher activities. In all cases the P value was always less than 0.03 and usually was close to 0.000.

The student percentage increase in pre- and post-test scores grew higher as we progressed with the program.

Train the Trainers

www.bayoutown.com

Watershed Harmony Puppet Show

Three Field Experiences Beach, Bayou & River

Engage the Students Outside

No One Was Left Inside!

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This project was made possible by a NOAA B-WET grant issued to a partnership formed between the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' Grand Bay NERR, The University of Southern Mississippi, The Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, the Moss Point School District, and the Pascagoula Audubon Center. The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program offers competitive grants to promote locally relevant environmental education opportunities to students in grades K through 12, as well as related professional development for educators. All B-WET funded projects emphasize sustained, hands-on, experimental activities that are aligned with academic learning standards. The cornerstone of B-WET is the **Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE)** . A MWEE is and educational experience that is investigative or project oriented, is an integral part of the instructional program, is part of a sustained activity, considers the watershed as a system, and is enhanced by NOAA products, services, or personnel, where appropriate. To learn more about the Gulf of Mexico B-WET Program contact Amy Clark at Amy.Clark@noaa.gov (228-688-1520), or visit their website at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/grants/B-Wet.htm.

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