

## INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

# Science at Westwood Middle School

## Part 1: Hogtown Creek Watershed

## Part 2: 7th Grade Life Science

By the Science teachers of Westwood Middle School

### Connecting Westwood Middle School Students with the Hogtown Creek Watershed

Westwood Middle School, the University of Florida's School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC), Camp Crystal Lake, Gainesville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, Alachua County Environmental Protection Department, and the US Forest Service competed for and were awarded a national grant from the Forest Service's *More Kids in the Woods* program. This program addresses the growing disconnect between children and outdoor experiences.

The goal of this two-year project is to provide Westwood Middle School students with outdoor science learning experiences in the nearby Loblolly Woods Nature Park. This nature park is situated within the Hogtown Creek Watershed and is where the Hogtown and Possum Creeks flow together. Project partners will work with students to explore scientific concepts such as erosion and sedimentation, wildlife habitat, and forest structure and to develop hypothesis, participate in experimental design, collect data and analyze the data to draw conclusions. Some main objectives of this project are for students to become more aware and connected to their local environment and exposed to careers in science and natural resources, as well as increased



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teacher participation in providing outdoor learning experiences for students.

In addition to participation in science learning experiences, project partners will also organize a school camp out and participate in career day events and science fairs.

To learn more about the More Kids in the Woods initiative visit: [www.fs.fed.us/news/2013/releases/05/more-kids-outdoors.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2013/releases/05/more-kids-outdoors.shtml)

We will regularly post project updates about the Westwood Middle School Kids in Woods project at: [www.interfacesouth.org/projects/kids-in-the-woods](http://www.interfacesouth.org/projects/kids-in-the-woods)  
**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Life Science**

In an attempt to bring LIFE into her Life Science class this year, Mrs. Shrum has invited 20 critters to Westwood Middle School. Her students clamor each period for one of the coveted Zoo passes. For the "Zoologist Pass", to come and enjoy the wild life for a half hour before school starts, students must purchase the pass by using positive behavior coupons. The "Pooper Scooper Pass", on the other hand, PAYS positive behavior coupons and allows 7<sup>th</sup> graders to take part in the feeding, cleaning and care of the various insects, fish, aquatic turtles, Leopard Geckos, creek inhabitants and the "Mice Girls." Recently, two students serving a morning detention got caught up in the excitement and mustered their courage to hold a lizard for the first time in their



lives! After the bell had rung and the children scampered to their homerooms, Mrs. Shrum realized they had not served the detention. In retrospect, she figures

that this life experience trumped a consequence.

"Our class welcomes business partners who would like to donate equipment or supplies."



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