

A photograph of three young people sitting on the ground in a field of green plants. They are looking at a small plant held by one of them. The image is overlaid with two text boxes.

Assessing the Impacts of Field Days for Youth

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Today

- Background on Lake County NRPD
- Research Design
- Results
- Conclusions and Implications





Goals of the research

- Identify the impacts of a single-day event
- Assess Lake Co field day for improvement

Natural Resources Field Day Lake County, MN

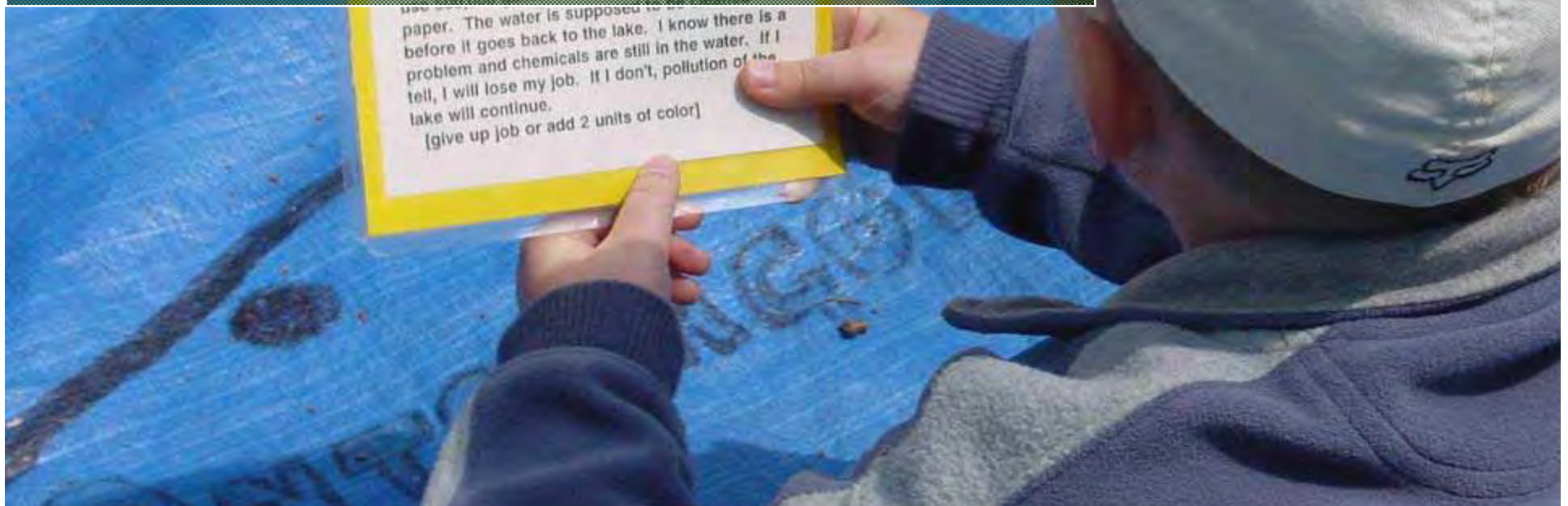
- **Goal – to educate youth about **cultural** and **natural** resources in Lake County**
- **All 6th graders, 3 schools**
- **In May every year since 1987**
- **Split Rock Lighthouse State Park**



Best Practices for Field Days

- Pre-event classroom visits, advance materials
- Introduction – prepares students for the day
 - Outline goals, expectations
 - Manage novelty
 - Pique interest
- Theme integrates across stations
- End-of-day review of learning from the day

- Hands-on, interactive activities
- Class groups of 15-20 students
- 35 minute sessions
- Taught by professionals
- Lighthouse movie & tour
- 4 stations – forestry, recreation, water, wildlife conservation





Conservation station



Forestry station



Recreation station

Lake Superior station



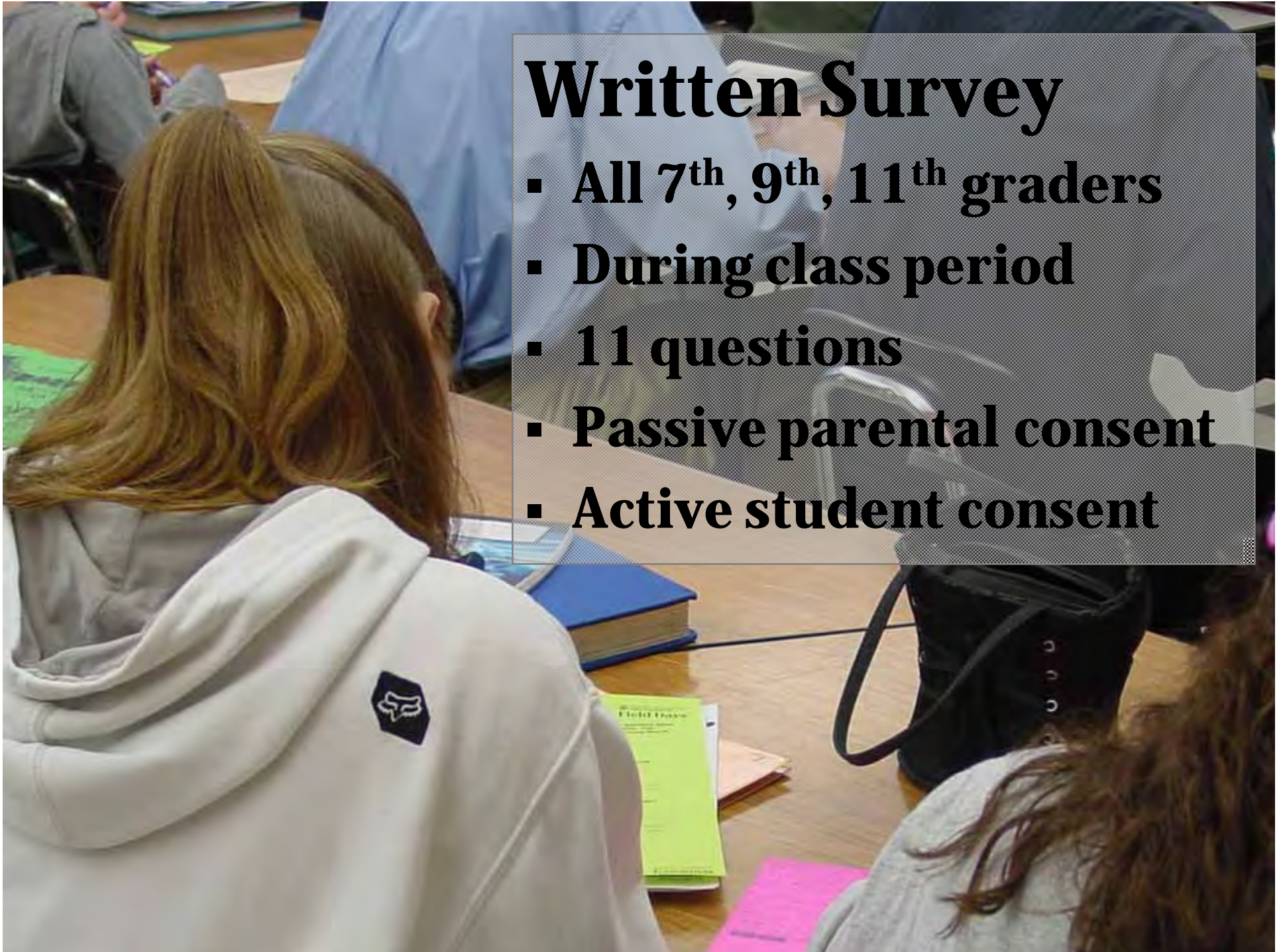
Survey Research

- Silver Bay & Two Harbors High Schools
- Written survey
- Focus groups
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - Presenters



Written Survey

- All 7th, 9th, 11th graders
- During class period
- 11 questions
- Passive parental consent
- Active student consent



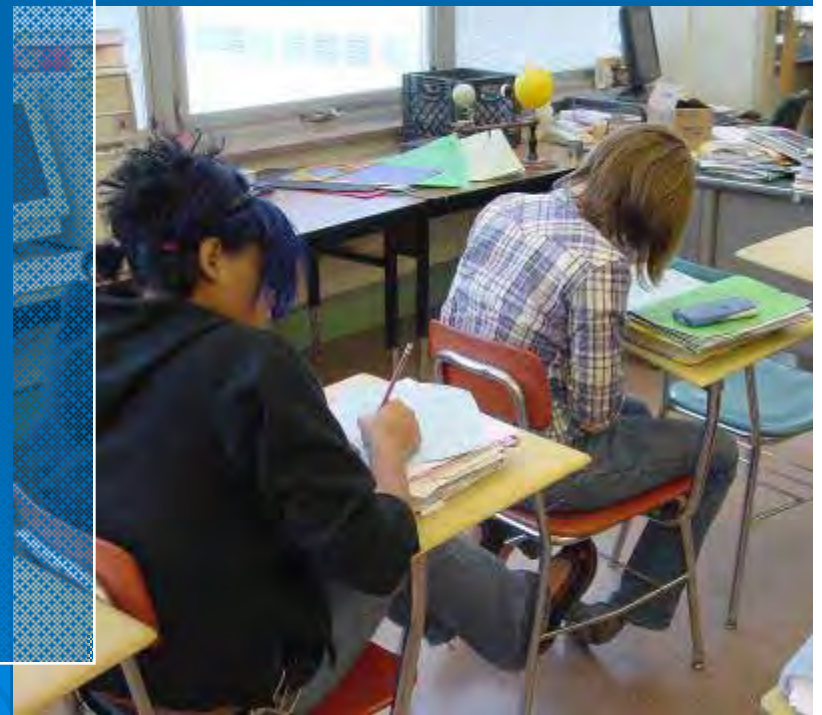
Survey Questions

- Do you remember the field day?
- What is one thing you learned?
- Did you do anything differently as a result?
- Do you still do it?



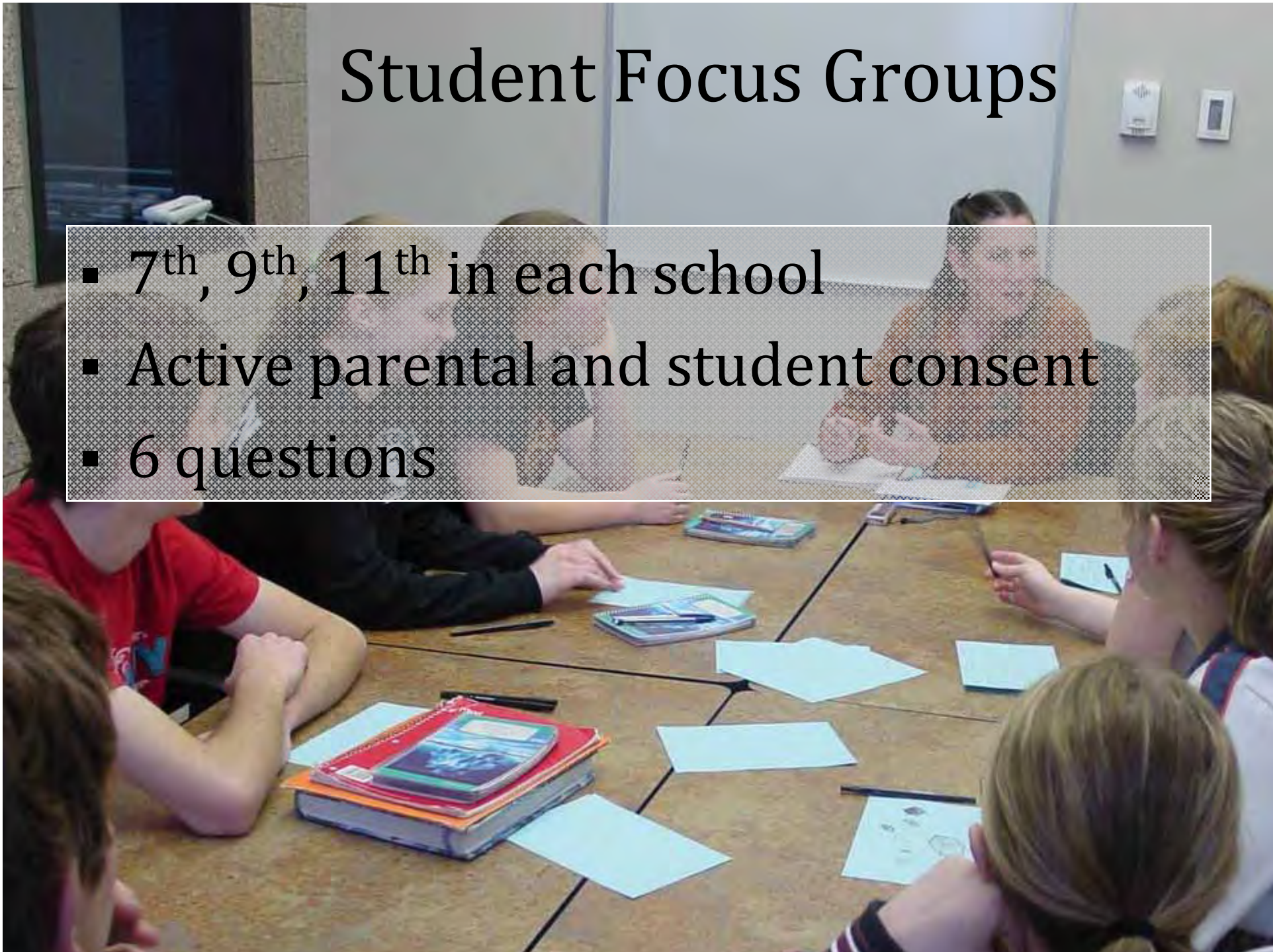
Survey Questions

- Did the day change how you look at natural resources?
- How much did the day increase your interest in going to college?
- Did the day influence your potential career choice?
- How can we improve?




Student Focus Groups

- 7th, 9th, 11th in each school
- Active parental and student consent
- 6 questions



Student Focus Group Questions

- What do you remember about the field day?
 - What was the best thing about it?
 - Write down 3 ways you were influenced.
 - Did it connect with your school work?
 - Compare it with other student field trips.
 - How could we improve the day?
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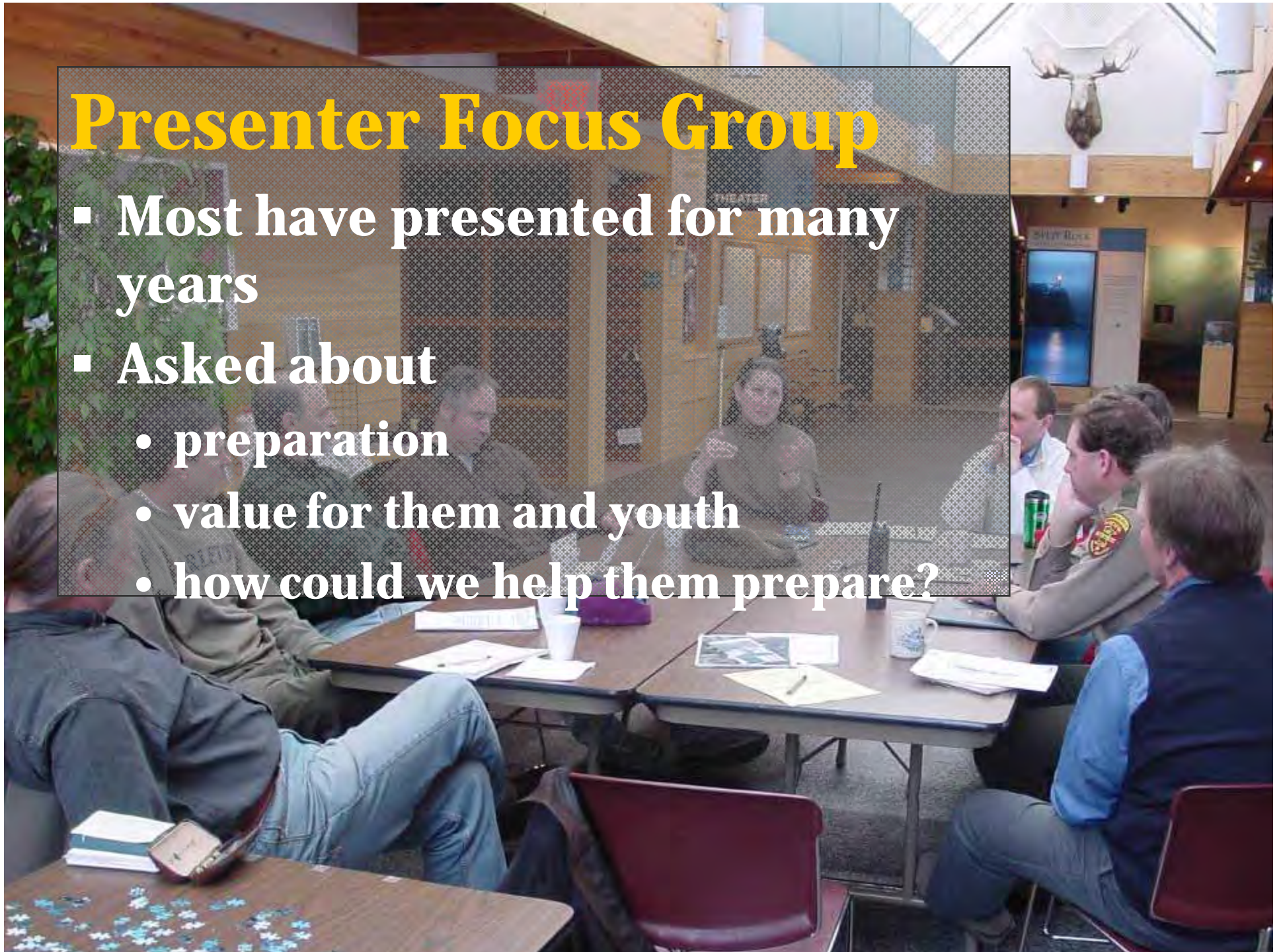
Teacher Focus Groups

- 6th grade teachers
- Asked about
 - value of the day
 - preparation & follow up
 - did students change?
 - how can we improve?



Presenter Focus Group

- Most have presented for many years
- Asked about
 - preparation
 - value for them and youth
 - how could we help them prepare?



Survey Results

both schools, all grades

- 352 surveys; 193 girls, 159 boys
- 64% remembered the field day
- 22% said they did something as a result
- 96% continue to do it

Survey Results

both schools, all grades

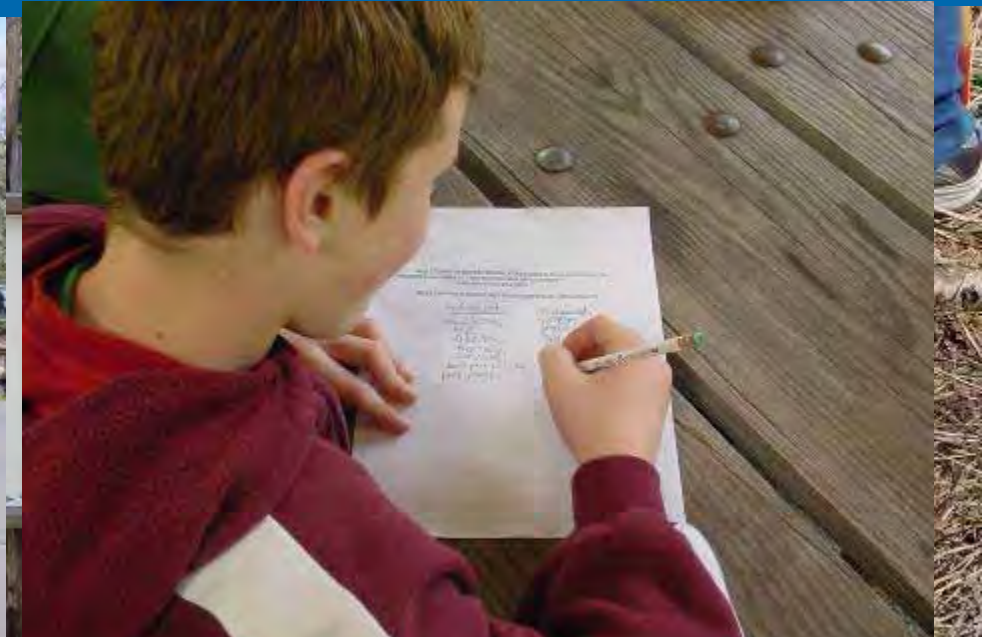
- 46% said it changed how they see issues involving natural resources
- 45% said it increased interest in college
- 19% said it affected career choice

Differences by grade & gender


- 74% of all 7th graders remembered
- 84% of Silver Bay remembered (all grades)
- 58% of Two Harbors remembered (all grades)
- 25% of girls changed behavior; 18% of boys
- 12% of TH 7th graders changed behavior;
46% SB 7th
- More 7th & 9th graders said it affected career choice than 11th graders

Results from student focus groups

- Place is important – Split Rock
- Interactive learning is key
- Being out of the classroom
- Reinforced the written survey
- Unclear connection with school work



Teacher focus groups results

- Look forward to the field day
 - Believe it has educational value
 - Find it complements classroom curriculum
 - Could integrate it more fully
 - Wish students could go to all sessions
 - Believe cultural AND natural resources are important
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Presenter focus group results

- Helps them accomplish departmental goals
- Enjoy and anticipate the event
- See educational value for students
- Don't perceive they do much prep
- See value in long-term involvement
- Roles as professionals – not as teachers

A background photograph showing a group of children holding hands in a circle outdoors. The children are of various ethnicities and are wearing casual clothing. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment with trees and grass visible in the background. The text is overlaid on this image.

Conclusions & Implications

- Students remembered details and concepts
- All participants valued event
- Clear evidence of learning & behavior change
- Opportunity & willingness to more fully integrate event with classroom work
- Regular evaluation will help improve the program

Implications

The background image shows two children in a natural, grassy setting. One child, wearing a dark jacket with light-colored stripes on the sleeves and blue jeans, is holding a long, thin wooden instrument, possibly a flute or a recorder, to their mouth. Another child, wearing a red shirt and pink and white striped pants, is partially visible in the foreground. The scene is outdoors with tall grass and some debris on the ground.

- Following Best Practices can help improve learning and stewardship
- Single-day field day events can have both short- and long-term impacts
- Regular evaluation will help improve the program

Changes made in 2007

- Extended day
- Advance material
- Volunteer letter

Unexpected outcomes

- **Effects of Thank You letters**
- **Students were eloquent and thoughtful about event, could make connections**
- **Older students remembered in great detail**
- **The day could be improved with simple changes**
- **Differences between TH & SB**



Thank You

- Lake County Forestry Department
- Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Lake Superior School District Faculty & Students
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Sea Grant Program
- Split Rock Lighthouse Historic Site
- Split Rock Lighthouse State Park
- University of Minnesota Extension

Comments?
Questions?

