

Saving the Penguins Project in Sixth Grade Science Sparks Great Ideas

February 1, 2023 – Solar panels and windmills for energy. Swimming pools to cool them off. Giant air-conditioners to keep them cold. These are just some of ideas that students in Jennifer Page’s sixth grade science classes at Woodbury Middle School came up with to help save the endangered population of penguins from extreme heat.

The premise of the project was to use what they learned about thermal energy to save the penguins. The idea was to give the penguin’s time to acclimate to a new climate in the Antarctic. The came up with innovative ideas to help the penguins survive by keeping the heat to a minimum.

Students researched at least five different elements that have endangered penguins including predators and diseases, geological events like volcanic eruptions, pollution, getting tangled in fishing nets, sea ice melting as well as severe and changing weather patterns. Using what they found, students designed and created dioramas to illustrate their plans to help these endangered seabirds in the wild. Sixth graders used the materials of their choice like paint, duct tape, popsicle sticks, dixie cups, cotton balls, pipe cleaners and more to create these visual models. Some ideas included penguin docks, windmills for cooling air, and enclosing the penguin nurseries while the birds grow.

Colton Gagnon and Colton Fangler teamed up to create a deep swimming pool in their diorama. “Leopard seals and bigger birds are their greatest danger,” Gagnon. “We’re building the penguins their own swimming pool to keep the predators away and to keep them cold.”





Colin Humowitz said warming temperatures are threatening the penguins and that prompted his idea of a high-powered air conditioning unit driven by windmills and solar panels to keep them cool. Humowitz used popsicle sticks to make solar panels and windmills in his diorama.

Maddie Taylor found that boat pollution was creating a problem for the penguins. Her project uses solar panels to power a filter to help clean the air.

