

## **Water Education Day**

On Wednesday September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Columbia County Conservation District held its 8<sup>th</sup> annual Water Education Day at Briar Creek Lake Park in Berwick. About 240 eighth-grade students from three different school districts in Columbia County attended the event. The students rotated through six stations where they learned about various aspects of our water sources, water quality, and aquatic ecosystems. The six stations: Water Quality, Streams, Groundwater, Music and Discovery, Art and Poetry, and Fish Ecology are all lead by volunteers. About 50 volunteers, from organizations like PA American Water, PA Fish and Boat Commission, Trout Unlimited, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, PA DEP, Bloomsburg Children's Museum, Columbia County Traveling Library, McBride Memorial Library, Commonwealth University – Bloomsburg, and many more, helped make the day possible and educated the students on these topics.

The stations are designed to be quick and fun, but also impactful. The students learned about where their drinking water comes from, possible contamination sources, and source water protection. They got to see live aquatic macroinvertebrates, how they can indicate water quality, and how they fit into the aquatic ecosystem. The Music and Discovery station, led by SRBC, presented the history of the Susquehanna River and the American Eel and all about their unique lifecycle. Art and Poetry focused on the natural beauty of our watersheds, and the students wrote haikus about water and created mandalas out of natural materials. Students got to explore surface and ground water via groundwater models and stream tables. The Water Quality station focused on where our drinking water comes from and how it is treated, and the students got to compete against each other in the 'Filter Challenge.' The stations are created to be hands on and engaging, and multiple stations even include games where the kids get to run around and be active.

The event was sponsored by PA American Water, and donations were made by Weis Markets, Giant, Dunkin, and Wise Foods. This event would not be possible without all of the amazing volunteers who gave their time and expertise to the students. It was a beautiful day for some outdoor education!

\*see photos below



Students creating sustainable art, specifically a mandala, out of natural materials and learning about native versus invasive species.



Live aquatic macroinvertebrates (and a fish or two) at the Fish Ecology station with taxonomic keys identifying tolerant, intolerant, and somewhat tolerant species.



Students at a stream table using flags to identify various parts of a stream like headwaters, mouth, delta, cut bank, deposition, and erosion.



Students wait in anticipation to see how well their filter handles the contaminated water.



Students and volunteers compare the results of their filters to pick a winner of the challenge.