

Project education in our community



The Napa River Education Program is currently targeting 3rd-6th graders in a series of three, hour-long lessons. There are a total of six lessons where each lesson reflects on the role that rivers and tributaries play in nature, and the interrelationship that plants, animals, and the people of Napa have to our watershed. These lessons are augmented with videos, student guides, insect specimens and interactive demonstrations. Each lesson is presented by a docent, and is supported with a teacher's guide that has over three weeks of enrichment activities. The concepts and themes given in these lessons are based on the standards set forth by the California State Science Framework for grades kindergarten through grade six.

College and high school students assist in the BMI field sampling, which is an interactive way to bring students into their watersheds. Once in the creeks, students see the relationship between land use and creek health. Some of the local land use impacts to streams are: cattle grazing, urbanization of the creek (channel straightening), garbage dumping, sediment deposition from agriculture and road building, non-native plants being used for landscape, and stream alterations for growth and development are changes frequently seen in the Napa River tributaries. A video of the aquatic bugs has been developed.

A video of the aquatic bugs has been developed. The video displays macro-invertebrates under a microscope. It is being shown in classrooms in Napa County and more recently the Sonoma Ecology Center has requested the video to be used in Sonoma County schools to illustrate the importance of invertebrates to a healthy watershed. The education project will continue to create a database of information and various tools to bring into the classroom. It is our hope that teachers will continue to utilize this excellent resource and expand their own programs to explain and educate students to what is happening to streams and water quality all over California. Fresh water is only 2% of the water on the planet (salt water is the rest of the planet's water source). If we do not protect our fresh water resource, all of humanity will be in harm's way. BMI's are the canaries living in the mine indicating which direction our water quality is going. Presently, most west coast streams in California are polluted and need clean up guidelines. BMI's are the indicators and that help us restore our ecosystems to restore water quality.

Friends of the Napa River thank all the volunteers and property owners who are helping achieve the project goals. Volunteers are getting trained in the collection of the bugs and an educational curriculum is being prepared. If you would like to volunteer in future research please contact ICARE, Chris Malan 255-7434, Project Manger.

