

PA Wilds Inspiring Entrepreneurs – Program Description

FORMAT & FOOTPRINT

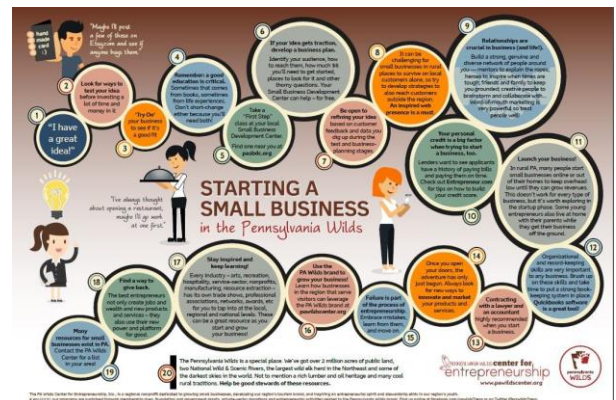
This program is available to the 50+ public high schools in the 12 ½ counties of the Pennsylvania Wilds region. The program uses real-life stories of entrepreneurs in the Pennsylvania Wilds to educate and inspire students in grades 9-12 about entrepreneurial and stewardship opportunities in their back yards. Teachers in participating schools sign up to have the 40-minute workshop brought to their classroom. Once there, the presenter uses class exercises, real-life business stories from the region captured on film and other tools such as handouts and visits by business owners to talk with the students about entrepreneurship in rural PA.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

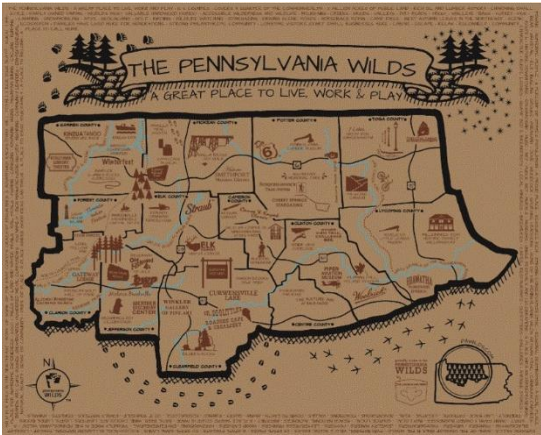
This program focuses on four main learning objectives, which are evaluated after each presentation through student surveys. The learning objectives are:

- Spending local matters. Entrepreneurship isn't for everyone, but everyone can have a hand in creating entrepreneurial communities by supporting small local businesses. Independently-owned businesses recycle a much larger share of their revenue back into the local economy, enriching the whole community. This is good for environmental sustainability, innovation and community character – all of which help the Pennsylvania Wilds region thrive.
- Failure is part of the process of entrepreneurship. The important thing is to learn something from it and get back up, or “fail forward.”
- Sustainability matters. The economy of the Pennsylvania Wilds is strongly tied to its natural assets, through nature tourism, resource extraction and other industries. It's



up to all of us – consumers and businesses – to be good stewards of these natural assets so they are here for future generations.

- People from all walks of life go into business in rural PA, at different stages in their life -- and this is an option for the students, too. Resources are available to help.



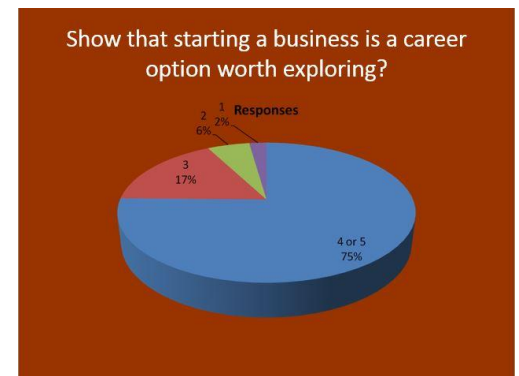
At the end of the presentation, we leave students with handouts to explore entrepreneurship further, as well as a keepsake letterpress map, “The Pennsylvania Wilds: A Great Place to Live, Work and Play,” that was made by one of the businesses they met on film. Our basic message with the map is: you come from a special place and wherever your travels take you, rural PA wants you and your good ideas back some day.

PILOT RESULTS

Thanks to grant funding from the PA Dept. of Community & Economic Development and the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, a pilot for this program was completed in Spring 2014 in seven public high schools in two PA Wilds counties. Twenty-eight high school classes signed up for the programming. An estimated 500 students were reached. Seventy-four percent of students surveyed in the pilot said the class encouraged them to shop locally; 75 percent said they now think business is a career path worth exploring. All of the high school superintendants said they’d like to see the programming return to their schools next year.

This program ties into state curriculum standards found under Standard Area 15.5.12 – Entrepreneurship (for grades 9-12), but no program like this currently exists in public schools. This program’s uniqueness is tied in part to its focus on the local regional landscape.

Because of its rural landscape, the Pennsylvania Wilds region presents unique challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurs, and this workshop is a way to start a conversation with students about those and to plant



seeds about what it possible. While the programming is wrapped in the PA Wilds brand to build a sense of regional identity and pride of place, the entrepreneurship messaging goes beyond nature tourism to include stories from other growth industries in the region.

Any field of study or interest – from science to English to math to woodshop to health – has the potential for business ideas to spring from it. For this reason, we encourage teachers from any discipline to consider bringing the programming to their classroom.

COST & FUNDING

This program is free to high schools thanks to generous funding from our sponsors. The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, the regional nonprofit that developed and operates the PA Wilds Inspiring Entrepreneurs Program, is a state-approved Educational Improvement Organization. That means corporations, banks and other organizations participating in the Commonwealth's [Educational Incentive Tax Credit Program](#) can donate to it to support its free programming in high schools - and get tax credits in return. Other private-sector donations are also an important funding stream for this program.

For more information:

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