

User and Non-user Assessment Study of Project WILD Materials

Standage Accureach, Inc.

June, 1990

The primary objectives of this study were to analyze the use and nonuse of Project WILD, the impact of Project WILD and areas for improvement to Project WILD.

Project WILD has increased the teaching time devoted to wildlife issues for 84.1% of the users -- indicating that Project WILD is adding to wildlife curriculum rather than replacing other wildlife curriculum.

For nearly one-fourth of the respondents, Project WILD is their only source of wildlife curriculum material.

While the activities in the Project WILD material are clearly a favorite aspect of the program, there is significant interest in supplementing the activity guides and cross-referencing with textbooks. Along with offering additional workshops, these actions would be very helpful in better utilizing Project WILD.

Teachers appreciate "hands-on" involvement of activities.

The impact of Project WILD increased with the number of activities used per year.

There is a direct correlation between the impact of Project WILD and attendance at a Project WILD workshop, but the length of the workshop is not a significant contributor to its impact, when comparing the traditional 6 hour workshop to workshops of longer lengths (9 hrs.)

The most frequently used activities are environmentally oriented -- recycling and litter -- rather than those specifically related to wildlife.

Another suggested area for improvement is in advertising or marketing the program to reach more people. Users are clearly enthusiastic

In terms of the impact of Project WILD, the areas of awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward wildlife and the environment improved for the majority of students. However, the impact on social and academic skills was not as strong. Thus, Project WILD seems to be achieving its primary goal of wildlife/environmental education, but spin-off effects are not necessarily evident.

Teachers and other users perceive that the messages of wildlife survival, habitat and responsible decision-making are being received by their students (over 90% for each measurement).

Users of Project WILD overwhelmingly agree that it offers a fair and balanced approach to the issue. (98.7% strongly or somewhat agree.)

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Analysis of non-users is illuminating in considering areas in which to strengthen the program:

- had not received guide
- secondary teachers have more difficulty incorporating program into curriculum than elementary teachers
- primary reason: lack of opportunity and not enough room in the curriculum

Respondents were enthusiastic about continued use of Project WILD materials.

The majority of Project WILD participants have encouraged colleagues to participate (86.5%) and many (79.5%) have loaned or shown their materials to other educators.

Participants believe Project WILD is fair and balanced in its approach.

Over 90% of educators strongly or somewhat agreed that their own attitudes had been changed and that the workshop was one of their most valuable sources of support.

Recommendations:

- Provide additional materials to supplement activity guides.
- Offer additional workshops.
- Cross-reference Project WILD and textbooks.
- Expand to reach targeted groups (students with special needs, youth at risk, urban students).
- Advertise better for Project WILD to reach more people.