

Teacher Supported MWEE



**UPDATING AND EXPANDING AN
EDUCATIONAL BEST PRACTICE**

MWEE History



Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup

STEWARDSHIP AND MEANINGFUL WATERSHED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

The “Stewardship and Community Engagement” Commitment of the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement clearly focuses on connecting individuals and groups to the Bay through their shared sense of responsibility and action. The goal of this Commitment, included below, not only defines the role of the jurisdictions to *promote* and *assist*, but formally engages schools as integral partners to *undertake initiatives* in helping to meet the Agreement. This goal commits to:

Promote individual stewardship and assist individuals, community-based organizations, businesses, local governments and schools to undertake initiatives to achieve the goals and commitments of this agreement.

Similarly, two objectives developed as part of this goal describe more specific outcomes to be achieved by the jurisdictions in promoting stewardship and assisting schools. These are:

Beginning with the class of 2005, provide a meaningful Bay or stream outdoor experience for every school student in the watershed before graduation from high school.

Provide students and teachers alike with opportunities to directly participate in local restoration and protection projects, and to support stewardship efforts in schools and on school property.

There is overwhelming consensus that knowledge and commitment build from first-hand experience, especially in the context of one’s neighborhood and community. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community will further connect students with the watershed and help reinforce an ethic of responsible

Defining a Meaningful Bay or Stream Outdoor Experience

A *meaningful* Bay or stream outdoor experience should be defined by the following.

Experiences are investigative or project-oriented. Experiences include activities where

- Drafted in 1998
- Formally adopted as a “keystone commitment of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement
- States re-endorsed MWEE in 2005
- Formally tracked in PA, MD, VA, and DC from 2005-09
- Teachers involvement implied, but no guidelines included

Best Practices Research Symposium



- August 27-28, 2012 Annapolis
- Explored the MWEE definition to reflect its role and importance in broader more systemic environmental education programs
- Also looked at best practices for educators and green school programs

OUTCOMES:

- Concluded elements of original MWEE were sound
- Draft set of best practices for teachers

Draft MWEE Outcome in new Bay Agreement



- Enable students in the region to graduate with the knowledge to use scientific evidence and citizenship skills to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watershed
 - OUTCOME: Increase the number of students participating in teacher supported meaningful watershed educational experiences in elementary, middle, and high school



TEACHER-SUPPORTED MEANINGFUL WATERSHED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

The Chesapeake Bay Program recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. A student's school years are a unique opportunity in which to deliver the set of skills necessary to think critically about multifaceted and evolving environmental challenges. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Environmentally literate individuals can become effective future workers, problem solvers, and thoughtful community leaders and participants.

In recognition of this, since the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement was signed on June 28, 2000, the federal government along with the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and the District of Columbia have been committed to delivering meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEEs) for each of the more than three million students in the watershed before graduation from high school. This Commitment not only defined the role of the jurisdictions in promoting and assisting the implementation of outdoor education, but formally engaged school divisions and schools as integral partners in the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In 2012, *The Mid Atlantic Elementary and Secondary Environmental Literacy Strategy* broadened this commitment by calling on federal, state, and nongovernmental partners to advance shared priorities for students, educators, and schools along with the systems that support them, including local education agencies. Together, these partners have the vision, expertise, and resources to create and support schools that foster citizen stewardship and graduate environmentally literate students.

What's New:



- Combines student and teacher elements
- Includes best practices for teacher professional development
- Separates elements into “essential” and “recommended”

Essential Student Elements



- Teacher Supported
- Investigative or project-oriented
- Include an authentic, local context for the investigations
- Integral part of the instructional program
- Part of a sustained activity
 - Background research
 - Field Experiences
 - Synthesis and conclusion

Recommended Student Elements



- **Inclusion of environmental professionals and resources**
- **Emphasis on learner-centered, collaborative instruction**

Essential Elements for Teacher Training



- Meets Jurisdictional Guidelines for Effective Teacher Professional Development
- Increases Knowledge and Awareness of Environmental Issues
- Includes Environmental Education Pedagogy
- Includes Ongoing Teacher Support

Recommended Elements for Teacher Training



- **Includes Adequate Instructional Time**
- **Increases Environmental Literacy of Teacher**

Next Steps



- **Workgroup review: due in January**
- **Finalized version goes to MGMT board in spring (prior to new Bay Agreement)**