

2024 MWEE Award Winners



MWEE SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Millville Jr/Sr High School Agriculture Department

The Millville Jr/Sr High School Agriculture Department MWEE experience took place during the 2022-2023 school year and continues to occur this school year. Ms. Guise, the Agriculture Education Teacher, made the connection with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and began implementing the Eels in the Classroom program in her Wildlife Management and Natural Resource Management courses. Throughout the MWEE experience, students participated in cross-curricular learning activities, engaged with industry guest speakers, competed in the Agriscience Fair, and learned about the importance of the American Eel within the Susquehanna River Basin. At the conclusion of the MWEE experience, students demonstrated an average growth in knowledge of 17% (with some growth as high as 43%). In addition, 47% of students stated that they strongly agreed that the MWEE experience "deepened their understanding of environmental science" and 52% of students stated the experience "taught industry skills related to environmental science" that they could use in future careers within the field.



Riverbend Environmental Education Center Riverbend's Nature-Based STEM Community of Practice

The Nature-Based STEM Community of Practice is a yearlong PD program that gives teachers both confidence and skill in teaching nature-based STEM outdoors on their school grounds and beyond. Teachers become adept in teaching science with the new STEELS standards by designing and completing a MWEE with their students. This program develops teacher leaders in MWEEs and STEELS, phenomenon-based learning, outdoor nature education, sustainability, and environmental literacy, and it supports teachers with a regional community of peer science teachers and professional environmental educators.



Jill Shashaty

Jill Shashaty serves as Riverbend's Education Specialist. In this role, she develops EE programming for students and PD for teachers, directs Riverbend's Nature-Based STEM Community of Practice, and ensures that Riverbend's programs embody high-quality, best-practice environmental and science education. Jill's work in education has included teaching literature and writing in high school and university classrooms, with the natural world always a focal point of her teaching and research. She brings this interdisciplinary mindset to her work in STEM education. Jill is passionate about high-quality education for all learners, especially young children, and volunteers in the ECE field, with Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts, and as a PA Master Naturalist.

Suzanne Safran

Suzanne Safran serves as Riverbend's Education Operations Manager, designing programs, connecting with community partners, and overseeing program logistics. She is passionate about Riverbend's student-centered, hands-on approach to environmental education, and commitment to equity and access as core values in our work. Suzanne is an outdoor enthusiast who loves hiking, camping, and birding especially. She holds a BS in Biology from James Madison University, an MS in Public Policy from Georgia Institute of Technology, and is currently working toward a M.Ed. in Environmental Education at Slippery Rock University.