

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Middletown students prepare for Connecticut State BioBlitz.

Middletown, CT-- Twenty-one district-wide teachers from the Middletown Public School District are preparing for the Connecticut State BioBlitz by holding a number of Mini-BioBlitzes throughout the month of May. Students involved in the Mini-BioBlitzes will investigate their local habitats to discover what species live around their schools.

“The hands-on activities of the Mini-BioBlitzes will be a great way to excite students about science by having them act as scientists in search of living things,” said Principal James Gaudreau of the Wilbert Snow Middle School.

The school system is providing each of the participating classes with a Mini-BioBlitz kit and easy-to-follow lessons. The kit will include butterfly nets, magnifying glasses, bug boxes, various guides related to birds, trees, insects, and wild flowers, binoculars, and display boards.

The students’ main task will involve going outside on the school grounds to locate and catalog as many living things as possible. Students may list birds, animals, insects, plants, wild flowers, and trees of different species. The goal will then be to create show boards that document their findings and put them display during the BioBlitz on June 9 at Snow School. The one elementary class and one middle school class that find and document the greatest number of species will also be recognized on Saturday June 9th at the Connecticut State BioBlitz and treated to a recognition lunch at their school.

The internationally recognized Connecticut State BioBlitz will take place in Middletown, Connecticut, June 9, 2007, 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., with the Wilbert Snow School serving as the "base camp" and the hub of public activity. The City of Middletown, Wesleyan University, Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut and a growing list of community organizations have teamed up with the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Center for Conservation and Biodiversity, part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn, to host this year's event.

The BioBlitz is a distinctive scientific endeavor- part contest, part festival, and part educational event. It will bring together scientists from a number of universities and scientific institutions in a race against time to see how many species they can count in a 24-hour biological survey. The public will have the opportunity to observe the scientists' activities, to interact with them, and to participate in other citywide activities presented by the BioBlitz partners and a host of nature-oriented organizations.

BioBlitz is a celebration of the diversity of life in our backyards. As we gain valuable information about the natural world within urban environments, we can begin to understand the extent to which the urban areas are sustaining the richness of Connecticut's biodiversity. For additional information please visit <http://web.uconn.edu/mnh/bioblitz/>

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