

Helping Earth Field Project takes learning outside of the classroom at NVCS

Actively engaging students in learning is the key to Nittany Valley Charter School's success. Moving outside of the classroom, students participate in real-life learning experiences. This year NVCS students are involved in a project to improve the habitat of a local property that was a Christmas tree farm, but that now has large areas of dying trees. Using science, technology, and math skills, students will determine what action should be taken to provide the greatest benefit to the environment during class time and eight trips to the farm. The project's name is "Helping Earth Field Project" and it is just one way that the teachers at NVCS connect students with real problems, people and places.



Students survey the land to identify existing plants and animals



Kindergartner, first, and second graders get a close look at a pond ecosystem





Pros and cons of invasive species are debated



Digital mapping pinpoints trouble areas



Experts assist students and provide information about future professions



Students calculate to reveal carbon sequestration



NVCS looks for ways to enrich students' education beyond what can be provided with the partial funding that it receives from tax dollars (the district retains about 25% of the cost of educating each child). This year's unique environmental project is utilizing the excellent educational resources provided by many entities, including parents, a forester from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and biologist from the Game Commission. It is partially funded by a grant from the Department of Environmental Protection.

Nittany Valley Charter School's Environmental Education Program is based on their mission. The mission includes "providing opportunities for students to interact with a variety of instructional materials, as well as to stress the importance of learning from each other, from adults, and from community resources. NVCS believes experiences outside of the traditional classroom setting are an essential component of learning" and works at all times to "integrate the learning process with a personal understanding of the natural environment." Learning in this manner, students see that it is possible to make a real difference in the well-being of our environment and helps students develop into positive, productive citizens.

