

# HOW CAN WE RESTORE OUR OUTDOOR CLASSROOM?



## ALGONQUIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Bioblitz Spring 2023

### STANDARDS COVERED

**Science 5-ESS3-1: Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.**

**Social Studies: P3 Public Discourse and Decision Making**



### SOLVING A PROBLEM

Algonquin Elementary students from Nikki DeGowske's fifth grade class realized their school's trails, pond and dock had been neglected for years and were in poor condition. The students brainstormed a vision for use of the outdoor classroom and ideas to restore it.

### PARTNERS TEAM UP

Nikki reached out to the community for assistance with bringing her student's vision to life, which resulted in rapid networking of resources and volunteers. Nikki shared, "Social media was so powerful in helping get community action, funds and support. So many wanted to be a part of this, and continue to do so." The Algonac Lions Club cleared trails in the wooded lot, Algonac Jr./Sr. High School students provided mentorship to the younger students, and environmental organizations like the Michigan DNR and Friends of the St. Clair River facilitated a bioblitz of the property to inventory invasive and native plants and animals. A bioblitz allows students to assess track the diversity of all living things found within their outdoor classroom.

### A WIN FOR EVERYONE

Nikki's classroom received accolades from local media as well as the school board for the project's success. The project incorporated science and social studies standards while fostering community relationships centered on solving an authentic problem. Other projects in the pipeline for Algonquin's outdoor classroom include a storywalk and educational signage using student photos, and nesting boxes. Local groups continue to pledge funding to help restore the Outdoor Classroom.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Algonac Community Schools
- Algonac Rotary Club
- Algonac Lions Club
- Clay Township
- Friends of the St. Clair River
- MI Dept of Natural Resources
- St. Clair County RESA
- St. Clair Flats Waterfowlers



*"It truly is happening because we are all working together as a school and community." - Nikki DeGowske, 5th grade teacher*



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