

Fish, watersheds focus of Marion Elementary event

SEEDS, Trout Unlimited partner for Marion Mill Pond event

By Rick Charmoli Cadillac News Apr 24, 2021 Updated Apr 24, 2021



On April 17, Marion elementary students who are involved with the SEEDS After School Program and their families gathered at the Marion Mill Pond for a day of fishing, fun and learning.

Courtesy of Erin Horton, Marion Elementary SEEDS S

MARION — Fishing, fun and learning were all part of a weekend event for Marion Elementary School students involved with an after-school program.

On April 17, Marion elementary students involved with the SEEDS After School Program and their families gathered at the Marion Mill Pond. In addition to fishing, 10 fish-themed activity stations included fish Jenga, fly fishing for lawn trout, watershed art posters, fish keychains and others.

These activities were part of a series of lessons on fish and watersheds conducted at the SEEDS After School program.

"The main goal is to teach students about the importance of watersheds," Marion Elementary SEEDS Site Coordinator Erin Horton said. "We are focusing on fish because fishing is an important pastime in the community and fish are just fun."

Trout Unlimited Education and Diversity Chairman Greg Potter also brought a variety of displays and activities to engage children in learning about fish and their habitats including a stream-table to teach about maintaining clean watersheds and a work table for identifying macroinvertebrates in the water. Potter also demonstrated how to make fishing flies, allowing the students to select the tails and hackles. The SEEDS students then got to use the custom flies and take them home afterward.

Students have been learning about water quality testing, ecosystems, water filtration, and more during the SEEDS After School sessions. This past winter, students used water testing kits donated by the Izaak Walton League of America Winter Salt Watch program to test sodium levels in the water at the Mill Pond. Each Friday students are sent home with an additional activity to share with family and friends, such as a 'Beat-the-Barrier' board game about Lampreys.

"Watershed education is important to SEEDS as part of our focus on offering ecologically rooted STEM learning," SEEDS Executive Director Sarna Salzman said. "We are proud to have education partners like Trout Unlimited and the Grand Traverse Stewardship Initiative among others."

This year, students at Marion will finish their school year with a field trip to the Inland Seas Educational Association to learn more about macroinvertebrates while sailing on Lake Michigan.

SEEDS is a 501c3 nonprofit organization formed in 1999 to implement local solutions to global challenges at the intersection of ecology, education, and community design. SEEDS' goal is to foster healthy, vibrant communities filled with clean food, great kids, and helpful neighbors.

The programming is offered free to families within the district after school for a total of 32 weeks. During the school year, the program is usually offered four days a week, generally Monday-Thursday for an average of three hours per day. Summer programming also is part of the program and is free to families in the district. It too is usually Monday-Thursday for an average of 4-6 hours a day.

SEEDS After School Program currently is in Marion Elementary School, Fife Lake Elementary, Forest Area Middle School, Jewett Elementary in Mesick, Rapid City Elementary, Kaleva Norman Dickson Elementary, Brethren Middle School, Betsie Valley Elementary, Cherry Street Intermediate and Benzie Central Middle School.