

EE Activity Descriptions by grade level

(CK = Classroom Kit) (CP = Classroom Program) (O = Off Site) (E = Either classroom or off site)

Kindergarten

Sensory Awareness

Magic Fingers E Students are blindfolded and given a natural object to discover using any sense by sight. Next without seeing the object, they describe it. Finally, students can use their eyes to select their object from the rest of the groups' objects.

Micro Hike O Using a small rope or wire circle put on the ground, students examine carefully with magnifiers what they find within.

Trees

Leaf Friend E Using their senses, students get to know a leaf so well that they can find their own leaf in a pile of classmates' leaves

Leaf Rubbings E Using real leaves or rubbing plates, paper, and crayons, students create replicas of the leaf shapes.

Tree replica display @ GrimesFarm & Conservation Center O Students examine a life-like tree to see wildlife inhabitants

Seasons & Weather

Fall/Spring Hikes O Hiking trails at several county parks provide opportunity to see seasonal changes in the natural world. (Grammer Grove, Timmons Grove, Grimes Farm, Green Castle County Parks)

Hibernation CP Using a story book, puppets, and furs, students learn which animals stay awake and which sleep in winter.

Seeds on the Go O Students describe five different ways that seeds are dispersed and look for those seed types on a hike. (*Living Lightly in the City Vol. 1*)

1st Grade

Insects

Insects Alike & Different O Through catch and release with sweep nets, students compare insects and insect body parts.

Invent an Insect E Using laminated paper insect body parts, students create an imaginary insect and make up its natural history.

Animal Habitats

Tropical Rainforest Kit *CK* Props to create a rainforest in your classroom; includes activity ideas. Kit can be checked out for 2-4 weeks depending on availability.

Forest/Prairie Exploration *O* Hike through forest and/or prairie habitats to observe plant or animals. (Grammer Grove, Timmons Grove, Grimes Farm)

Habitat dioramas @ GrimesFarm & Conservation Center *O* Large, recreated habitats with taxidermy mounts and background murals introduce nature center visitors to the wildlife in pre-settlement times. Includes spring woodland, summer and fall prairie and fall wetland.

Everybody Needs a Home *E* Students observe wildlife homes with or without a exploratory hike & discuss needs of food, water, shelter and space. (*Project WILD*)

Animals

Iowa Wildlife *E* Through furs and taxidermy mounts, students discover common Iowa wildlife and Iowa endangered species.

Bird Beak Adaptations *CP* Students will understand that the shape of a bird's bill/beak is adapted to eating certain foods.

Birds & Worms *E* Students discover the value of camouflage as they pretend to be birds in search of colored worms. (*Project Learning Tree*)

Bat & Moth *E* A blindfolded student representing a bat tries to find its prey by use of echolocation. The rest of the students create a circle to keep the bat and moth in place. (*Sharing Nature with Children*)

Life Cycles

Monarch Tagging *E* Monarch butterflies raised in your classroom can be marked with a special ID tag from Monarch Watch. Includes discussion of monarch migration & life cycle.

Seasons

Fall/Spring Hikes *O* Hiking trails at several county parks provide opportunity to see seasonal changes in the natural world. (Grammer Grove, Timmons Grove, Grimes Farm, Green Castle County Parks)

Seeds on the Go *O* Students describe five different ways that seeds are dispersed and look for those seed types on a hike. (*Living Lightly in the City Vol. 1*)

Helpful Citizen

Litter Pick up *O* Students can beautify your school grounds, neighborhood or county park by picking up litter and disposing of it properly.

Pine Cone Feeders *E* Students create a small birdfeeder from a pinecone, peanut butter and birdseed. Includes discussion on colors, shapes, sizes & sounds of birds.

Trash Magic *CP* Using recycled or discarded materials, students create a craft item such as a gift bag from an old envelope. Includes brainstorming how to reuse items.

Tree Plantings *O* Students can help create habitat on the school grounds or park.

2nd Grade

Plants

Build a Tree *E* As a group, students act out the parts of a tree and learn how each part works. (*NatureScope – Trees are Terrific!*)

Maple Seed Mix-up *O* Students play a running game to learn what a tree seed needs to sprout and grow. (*NatureScope – Trees are Terrific!*)

Tree ID *O* Matching tree leaf shapes, students will become familiar with some trees found in Iowa. Tree Trail at Timmons Grove has labeled tree species.

Trees as Habitat *O* Students examine tree trunks and branches for clues that animals and other plants use the tree as habitat.

Rotten Log Study *O* Students examine a rotten log to look for decomposers and discover the importance of dead trees to wildlife.

Recycled Paper Making *CP* Students will learn the process of recycling paper and each student will create their own piece of recycled paper from scrap paper.

From Paper to Plastic *CP* Students search for more than 40 items in a picture to discover some of the many ways people use trees. Includes discussion on how some of these products are made. (*NatureScope – Trees are Terrific!*)

Food Chain Game *O* Students become plants, rabbits, and foxes for a lively running game of predators and prey.

Weather & Plants/Animals

Bird Migration

Animal Coverings *CP* Furs, feathers, shells and scales provide hands-on experience for students to learn about the why and what of animal coverings.

Animals

Animal Autographs *O* Students become detectives in search of animal clues on this nature hike. Includes writing or drawing clues found and brainstorming possible animal which made the clue.

Owls of Iowa *CP* Students will discover the common owls of Iowa, their habitat and prey through taxidermy mounts and sounds.

Birdwatching *O* Introduction to bird identification and use of binoculars for this popular leisure skill. A limited number of auto-focus binoculars are available.

Fishing *O* Introduction to fishing technique for this popular leisure skill. Poles are provided, but additional adults with fishing licenses are needed.

Fashion a Fish *CP* Students design a variety of fish adapted for various aquatic habitats. (*Aquatic Project WILD*)

Nature Walk

Rock Testing *E* Students will conduct scratch, streak, and vinegar tests to determine rock types. A variety of mineral and rock collections are available.

Journaling/Poetry *O* Nature provides wonderful inspiration for noting observations and creative writing.

Bird ID *O* Students will learn that shape, size, color & sound is used to identify birds.

Unnatural Trail *O* Students look for man-made objects along a trail to introduce concepts of camouflage and adaptation. (*Sharing Nature with Children*)

Pioneers/Native Americans

Bison & Native Americans *E* Students can feel a real bison hide and learn how Native Americans used nearly all parts of the bison.

Tin Punch *CP* Using hammer, nail and juice can lid, students will create a tin punch ornament to hang in a window.

3rd Grade

Animal Habitats

Pond Study *O* Using dip nets, students explore a pond to discover aquatic life.

Forest/Prairie Exploration *O* Hike through forest and/or prairie habitats to observe plant or animals. (Grammer Grove, Timmons Grove, Grimes Farm)

Habitat Dioramas at GrimesFarm & Conservation Center *O* Large, recreated habitats with taxidermy mounts and background murals introduce nature center visitors to the wildlife in pre-settlement times. Includes spring woodland, summer and fall prairie and fall wetland.

Wetland Metaphors *E* Students are given a selection of hands-on objects for investigation as metaphors for natural functions of wetlands. (*Aquatic Project WILD*)

Marsh Munchers *E* Students act out predator and prey animals in a marsh and create a food web. (*Aquatic Project WILD*)

Earth Materials

Fossil ID *E* Students are introduced to common fossils of Rockford Fossil Park and then identify a small collection of fossils.

Rock Testing *E* Students will observe and analyze various rock types. A variety of mineral and rock collections are available.

Sedimentary Smash *E* Students will take a closer look at sedimentary rocks and create a “smashing” example.

Water

Molecules in Motion *E* Students become water molecules moving through each of water’s physical states. (*Project WET*)

Incredible Journey *E* Students simulate the movement of water through the water cycle through a giant board game. (*Project WET*)

H2O Olympics *E* Students participate in a Water Olympics to investigate two properties of water, adhesion and cohesion. (*Project WET*)

Cardinal Directions

Orienteering *E* Students will learn the basic parts of a compass and how to set it.

4th Grade

Solar System

Constellation Program with STARLAB *CP* Using the portable planetarium available through AEA 267, students will learn basic constellations and how to find them. Greek mythology and Native American stories can also be shared about the constellations.

Map Skills

Orienteering *E* Students will learn the basic parts of a compass and how to follow a short compass course.

Plant/Animal Responses

How Many Coyotes? *E* Students become coyotes to learn about carrying capacity in a habitat.

Bird Nest Builders *E* Students become birds and construct a nest using their beak to learn about the variety of materials from which nests are made and their intricacy.

Bird Migration

Insect Diversity *O* Through catch and release with sweep nets, students compare the link between plant diversity and insect diversity.

Tree ID *O* Using simple tree identification keys, students identify several trees.

Oh Deer! *E* Students become deer to learn about the components of habitat.

Habitat Lap Sit *E* Students physically form an interconnected circle to demonstrate components of habitat.

Quick Frozen Critters *E* Students become predator and prey in an active version of freeze tag.

Deadly Links *E* Students become hawks, shrews and grasshoppers to learn how pesticides enter and move in food chains.

Migration Headache *E* Students become migrating waterfowl to learn limiting factors affecting populations of migrating water birds.

Monarch Tagging *E* Monarch butterflies raised in your classroom can be marked with a special ID tag from Monarch Watch. Includes discussion of monarch migration & life cycle.

Plant/Animal Adaptations Hike *O* Hiking trails at several county parks provide opportunity to see plant and animal relationships in the natural world. (Grammer Grove, Timmons Grove, Grimes Farm, Green Castle County Parks)

Nature: Friend & Foe

Enviroscape *E* Using a table top landscape model, students get hands-on learning about watersheds and water quality.

Common Water *O* Students simulate multiple users of water resources in a community and examine water quality and quantity.

Musical Resources *E* Through musical chairs, students identify the natural resources consumed for items in daily life and the dilemma of finite resources and increasing human population pressures.

Trash Magic *C* Using recycled or discarded materials, students create a craft item such as a small gift box from an old calendar. Includes discussion on reuse.

Chocolate Chip Cookie Mining *E* Students mine chocolate chip cookies to learn about using natural resources and reclamation of the earth.

Earth Day Every Day slides/puzzle *CP* Slide show about what you can do everyday to help the Earth and interactive puzzle to review action ideas.

Ethi-Thinking *E* Students discriminate between outdoor activities that are harmful to wildlife and the environment and those that are not.

Ethi-Reasoning *E* Students read, discuss and make judgments about hypothetical dilemmas concerning wildlife and/or natural resources.

Wildflower Walk *O* Identification of spring woodland wildflowers and discussion of their uses by pioneers and Native Americans.

Fishing *O* Introduction to fishing technique for this popular leisure skill. Poles are provided, but additional adults with fishing licenses are needed.

Birdwatching *O* Introduction to bird identification and use of binoculars for this popular leisure skill. A limited number of auto-focus binoculars are available.

Nature's Music *E* Using natural items, students create musical sounds.

5th Grade

Prairie

Plants Exploration *O* Students walk through the reconstructed tall grass prairie to observe plant life.

Insect Exploration *O* Through catch and release with sweep nets, students discover the diversity of insects in the prairie.

Wildlife Observation *O* At Green Castle Recreation Area, students can observe captive bison and Trumpeter Swans, as well as, wildlife using this park.

Intermediate/Middle/High School

How Birds Make a Living *CP* Students receive food gathering tools representing different bird beaks and must discover which foods and habitats they are adapted to.

Tree ID *O* Using a simple tree key, students will become familiar with some trees found in Iowa. Tree Trail at Timmons Grove has labeled tree species.

Prairie Plant ID *O* Using a simple plant key, students will become familiar with some plants found in Iowa. Seasonal interpretive signs at Marietta Sand Prairie identify and inform visitors about several plant species.

Animal Track ID *O* Using a simple key, students will become familiar with some of the tracks of Iowa wildlife. Track molds are available for students to make a track to take home.

Orienteering *E* Students will learn how to use a compass and how to follow a short compass course.

Energy Conservation Tour *O* Students tour the Consumers Energy building to learn about energy conservation techniques and visit the Grimes Farm & Conservation Center to see some of these techniques in use.

Environmental Shopping *E* Students will make purchasing decisions about products based on their impact on the solid waste stream.

Ecological Footprints *CP* Students calculate their own ecological footprint and discuss ways to lessen their impact on the Earth and its natural resources.

Career Day *CP* Conservation staff are available to share their career knowledge.

Service Projects *O* Contact us about a list of service projects your students could help with. For example, tree planting, litter pick up, mulching, trail maintenance, etc).

Biology

Enviroscape *E* Using a table top landscape model, students get hands-on learning about watersheds and water quality.

Owls of Iowa & dissect owl pellets *CP* Through power point and taxidermy mounts of owls, students learn about the common owls of Iowa. Student dissection of owl pellets show food habits of owls.

lowater Testing *O* Using simple water testing kits, students check water quality of a stream and observe aquatic insects.

Prairie Seed Harvest *O* Students tour a prairie and help harvest seed for prairie restoration projects.

Waterfowl Biology *CP* Discussion and video presentation on the burgeoning Snow Goose population and the serious impact on their breeding grounds.

Child Development

Environmental Education Activities *CP* Students get hands-on learning about environmental education activities they can use with preschool through elementary age students.

Marshall County Conservation Board website displays a map to your Marshall County parks. **www.co.marshall.ia.us/departments/conservation**

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