

Harford Glen is Harford County Public Schools' Environmental Education Center and an integral part of the HCPS Science Department. Situated on approximately 400 acres in the heart of Bel Air, the secluded location boasts forest, meadows, wetlands, Winters Run, Plumtree Run and Wheel Creek. More than twelve miles of trails braid their way through the various habitats leading students of all grade levels to take advantage of different learning opportunities.

Since 1980, the Harford Glen team has executed curriculum and run the fifth-grade residential program which consists of two nights and three days of hands on environmental educational activities. The lessons students are presented with while on site align and dovetail with their fifth grade Environmental Stewardship science unit. The activities and lessons at Harford Glen include data collection and analysis of stream macroinvertebrates or feeder birds; compost processes including a hands-on dissection of vermicompost; best management practices associated with property and garden management; invasive vs. native plants and animals; birding as a hobby; forensic ornithology and much more. This trip is the culmination of their elementary school career as it challenges and encourages growth within the student to prepare them for middle school. Students learn much more than environmental science while they are on site. They grow as individuals through managing their own belongings and dietary needs including serving themselves and cleaning up after themselves, sleeping away from home and creating a deeper bond and stronger relationships with classmates and teachers.

Well vetted high school students from all HCPS high schools work as assistants during the overnight program and support the classroom teachers and Harford Glen team with student management and being an extra set of helpful eyes and ears on campus during residential sessions.

The team of highly trained, specialized, teachers at Harford Glen create personal and individual field trip experiences to mirror the current science curriculum for grades other than fifth. Some second-grade classes come to learn about the geography of a watershed and how choices made within a watershed impact the waterways and Chesapeake Bay. High school Zoology classes work with the Master Bird Bander to study bird anatomy and participate in the ongoing citizen science project at Harford Glen. Special needs students from many high schools travel to Harford Glen weekly for their jobs as warranted in their Life Skills classes. Harford Academy students visit Harford Glen for a good dose of the great outdoors with lessons that excite all five senses.

The Harford Glen teachers work one on one with students from various high school magnet programs to mentor them through their capstone projects. Students have tagged and tested Monarch Butterflies for parasites to gather data for scientists and their own capstone research questions. Students have created test plots at Harford Glen to analyze the growth of native plants to outcompete the fast-growing invasive species. Students have apprenticed under the Harford Glen Master Bird Bander to learn the skills necessary to band birds and have used the 40+ years' worth of data from the Harford Glen Bird Banding Station to analyze various trends in bird populations over time.

Providing a location, as well as a knowledgeable team of teachers, professional development opportunities are vast at the environmental education center. Hosting numerous professional development sessions each year, the science team encourages teachers to get outside and DO science using the Harford Glen team as examples and models for how this could look for a classroom teacher.

Harford Glen provides learning experiences that cannot be replicated in a regular classroom setting.