



HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY – STUDENT EDUCATION FACT SHEET

Innovating to Educate, Engage and Empower Today's and Tomorrow's Environmental Stewards

Melding environmental education, leadership and communication skills, and civic engagement, the Howard County Conservancy helps students become leaders in both science and stewardship, prepares them to become informed citizens and decision makers, and inspires them to build the tomorrow they want to live in. From our [founding story](#) to our [mission](#), education is at the heart of everything we do.

This fact sheet highlights **student education initiatives** and **impact** over **just the past six years**.

August 2021 – The Howard County Conservancy announces its **2nd NOAA grant** – a nearly \$400,000 award over three years – for the **Climate kNOWLEDge** program.

- The grant was developed and will be administered with long-time partner Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) to every student in the 6th grade by the 2023-24 school year.
- Centered on climate change impacts and solutions/positive actions, the project combines classroom learning and real life data collection in the field, and will ultimately reach 20 middle schools, all 45 HCPSS 6th grade science teachers, and all 4,500 6th graders.
- Includes environmental justice focus partnering with the Howard County NAACP and University of Maryland Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH).

March 2021 – [Howard County Conservancy Nature Preschool](#) for ages 3-5 opens at the Conservancy's nature center located at Belmont Manor and Historic Park in Elkridge, Maryland.

- Aiming to spend 50% of the day outdoors, seasoned educators help prepare students for kindergarten through our emergent [curriculum](#) that integrates all the wonders of nature.
- Located within a county park bordering thousands of acres of state parkland, the preschool has two interactive classrooms, a covered patio, a natural play area, and onsite animal friends.

February 2021 – [@hclimatechangeinstute](#) goes live on Instagram. **Climate Change Institute (CCI) Ambassadors** on the environmental messaging team create the social media channel to share information and practical tips about energy efficiency, trees, how to support environmental policies, and more. In May, the CCI Ambassadors go on to host a Town Hall with over 100 participants that features a panel of senators and delegates from the Maryland General Assembly.

September 2020 – The student-led, Conservancy-sponsored **Howard Climate Change Institute**, consisting of **31 students from ten high schools**, kicks off and forms teams focused on legislation, energy, tree planting and environmental messaging. During their first year, CCI Ambassadors participated in or hosted over 20 community advocacy events.

“We are dreamers, activists and revolutionaries here to make an impact.”

(more)

June 2019 – The **Watershed Report Card** program is fully systemic and woven into Earth Science and Biology GT classes, which encompasses all 9th grade students in Howard County (over 5,000 students annually). The program is ongoing. Click here to view the [2021 Watershed Report Card](#).

July 2018 – NOAA extends funding for an additional year. Watershed Report Card students examine the [historic 1,000-year flood in Ellicott City](#).

May 2017 – The Conservancy’s Watershed Report Card program [goes statewide](#).

- Ten Maryland counties participate during the 2016-2017 school year and then share their data and recommendations in Annapolis at the May 2017 Watershed Summit.

April 2016 – Students and teachers work with **Maryland Department of Natural Resources** to **create a new stream survey tool** to more accurately assess the biological health of streams. This tool is **now used statewide** to evaluate more than 100 streams in Maryland.

October 2015 – [U.S. Senator Ben Cardin speaks on the Senate floor](#) about the Watershed Report Card program and Summit.

April 2015 – The Conservancy is awarded the first federal grant for its [Watershed Report Card](#) program in the form of a three-year, \$310,000 NOAA B-WET grant.

- Starting with the 2015-16 school year, students will study the biological, chemical and physical aspects of local streams and complete a scientifically rigorous assessment. The final product of their year-long studies will be a student-developed, published Watershed Report Card.
- At the annual Watershed Summit, the students turn the table and present their grade to county and state leaders.
- Developed and implemented in partnership with HCPSS, the program is Howard County’s largest environmental education program, reaching all high school biology students.

Ongoing Student Programs:

- [School Outreach Programs](#) – Traveling educational programs for schools (as well as community groups and local organizations). Also learn more [here](#).
- [Elementary School Field Trips](#) – Wild Exploration (K), Owl’s Observations (1st grade), The Science of Soil and Buggin’ Out (2nd grade), Habitats and Homes (3rd grade), Mystery of the Patapsco River (4th grade), and Belmont BioBlitz (5th grade). Also learn more [here](#).
- [Middle and High School Field Trips](#) – Annual Weather Conference with WBAL’s Ava Marie (6th grade), Biodiversity University and On the Way to the Bay (7th grade), Watershed Report Card (9th grade Earth Science and Biology), and Climate Change Challenge (AP environmental Science/AP Bio students)
- [School’s Out Program](#) & [Summer Camps](#)

Impact & Reach:

The Conservancy has partnered with HCPSS since 2003 and is the top provider of environmental education field trips in Howard County. Over 2,400 thousand teachers have been trained in just the last three years. Howard County Conservancy programs have reached approximately 100,000 students and adults in the last five years alone.

For more information about the full range of the Conservancy’s regular annual in-person programs, see our [2019 highlights](#). Our [2020 highlights](#) feature how the Howard County Conservancy’s impact grew and evolved through innovative virtual and COVID-adapted programs. Visit us at howardnature.org.