



Wild Pond Protectors

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At the beginning of the year the kindergarteners learned about their own community and how individuals depend on one another, and then their attention turned to the communities around them. Through an interdisciplinary, collaborative project that lasted five months, the students tackled these essential questions: How are plants and animals helpers in their communities? How can we help protect our local ponds? To build content knowledge, students studied the wildlife at several locations in the local watershed, built and observed their own pond models in science exploratory, and became an expert on one local pond animal with the help of students from Matt Leader's 11th grade biology class. In the end, each student created three distinct products:

- 1) A "Wild Pond Protectors" television episode using a combination of stop motion animation and live action video to teach viewers about how pond animals use special features for survival.
- 2) A conservation poster featuring their animal that will be displayed in the San Dieguito River Park.
- 3) A page for our collaborative children's book, *Protect Our Ponds!*

Teacher Reflections

We exhibited our project work with a Pond Discovery Center in the spring and intended to move on to a new project, but the students were more dedicated to their work than ever after exhibition. They really wanted to spread their message of conservation to an even bigger audience, and it was their idea to create a television show and posters, so we followed the interests of the students and continued the project for two more months. In addition to teacher collaboration, having community partners, an authentic audience, and meaningful work in the classroom can really inspire students, even kindergarteners, to make a real difference!

Student Reflections

"Don't kill bees because they pollinate the flowers" —Bryan Ramirez

"I felt good about exhibition because we got to celebrate ponds."

—Desmond McDonald

To learn more visit: <http://sglennlee.weebly.com>