



### **2016 Carl Weber Award – Ann Strozyk**

Ann Strozyk is a Howard County Public School System Environmental Educator (HCPSS) for The Howard County Conservancy, She has been an educator for 22 years with the last 7 years concentrating on water monitoring. .

Ann has developed, maintained and improved the outdoor education programs at the Conservancy. Beginning as stream surveys of the Davis Branch of the Patapsco River, these outdoor education experiences have evolved into countywide Schoolyard Assessments and Stream Surveys for all high schools and now statewide teacher and student involvement. Ann implemented a Howard County Watershed Report Card (WRC), and advocated for improvements of the schools and stream-sites at a Watershed Summit. In 2016, Ann progressed the Watershed Report Card program statewide. Currently seven counties are involved in the WRC. Ultimately the goal of the Program is for students to become scientists, community and citizen stewards for the Chesapeake Bay.

In 2014, the Conservancy was awarded a CBT Grant to study the sub-watersheds of the Chesapeake Bay in Howard County. Ann coordinated efforts among the schools allowing them to have their own outdoor education MWEE at either a stream or on their school site. Ann enlisted and trained several Watershed Coaches, who provided support for teachers and students. Ann developed lessons that aligned with the Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards, and Environmental Literacy.

In 2015, the Conservancy was awarded a three-year NOAA Grant that allows all schools the opportunity to assess both their schoolyards and local streams. Seven streams will now be monitored twice a year in an effort to collect annual data for analyses using abiotic and biotic macroinvertebrate surveys. In addition, a DNR Grant provided funding for a WRC Curriculum Guide with DNR MBSS expert

guidance at the streams. As a result of the stream assessments, DNR updated the Macroinvertebrate Survey Sheet, creating a new category of less tolerant macroinvertebrates.

Ann has placed lessons, PowerPoints and resources for teacher use on the intranet that is maintained by the HCPSS's staff support resources. She encourages teachers to post their modified lessons there as well. Many of the HCPSS students have never embarked on this type of outdoor education whereby they measure authentic data, analyze it, and advocate for ways to improve the stream or school surroundings to ultimately improve the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay. Webinars provide content and exposure to college and career exploration. The Watershed Summit affords the students the opportunity to present their experiences and action plans to county and state officials. Representatives at the Watershed Summit, like the HC Office of Community Sustainability, will promote continued ongoing citizen science and action implementation for these students. Data is also being shared using the NASA GLOBE Program, a science and education program that provides students and the public worldwide with the opportunity to participate in data collection and the scientific process, and contribute meaningfully to our understanding of the Earth system and global environment.

One of the most significant developments from the Watershed Report Card program is a new stream survey tool, developed by our Howard County students in partnership with the DNR. Students raised questions about the first year's data and wanted answers. By working with DNR MBSS, they were able to develop a tool that provides more accurate results on the biological health of streams. The tool is now used statewide by DNR's citizen science program, Stream Waders, which evaluates more than 100 streams across the state.

Ann Strozyk has made so many connections and correlations with students, teachers, coaches, and outside professionals, her energy and enthusiasm are contagious. She exemplifies spirit, vision, and leadership while managing the

Howard County Watershed Project, and she promotes awareness, advocacy, and stewardship for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and its sub-watershed tributaries.