QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Where Our Future Begins

NEWS RELEASE
January 28, 2025

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERS WITH SULTANA EDUCATION FOUNDATION TO LAUNCH THE WONDERS OF WETLANDS PROGRAM

Photo by John Mann of the Lawrence Wetland Preserve - where students will explore and investigate local wetlands.

Centreville, MD – Queen Anne's County Public Schools (QACPS) is thrilled to announce its collaboration with the Sultana Education Foundation (SEF) and the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (CBEC) on the innovative **Wonders of Wetlands** program. This initiative has been made possible through a three-year, $200,000 grant awarded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and aims to provide all QACPS sixth-grade students with immersive, hands-on experiences exploring the critical role of wetlands.

"The Wonders of Wetlands program illustrates the power of partnerships in advancing environmental literacy and stewardship," said Michael Page, Supervisor of Instruction, QACPS. "We are deeply grateful to NOAA and our partners at Sultana Education Foundation and CBEC for making this transformative opportunity possible for our students."

The Wonders of Wetlands program is a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) that empowers students to investigate the effects of human development on aquatic ecosystems, with a special focus on the vital functions of wetlands. The program offers an array of educational opportunities for both students and teachers. Educators will participate in specialized professional development sessions to enhance their instruction on wetland ecosystems and environmental literacy. The students will embark on field experiences at SEF's Lawrence Wetlands Preserve and CBEC, where they will explore swamps and marshes, sample marine life, and learn about wetland biodiversity. They will also have the chance to canoe along local waterways to study wetland habitats up close. To ensure a seamless connection to

classroom learning, the program integrates pre- and post-trip lesson plans, enabling students to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. At the conclusion of the unit, students will design and implement community action projects focused on improving water quality and raising awareness about the challenges facing wetland habitats in their local communities.

"This NOAA grant is the result of an exciting partnership that will be mutually beneficial to Sultana Education Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, and most importantly the 6th grade students and teachers of Queen Anne's County Public Schools," said Sultana Education Foundation Vice President Chris Cerino. "We look forward to working with the staff and students of Queen Anne's to develop a sustainable program that utilizes hands-on experiences in the field to bring the subject matter to life and enhances learning already taking place in the classroom setting."

The hands-on nature of the Wonders of Wetlands program ensures that students are not only learning but also experiencing their curriculum in meaningful ways. “The experience connects perfectly with our curriculum. The students can experience wide-eyed and firsthand so many of the topics that we’ve been working on in class,” said Heather Walsh, Science Teacher at Matapeake Middle School.

With its focus on experiential learning, community engagement, and environmental stewardship, the Wonders of Wetlands program represents a significant step forward in QACPS’ commitment to empowering students as active participants in environmental sustainability.