



# Extension Snapshot

## Explore and Learn About Conservation at Mason County Discovery Day

Mason County Discovery Day was held Friday, September 16 at Rockwell Park in Havana for 3rd graders from across the county. Throughout the day, 227 students, along with their teachers and helpers, moved through 10 learning stations about conservation and how we can preserve and take care of our natural resources. Prior to the event, Mason County Extension staff, along with Amy Ishmael from the Soil & Water District, gathered materials from participating agencies (including 4-H & SNAP-ED) to fill drawstring backpacks, which were delivered to the schools in the county. On the day of the event, students were able to wear their backpacks with the Discovery Day logo and already had some great resources on the topics covered. Over the past 10 years this event has been offered to all the 3rd graders in Mason County at no expense to the schools through grants and donations.



Marking the 10 year anniversary of Discovery Day, special guests Smokey the Bear and Elliot Eagle stopped by during lunch to deliver their conservation message to students. Havana High School students volunteered to assist with character costumes and to serve as escorts, earning community service hours towards high school graduation.

Participating agencies included: IDNR, U of I Extension, Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois EPA, Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge, and Dickson Mounds Museum, as well as retired teachers and volunteers.

Youth and teachers participating in Discovery Day expressed how much fun they had while learning new and interesting information about their local environment.

Evaluation information collected will help the event continue to provide a quality learning experience for third grade students in Mason County in the future.

For more information about the 4-H Youth Development program in Mason County, please contact Christine Belless, Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development at [cbelless@illinois.edu](mailto:cbelless@illinois.edu) or 309-543-3308.

