

The Mariners' Museum and Park Mariners' Lake Stewards Program

Mariners' Lake Stewards is a permanent offering for all local school districts and is built off of the past successes. Students and teachers learn ways to protect our fragile watershed and are empowered to become leaders of community solutions. A unique student-led action project caps off the experience that fosters a sense of stewardship. Supporting student academic achievement and their understanding of the Chesapeake Bay through hands-on experiences that demonstrate environmental stewardship as an individual responsibility. The learner-led and inquiry-based framework of an MWEE is intended to lead students to be informed on local environmental issues and contribute to solutions in the community.

Funding from DCR allowed us to serve 361 unique individuals, provide a total number of 820 engagements, and offer professional development to four teachers. This project accomplished the goal of getting local students outside and connected to their environment in a meaningful way with a broader goal of connecting students to our local waterways and encouraging a sense of belonging. Students and their teachers reported that they enjoyed the experiences.

In addition to field trips and classroom support, partners from CNU and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) serve as connections to higher education and research resources for the project team and participating teachers. The teachers and school system administrators are the biggest collaborators, due to their participation and enthusiasm for connecting to and sharing our resources with the students. We are incredibly grateful for the Department of Conservation and Recreation's partnership in the expansion of this program, and for helping to fund the sustainability of environmental education experiences at The Mariners' Museum and Park.

