

2020-2021

Environmental Education Programs

If you are interested in scheduling a program please contact Angela at (563)547-3634 at least two weeks prior to the date you would like the program.

PLEASE CHECK BACK PERIODICALLY AS NEW PROGRAMS MAY BE ADDED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR!!!

AMPHIBIANS (Grades K-3)

A program on amphibian basics covering physical characteristics of amphibians and their lifecycle. I will touch briefly on different amphibians that call Iowa home. The program will wrap up with the book Salamander Room and a short discussion about the story to review what the students learned.

BABY ANIMALS (Grades PreK-1st)

This program uses *Deborah Guarino and Steven Kellogg's* book Is Your Mama a Llama? to learn the names that are used to identify animal babies. Along with the baby animal terms that are talked about in the book, we will learn several other terms while having fun coloring animals on a mother/baby worksheet.

BEARS (Grades K-2)

Black, Brown and Polar. We will take a closer look at each of these three bears to see where they live, what they eat, how we can tell them apart.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER (Grades K-4)

Get to know the birds as we discuss what characteristics make a bird a bird, and learn about some of the different birds we can see here in Iowa. ***OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:** *After a short indoor program we will head outdoors to view a variety of birds. This is a great program for a field trip out to the nature center where the children can experience both prairie and woodland habitats and the birds that reside there!*

HABITATS (Grades 1-3)

The students will discover what the word habitat means and the 3 main habitats here in Iowa. For each of the three habitats we will explore the different plants and animals that can be found in each habitat. During our conversation we will briefly touch on common food chains for each habitat type.

HANGING OUT WITH BATS! (Grades K-3)

Is a bat a bird? How long can a bat live? If they are nocturnal, how can they see at night? These are just some of the questions I will answer during the program as I help children (and adults!) understand why bats aren't as scary as they think! We will end the program with the story Stellaluna by Janell Cannon.

INSECT INQUIRY (Grades 1-3)

Is it an insect or arachnid? This program will help the students understand the things that put invertebrates into the "insect" category. We will discuss the physical characteristics, lifecycle, and how insects protect themselves from potential predators.

IOWA INVASIVES (Grades 4-12)

Emerald Ash Borers, Japanese Beetles and Asian Carp. All of these species are becoming more familiar to Iowans because of the problems they are causing. Invasive species are species that have been introduced into Iowa and have had a negative effect on native species. We will discuss when these species were first discovered in Iowa, how they got here, their lifecycle, how they affect humans and what is being done to control these pests.

LANDFORM LINGO (Grades 3-5)

To help reinforce what you have been talking about in the classroom we will play a game in which students must be able to recognize a picture of a specific landform and be able to match it up with a written explanation. There will also be a discussion on slow changes of the Earth like weathering and erosion, along with rapid changes.

LET'S CELEBRATE GROUNDHOG DAY! (Grades 1-3)

Each year on February 2nd we eagerly wait for the groundhog to come out of his burrow to let us know whether or not we will endure another 6 weeks of winter. A trivia game will help students understand more about this animal and how exactly we came to depend on the groundhog as the predictor of the upcoming weather.

LET'S TALK TURKEY (Grades 1-6)

Learn more about the life of wild turkeys like what they eat, where they live, more about their anatomy and the predators that they must watch out for.

MONARCH MADNESS (Grades 1-6)

During this program students will learn the characteristics of insects and how butterflies protect themselves from enemies. Finally we will focus on the life cycle of the monarch in particular. This program goes great with hatching out monarchs in your classroom! If you wish to schedule a monarch tagging program this is best done by September 12 in order to tag the monarchs before they are finished migrating through. **TAGS ARE NOT PROVIDED. You are responsible for purchasing the tags from www.monarchwatch.org.**

NATIVE AMERICANS (PreK-1)

The focus of this program is on how Native Americans used animals in their daily life. They will get the chance to see Native American drawings of the animals and then there will be a discussion on the uses of the animal. At the end of the program the students will be asked to draw a picture of one of the animals that we discussed.

NATIVE AMERICANS (Grades 4-6)

This program introduces the students to Native Americans that lived in the area now known as Iowa, how they lived, and the problems that arose between them and the Europeans. We will discuss the Native American's spiritual connection with the Earth and respect of all its beings — a lesson that “white man” has yet to learn. Time permitting there is an activity using Native American symbols.

NATURE DETECTIVES (Grades PreK-6)

Have you ever seen an animal track in the mud or snow and wondered who made it? During this program we will discuss the clues animals leave behind and how to tell which animal it was! We will read a short story and then take a look at some animal track flashcards. Animal pelts are used to help in the discussion. ***OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:** *If you are interested in making plaster casts of animal tracks you will be responsible for providing the plaster of Paris, bucket, water and newspaper. This activity will require at least an hour session, the more time the better!*

PASS THE ENERGY, PLEASE (Grades 3-5)

A program to help explain the food chain. Children will learn the flow of energy from producers to primary and secondary consumers down to the decomposers through an interactive game. We will have a short discussion about how humans have changed the balance of nature and what can be done to protect the fragile balance.

PLANT POWER (Grades K-2)

A look at plant parts and the job each part plays in the life of a plant. Our discussion will conclude with a look at how plants are important to the lives of humans and especially our lives here in Iowa.

PLANT POWER (Grades 3-4)

An overview discussion of plants: why humans need them, the parts of the plant and their functions, what plants eat, and finally a look at different foods and if they are from a plant source.

SPECTACULAR SPIDERS (Grades 2-4)

Is there really any reason to be scared of spiders? People are often afraid of things that they don't understand, so through this program students will learn to understand the anatomy of a spider, how it hunts, and the different types of spiders they may encounter.

SURVIVING WINTER (Grades PreK-2nd)

This program discusses what methods Iowa animals use to survive the winter – hibernate, migrate, or adapt. As a review the students will be given a picture of one of the animals we talked about and they will have to draw a picture of how their animal survives the Iowa winter.

TEETH (Grades PreK-2)

A program discussing the different types of teeth animals have and what they are able to eat with those teeth. We will take a closer look at animal skulls to see how the teeth of carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores are different.

TERRIFIC TREES (Grades K-2)

This program discusses the changes that trees go through in different seasons -- taking a closer look at what happens to trees during Iowa's four seasons.. The focus of this program discusses the difference between conifer and deciduous trees, seeds of different trees, and the animals that are dependent on trees for food. We will read the book *In a Nutshell* by Joseph Anthony and then do a short art project.

THE WORLD AROUND US (Grades 4-6)

This program focuses on ecosystems. Our discussion will include the difference between biotic and abiotic factors, the living parts of an ecosystem, and the roles of non-living things in an ecosystem. No discussion would be complete without discussing human's role in the ecosystems, both positive and negative and natural causes of ecosystem changes.

TURKEY TROUBLE (Grades PreK-K)

What would Thanksgiving be without turkey as part of our feast?!? Before I come for the program the students will be asked to disguise a turkey (I will provide the template) to keep him safe from becoming part of our feast! We will discuss different words students may hear when talking about turkeys like tom, hen, jake, etc. After our discussion we will read the book Turkey Trouble by *Wendi Silvano and Lee Harper* and then the students will have a chance to share their turkeys in disguise!

VERTEBRATE ANIMAL GROUP TRIVIA (Grades 2-4)

Do you know which group of vertebrates has a special sense organ which allows them to feel the nearness of a predator or obstacle before it can be seen? Through a game of vertebrate trivia we will learn more about the 5 different groups of animals classified as vertebrates and discover the answer to this question and many others.

WHAT A WASTE! (Grades PreK-6)

Can your students name the "3 R's"? Do you know what happens to your garbage once the garbage truck picks it up, does it magically disappear? Through our discussion we will learn how to make better decisions on the items we use and why recycling isn't the most important "R".

WHOO AM I? A CLOSER LOOK AT OWLS (Grades 1-6)

We will take a closer look at one of the greatest winged hunters. While investigating an owl foot, skull, pellet, and a mounted owl we will learn why they are such efficient hunters.

WILDFLOWER WALK (Grades 3-8)

Spring is a great time to get out and watch nature waking up after its long winter's nap. The woodlands around the nature center produce a multitude of spring wildflowers. A hike to view these spring beauties will require at least one hour.