

FINAL REPORT
WISCONSIN'S LAKE PLANNING GRANT
Project No. SPL-218-10
Hunt Hill Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) Project
Phase II

Overview: The YES Grant project was is a four-way partnership, between three separate Washburn County volunteer non-profit organizations working with and through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, to provide in-depth water quality education on watersheds, water quality and water protection. It is focused primarily on Washburn County school districts' 3rd through 6th grade students by offering experiential fieldtrips.

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Goals:

1. Continue development of the YES Steering Committee to oversee the promotion and development and continuation of this project
2. Recruit/train educator staff in adequate numbers to meet student educator ratio goal of 10:1
3. Carry out an experiential school fieldtrip to Hunt Hill for each of the five school districts in Washburn County
4. Refine age/grade appropriate YES Phase II water/watershed curricula based on previous participation in YES Phase I fieldtrip (4th graders who had participated in YES Phase I as 3rd graders)
5. Procure or develop adequate watershed educational tools and supplies
6. Assure water/watershed curricula will meet state environmental educational standards
7. Offer outreach programs to the schools, if a fieldtrip was not possible
8. Collect student and teacher evaluations of their fieldtrip classes and activities
9. Carry out stewardship projects selected by the students themselves to be carried out at school, family homes, or in their community, to meet needs in their own area

10. Report student stewardship project results to their school, school board, community newspapers and organizations which helped support the fieldtrips (chambers of commerce, service clubs, PTA's, community education foundations, other?), their own area's lake associations, the three partner non-profits sponsoring YES Project, Wisconsin DNR Lake Planning Grant officials and WAL
11. Continue cultivating other community financial resources to support future YES Project activities
12. Reconnect youth with nature – particularly as related to water resources

Results - Summary:

The expectations of all school groups participating in the Youth Ecology Stewardship Project were fully met or exceeded as evidenced by the evaluations conducted with each school group. All three active partners to Phase II supported this project and decided to apply for a Lake Planning Grant for a third year - Phase III. However, local community financial support to continue the water quality fieldtrips through community education foundations or corporations was minimal. Efforts in four of the five communities will need to be stepped-up. We believe sharing the results of these stewardship projects will help to generate community financial support. Finally, the number of students on official YES Phase II fieldtrips declined, because of scheduled trips being cancelled due to schedule conflicts at the school; However, three additional schools used quality water curricula and equipment!

Results - Details:

1. The YES Steering Committee was formed with volunteer representatives from the three non-profit partners, school system representatives and Hunt Hill staff. The Steering Committee met less frequently (quarterly) than during the first year. The Birchwood School District in Washburn County did the best job in participating.
2. Hunt Hill staff, with input from several school district personnel, sought out curricula resources and developed specific programs to offer to school classes. Hunt Hill staff also purchased supplies, with advance approval of the Steering Committee and well within the project budget guidelines, to use with the school fieldtrip programs.
3. Six fieldtrips resulted 197 students in the YES Project, including all four public school systems in Washburn County (Spooner, Shell Lake, Northwoods – Minong area and Birchwood), one parochial school system (St. Francis De Sales, Spooner), and one charter school (Birchwood).
4. Water quality curricula were also used by three other school classes as part of their fieldtrips to Hunt Hill, but not as "official" YES fieldtrips.
5. Student and teacher evaluations were collected, analyzed and used by the Steering Committee to redirect program efforts for YES Project – Phase III (2011 – 2012).
6. Follow-up contacts with teachers and Steering Committee school representatives are being conducted to learn results of local community stewardship projects.
7. Steering Committee member Craig Walkey was successful in contacting several local community groups (Chamber of Commerce, Birchwood Ed. Foundation, Shell Lake Lions Club)), as well as Birchwood Best Mfg for financial support. The Spooner Education

Foundation authorized the Spooner Elementary Principal to use budgeted money to pay for bus transportation in Phase II.

8. The positive evaluation results were very supportive of the program and indicated an effective recognition by teachers and students of the significance of clean of water in their lives.

Project Deliverables:

1. Water quality curricula used for the fieldtrip programs (available through Hunt Hill)
2. Communications letters explaining the YES Project (available through Hunt Hill)
3. Communications sent to schools in advance of their fieldtrips (available through Hunt Hill)
4. Communications for following up the fieldtrips and reminders about the stewardship projects (available through Hunt Hill)
5. Non-profit partners' newsletter articles
6. Stewardship project guidelines or suggestions
7. Steering Committee sample agendas
8. Steering Committee fieldtrip tracking – school participation, # students, busing costs
9. Evaluation forms used
10. Evaluation results
11. Supplies and resources list
12. Budget

Program Resources:

1. Project WET
2. Project WILD
3. Acorn Naturalists
4. HACH Chemical
5. Wisconsin DNR Northern Region water quality personnel
6. Washburn County Soil and Land Conservation – Lisa Gabriel (AIS)
7. UW- Extension Service - John Haack (curricula, watershed facts on Washburn County)
8. UW – Extension Service – Beverly Stencil (evaluation guidelines and forms)
9. Pat Shifferd - retired Northland College professor (evaluation guidelines and forms)

Future plans for YES Phase III (2011 – 2012 school year):

1. Confirm which school classes from each district will be most suitable for participation in YES – Phase III, based on their experiences in YES – Phases I and II.
2. Hunt Hill to consult with teachers on Phase III fieldtrip program/curricula
3. Better accountability for stewardship projects and reporting on them after the fieldtrips.
4. Continued Steering Committee involvement in soliciting financial support from area communities – in Phase III we will also approach service clubs.
5. Hunt Hill staff to attend groundwater monitoring scale model training workshop through DNR and will use in Phase III

Recommendations:

- Local lake association(s) should take the lead in your watershed to get the best participation and develop support for fieldtrips.
- There must be consensus on the importance of focusing efforts on youth.
- There must be consensus on the importance of the concept of stewardship or service projects.
- Year-round newspaper articles on local watershed issues will help develop more support for school fieldtrips.
- If no nature center is located near you, ask lake association(s) for help identifying a good fieldtrip location.
- Support of and communications with your local Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources personnel are very important for the successful implementation of the project, as well as the application process for grants.
- Focus of the fieldtrip curricula would be expected to vary greatly – for instance organizations might also consider aquatic invasives education, or shoreline restoration, or fish stocking projects, or native species support, or underwater structure improvement, or rain gardens, or many other topics according to your prioritized needs.
- School districts need to be consulted about which schools and/or classes should be invited to participate – by involving district administrators and teachers in the planning discussions.
- Public communications about your projects will build support for further efforts.
- Development of the budget should be the shared responsibility of the Steering Committee – not one individual.
- If an environmental education organization or nature center is not accessible in your area, educational fieldtrip programming could be accomplished by using DNR personnel perhaps, or UW-Extension personnel, or school teachers following established curricula guidelines.
- Transportation dollars might be available through fieldtrip budgets within each school district, or from parent teacher organizations.

Accessibility of the Y.E.S. Project Final Report for the general public:

- The partner organizations each wrote newsletter articles to share the YES project with their members.
- The Friends of Hunt Hill posted information on their website at www.hunthill.org.
- The YES Project materials were shared with other Lake Associations in the summer of 2010 at the NW Wisconsin Lakes Conference in Drummond, WI.
- Electronic copies of report materials are available through the FOHHAS (Friends of the Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary, Inc.) by emailing requests to: director@hunthill.org.
- Finally, a copy of this report will be forwarded to WAL for their use.

Submitted by: Storme Nelson, FOHHAS Executive Director

2010 - 2011 SCHOOL YEAR Y.E.S. PROJECT Phase II - SCHOOL SIGN-UPS

(Through June 30, 2011)

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:	GRADE:	Est. # STUDENTS:	Actual #:	YOUTH COST (\$7.10 per student per day):	# ADULTS:	DATE :	ROUND TRIP DISTANCE to HH:	Est. * BUS COST:	Actual Bus Cost:	CONTACT PERSON and COMMENTS:
Spooner Elementary	3rd	31	31	\$220.10	est 3	9/24/10	1 bus 30 mi	\$130.00	\$0.00	Principal Chris Anderson, 715-635-2174
Spooner Elementary	3rd	54	54	\$383.40	est. 7	10/7/10	1 bus 30 mi	\$130.00	\$0.00	Principal Chris Anderson, 715-635-2174
St Francis DeSales, Spooner	3rd - 6th	20	20	\$142.00	est. 3	9/16/10	1 bus 30 mi	\$130.00	\$134.14	Principal Pat Dougherty, 715-635-2774
Birchwood Charter	all	20	22	\$156.20	est. 8	9/14/10	1 bus 30 mi	\$130.00	\$0.00	Linda George, School Program Director, 715-354-3471
Shell Lake	5th	40	40	\$284.00	est. 4	9/22/10	1 bus 26 mi	\$122.00	\$0.00	Teacher Val Haaok, 715-468-7815
Shell Lake	6th, 8th ?	40	0	\$0.00	est. 4	6/10/10	1 bus 26 mi	\$122.00	\$0.00	Keri Jensen; fall maybe
Northwoods, Minong	5th	30	30	\$213.00	est. 5	9/20/10	1 bus 70 mi	\$210.00	\$0.00	Principal Josh Tomesh, 715-466-2297
St Joseph's, Rice Lake	3rd - 6th			\$0.00		Spring 2011?		\$0.00	\$0.00	Mrs. McRaith
Northwoods, Minong	4th?			\$0.00		Spring 2011?	1 bus 70 mi	\$210.00	\$0.00	Principal Josh Tomesh, 715-466-2297
TOTALS:		235	197	\$1,398.70				\$1,184.00	\$134.14	\$2,582.70
										Totals expected to increase when bus bills received
		*Bus cost estimates based on : \$2 per mile per bus roundtrip; plus \$14 per hour for driver waiting time (average of 5 hours - 9:30am to 2:30pm) or \$70 per driver								