

Once Upon a Wetland...

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Semi-Annual Progress Report

Organization Title: Oak Grove School

Project Title: “Once Upon a Wetland”

Student-based Restoration and Stewardship of the Ojai Meadow Preserve

Report Period: 08/01/2006-01/31/2007

Introduction

The mission of the “Once Upon a Wetland” Project is to provide a meaningful watershed experience to students at Oak Grove School, Meiners Oaks Elementary School, and Nordhoff High School by engaging them in the restoration and stewardship of the historic wetland located on the Ojai Meadows Preserve, directly adjacent to all three schools.

The project connects students to their own backyard, their home, their place-- in other words, their watershed-- by emphasizing the intrinsic ecological relationships of all things (including people!) within the watershed and the direct connection of the watershed to the local ocean environment.

Purpose

In order to provide a meaningful watershed experience to students, the “Once Upon a Wetland” project is guided by the following five goals:

GOALS

- #1. To educate students and teachers about our local Ventura River Watershed.
- #2. To raise awareness about the importance and value of wetlands and their role in a healthy watershed community.
- #3. To raise awareness about the importance and value of a healthy watershed and its role in a healthy World Ocean.
- #4. To foster a sense of community ownership and shared responsibility for our natural environment at the local (watershed) scale.
- #5. To instill confidence, hope, and a sense of empowerment in students and teachers, helping them to see that their actions do make a difference.

These five over-arching goals inform the following project objectives:

OBJECTIVES (Correlated to Goals #1-5)

#1.

GOAL: To educate students and teachers about our local Ventura River Watershed.

OBJECTIVE: By the end of the school year, students and teachers should know: *what* is a watershed; *who* lives in the watershed; *where* is the watershed; *which* watershed is ours; and *why* is the watershed important?

#2.

GOAL: To raise awareness about the importance and value of wetlands and their role in a healthy watershed community.

OBJECTIVE: By the end of the school year, students and teachers should know about the importance and value of wetlands and their role in a healthy watershed community.

#3.

GOAL: To raise awareness about the importance and value of a healthy watershed and its role in a healthy World Ocean.

OBJECTIVE A: By the end of the school year, students and teachers should know *why* a healthy watershed is important to the health of our World Ocean.

OBJECTIVE B: By the end of the school year, students and teachers should know that our watershed is directly connected to the ocean environment

#4.

GOAL: To foster a sense of community ownership and shared responsibility for our natural environment at the local (watershed) scale.

OBJECTIVE: By the end of the school year, students and teachers at Oak Grove School, Meiners Oaks Elementary School, and Nordhoff High School should feel (a) more connected to one another as a cooperative community, and (b) should feel that the OMP and Channel islands belong to all of us and that it is everyone's responsibility to take care of them. [This will be expressed in the year-end summative survey as well as in personal dialogue.]

#5.

GOAL: To instill confidence, hope, and a sense of empowerment in students and teachers, helping them to see that their actions do make a difference.

OBJECTIVE: By the end of the school year, students and teachers should feel that they have made a difference by improving the ecological health of the OMP wetland as well as Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands.

Approach

The following Outputs have been designed to facilitate achievement of the aforementioned Goals and Objectives:

#1.

OUTPUT: Present a Watershed slideshow that investigates: *what* is a watershed; *who* lives in the watershed; *where* is the watershed; *which* watershed is ours; and *why* is the watershed important? (See *B-WET Project Record, column J, "WATERSHED ASSEMBLY."*)

#2.

OUTPUT: Present a slideshow telling the story of the Ojai Meadow Preserve. (See *B-WET Project Record: column I, "OMP STORY ASSEMBLY."*)

[Also, talk about the importance and value of wetlands during OMP visits, during in-class studies, etc. BUT Although I will do this and it is important, it is not measurable...]

#3.

OUTPUT A: Present a Watershed-Ocean Connection slideshow that investigates *why* a healthy watershed is important to the health of our World Ocean. (See *B-WET Project Record: column K, "WATERSHED-OCEAN ASSEMBLY."*)

OUTPUT B: Students in grades 3 and up travel by boat from the Ventura River mouth through the Santa Barbara Channel out to Anacapa or Santa Cruz Island (i.e. the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary) (See *B-WET Project Record: column T, "ISLAND TRIP."*)

#4.

OUTPUT A: Coordinate opportunities for students from the three schools to visit one another's home campuses to tour school greenhouses, classrooms, gardens, etc. (See *B-WET Project Record: column L, "GH VISIT."*)

OUTPUT B: Coordinate opportunities for students from the three schools to work together on the Ojai Meadow Preserve wetland restoration project as well as restoration projects on Anacapa or Santa Cruz Island (i.e. the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary). (See *B-WET Project Record: * asterisked dates.*)

[Also... Painting mural, telling them it is theirs, having them investing their time/energy in restoration....]

#5.

OUTPUT: Provide real-world opportunities to help improve the health of our local ecosystems by:

OUTPUT A: Collecting native plant seeds, starting and propagating these native seeds, planting these natives out on the OMP and removing non-native invasive plants from the OMP. (See *B-WET Project Record: columns F, G, Q, R, and S, "SEED COLLECT," "SEED START," "TRANSPLANT," "PLANT," and "OMP WEEDS."*)

OUTPUT B: Removing invasive plants on Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands. (See *B-WET Project Record: column T, "ISLAND TRIP."*)

OUTPUT C: Engaging students in authentic scientific monitoring and other stewardship activities including: water quality monitoring, soil sampling and testing, seasonal photo-documentation, wildlife surveys, plant success rate monitoring, local weather and climatic conditions monitoring. (See *B-WET Project Record: column M, "SPECIAL ACTIVITY."*)

Results

#1.

OUTPUT: Present a Watershed slideshow that investigates: *what* is a watershed; *who* lives in the watershed; *where* is the watershed; *which* watershed is ours; and *why* is the watershed important? (See *B-WET Project Record, column J, "WATERSHED ASSEMBLY."*)

All Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 287

All Oak Grove School students= 116

Total students served= 403

#2.

OUTPUT: Present a slideshow telling the story of the Ojai Meadow Preserve. (See *B-WET Project Record: column I, "OMP STORY ASSEMBLY."*)

All Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 287

All Oak Grove School students= 116

All Nordhoff High school students (by Derek Poultney, OVLC)= 33

Total students served= 436

#3.

OUTPUT A: Present a Watershed-Ocean Connection slideshow that investigates *why* a healthy watershed is important to the health of our World Ocean. (See *B-WET Project Record: column K, "WATERSHED-OCEAN ASSEMBLY."*)

Not scheduled until the Spring.

OUTPUT B: Students in grades 3 and up travel by boat from the Ventura River mouth through the Santa Barbara Channel out to Anacapa or Santa Cruz Island (i.e. the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary) (See *B-WET Project Record: column T, "ISLAND TRIP."*)

Not scheduled until the Spring.

#4.

OUTPUT A: Coordinate opportunities for students from the three schools to visit one another's home campuses to tour school greenhouses, classrooms, gardens, etc. (See *B-WET Project Record: column L, "GH VISIT."*)

Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 267

Oak Grove School students= 12

Total students served= 279

OUTPUT B: Coordinate opportunities for students from the three schools to work together on the Ojai Meadow Preserve wetland restoration project as well as restoration projects on Anacapa or Santa Cruz Island (i.e. the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary). *(See B-WET Project Record: * asterisked dates.)*

Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 52

Oak Grove School students= 12

Total students served= 64

#5.

OUTPUT: Provide real-world opportunities to help improve the health of our local ecosystems by:

OUTPUT A: Collecting native plant seeds, starting and propagating these native seeds, planting these natives out on the OMP and removing non-native invasive plants from the OMP. *(See B-WET Project Record: columns F, G, Q, R, and S, "SEED COLLECT," "SEED START," "TRANSPLANT," "PLANT," and "OMP WEEDS.")*

SEED COLLECT

All Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 287

All Oak Grove School students= 116

Total students served= 403

SEED START

All Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 287

All Oak Grove School students= 116

Total students served= 403

TRANSPLANT

Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 56

Oak Grove School students= 62

Total students served= 118

PLANT

Not scheduled until March.

OMP WEEDS

Not scheduled until February.

OUTPUT B: Removing invasive plants on Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands. *(See B-WET Project Record: column T, "ISLAND TRIP.")*

Not scheduled until the Spring.

OUTPUT C: Engaging students in authentic scientific monitoring and other stewardship activities including: water quality monitoring, soil sampling and testing, seasonal photo-documentation, wildlife surveys, plant success rate monitoring, local weather and climatic conditions monitoring. (*See B-WET Project Record: column M, "SPECIAL ACTIVITY."*)

Meiners Oaks Elementary students= 40

Oak Grove School students= 90

Total students served= 130