

## Educational Activities – Northern Middle School Science Students Visit

### Deep Creek Lake Discovery Center



**The DCL100 Committee made local student educational activities on Deep Creek Lake one of its top priorities for the 100th-anniversary celebrations. To make these activities possible, the Deep Creek Watershed Foundation and the DCL100 Committee are funding several field trips, including the costs for transportation, substitute teachers, and equipment.**

A series of field trips was held this spring with ~375 science students from Northern Middle School visiting the DCL Discovery Center for hiking tours, hands-on presentations, nature observation, and watercolor painting to learn about the ecology and conservation of the animals and plants of the lake and surrounding forests. Northern Middle School Science teachers, Darren Wilburn, Tanner Faith, and Lorie Burdock, collaborated with the DNR Parks staff, Christine Smith, Kaitlyn Mitchell, and Roy Musselwhite to develop the field trip. The goal of these field trips is to deepen students' understanding of Deep Creek Lake's ecology and teach them how to be good stewards of their local watersheds.

Students learned about the importance of water quality testing to determine whether water is potable. Using only their senses, they tested five water samples of varying clarity, colors, and smells. Despite appearances, the brown and dark purple water samples (cocoa powder and purple food dye, respectively) were safe to drink. pH testing of the clear, odorless water sample revealed an acidic solution.

Students drew their ideal river or lakefront property to understand better how our activities can pollute rivers and lakes. They discussed how the different activities and structures may or may not contribute to water pollution at the site and downstream. Students' dream properties included dragons, roller coasters, dirt bike trails, forest hiking trails, cabins, and

recycling plants. Two serious entrepreneurs covered every inch of their property with revenue-generating activities with two houses for rent (one a motorhome), wind turbines, a solar panel field, a convenience store, McDonald's, four docks to rent, a soccer field and a boat house with club fees, and a smaller cabin for them to live. Several students articulated the point and nonpoint source pollution affecting Deep Creek Lake. The group also did a great job identifying all of these in the students' ideal lake property visions.

Christine Smith, a Deep Creek State Park ranger, presented a hands-on activity about the natural history of reptiles and amphibians that call the Deep Creek Lake watershed home. Students could touch and see a corn snake and a box turtle, two of the Center's live animals.

Much thanks to Molly Ramsey, the Deep Creek Watershed Coordinator and member of the DCL100 Committee for doing the legwork to set up this and future tours!





