



Girl Scouts of Connecticut CT SWEF Grant Report

Environmental Program at GSOFCT Camps – Summer 2013

Spider Wonders!

Our goal this summer was to train facilitators to deliver the "Growing Up Wild" program at all nine of our day and resident camps so that our campers would:

- better understand spiders and their importance in our ecosystem,
- know how to behave when seeing a spider, and
- with this awareness, be more comfortable around spiders.

We trained 18 summer camp staff prior to the start of the camp season and provided them with the Growing Up Wild book, supplies, and materials to deliver the program. We supplied the camps with different fiction and non-fiction books featuring spiders to enhance our literacy program. Our camp stores sold bright pink T-shirts with a spider web and a spider on them that has their camp name and our slogan for this summer, "It's your web, spin it!" We also sold water bottles with the web on them.

As part of the program the girls first drew pictures of spiders as they knew them. The first spiders were often scary or Black Widows. At the end of the program, they drew another picture with what they had learned. The spiders were often cute, sometimes with smiling faces. The good news is that the drawings did show that the girls learned basic spider anatomy and they depicted different webs. The better news is that they were so proud of their artwork and what they had learned that they wanted to take their pictures home. The only bad news is we have very few to share.

The facilitators shared that not only the girls but their counselors were more comfortable around spiders after the classes. This helped the staff be better role models.

At one camp, the class moved to an area where spiders frequented so they could see them in their habitats! Walks from activity to activity often included looking for spiders. Girls were heard to exclaim, "It's so sparkly!" and "It's beautiful!" when they came upon a web. This is a very different reaction from prior to the classes when what we heard was, "Gross!!"

Girls learned some fun songs to remember the parts of a spider and this was heard being sung as they traveled through camp. At one camp the staff sang one of the songs at their closing banquet.

Some of the questions the girls asked were, "Do spiders sleep?" "Are tarantulas real?" "What if I find one on a toilet seat?"

A thank you note we received from a camper listed what she did at camp and "Learned about spiders" is on her list right next to "Made new friends every day!!!!!!" That's very high billing.

3,550 girls and 200 camp counselors participated in our first multi-camp environmental program. While all of the girls enjoyed the program and learned things about spiders that they didn't know, the material was focused towards girls ages 5 - 11. We believe that offering an additional curriculum for girls ages 12 - 16 would engage them to an even greater degree. Next year we want to teach about bats and while we won't need to purchase additional Growing Up Wild books, we will need Project Wild books for the older girl version and would like to bring live bat programs into the camps.

Thank you so much for supporting our efforts! This was an ambitious undertaking that would not have happened, let alone be so successful, without your help.

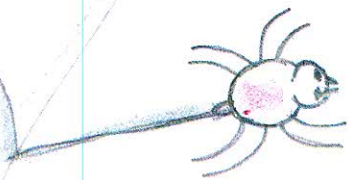
Respectfully submitted,
Alexandra Thomas
Camp Manager
GSOFACT

Grant Expenditures

Expense Item	Cost
Growing Up Wild book	\$270
Fiction and non-fiction books	540
Materials for training	75
Program delivery supplies*	900
Total	\$1,785
Revenue	
Grant received from CT SWEP	\$1,200
GSOFACT operating budget	585
	\$1,785

*art supplies, poster, book marks, take-home flyer, plastic spiders, food

Spider city



Lesson 2 third, fourth, fifth, sixth grade.

We discussed the different spiders in camp and used spider books to identify the spiders the campers observed in their units.

One unit captured a jumping spider that was dragging its web and sac of eggs. We set up a spider habitat near some rocks so we could observe the spider. The spiders were very cooperative and hatched their eggs during camp hours so all the campers could see how many spiders came out of the sacs. I found some spider balls in JoAnn fabrics.

the non-fiction read-alouds and fiction spider stories.

Even the pool staff nursed a spider sac on their beach ball and thrilled the campers when the babies hatched.

Every day, campers announced to me what the spiders were doing in their units, what kind of bugs ~~hatched~~ were caught in the webs, and what kind of spiders living in their unit.



