



Become a part of Great Swamp Watershed Associations first ever BioBlitz by using the great outdoor lessons to conduct your own school Biodiversity survey!

Dear Educator,

We are excited to present information about activities we have put together to get your students excited about hands on science discovery, get them outside and learning – and we have taken the pain out of the process as the activities and preparation are all done for you!

Great Swamp Watershed Association School BioBlitz is patterned after the GSWA BioBlitz taking place on May 18-19, 2007 at Loantaka Brook Reservation, Morris Twmsp. The School BioBlitz is an excellent means of exciting children about science and their environment. Students will have the opportunity to work just as real scientists do to gather information. Teachers will be able to choose a habitat that will accommodate their needs. Possible School BioBlitz sites are a playground, woods or field adjacent to school, a park within walking distance from school or Loantaka Brook Reservation itself. No natural history knowledge is required on the educator's part for the students to learn and have fun exploring their site.

Students will use guides, tallies and other materials fashioned after those used by professional scientists to identify and record wildlife species they observe. Teachers and students will then be able to report their findings on the GSWA website to supplement information collected by scientists on May 18th. You can visit our website at www.greatswamp.org/bioBlitz for a complete schedule of events that will take place on May 18-19th.

What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is an inventory of all living organisms observed in a given area, usually over a 24 hour period. The goal is to count as many species as possible in a specific habitat. This species count serves as an indicator of the ecological health of that habitat and gives scientists a baseline for future studies of biodiversity. School BioBlitzes are organized over a shorter period of time to replicate the work of the scientists. The results of the school BioBlitz while not fully reflecting the diversity of species in that area

because some of the inhabitants may be nocturnal or crepuscular, gives a snapshot of what is present in the habitat.

These activities have been put together with the busy educator in mind. There is background material, pre and post activity follow up lessons, vocabulary and species definitions, and a check list of materials. Schools who return their finished bioblitz surveys returned to the Great Swamp Watershed Association will see their results posted on our website, just as the real BioBlitz results will be posted.

GSWA is passionate about protecting land and water within Great Swamp. We achieve these goals in part by education of the inhabitants of the area who live, learn and play within Great Swamp. Learning what lives on your doorstep is a step in caring for the bigger habitat. We hope that you will consider having your class undertake a School BioBlitz, and let us know how you get on.

Best of Luck!

Hazel England
Director of Outreach and Education