

# Wilderness Wheels Brings Students to Little Buffalo State Park

*PPFF's transportation scholarship program helps students learn outdoors at Little Buffalo State Park.*

CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA, THE UNITED STATES, December 5, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Just before the epic colors of Pennsylvania's fall foliage began to show across the state, students from Newport Elementary School visited Little Buffalo State Park to enjoy a "Watershed Day."

As an extension of Newport Elementary's FOSS Soil, Rocks, and Landforms module, educators applied for the [Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation \(PPFF\) Wilderness Wheels Transportation Scholarship](#) with the aim of taking classroom learning to outdoor experiences. The result was that 54 students, four staff, and eight volunteers embarked on an educational day of fun, experiential learning at Little Buffalo State Park.

The PPFF's Wilderness Wheels Scholarship is a donor-funded transportation scholarship program geared toward reducing one of the greatest barriers to outdoor education and recreation: lack of transportation. The program is for both youth and seniors, through clubs, schools, and senior centers.



The Wilderness Wheels program covers the cost of transportation to/from the park/forest, as long as the visit is part of a larger educational initiative and will involve park/forest staff at the destination.

With 124 state parks and 2.2 million acres of state forest, Pennsylvania possesses many options for hands-on environmental learning. While exploring and learning about nature, there are opportunities to develop leadership skills, connect youth and seniors to PA's rich cultural legacy, and advance recreational skills that lead to healthier, happier people.



“We initiated this program to give access to the outdoors, knowing that hands-on learning helps visitors of all ages apply the knowledge that they gain in the classroom in meaningful ways,” said Marci Mowery, President of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation. “We also know that spending time outdoors is good for physical, mental, and emotional health. Introducing or reconnecting people to parks and forests helps to facilitate return visits or connections to the outdoors.”

At Little Buffalo, the elementary students enjoyed a variety of stations. They tested the quality of streamwater, created water filtration systems, explored a watershed enviroscape, and conducted a stormwater simulation. In addition, students carried out a service project by cleaning up the Little Buffalo mill area in preparation for the Apple Butter Festival.

Jane Gillwood, the 4th Grade Teacher at Newport Elementary, was surprised by how quickly students took to the service project. Mason, echoing the feelings of his classmates, reflected, “My favorite part was the service project because I liked helping around the park.”

Jane wrote, “The fact that the service project was the favorite part of the day is encouraging for the future stewardship of our public lands! Getting students out there and making them aware of the opportunities to engage with our state forests and parks is an excellent reason to support this program.”

Jane's hopeful that the service project will motivate students to return with their families to take part in stewardship opportunities at state parks and forests in the future.

The outdoor learning experiences, which allowed students to further understand watersheds

and run-off, also enabled them to decide on an action project geared towards building awareness about watersheds and/or reducing runoff from the Newport Elementary schoolyard. An additional follow-up activity, saw students investigating water-related careers in their computer class.

To find out more about eligibility, application details, or to make a donation to the Wilderness Wheels Transportation Scholarship visit: <https://paparksandforests.org/our-work/education/wilderness-wheels-transportation-scholarships/>

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