

BALLARD STUDENTS GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH NATURE

Kids tour Bear Creek Wildlife Sanctuary

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Media

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SAUGUS, Mass. (JUNE 21, 2013) – Students from the Ballard Early Childhood Center explored the local ecosystem during a visit to the Bear Creek Wildlife Sanctuary located at Wheelabrator Saugus Tuesday.

More than 110 students, teachers and parent chaperones engaged in a guided tour of the sanctuary's nature trails where they discovered the plants, trees, insects, birds and bees that inhabit the 160-acre parcel.

The Wheelabrator field trip marked the second visit from Ballard school students. "The kids love coming here," said Ballard School Principal Marie Bridges. "They had an amazing time on the nature walk. We do a unit on planting and insects so it fits right in with what they have learned in school. Our partnership with Wheelabrator is outstanding."

The outdoor learning center was certified in 2008 by the Wildlife Habitat Council in two separate categories – Wildlife at Work and Corporate Lands for Learning – for its land management practices and educational outreach programs.

Tour guide Geoff Wilson of Northeast Wetlands Restoration shared with visitors his enthusiasm for the sanctuary development, having planted more than 17,000 trees and created nine coastal ecosystems including coastal shrubland, early successional forest, native grasslands and wet meadows to attract nearly 200 different types of birds. Beekeeper Jay Falcone also demonstrated for Ballard students how he carefully cares for the sanctuary's 10 beehives.

"Bear Creek provides a unique ecological experience for Saugus students," said Liz Wilson, environmental manager of landfills for Wheelabrator. "It's especially rewarding to see young students make connections with nature."

After the tour, the Ballard students gathered under a tent where they enjoyed pizza from Prince Pizzeria and participated in a sing-along to children's music provided by Peter Stewart of Sing and Learn Music.

Wheelabrator Saugus began planning for Bear Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in 1992 and has spent more than \$2.2 million in restoring coastal habitats, capping the landfill with native grassland species and implementing methods to prevent the growth of invasive plants. Bird species such as the peregrine falcon, American bald eagle and short-eared owl have been observed at the sanctuary, which continues to be enhanced and managed to attract these sensitive species.

“We are very proud of Wheelabrator's Bear Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, which has