

May is Outdoor Science Learning Month

The goal is to have every student in NH participate in some outdoor science activity during the month of May. Recently, there has been a great deal of discussion about the importance of connecting with nature. This generation of school children has limited contact with nature and the outdoors. In an effort to encourage schools to enrich their science curricula and get children and adults outside, the New Hampshire informal science community has gathered together resources for outdoor learning opportunities that classroom teachers can use with students. Information will also be included about places to take students on field trips for additional science study.

Many New Hampshire schools have school yard habitats, outdoor classrooms, nature trails and gardens. Other schools have local parks and community green areas within a short walk. NH has wonderful resources and a variety of natural environments including tidal areas, fields, forests and mountains. May is a wonderful time to get children outside! Winter is over. The leaves are coming out on the trees. Plants are sprouting and song birds are returning to the north from a long winter in the south.

But wait; **there is a science test in May!** Many schools and districts, in an attempt to “cram” for the test, remove outdoor observations, labs & activities, and field trips from the curriculum during the weeks and days preceding the test. Since the NECAP Science Assessment is not designed to measure how well students remember vocabulary but is designed to see how students think and understand science, this “cram effort” may not translate into increased scores on the assessment. It may increase the test anxiety felt by students and teachers in the school.

Success on the NECAP Science Assessment depends on students having access to a rich and well connected science curriculum year round and throughout their school career. Students should have opportunities to make observations, ask questions, develop those questions into investigations, work collaboratively, collect data, and use that data to support or refute their ideas.

So let's get NH kids outside to engage in science and scientific thinking. The resources will be available at the NECAP Test Administration workshops or can be downloaded from the web. (web location to be decided soon). Check the NH Science Blog for more information: www.nheon.org/science.

Find more information and activities at: <https://outdoorsciencemonth.pbwiki.com>

Invite Key: May