

MILL CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Mill Creek Restoration Project's Environmental Education Program is designed for schools within the Mill Creek watershed. Each school year there are six different activities planned for each participating school. A typical program will include the following:

- 1 classroom presentation in the fall and in the spring if needed
- 1 water quality monitoring field trip in the fall
- 1 - 2 water quality monitoring field trips in the spring
- 1 community service event (tree planting/streambank cleanup) fall or spring
- 1 year-end event in May

Even though these activities take quite a bit of planning and organization on the teacher's part, we provide you with as much support as you need so that your students can participate in as many of the activities as possible. We are flexible to each school's needs and time constraints for activities so that they fit into your curriculum.

Each school takes two (or more) water monitoring field trips to different sites (of the 16 designated water monitoring sites) within the Mill Creek watershed. Some teachers take a different class on each field trip and other teachers take the same class on all field trips. It is up to you how many students you want to work with. You do need to limit the number of students to 30 for each water monitoring field trip. If you take more than one class out on the water monitoring field trips we make accommodations for all students to attend the tree planting/community service event and the year-end event. Our goal is to expose the students to different areas of the watershed (inner-city and suburban) and to have the students work together and meet the other students in the program at the community service and year-end events. The students are our largest source of volunteers for collecting water quality data, streambank cleanups, and tree plantings. We normally provide lunch during the year-end event and everyone gets a Mill Creek Restoration Project T-shirt to show they have been "Part of the Solution."

At the beginning of the school year parents will be given information about the program along with permission slips to be signed. We stress the importance of our health and safety protocol and the educational value to the students. The water monitoring field trips take approximately 2-3 hours on site. Most teachers have the students pack their lunches so they do not have to rush back to school and can complete all of the tests. Once you return to school, if it is needed, the remainder of the day is spent on lab work, cleaning up the test kits and organizing the equipment for the next field trip. Some of the volunteers that work with our program can sometimes go back to the schools to help with the labwork if they are needed. Before the first field trip we will give a presentation in your classroom. This presentation covers the history of the Mill Creek, basics on what is a watershed, and health & safety protocol for all monitoring activities. We normally show slides of the different activities the students will be participating in to prepare them for the field trips. The teachers are responsible for training the students in the water monitoring tests before the field trips.

All teachers and volunteers are trained in the water quality monitoring tests and health and safety protocol before the program begins (usually in August or September). Our program pays for all of the monitoring equipment and supplies for the field trips. We can also pay for the buses for each field trip, or for a substitute teacher if needed.

We encourage parents to participate in the field trips also. They can participate in the same training the teachers attend. Each school is also assigned volunteers from our team of trained volunteers. Our source of volunteers includes employees from the Metropolitan Sewer District, GE Aircraft Engines, Hamilton County Environmental Services, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District and others. All have been trained in the water quality monitoring and are excellent resources for the students. Many of the volunteers have worked with us since the program began in 1994.

Please contact Lora Alberto at lora@millcreekrestoration.org or 731-8400 with any questions about our environmental education program.