



Wendy Smith, Education Coordinator at the Great Lakes Research and Education Center, shares in the discovery of a zebra mussel shell on the Lakeshore.

Stewart Students Visit Indiana Dunes

On May 1, the Aquatic Adventures Academy students from Graeme Stewart Elementary School learned just how powerful the forces of nature can be on our environment. Part of the original agenda for the day was to accompany Dr. Tom Simon, a researcher from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, to a wetland just behind the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education in Miller, IN. Due to the heavy rain in the area, the wetlands were completely flooded on the day of their visit.

Rangers Wendy Smith and Christine Gerlach did not let the wet conditions dampen their plans. They took students on a tour of the wetlands, provided a historical overview of the area, and conducted some of the preliminary activities from the Lake Michigan Alive program.

When asked about his favorite activity Cody said, "My favorite activity was going outside and learning about the plants and how the Indiana Dunes were created. I also learned about "prescribed fires" that the forest needs to burn down medium sized trees to keep the sunlight in to keep plants alive."

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Tichenor Students Go Backstage at Newport Aquarium

Every year many students take fieldtrips to their local aquariums; however, very few get the opportunity our Tichenor Aquatic Adventures Academy students experienced. The Newport Aquarium staff opened the back doors to give students an firsthand look at what goes on behind the scenes in terms of water quality monitoring and animal care, treatment and training.



The students engaged in the same types of water chemistry testing that they complete on their aquariums at school, but were able to see how the process takes place on a much larger scale. In addition, they were challenged to discover the differences among three samples of water that looked the same, but were chemically very different. The students also observed areas where aquatic life is quarantined due to illness as well as the areas where medications and treatments are administered.

A special thank you to Jeff Gibula and the wonderful staff and volunteers at the Newport Aquarium in Kentucky for this amazing experience.



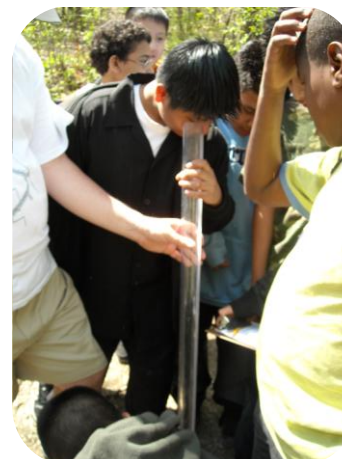
Stewart Students Become “Friends of the Chicago River”

The Aquatic Adventures Academy students from Graeme Stewart Elementary donned their waders and became real friends of the Chicago River on May 5.

Using nets provided by Friends of the Chicago River, the students actually collected macroinvertebrates for identification.



Mark Hauser, Education Coordinator for Friends of the Chicago River, also led the group in water chemistry testing. Mr. Hauser talked with the students about how fertilizer from a nearby golf course runs off into the river and impacts its chemistry, as well as the aquatic plants and animals. Waldemar shared the following, “If we were to throw any chemical inside the river the fish will die because chemicals are like acid that burns your skin. So we have to keep our lakes and rivers clean for the environment and the animals so they won’t become extinct.”



Tichenor Heads to St. Thomas More Field Station



Under the guidance of Dr. Chris Lorentz, and his wonderful staff and students, Tichenor students also took a closer look at macroinvertebrates in a laboratory setting. Hayley from Mrs. Noll's class shared the following, "We had about eight small containers with macroinvertebrates in them and we had to classify which one it was."

The students also engaged water chemistry testing and were asked to make comparisons to the chemical testing they have done on their aquariums.

Catherine from Mrs. Noll's class shared the following, "We tested the oxygen levels in the water, the electricity level in the water, which was pretty good at 350. It was better to have it low from a range of 0-1500. We tested to see how clean the sample of the Ohio River was. We also tested the temperature. Some of these tests are done to see if the river is actually clean, and to see if the fish are affected much by the electricity in the water and oxygen levels. What we do here at school is a little different, but still the same. We test the oxygen levels, and check the temperature, but I don't think that we check the electricity levels."



Dr. Tom Simon Travels to Stewart & Brennemann

On May 14, Dr. Simon, a scientist and researcher from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, made the nearly six hour drive from Bloomington, IN to Chicago to share his research on crawfish with Aquatic Adventures Academy Students in the Chicago Public Schools, Stewart and Brennemann.



There were many highlights to his visit including explaining and demonstrating how to use his research equipment, including a “fish shocker,” and sharing the research that his own son conducted when he was in 7th grade. Dr. Simon talked to the students about how to get involved in science related careers and where to locate volunteer opportunities. Perhaps the most exciting field experience he shared was when he and his team found the nest of “Crawzilla,” a giant crawfish. Thank you Dr. Simon!



Stewart & Brennemann Go Behind the Scenes at the Shedd



CPS Aquatic Adventures Academy students also got the unique experience of heading behind the scenes at the Shedd Aquarium. Students were welcomed into the quarantine area, medical treatment facility, water chemistry laboratory and necropsy room. According to Daanish, when an animal gets sick or dies, “They test the animal’s tissue to see what’s wrong. It’s important for the tanks so the other fish don’t get sick.”



Students also learned the medical history of two of the Shedd Aquarium’s famous inhabitants, Nickel and Bubba. Efani had the following to say about Bubba, “Bubba was an otter that was diagnosed with cancer. He was a hero because he made it through the cancer and that gave the children hope that they can get past their illness.”

Thank you to Amy Christiansen and the Shedd Aquarium for a wonderful experience!

Making a Difference

“Many starfish washed up on shore. A young boy started picking them up and throwing them back into the ocean. Someone saw what he was doing and told him that it was pointless, that there were too many to save, that it wouldn't make a difference. Throwing another starfish into the sea, the little boy responded, "It makes a difference to this one.”

Thank you to the Toyota USA Foundation. Your generous support has made an immeasurable difference in the lives of children.

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