

ECO Education / Pontoon Classroom
September 2011

“5th Pontoon Classroom / ECO Field Trip”.

This program marked the beginning of our 3rd class year and included 32 students. We also realized we still had some improvements that needed to be made. From the spring we noted that we needed to include a canoeing lessons session as part of the in class programs to better prepare the students for the CH segment. We also wanted to improve the curriculums so the education committee met several more times during the year to finalize them. We also decided to create a complete curriculum guide of the program that could be accessed by the public. So plans were put in place to complete that by the spring of 2012. This 3rd season also brought on a new curriculum segment. We wanted to introduce a study on the food chain pyramid /energy web cycle. That best fit for the food chain segment would be in the spring so we moved the CH segment to the fall program. This 5th session also included the Water Quality and Aquatic Plant / AIS study. Jerry Kaiser led the CH segment and once again the students used canoeing to conduct their research. This was the first CH segment held on Middle Eau Claire. The in class session was used to again introduce students to the WDNR CH web site where they learned CH designations and printed a map of the south end of Middle Eau Claire Lake. Lee Wiesner and Fred Haueter led the Water Quality segment of the field trip. John Kudlas led the in class lab on water quality. This lab was enhanced by some really hands on interactive water chemistry lab work. John Kudlas, Jeremy Bates and Carrie Sanda led the AIS and Aquatic plant segments, both the field trip and in class lab. Jeremy was able to share actual samples of Eurasian Milfoil to support his AIS discussion. A side note was shared that a student from the first year’s class was responsible for the finding of the Eurasian Milfoil found on George Lake in Barnes!! We also included a 5th in class session for canoeing lessons. The students walked to the local pond in Drummond where Scott Pederson, John Kudlas and Jerry Kaiser provided training and an obstacle course for them to navigate. This helped considerable for the on water field trip experience. This was first class which completed a written evaluation survey. A final in class was held the week after the field trip which was very effective for the committee to review and implement changes to the program.

The education committee was determined and committed to completion of individual written curriculums for all seven sessions that were designed. These were written in conjunction with Wisconsin Education Standards for 7th and 8th grade to ensure that any school would be able to utilize and support them. John Kudlus, who was an educator and curriculum designer for Rochester Schools in his career, was instrumental in helping us get this accomplished. The Education committee met weekly through the winter and spring to get this completed. We also created in class curriculums that would support all seven segments of the field trip. Additional lesson learned over the previous session included

1. We needed to improve the students preparation for the field trips by conducting an in class segment for each segment of the field trip.
2. Planned segments to better support the time of season, (Aquatics plants in the fall, shoreline restoration in the spring etc.
3. Canoeing was introduced to support researching Critical Habitat and also to introduce some entertainment for the students
4. The in class sessions needed to include an evaluation segment following the field trip. This helped us better understand what the students liked, disliked and what they learned.

The 4th session was again held on Bony Lake at Carol Lebreck’s property. The 36 students were able to learn about Macro Invertebrates, Shoreline restoration, and Critical Habitat. Travis Tulowitzky and Ann

Brovold plus POA volunteers helped the students plant Native plants and grasses and tree seedlings. Each student was also given a tree to take home to plant. Jeremy Bates Bayfield Co. AIS Coordinator and John Kudlas lead the Macro session and Jerry Kaiser and Scott Peterson for 'Canoes on Wheels' lead the students through the Critical Habitat experience. The students were paired up and with at canoeing partner and were on the water for 90 minutes studying 4 area of CH on Bony Lake. For the in class session on CH the students used the school computer lab and were introduced to the DNR CH web site and printed off maps of Bony Lake with CH designations displayed. Equipment purchased with the grant funds was utilized to enhance the hands on experiences. Equipment used included; dip nets, aqua view scopes, pails, shovels underwater cameras, clipboards forceps, ice cube trays and magnification lenses. By the end of this 4th session we were getting pretty comfortable with the program but still realized we needed some improvements. The key learning was the students needed canoeing lessons! We took it for granted that most students from the north woods/lakes area would have canoeing experience... not so.