



# Garrett County Public Schools

## Environmental Education Highlights



Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) incorporates a comprehensive Pre-K through 12 Environmental Literacy program, taking full advantage of the wonderful resources that Garrett County has to provide. GCPS students have the luxury of experiencing the in-county Hickory Environmental Education Center (HEEC), which includes 77 wooded acres, dormitory facilities, a state-of-the-art Planetarium, streams, and marked trails. In 2014-15, HEEC recorded over 6,800 student visits in Pre-K through grade 12.

Students conduct various outdoor activities and perform service learning at HEEC. Garrett County also has as a number of parks, lakes, rivers, streams, swamps, and other natural areas used to incorporate the E-Lit Standards. Examples of activities include clearing trails, removing invasive species, planting trees & flowers, cleaning up litter, maintaining bird & squirrel houses, conducting stream health analysis, recording species diversity, and providing stream/environmental restoration to HEEC and the surrounding area. All students in high school must also take Environmental Science, Wildlife & Fisheries OR Bio150 Ecology (dual enrollment through Garrett College) to meet E-Lit requirements. HEEC is used as a site for many curricular, extracurricular, and community activities including administrative meetings, Science Fair competitions, SGA Leadership Summits, sports, JROTC, clubs, school & area organizations, and much more.

HEEC also serves as a Green School Center. Its administrators and staff work to encourage and assist county schools in achieving and renewing Green School status. Currently, all but 2 schools are Green Schools with the goal to reach 100% in the near future!



Elementary, Middle, and High School students work together along with scientists, environmentalists, teachers, and the community to restore Brook Trout to area streams.



Students plant gardens to grow produce that is used in their schools and in the community, run school-based farms, operate greenhouses, and work with local professors banding owls,

shocking fish, identifying species, bird-watching and more!



Students engage in NSF funded project with Frostburg State University and surrounding counties to study nitrate problems in the region.



Students from competing Envirothon Teams complete training and competition at HEEC and the 4-H Center, also located in Garrett County.



In addition to using HEEC as a unique learning site, school faculty provide rich environmental education through community & school yard activities. Valuable and lasting partnerships have been forged and fostered with area higher education institutions, area agencies, private/public donors, advocacy groups, businesses, and individuals to provide real work experiences to GCPS students and foster environmental stewardship.