

San Diego Unified Port District- Environmental Services
CVESD Coastal Education Program Located at the Chula Vista Nature Center
Progress Report: March 2011
Sent to: Eileen Maher [emaher@portofsandiego.org] on March 31, 2011

Work Completed to Date:

From January – March 2011 twenty one classes came in seventeen separate groups on a Nature Center Study Trip funded by the Port District. (Please see photos) The majority of these classes, 10 to be exact, were 3rd graders that participated in the Crustacean Lab. They learned about the adaptations of crustaceans and other animals, and touched and held crabs and crayfish. They also walked down to the beach and got to see crabs in their shoreline habitat. They also noticed trash on the beach that had washed up from the ocean. There was even a large couch pillow that really got them talking. We discussed how it had gotten there and how they could help keep the ocean clean for the animals. Two lower grade and one upper grade moderate to severe SDC classes also participated in the Crustacean Lab and became very excited when they got to hold the animals and see them on the beach. The teachers were thrilled when one of the boys who is usually very withdrawn came alive when he got to touch some molts of crayfish and lobsters. They really enjoyed observing their students with another teacher in this experiential environment.

One group of 4th graders came and did the Food Chain Hunt Program. They went on a hike in the morning recording all the animals and evidence of animals they found. They separated the animals into 5 categories: Reptiles, Mammals, Birds, Fish and Invertebrates. Then in the afternoon they viewed plankton with microscopes. They learned how important plankton is to the marine food webs and the terrestrial food webs as well. A great discussion about their role in protecting the plankton and ocean in general followed.

Five classes of 5th graders came and participated in the “Geology Rocks” Program which has been described in previous reports. They did various activities demonstrating weathering and erosion and then went through the rock cycle as they made edible rocks out of starburst. One group of 6th graders did the “Watershed Chemistry” program to test the quality of the water in our area. They tested the pH of the water and looked at plankton with microscopes to check their vitality. They made conclusions about the health of the water and come up with ideas on how our community can improve the water quality in our area.

After the November Open House one of the teachers that had won the lottery for free transportation for her grade level had to cancel the trips. The money that was allotted for her students was able to be given to the next teacher on the list so her students are going to be able to come in the next couple of months. She was not going to be able to bring her students because of the cost of transportation so they are thrilled to receive the grant funding.

Currently I only have 6 days without a study trip scheduled for the remainder of the year. All of those days are minimum days, 1 day is during the big testing week, 1 is the last day of school and the other 4 are the week of Parent Teacher conferences right before Spring Break. Every other day is filled! Teachers continue to call requesting field trips even though the program is almost completely full. They always ask if there is funding available for transportation since it is such an obstacle for them.

How effective the project is at benefiting the Bay:

When students come to a study trip they are given a free pass that allows them and one adult to come back to the Nature Center on another day for free. The Nature Center keeps track of these passes and how many people return. From December 2010- February 2011 59 free passes (2 people per pass) have been collected from my program. An additional 1 adult and 2 children paid to accompany their family members that got in for free. Therefore a total of 121 people have returned to the Nature Center as a direct result of attending one of the Coastal Education Programs during September - November. Not only was the student inspired enough to bring their family back, the family then was able to have the opportunity to become inspired by the exhibits and programs during their visit. Overall the entire local family gains a greater respect for their local environment and the flora and fauna living in it. The data for March still has not been processed yet and it will be included in the June report.

Each group that comes out to the Nature Center takes a pretest and a post test that includes information they learn in their standard- based program as well as information about the watershed and pollution. The data will be written up in the June report but results are showing a significant amount of improvement in the students' knowledge following their visit.

The CST testing takes place the 1st week of May and all students in 5th grade will take a science test that covers the 4th and 5th grade standards. It is the hope that all the 5th graders that came and did the Geology Rocks program perform even better than last year's 5th graders on the geology portion of the test.

Costs Incurred to Date:

The twenty one classes that have attended the Nature Center with the transportation funding from the Port during December- March came in 17 different trips on 15 days. (4 @ \$225= \$900, and 8 @ \$155= \$1,240 for a total of \$2,140) One of the groups was awarded Port Grant funding but then was able to get funded by the Sweetwater Authority instead. They paid all except \$35 of the total amount of their transportation costs so \$35 was given to them from the Port Grant so their transportation costs would be entirely covered. Therefore the total cost incurred from December 2010- March 2011 is \$2,175 (\$2,140 + \$35).

An invoice is being sent to the Port District requesting the payment of the transportation funds of classes that came to the Nature Center funded by the Port from March 2010- March 2011. Trips from March-June 2010 totaled \$1,970, trips from August-September 2010 totaled \$1,985 and trips from October- December 2010 totaled \$1,225. Trips from January- March 2011 totaled \$2,175 however not all required paperwork has been received from all these teachers yet so only \$1,175 has been charged. The remaining \$1,155 will be included on the invoice that will be sent in March 2012. Therefore the total amount on the invoice being sent to the Port District is \$6,355 (\$1,970 + \$1,985 + \$1,225 + \$1,175)"

The teachers and students are so appreciative of this wonderful opportunity the Port has given them. Thank you so much.

Photos:
Upper Grade Special Education Crustacean Lab



Crustacean Lab- 3rd Grade



Food Chain Hunt- 4th Grade

