

August 19, 2008



[Download Page One](#)

Login/Registration
Calendar
Weather
HersamAcorn.com
Amity Observer
Bridgeport News
Darien Times
Easton Courier
Fairfield Sun
Greenwich Post
Huntington Herald
Lewisboro Ledger
Milford Mirror
Monroe Courier
New Canaan Advertiser
Oxford Gazette
Redding Pilot
Ridgefield Press
Stratford Star
Trumbull Times
Valley Gazette
Weston Forum
Wilton Bulletin
Arts & Leisure
The HOME Monthly
Classified
Advertising

Learning about polar bears and climate change at Merwin Meadows



Written by [Justin Reynolds](#)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2008

For Jim Donaher of Gault Inc., children are the best teachers, and when it comes to saving energy, children can have a huge impact on their families.

On Thursday, summer campers at Merwin Meadows participated in Polar Bear Empathy Day. They learned about the problems facing the polar bear community and how energy conservation and the reduction of carbon footprints — the amount of greenhouse gases humans produce through activities — could help remedy them.

The event was co-sponsored by Gault, a home heating oil, propane and cooling company based in Westport, and Polar Bear International, a non-profit organization aimed at protecting polar bears.

About 75 campers listened to Gault's publicists, Jennifer Bebon and Cynthia Baumann, talk about the history of the polar bear, describe its physical attributes and discuss the problems facing the Arctic bear community due to global warming and climate change.

Ms. Bebon said male polar bears can weigh up to 1,500 pounds and that they have three and one-half to four inches of blubber on their bodies to help them stay warm in the winter. The two women wore down vests to mimic how the bears must feel as temperatures rise.

"We're wearing vests on this hot day to pretend we're polar bears," Ms. Bebon told the campers in the 84-degree weather. "I'm hot, by the way, I'm really hot."

Ms. Bebon said that since "the Earth is getting a lot warmer," polar bears are put in more danger as they have to swim a lot farther to find ice to rest on. She said scientists think the Arctic will be ice-free by 2040.



"The polar bears' habitat is melting at an alarming rate. This year, the polar bear was put on the endangered species list," Ms. Bebon said. "Scientists estimated there are only 20 to 25,000 polar bears throughout the Arctic. Scientists estimate we'll lose two-thirds of polar bears by 2050."

But all hope was not yet lost, Ms. Bebon said.

"You all can help us make a difference," she said. "We're here to inspire you, inform you and empower you."

Ms. Baumann said that while it is uncertain whether global warming is a natural phenomenon or a trend caused by humans, "there are certainly things we can do to try and reduce the trends."

In order to reduce our carbon footprints, we should try to recycle, turn lights off and unplug appliances when not in use, car pool and walk or bike instead of drive, she said.

A camp counselor said to Ms. Baumann that "green" breakthroughs may come with other, perhaps worse, challenges for the environment. For example, batteries from hybrid cars might have a terrible effect on the environment.

"Every opportunity that we have to reduce our carbon footprints also comes with a challenge," Ms. Baumann said. "Maybe one of you guys will come up with the answer" to these challenges, she said to the campers.

It might be odd for an energy company to advocate energy conservation, but Mr. Donaher said Gault has its eyes set on being Fairfield County's pioneer in starting a grass-roots energy conservation movement.

"We're an energy company, but we're pushing for energy conservation," Mr. Donaher said. "You just don't think about how much energy you could save by shutting things off when you're not using them."

Before the event at Merwin Meadows, the two companies had hosted Polar Bear Empathy Days in Fairfield and Westport, Mr. Donaher said.

Information: gault-pbi.com.

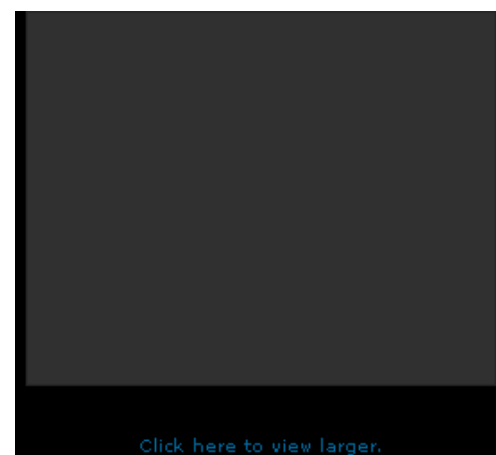


Add comment

Commenting is reserved for registered users. Click on "Login/Registration" in the left menu to log in or create a new account.

[JComments](#)

Multimedia



Welcome to
YOUR VILLAGE MARKET

WWW.VILLAGEMARKETWILTON.COM

BEST of the GOLD COAST
CONNECTICUT 2008

Come see for yourself!

Stepping Stones Museum for Children

Looking for something to do this summer?

Check out 100 THINGS TO DO

It offers suggestions for getting out and about in Fairfield and Westchester Counties.



WiltonBulletin.com

Serving the readers of Wilton, Connecticut

[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Columns](#) | [Community](#) | [Arts & Leisure](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Staff & Information](#) | [Archives](#) |

[Local News](#) [Obituaries](#)