



2022-23 Outdoor Experiences

Two half-day outdoor experiences can be combined for a full-day experience.

(Denotes teacher and/or parent led activities are a part of this outdoor experience.*

All grades - Discovery Hike (1-1.5 hours; Sept.-May) - Spontaneous interpretation. Nature only knows what we will find.

PreK- I Spy (45 minutes; Oct.-Nov. & late April-May) - Explore nature using letters, colors, and numbers.

K- *Nature Detectives (1.5 hours; late April-May) - Using their senses to uncover clues, “detectives” will investigate the forest through inquiry and hands-on observation.
K-LS1-1, K-ESS2-2, K-ESS3-1

1st grade - *Bird Nerds (2.5 hours; late April-May) - Discover how adult bird behaviors help young birds survive and thrive. Students will design a safe nest, protect and feed their “nestlings,” and hike to meet the birds in their habitats. 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1

1st & 3rd grade - *Insectology (1.5 & 2 hours; Sept.-Oct. & May) - Learn the characteristics of insects and their survival strategies. Collect insects to observe and identify.
1-LS1-1, 3-LS1-1

2nd grade - Plant Parts and Pollination (1.5 hours; Sept.-Oct. & late April-May) - Learn about plant parts and life cycles, pollination, and how animals interact with a plant community.
2-LS2-1, 2-LS2-2

2nd grade - *Pond Study (2.5 hours or all day; May) - A lake is an amazing habitat full of critter and u
Cancelled for 2023 chain life. 2-LS4-1, 2-ESS2-3

2nd grade - *Tree-rific (2.5 hours; October) - Students learn about the inner workings of trees, their benefit to wildlife, and tree identification.
2-LS2-1, 2-LS2-2, 2-LS4-1

3rd grade - *Birding Bonanza (2.5 hours; late April-May) - Students scour different habitats to learn about bird adaptations, practice using binoculars, and identify birds by sight and call.
3-LS1-1, 3-LS2-1, 3-LS4-2, 3-LS4-3

3rd grade - *Prairies (2.5 hours; Sept.-Oct.) - Through hands-on discovery, students learn about Iowa’s once vast prairies and their animal inhabitants. 3-LS4-3, 3-LS4-4

3rd & 4th grade - *Naturally Sensational (2.5 hours; Sept.-May) - Discover how local organisms use their senses to survive within their habitats. A series of hands-on experiments, a naturalist-led hike, and journaling make this program “*Naturally Sensational*.”
4-LS1-1, 4-LS1-2

4th & 5th grade - *Iowa History Day (all day; late April-May) - Students travel back to 1869. Cooking, making soap, and doing laundry are a few of the hands-on activities offered. SS.4.10, SS.4.23, SS.4.25, SS.5.21, SS.5.22, SS.5.24
Prerequisite: Traveling Trunk in-class program.

4th grade & up - *GPS and Geocaching (2.5 hours; Oct.-May) – Understand how to use a GPS to find a location based on latitude and longitude, find a location using new coordinates, and learn the sport of geocaching. 21.3-5.ES.1, 21.3-5.TL.6, 21.3-5.HL.5, 21.6-8.HL.5, 21.6-8.ES.1

4th grade & up - Snowshoeing (1.5-2.5 hours; Dec-Feb.) - Snowshoeing is a great way to spend a winter day. After learning about equipment, techniques, and safety, students will venture through McFarland Park.
21.3-5.HL.5, 21.6-8.HL.5, 21.9-12.HL.5

4th grade & up - *Service Learning (2.5 hours; Sept.-May) - Help your students learn the importance of giving back to the community through volunteerism. Many of our county areas need help! Your class can help remove invasive species or collect prairie seed. The service project will depend on the season and the time will depend on the activity. 5-ESS3-1

5th grade - *Hatchet (2.5 hours; Oct.-May) - After your students finish reading *Hatchet* or another wilderness survival-based book, bring them to McFarland Park to experience survival shelter and fire building.
Please tell us which book you will read.
RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3

5th & 6th grade – Outdoor Day (2.5 hours no canoeing or all day; September or May) – Canoeing, orienteering and team building.
21.3-5.ES.1, 21.3-5.ES.2, 21.3-5.ES.3, 21.3-5.ES.4, 21.6-8.ES.1, 21.6-8.ES.2, 21.6-8.ES.3, 21.3-8.HL.5 *This activity involves less than 3 feet physical distancing between students.*

5th grade & up - Ice Fishing (2.5 hours; Dec.-Feb.) - Ice fishing is a great way to spend a winter day. After learning about equipment, techniques, and safety, students will venture onto the ice to try catching fish.
21.3-5.HL.5, 21.6-8.HL.5, 21.9-12.HL.5

Fees are assessed to schools and daycares scheduling environmental education programs and outdoor experiences. Two options are offered, to be decided in advance:

1. For multiple programs, the fee is \$1.25 per student enrolled in the school attendance center.
2. For individual programs, the fee is \$1.25 per student per program (minimum charge of \$20).

To schedule in-class programs or outdoor experiences, contact the environmental education coordinator Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, at 515-232-2516 or email jkeys@storycountyiowa.gov.

If we don't have what you are looking for, let us know. We may be able to create a program or field trip for your class.

Story County Conservation Contact Information

Phone: 515-232-2516

Jerry Keys, Environmental Education Coordinator: jkeys@storycountyiowa.gov
Jess Lancial, Naturalist: jlancial@storycountyiowa.gov
Bekah Beall, Naturalist: rbeall@storycountyiowa.gov
Beth Waage, Naturalist: ewaage@storycountyiowa.gov
Bobbi Donovan, Naturalist: bdonovan@storycountyiowa.gov



Outdoor Experience Information

- Dress in clothes and shoes that can get dirty. **Requiring students to wear long pants and comfortable closed-toe shoes for walking is best.**
However, shorts and/or sandals (**NO flip flops**) may be worn for the following outdoor experiences:
 - *Birding Bonanza - Shorts permitted*
 - *Bird Nerds - Shorts permitted*
 - *I Spy - Shorts permitted*
 - *Outdoor Day - Shorts and sandals permitted*
 - *Pond Study - Shorts permitted*
- **Fall and Spring:** It is usually cooler at the parks than in town. Have students dress in layers: t-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, sweater or sweatshirt, and jacket. A hat with a bill provides protection from the sun.
- Bring **rain gear**, insect repellants, and sunscreen if needed.
- In the **winter**, wear a warm winter coat, snow or insulated pants, mittens or gloves, and a scarf. Wear a stocking cap and warm (preferably water-proof) boots.
- If your outdoor experience trip includes lunch, encourage your students to pack an environmentally friendly lunch that creates as little trash as possible. Please bring **garbage bags for your trash**. We have a carry-in, carry-out policy at our parks.
- **Composting education** is now available for full-day outdoor experiences at McFarland Park. Please indicate upon scheduling if you would like this to be included.
- We request **one adult helper for every five students**. Adult helpers are expected to participate fully in all activities, dress appropriately, sit with the children, and help keep them on task. We ask that adult helpers **not** bring young children or smoke in the presence of students. Please ask helpers to quiet AND NOT USE their cell phones.
- **Teacher and/or parent led activities** are a part of the following outdoor experiences:
 - *Nature Detectives*
 - *Prairies*
 - *GPS and Geocaching*
 - *Insectology*
 - *Pond Study*
 - *Birding Bonanza*
 - *Iowa History Day*
 - *Service Learning*
 - *Tree-rific*
 - *Naturally Sensational*
 - *Bird Nerds*
 - *Hatchet*
- **Have each student bring a water bottle.** Some areas in the parks do not have easy access to drinking fountains.

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Potential Dangers in the field and what you can do to protect yourself:

Lyme disease



- Transmitted through the bite of a deer tick.
- Symptoms of the disease include fatigue, muscle aches, headache, low-grade fever, chills, sore throat, and swollen glands.
- Removing a tick within 24 hours can greatly reduce chances of transmission.
- Treated by doctor with prescribed antibiotics.
- **Protect yourself by: wearing light-colored clothing, pants tucked inside of socks, and closed-toe shoes. Always do a head to toe check after being outdoors.**

Poison Ivy



- Allergic reaction is caused by urushiol found in all parts of the plant and is released when the plant is touched.
- It causes an allergic reaction characterized by red, itching welts followed by water-filled blisters.
- Treat rash with calamine lotion, 0.5% hydrocortisone, and/or antihistamines.
- **Protect yourself by recognizing this plant. Wash skin and clothes exposed to poison ivy with soapy water.**

Wild Parsnip



- Non-allergic reaction is caused by chemicals called psoralens contained in the plant juices. Reaction intensifies in the presence of sunlight.
- Reaction burns the skin causing the formation of blisters.
- Relieve burning by covering the exposed area with a cool cloth. If blisters pop, they should be treated with antibiotic cream and covered with a band-aid.
- **Protect yourself by recognizing this plant and staying clear of it!**

West Nile Virus

- Carried by mosquitoes that become infected when they feed on birds carrying the virus.
- Most people who are infected don't develop symptoms.
- A minority of people may develop a mild illness with fever, headache, body aches, and swollen glands.
- Infection can lead to a severe illness known as West Nile encephalitis. However, risks for contracting this disease are low.
- **Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and pants with dense fabric and insect repellent containing DEET.**

Story County Conservation's Weather Policy

- Students need to come dressed for the weather conditions.
- Outdoor experiences will be postponed or canceled if there is lightning or other severe weather.
- **Busses need to stay onsite** on days of questionable weather in case the weather becomes severe and the program must be canceled.
- We have a multi-purpose room at the conservation center to utilize for some rainy outdoor experiences. However, not all experiences can be moved indoors and may need to be canceled.
- **On days of questionable weather conditions, if you call before 8:30 AM, please leave a message on Jerry's direct line 515-598-4765.**



2022-23 Environmental Education Programs

Program	Date	Time(s)	Location

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