





**“Every Classroom a Green Classroom”**  
**Green Classroom Profile: *Jennifer Poodry***  
*Teacher Leadership Institute for Sustainability 2022-2023*

**TEACHER LEADER BIO: *Jennifer Poodry***

*I teach all subjects to third (and sometimes fourth) grade students at Bradley Elementary School in Corralitos, California. I have a deep interest in the outdoors, conservation, ecology, and environmental science. Opening the doors to experience and immersion in the natural world for my students is my passion.*



**BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

<b>Class(es)</b>	# of student impacted by this project: 24+ (additional students impacted at Open House with poster presentation and information presented) Grade level(s): 3 (K-6) Content area(s) of focus for this project: Water Conservation/Watershed Impact Student Quote: <i>“This project was fun and we learned how important it is to save water so that the fish can live out their lives and lay their eggs.” Dolores, grade 3</i>	
<b>School Site</b>	Bradley Elementary	
<b>School Demographics</b>	Grades served: K-6 # students: 496 % English learners: 17% % qualifying for free and reduced price meals: 54%	
<b>District</b>	Pajaro Valley Unified School District	
<b>District Demographics</b>	Grades served: Tk-12 # students: 19,000 % English learners: 39% % qualifying for free and reduced price meals: 78%	
<b>General Vision/Mission of School and/or district</b>	Bradley School Mission: To provide rigorous academic instruction in an innovative environment that values mutual respect, perseverance, resilience, leadership, and cultural diversity.	

## 1) ORIGINAL GOALS AND INTENTIONS

What originally drew you to this program?

Through my work over the years with the Teacher Leadership Institutes I have broadened my understanding of NGSS science practices and the importance of developing environmental literacy as a key component of any science curriculum. I value the collaboration of this experienced and passionate group of educators.

Share your vision for your Green Classroom. How has this program affected this vision?

A Green Classroom is: One where resources are thoughtfully managed and utilized. One where environmental impact is considered and explored. One where indoor and outdoor spaces are used interchangeably and fluidly for learning. One where curiosity is a key value. This program has inspired me by connecting me to teachers (and resources) throughout the county who express a like vision for expanding environmental literacy and education.

## 2) KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL BUILDING

A critical part of this program is building knowledge and skills related to Sustainable Schools. Examples include: Environmental Literacy & Sustainability Frameworks; Environmental Identity; Building student engagement through Campus, Curriculum, Community and Culture efforts; Continuum of Environmental Literacy Integration. **Where are you experiencing the most growth in your knowledge and skills related to being a teacher leader for sustainability?**

Building student engagement through campus, curriculum, community, and culture efforts. Connecting students to nature (and exploring environmental identity) through local field experiences, observation practice, and classroom study.

## 3) ACTION - COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Provide a brief summary of the purpose of your project and overall goals

**Coastal Watershed Steelhead Trout Unit:**  
Students will build an understanding of, and be able to model, the lifecycle and migration pattern of a local fish species. Students will identify the resource needs of the species.

Students will investigate how human activity impacts the ability of this and other species to survive and thrive here. The goal is to develop a desire to take action and change behavior in ourselves and others to mitigate negative human impacts on the watershed.



**How does this project connect to your Green Classroom vision and the broader mission and vision of the school/district?**

This project explores local environmental impacts and considers authentic problems and solutions, with students gaining outdoor experiences and taking action to teach others.

**What specific learning intention(s) did you share with your students?**

We will learn about a key animal species in our local watershed and how we, humans impact the survival and health of this species and our watershed. We will become Watershed Rangers - educating others about the watershed and our impact on it.

**How did this project serve your pre-existing instructional goals?** Students gained valuable outdoor experiences and built environmental literacy and identity. They gained an understanding of human impact on an important local ecosystem. They gained a desire to take action and teach others about water conservation.

#### 4) ACTION - IMPLEMENTATION STORY

Describe how implementation of your community impact project went. *If your project has not finished yet, describe how the start has gone, and how you anticipate it completing.*

**General story of implementation:** The project was very successful. Throughout the year we have studied local ecosystems and habitats and how animals adapt to their environments. We took a field

trip to the Seymour Center and studied adaptations over time. We had in-class lessons with Maria, from Coastal Watershed Council, to engage the student's interest in our local watershed by introducing the phenomenon of trout migration in the San Lorenzo River. As part of the 4 week lesson sequence, we took a field trip to the San Lorenzo River to make observations and take water samples. We also learned about the steelhead life cycle and made a model showing the migration paths and water needs throughout all of the phases of life and reproduction. The culmination of the unit was to consider human impact on the quantity and quality of water available in the San Lorenzo River and decide if we could take action to mitigate harmful impacts. The students created posters and poster boards educating others about the needs of the steelhead trout and how changing one or two specific behaviors to conserve water could make a difference.

**Challenges and obstacles and how you overcame them:**

Students had a strong desire to see actual Steelhead Trout, especially on our field experience. It was challenging to develop a strong connection for the students with a species they only get to read about. By adding photos, videos, and recalling fish we were able to see at the Seymour Marine Center - students were able to bridge this gap. We also were able to find some small fish during our field experience that were not trout, but were thriving in the same watershed. It was also challenging to get students to move beyond "not littering or polluting" as the only way to help the fish. Numerous lessons and activities about water usage and where our water is sourced from, helped students see that water conservation is just as important and is something we can all do proactively every day.

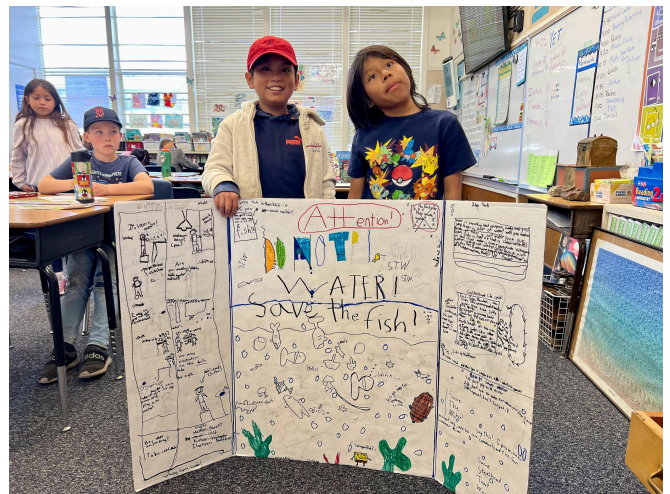
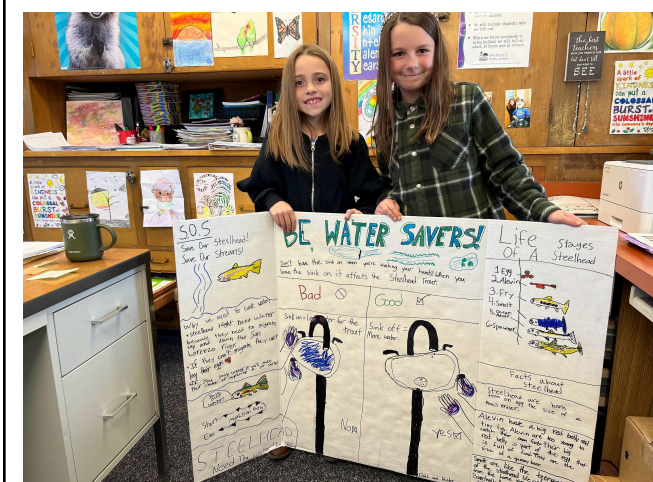
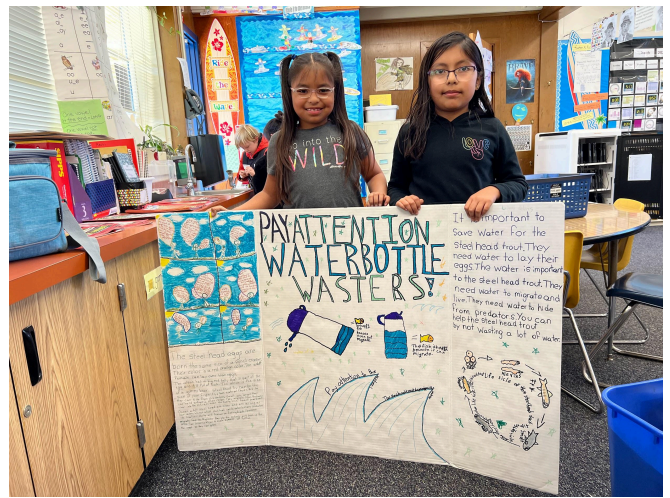
**Successes and what contributed to success:**

The students were very engaged by the field experience, the observations at the river bed, and the water quality measurements. They came up with detailed action projects (posters and poster boards) teaching strategies for water conservation and connecting them to important phases of the Steelhead Trout life cycle and migration. Timing this unit after outdoor observations, nature journaling, the field trip to the Seymour, and lessons about adaptation and environment helped students build the foundational knowledge and be open to taking this next step.

**Next Steps for this project:**

Students will be presenting their projects in class and displaying them at our all-school Open House in May.





## 5) ACTION - METRICS AND OUTCOMES

- **Overall Assessment:** How would you characterize the success of your project?
- **Ecological Benefit:** If possible, how were you able to measure the ecological benefit (reduced GHG emissions, reduced waste, increased biodiversity, etc.) and what were the outcomes?
- **Community & Culture Benefit:** If possible, how were you able to measure impacts on classroom culture and community (for example, students' sense of connection to nature, stewardship) and what were the outcomes?
- **Student and Staff Learning:** *Reflect on evidence of student learning from this project, and how this project shifted your classroom to further integrate environmental literacy.*

**Overall Assessment:** Maria and I were very impressed with the student engagement level, the recall/understanding of life stages and water needs, and the overall quality of the student action projects. Students have retained their interest and understanding since the completion of the project and are excited to visit Neary Lagoon and continue their exploration of our local watershed.

**Ecological Benefit:** Student growth in environmental identity and connection. Students taking action at home and school to reduce water consumption and teach others about the need for conservation.

**Culture & Community Benefit:** Student engagement with local environments and resources (Seymour Marine Center, Coastal Watershed, San Lorenzo River, Neary Lagoon). Student desire to share knowledge, specifically about human impact on our local watershed and a key species. Four students from my class joined our school "Green Team" and have expanded their work and learning regarding sustainability. Students see themselves as "Water Rangers" and feel a responsibility to engage and assist.

**Educational Benefit:** Hands-on science, authentic problem solving and connection to local issues, students as teachers - working through a 5E structured learning sequence and taking their learning to an "action stage".

*"This project was fun and we learned how important it is to save water so that the fish can live out their lives and lay their eggs." Dolores, grade 3*

## 6) REFLECTION AND COMMITMENTS

What is your enduring understanding about teaching for a sustainable future? And what are your commitments for next year and beyond for this important work?

**Reflection:** Now, more than ever before, the environmental education of our youth is critical. Their engagement, value of nature, and desire to change behavior in themselves and others to mitigate human impacts is essential. Building environmental identity and offering students a host of outdoor experiences that connect them to nature, is a central focus of my overall science instruction.

**Commitments:** Next year I will use the local EE partnerships to continue to connect my class with nature and extend our in-class lessons with field experiences. I would like to work with the "trout in the classroom" program next year and see if I can raise trout in the classroom with the students so they get to experience a species up close and throughout its life cycle. I would like to support our school's new Green Team and engage with them further.