



Uncharacteristic winter weather delays spring outings



With above average snowfall and unseasonably cold temperatures in Western North Carolina, Muddy Sneakers got off to a slow start this spring season. February alone resulted in over a dozen cancelations due to the inclement weather, though several schools did get to complete their Learning Expeditions with snow still on the ground. All five school districts experienced canceled classes and delays for weeks. Fortunately for everyone, spring came along in March! As the snow melted away and the warmer temperatures arrived, Muddy Sneakers programming returned to normal, with no canceled outings in March or April.

Dear Muddy Sneakers Friends and Supporters,

Thanks for making another year of Muddy Sneakers programming possible! We involved 12 schools in five school districts – and over 1,000 students! – this year in multiple Muddy Sneakers Learning Expedition outings. The list of interested schools continues to grow, and we feel blessed to have community support in this initiative.

Teachers had a lot to say about the positive effects Muddy Sneakers programming had had on their students, and we eagerly await their End of Grade test scores to see how programming may have affected their Science proficiency, as well. Teachers at Avery’s Creek Elementary School in Buncombe County said Muddy Sneakers “was a great experience.” Claxton Elementary teachers in Asheville were impressed with students making connections between outdoor Muddy Sneakers lessons and the classroom. Their students, they said, “even mentioned FBI [fungus, bacteria, insects – decomposers] in our discussion this week two months after our last session” with Muddy Sneakers.

Parents have let us know that the program is meaningful to their children, as well. Pisgah Forest Elementary school parent Shelley McCarson said, “we are so impressed with the Muddy Sneakers program. You all do an outstanding job of teaching and sharing your love of the outdoors with others.”

But Muddy Sneakers is, after all, about the kids. So what do students have to say about their experience with the program? Hannah, a Transylvania County fifth grader, said, “I’ve learned about different bugs and plants that are native and nonnative. I’ve learned what those words mean too. Muddy Sneakers rocks!” Another student said, “Because of Muddy Sneakers, every time I go outside I like to share everything that I know from Muddy Sneakers with whoever I’m with.” Ryan, a Henderson County fifth grader, said “I like Muddy Sneakers because my classroom is outside.” And while Ashleigh will miss Muddy Sneakers, she hopes “the new fifth graders like it as much as I did!”

We couldn’t continue to provide programming that enhances students’ learning and exposes them to the outdoors without community backing of Muddy Sneakers’ partnership with local public schools.

We sincerely appreciate your support,

Lauren Arella-Sevilla, Executive Director



Katelyn McCarson, a Pisgah Forest Elementary School student, shares what she knows about the Carolina hemlock and the wooly adelgid during the Muddy Sneakers Family Day celebration, a Saturday morning hike that included fifth grade students who participated in the program and their families.

Meet a Muddy Sneakers Field Instructor **Steve O'Neil**



Steve spent his early years chasing snakes, lizards and salamanders all over the mountains of North Carolina. Steve holds a Bachelors of Science in Recreation Management and Outdoor Experiential Education. He works full time for Earthshine Mountain Lodge in Lake Toxaway as a staff naturalist and outdoor education facilitator and part-time for Muddy Sneakers. Steve was

greatly inspired to follow his dream of working with wildlife in his early years first by his parents Catherine and Clayton O'Neil who gave him a love for all things natural. Steve has coordinated several wildlife conservation projects, his most recent being an Eastern box turtle habitat use and movement study in the forests surrounding Earthshine Mountain Lodge.

Learn more about Steve's turtle tracking:
www.earthshinenature.com

Which schools get to participate in Muddy Sneakers?

We write grants and solicit funds from donors on a daily basis to keep Muddy Sneakers programming happening.

With cuts in the state budget for education and non-profit donations down, Muddy Sneakers needs your help to keep our current schools involved in the program, and to bring on new schools in 2010-11. Our waiting list is growing!
You can donate online at www.muddysneakers.org.

2009-10 Elementary Schools

Avery's Creek (Buncombe County)
Brevard (Transylvania)
Claxton (Asheville City)
Isaac Dickson (Asheville City)
Edneyville (Henderson County)
Hall Fletcher (Asheville City)
Ira B. Jones (Asheville City)
Pisgah Forest (Transylvania County)
Rosman (Transylvania County)
TC Henderson (Transylvania County)
Vance (Asheville City)
West Marion (McDowell County)

Help fund these schools in 2010-11

Estes (Buncombe County)
Haw Creek (Buncombe County)
Interested Henderson County schools
Nebo (McDowell County)
Oakley (Buncombe County)

If you know of a parent, teacher, school, or donor who is interested in the Muddy Sneakers program, please direct them to our website at www.muddysneakers.org.

Muddy Sneakers:
The Joy of Learning Outside
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Help us save paper!

Send us your email address to info@muddysneakers.org, and we'll send you a paper-free winter newsletter.

Did you Know?

- Muddy Sneakers is on **Facebook!** Look us up today, and become a fan. Share your photos and impressions, too.
- Make **GoodSearch.com** your internet search engine, choose Muddy Sneakers as the cause to support, and you donate one penny to Muddy Sneakers every time you conduct a search. Pennies add up!