



# St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## PRESS RELEASE

For release:  
Ohiari:ha/June 19, 2012

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### **St. Lawrence River Area of Concern Program Engages Grade Three Students**

#### *Environmental Education Program*

Akwesasne Territory - On Tuesday, June 12, 2012 grade three students from the St. Regis Mohawk and Salmon River Elementary schools learned about some important aquatic species and their habitats. The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) Environment Division's St. Lawrence River Massena/Akwesasne Area of Concern (AOC) program hosted the "Grade 3 Educational Outreach Day." They held it at the Hogsburg-Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department (HAVFD) station.

Students spent the morning with SRMT Environment staff and volunteers making their way through different activity stations. These were designed to expose students to the importance of the natural environment. At one station, students explored a nearby pond and collected their own water samples to test water quality. They learned how water quality affects more than just boating and swimming and that many animals and fish depend on the water for drinking, food and shelter.

Another station demonstrated animal adaptations to the aquatic environment using common household items to imitate the adaptations of a beaver. Students also learned how the adaptations of the beaver make them natural engineers. They are capable of drastically changing their environment and create new habitat and benefits to other species. At another station, students got up close and personal with mink and otter skins and skulls and got a glimpse into their natural habitats. They also learned how these animals depend on the different elements of their habitats to survive by playing an interactive population game.

In yet another station, students were exposed to the secret world of freshwater mussels by reenacting their lifecycle. Students played the role of a newly formed mussel and they travelled up the lifecycle to adulthood. At the final activity, students listened to a story of the lake sturgeon life history as told by the Sturgeon Restoration program's own mascot, "Stewie the Sturgeon." They also watched a film on sturgeon restoration and made their own lake sturgeon puppets to take home with them.

The St. Lawrence River AOC program was created in response to the U.S./Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The agreement sets out to identify and begin restoring areas listed as of "concern" under specific criteria. There are 43 AOCs located throughout the U.S. and Canada. Massena/Akwesasne is one of five internationally recognized areas. Through outreach and community events, the SRMT, along with other U.S. agencies and various interest groups are working together for education and awareness on the progress with the St. Lawrence River AOC.

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk People.

**Helping Build A Better Tomorrow**

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