

FREDERICK H. HOOPER INSTITUTE - 2008

The Frederick H. Hooper Institute continued to serve the youth of Walpole through its educational programs in 2008. In accordance with the will of George L. Hooper, programs in agriculture, forestry, botany, soils and environmental conservation were conducted. Hooper Institute personnel visited each classroom at the Walpole and North Walpole schools on a weekly basis.

Gardens at all three Walpole Schools were the sites of many lessons. By starting and planting seeds, mulching, weeding, watering and harvest, students learned about the life cycles and care of plants. Cuttings of plants became seasonal gifts and crafts. Insect, avian and mammal visitors to the gardens prompted other studies. A grant from NH Fish and Game provided funds to plant a blueberry and holly hedge along one length of the Primary School garden.

Fourth graders participated in the Farm & Forest project, now in its 28th year. With cooperation from local farmers and woodsmen, students visited dairy, horse poultry and Christmas tree farms. They witnessed the formation of round hay bales and saw how wooden pegs were "turned" from a block of wood. They watched logs sawed into lumber and maple syrup evaporated. After learning about apples, their eager hands powered a cider press for a delicious treat.

Wildlife was a favorite topic of study in every grade. Winter is an opportune time to learn about native mammals and their adaptations for the season. Students studied the basics of wildlife biology and management through games and projects. The Mill Pond, nearby the school, is ideal for the study of pondlife and its surprising denizens. Other lessons included winter weather, reptiles and amphibians, migration, endangered species and birds in winter.

Forestry was covered in all grades from the simplest leaf rubbings to tree anatomy and forest management. Students learned strategies to identify tree species, both deciduous and evergreen. Sixth graders measured and calculated board feet. We discussed how we could have woodlots and help wildlife.

The Mill Pond also served as the site of a "*Big Tree Quest*", a treasure hunt for families. The "quest" proved to be an exciting way to teach about tree identification and forest ecology. Tales of local log drives on the Connecticut River helped us transition to spring studies of the Connecticut watershed for sixth graders. We looked at the human and natural history of the valley.

Fifth graders learned about soils through sampling soil types in the schoolyard. They studied soil critters and conservation of this precious natural resource. Programs for junior high touched upon the Hooper study areas.

At the high school level, fourteen youths were placed at local farms and related businesses as part of the two-month summer work program. In 2008, these

teens worked almost 1,500 hours in the community. They gained insight into the responsibilities of caring for animals and plants; valuable work skills as well as the effort involved managing a business.

The summer camp programs for younger children attracted over 90 participants. Younger children explored the grounds at Hooper and did many hands on activities. Older campers hiked and biked to many spectacular natural sites in Walpole and visited local farms. One week was devoted to individual woodworking projects using our woodshop.

The Institute received \$1,423 in income from donations and fees to its Farm and Forest Museum. Thanks to the many people who have supported Hooper efforts with donations of time and expertise this year, especially the Hooper Institute Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Eloise Clark, Director