

MCCD My Growing Tree Goes Remote !!

The popular 'My Growing Tree' program, traditionally delivered to all McKean County elementary school first graders in April for Arbor Day, took a hiatus during the pandemic. This fall, the McKean County Conservation District, with the Potter County Conservation District and PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry, re-worked the program into a remote kit that could be delivered to schools without visiting classes. In early October, the program was delivered to now second grade students in McKean County, who missed their spring 2020 program.

A series of five video clips were produced as a team effort of Jody Groshek, Emily Shosh and Jared Dickerson, and DCNR forester Eric Monger. They covered the material normally shared with classes. Staff were able to film in a forest among stately Eastern hemlock trees; showing students what the trees look like and their important role in nature. Teachers led their classes in hands-on activities in between the short videos. The videos showcased All About Trees (the jobs trees do in nature, what trees need to live, what people use trees for); Trees for Trout (why are trees important for our watersheds and aquatic life, filmed streamside); Planting a Tree (demonstration and instructions by Forester Eric about the best way to plant your tree); Arbor Day (overview of the history of Arbor Day in the U.S.) All students took home their own Eastern hemlock seedling to plant with their family and a growth chart to track both the tree's and their growth.

The revamped program was well received and appreciated by teachers; as no visitors for such special programs are permitted at their schools. Spring 'My Growing Tree' programs for first grades will most likely be delivered remotely as well, so the new kit will reach more students Arbor Day week 2021.

This program was made possible by a DEP Environmental Education Grant.



Photos:

Above- Beginning of video series; five 4-5 minute clips shared with teachers on a flash drive

Middle- Bradford School Street Elementary students with their new trees

Bottom – Remote kit loaned to teachers with lesson plan, videos, and activities, and additional resources

