

Notes from Evergreen



Middle and high school students have first-hand field experiences at the EHC.



Quarterly Update

- EHC hosts county-wide field trips for science students
- EHC begins Heritage Hoop House project
- EHC kicks-off Help Grow Our Kids campaign

EHC Hosts Field Trips for Science Students County-Wide

This fall, in partnership with **Allegany County Public Schools, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Frostburg State University (FSU), and Allegany College of Maryland (ACM)**, the Evergreen Heritage Center (EHC) Foundation is providing outdoor environmental education for 7th grade Life Science and high school Earth/Space Science students county-wide. Over 1200 students will participate this academic year. Life Science students are learning about our western watersheds and how they feed the Chesapeake Bay, what habitats and species are found in our watersheds, and how all these species interact (including humans) and impact one another. Students participate in water testing, discover critters in the EHC pond, and role-play migrating waterfowl to understand migration issues. Students also participate in follow-up activities in their schoolyards, completing a Schoolyard Report Card and preparing suggestions for improving aspects of their school campus.

The program for Earth/Space Science students focuses on how humans use the land and how land use has changed over time. Students explore land use at the EHC, analyze land use locations, and perform site investigations. To reinforce learning, upon returning to their schoolyards, students perform similar site investigations and analysis.

These two science programs are part of a five-year, county-wide environmental literacy plan coauthored by Allegany County Public Schools and the EHC Foundation. Allegany County was the only county in Maryland to receive multi-year funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to support environmental literacy and is now *servicing as a model for environmental literacy throughout the state*. This program not only benefits participating middle and high school students, but also college students who gain field experience while assisting EHC environmental education instructors.

The EHC Foundation and its partners are pleased to report that this program has significantly exceeded its objective of increasing student environmental literacy (as measured by pre/post-tests), achieving 50% or better improvement in test scores versus a target of 25%, and will be expanded to include additional grade levels over the next three years.

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EHC Begins Heritage Hoop House Project

In spring 2013, to support their plan to implement, educate, and propagate best practices in **sustainable agriculture and forestry**, the Evergreen Heritage Center (EHC) Foundation and its partners are building a “High Tunnel” or “Hoop House” style greenhouse that will lengthen the growing cycle for crops (from 4 to 8 months) and provide more favorable growing conditions (warmer and protected from wind and wildlife) than are typical for Western Maryland. The Heritage Hoop House will also showcase soil and water conservation best practices via a rainwater collection and drip-line irrigation system, and will demonstrate alternative energy solutions via the use of solar power to support the structure’s irrigation and ventilation systems. This Heritage Hoop House Project, **funded in part by USDA and the Rural Maryland Council**, will demonstrate the principles and benefits of sustainable agriculture and forestry such as:



Schematic of the Heritage Hoop House

- Using a protected growing environment to improve plant quality, increase survivorship, and create a longer growing season to potentially double crop production;
- Replacing invasive species with hoop house-nurtured native plants and trees;
- Improving soil quality by utilizing only organic soil additives such as compost;
- Increasing water conservation by utilizing filtered rain water for irrigation;
- Conserving energy by using solar power for hoop house ventilation;
- Cultivating plants that will provide an attractive habitat for pollinators.

The **benefits of this collaborative Project** also include:

- Providing a learning experience for participating students, adults, and adjudicated youth, who will gain valuable field experience, a marketable science credential, and “green” job skills;
- Creation of a replicable showcase of sustainable agriculture and forestry that will help preserve Maryland agriculture and educate EHC students and visitors for years to come;
- Alignment with the objectives of STEM (encouraging children/youth to become excited about science, technology, engineering, and math), “No Child Left Inside” (increasing learning in and about the environment), the Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature (providing at least one “meaningful outdoor environmental education experience” annually for every child), and the new Maryland Environmental Literacy Graduation Requirement;
- Support of agro-tourism which can attract visitors while preserving rural natural resources.

Evergreen is on Facebook!

The Evergreen Heritage Center has been on Facebook for nearly one year! We are hoping to hit 100 “Likes” by January 2013. If you are a Facebook user, please check out our page and click “like” to see occasional updates, news, and interesting links. You can also post on our wall! www.facebook.com/evergreenheritage



Help Grow Our Kids

What is it?

Help Grow Our Kids is a campaign by the Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation (EHC), a 501 (c) (3) public charity, to help raise money for educational supplies for our region’s young people (Head Start through high school) who are participating in EHC outdoor education programs.

Why is funding needed?

Our grants do not typically fund all the supplies needed for children to participate in our hands-on environmental education programs. Our programs are designed to engage students in fun, small group activities that boost desire to stay in school, reinforce key math and science concepts, and increase learning retention.

How can you help?

We ask you to give a little that could mean a lot to a child and help our young people grow into successful adults. For example, \$200 can purchase a set of pond investigation supplies, \$100 can purchase soil testing kits, and \$60 can purchase topographic maps used by high school students.



Student (left) is learning what creatures live in the pond at the Evergreen Heritage Center and how the quality of the water in the pond impacts the creatures that live there. Student (right) is testing soil to determine suitability for growing plants.



Yes, I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

My donation is ___ in memory of or ___ in honor of: _____

A check for \$ _____ payable to the Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation Inc. is enclosed.

Please mail this form and your check to:

Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation, Inc., 15603 Trimble Road NW, Mount Savage, MD 21545

For more information, call 301-687-0664 or email foundation@evergreenheritagecenter.org

EHC Wish List



All EHC education programs are funded by grants and donations. We have generated a “Wish List” of items that our staff could put to good use in furthering our educational mission. Please contact us if you are interested in making a donation of any of these items below:

- Binoculars
- Field guides
- Dissecting microscopes
- GPS units
- Digital cameras
- Taxidermy mounts in good condition
- Fur pelts in good condition
- Seed starting supplies (plug trays, seed starting soil)
- Shovels
- Mulch
- Bird nest boxes
- Late-model laptop or netbook
- Gift cards to Walmart, Staples, Amazon.com



EVERGREEN HERITAGE CENTER

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EVERGREEN HERITAGE CENTER FOUNDATION

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2013 SCHEDULE PREVIEW

Join us for special themed programs in 2013 including:

- **Summer Science Camp:** Week-long half-day programs where children ages 8 to 12 can learn where our food comes from plus how to plant, grow, maintain, and harvest a “kitchen” garden.
- **Weekend Events and Workshops:** Monthly programs for all ages beginning on Saturday May 18th from 1-4pm when we will focus on **gardening** to provide food for nourishment and for wildlife. The subject of our June event will be **wildlife** and will include activities such as building bird boxes and creating backyard wildlife habitat. Other events/workshops (dates to be announced) will provide fun activities for families to take outdoors and provide tips on how to help conserve environmental resources.
- **Heritage Tours:** Where visitors can step back in time, learn about the early settlement of western Allegany County and tour the historic Evergreen Mansion and Barn, both originally built in the late 1700s.