

2011 – 2012
Wargo Nature Center
Nature Education Program Descriptions

Please see the Curriculum Selections chart for grade levels and time of year for each curriculum topic.

Apple Cidering

Students will make apple cider using an old-fashioned cider press. They will be able to identify the parts of an apple and will learn the history of apples from colonial to modern times. A fall nature hike is included.

Biodiversity

Understand what biodiversity is and why it is so important to life on earth. Students will explore how animal populations are affected by habitat and diversity by learning what animals need to survive and what habitats provide.

Birds

Birds have adaptations that help them survive in various ecosystems through the seasons. Older students will use field guides and binoculars on a hike to identify the many different species found in Minnesota. Bird characteristics and adaptations will also be covered.

Canoeing/Kayaking

Learn the necessary skills to become an efficient canoeist or kayaker, including basic stroke, boat safety and maneuvering. Gain an appreciation for the wonderful encounters with wildlife that can occur while spending time out on the water.

Co-operative Games

Experience a combination of fun obstacles and initiative games designed to challenge your class to solve problems and work together. Communication, tolerance, leadership and support are processed along the way. Great tools for the classroom!

Endangered Species

Understand what may cause a species to become endangered. Take a hike and participate in activities to learn what species need and discover some of the obstacles that various species overcome in their quest to survive.

Food Chain

Plants and animals form a system based on interaction- a food chain. Students will explore how all things in nature are connected and explore how our diets connect to plants. We form food webs and learn the sequence (function) of food chains by playing games and role playing.

Geology

Students will discover likes and differences between rocks and minerals, the three kinds of rocks on earth and the rock cycle. Hike the local landscape to see the many different features of Minnesota's long and varied geological history.

Habitats

As we explore the pond, prairie and forest students will look at the adaptations of plants and animals that allow them to survive in each habitat. Using scientific inquiry students will identify the components that make up different habitats and how they interact to make a system.

Insects

After learning the parts of an insect, students will learn how insects undergo metamorphosis and how they use camouflage to avoid predators and stalk their prey. Students will catch and identify insects. They will also discover sounds and scents that insects use to attract each other.

It's Alive! Or is it?

What makes something alive? The earth is made up of living and non-living things that students will be able to identify. We will look at the inner workings of a tree and categorize everyday items into plants, animals or minerals.

Likes and Differences

Students will explore some of the differences and similarities in nature while using their senses for wildlife discovery and learning. Animal and tree characteristics will be explored along with an outdoor hike looking for those examples in nature.

Maple Syruping

Learn how to identify trees in winter by locating maple trees and placing a tap. Discover how the seasonal cycles impacted the Native Americans and how important maple sap was to them. See how collecting and cooking maple sap has changed over time. Taste a sweet treat!

Native American Cultures

Students will describe how the environment shaped early Native American Cultures and how the land provided all the resources needed for their lifestyle. We will focus on the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes of Minnesota.

Orienteering

Learn how to read different types of maps. Understand how a compass works and how to use one. Test your new skills and navigate your way through our orienteering course!

Pond Study

Students will study pond and wetland ecosystems to understand how they can indicate a healthy watershed and how human actions can alter that watershed. Students will collect macro invertebrate samples to monitor and observe.

Populations

Every habitat has a carrying capacity. Learn how human impact and natural causes can alter natural systems. Discover what this means for animal populations.

Predator & Prey

Students will participate in activities that group mammals into categories based on physical characteristics and play games that reinforce how adaptations aid survival for both predators and prey.

Recycling Naturally

Soil is made up of both living and nonliving materials. Students will learn how decomposing plants and animal matter make soil. They will describe the process of decomposing, observe decomposers and look at them as the world builds soil over the ages.

Seeds

Students will discover how seeds grow into plants and learn about the ways seeds are dispersed. Students will also observe and identify fruits and vegetables. On our hike students will gather and look for similarities and differences of seeds in the wild.

Snow Properties

Students will learn how snowflakes are formed in the atmosphere and will take measurements to discover how snow is beneficial to plants and animals during winter months.

Snowshoeing and Tracking

Before getting out on snowshoes, students will learn about the history of them and how important they were to Native Americans. We will also learn how to identify animal tracks in the snow and do some tracking while on the snowshoe hike.

Spring Awakenings

Students will use all of their senses to explore the wonders of spring. Students will participate in activities focusing on bird movement, animal sounds and scents, and participate in a discovery hike.

Survival Challenge

Can your team work together and survive? Everyone must work together to complete a set of challenges in order to survive after their plane goes down in a northern Minnesota forest. Some tasks include fire and shelter building.

Water Cycle

Studying the water cycle through hands-on activities will help students understand how water can exist in various stages. They will also explore the impact of human actions on water.

Weather

Students will learn how weather is determined by wind, water, and temperature and even look to the clouds to see how they help determine the forecast.

Winter Adaptations

Students will learn how animals can survive the winter through adaptations that allow them to adjust and thrive in the cold winter months. Students will discover that different animals have different food and shelter needs during winter and learn six slick tricks for adapting to the cold.

Winter Homes

During the winter, either animals migrate, hibernate or stay active. Students will be able to determine types of habitats for certain animals and find appropriate homes for winter protection.

Nature Preschool Programs:

Our preschool programs are designed to meet the energy and learning level of the preschool learner. Our classes are geared towards hands-on learning and exploration. Each of our classes include: outdoor exploration, nature play time, stories, songs, or crafts. We work in small groups to provide a positive learning experience in the natural world.

Amazing Autumn- We will learn about the Fall season.

Winter Wonderland- We will learn about the Winter months.

Super Spring- We will learn about the Springtime.

Happy Habitats- A time to learn about the habitats of a prairie, forest, and wetland.

Turtle Mania- We will learn about reptiles and amphibians.

Beautiful Butterflies and Insects- We will explore the characteristics and life cycles of insects.

****Other programs available upon request and conference with a naturalist****

Recreation Programs:

Anoka County Parks offers a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Along with the above canoeing, kayaking, and snowshoeing listings we are able to add team building activities into any recreation or environmental education program. In addition, we have a 30 foot voyageur canoe and a portable climbing wall available.

History Programs:

These living history programs can accommodate larger groups and are done through 6 to 8 stations that the students rotate throughout the day. Presenters are in costume and each station contains a hands-on component. Weather permitting most stations will be outside.

Voyageurs- Are you young and looking for adventure? Come join the Voyageur Brigade as we head off to the North Country and experience life in true Voyageur fashion.

Native American Indians- Learn about Native American skills, games, foods, shelters and life in Minnesota before European settlement.

Pioneers & Settlers- Learn what life was like in the 1800's. School, food, clothing, games and homes were very different and a lot of work so hope you are ready to learn, work and have fun!

Early Minnesota (Civil War period)- Minnesota became a state in 1858 and in the years following a lot was happening. We'll learn about the Homestead Act, Underground Railroad, Civil War, and what life was like for all the immigrants, Native Americans and settlers living in Minnesota.

Milling, Mining & Lumbering- The map of Minnesota changes as the three big industries of milling, mining and lumbering come to Minnesota. Where did the resources go and what did we make with them? Come live this history with our talented staff and interactive stations!