

Children Learn About Conservation With Trip to Brown's Brook

By Eric Fish

Grades kindergarten through third of Mackinac Island Public School continued their learning session on conservation Tuesday, May 29, with a trip to Brown's Brook on Lake Shore Drive between Griffin Cove and Heriot Point.

Prior to the field trip, the students spent the morning learning about the importance of wetlands, the environment, and animal habitats through games, activities, and videos. The trip came four days after the stu-

dents toured the British Landing Nature Center.

Once at Brown's Brook, students watched Water Plant Manager Allen Burt test samples from both the Brook and Lake Huron before concluding the afternoon with a hike to the spring-fed brook's elevated starting point.

Students learned about the harm that humans can cause to natural habitats and the overall importance of nature.

"It's animals' home," noted first-grader Sadie Johnson.

Water Testing

Gathering samples from Brown's Brook and Lake Huron, Mr. Burt showed students how he tests for chlorine, alkalinity, and minerals.

The water plant tests for fluoride each day, for chlorine and turbidity every two hours, and for alkalinity every month. In addition, pH tests are performed to determine whether a sample is acidic or basic, and water samples from all over Mackinac Island are collected on a monthly basis for testing.

"Just because water looks clean doesn't mean it is clean," he told the students.

Mr. Burt also warned students about the danger of the E-coli bacteria and the harm it can cause if consumed.

"So far, we have never found it in the drinking water here on the Island," he said. "But we do find it in the water we take from the lake."

Drawing conclusions from the experimental tests, the students learned there are more minerals in stream water than lake water and that there are more minerals in the lake water than there are in the drinking water.

"I think they were pretty nice," kindergarten student Nicholas Pokora said about the testing. He also added that he might want to test water professionally someday.

Mr. Burt said that educating children about nature and water substances is essential to their understanding of the world.

"These are the future [Public



Grace Roguska, a first grade student, observes the natural vegetation around Brown's Brook May 29. The students hiked to the top of the stream and learned about the importance of wetlands and the environment.



Kindergarten student Aaron Riggs (left) and second-grader Talon Greenlee test stream and lake water Tuesday, May 29, at Brown's Brook. Water Plant Manager Allen Burt explained the hazards of bacteria and the importance of clean water to students.

Works] board members," he said. "These are future city council members. The more they understand now, the better informed they'll be later when they need to make decisions about the city infrastructure."

March in the Woods

To conclude a day of learning about the preservation of nature, the students went on a hike through the Brown's Brook State Roadside Park to the point where the stream begins.

Led by kindergarten and first grade teacher Vicki Urman and second and third grade teacher Laura Eiseler, the students

learned how the forest is home to animals, ranging from squirrels and rabbits to snakes and frogs.

Students observed a beaver dam along the way and were careful to step around what could be home to animals.

"I like nature, but I don't like hiking," kindergarten student Alexandra Pokora said. "I just like nature."

Students also learned about the importance of wetlands to the environment.

"It gives us water," first-grader Cheyla Shunk said.

Added third-grader Katie Lassiter, "To stop flooding."

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