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Science Notes - Outdoor School Enrichment Programs

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SCIENCE NOTES

Outdoor School Enrichment Programs

The Outdoor and Environmental Education Program at the Iowa 4-H Education and Natural Resources Center (operated by the Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service) is offering several outdoor school enrichment programs for students and teachers of all grade levels.

The programs are designed to give practical application to classroom learning experiences, provide multi-disciplinary approaches to learning and help students develop self-confidence, independence and a positive ethic towards the natural environment.

The Center is located in more than 1000 acres of woods and fields in the Des Moines River Valley and offers several learning atmospheres and activities, including prairie, marsh, pond, creek and forest areas, the Iowa Arboretum, a Hidatsa earth lodge, a physical fitness trail, live animal sessions, a nature center, wildlife viewing blinds, canoeing and rappelling.

Day programs may be designed for K-12 students and residential programs (under the categories of one-, two- and three-day visits with overnight stays) are available for students in grades 4-12. Among the residential programs are the following:

One day/one overnight programs

Gurgle, Whoosh, Splish, Drip...WATER! Grades: 4-6. Season: Fall and Spring. Subjects: Science, Art, Social Science, P.E., Math. Students discover what lives in, uses and depends on water. Scientific testing illustrates the quality of drinking water. Water cycles are explored as well as groundwater and surface water problems. Includes skits, campfires, labs and demonstrations. Fishing and canoeing may be offered depending on availability.

Spaceship Earth Grades: 4-6. Season: Fall and Spring. Subjects: Science, Social Studies, Math. Students play the part of aliens from a dying planet in search of a new home. They must take data on the earth's water, air, soil and wildlife resources to decide if earth would be a suitable selection.

Prairie...There's No Place Like Home! Grades: 4-8. Season: Fall. Subjects: Science, Social Studies, Math, Art, Language Arts. Iowa's prairie pioneers and the days before the European settlers arrived are explored in this workshop. Students learn about medicinal and food uses of prairie plants and how they can help to save the last remaining areas of natural prairie.

Time Travel Grades: 4-8. Season: Fall and Spring. Subjects: Science, Math, Art, Social Studies, Language Arts. How has geology affected the human history of Iowa? This is the question student detectives must work to answer in this program.

Outdoor School Enrichment Programs (continued)

Students learn how time has changed the landscape through mapping, searching for shale and casting.

Predator/Prey Adventures Grades: 5-8. Season: Fall and Spring. Subjects: Science, P.E., Social Science.

Students learn about their relationship to the environment through predator/prey interactions. Live raptor, snake and insect sections help students overcome their fear of animals; and owl calling, beaver biology and animal tracking take them closer to animals in their natural habitat.

Three day/two overnight programs

Eco-splore Backpack Grades: 5-12. Season: Fall and Spring. Subjects: Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Art, P.E.

Students investigate a variety of habitats via trails of the Iowa 4-H Education and Natural Resources Center. They learn about the environment and how people affect it. Environmental issues are discussed and environmental ethics formed. Students also learn outdoor living skills, including low-impact camping, fire building, outdoor cooking, shelter building and nature lore.

Energy Explore Grades: 5-12. Season: Fall and Spring. Subjects: Science, Social Sciences, Language Arts.

What would it be like to live without electricity for a day? Students learn about alternate energy sources first hand. They create a living energy cycle and make hydroelectric, solar, geothermal and wind power part of their everyday living. They also learn about recycling and how they can help lessen use of energy by their own actions.

Native American Culture Grades: 5-12. Season: Fall and Spring. Subjects: Social Science, Language Arts, Art, Science.

Students learn about the lives of Hidatsa villagers, including what they believed, how they lived and how they coped with day-to-day life. Bison, plants, land ethics, arts, community government and customs are explored, and students spend the night in the earth lodge.

Outdoor Challenge Program Age Level: 14 and up. Season: Fall and Spring.

This program is designed for "youth at risk" or youth in need of training in teamwork and self-confidence. Over 15 low obstacles in an outdoor setting present students with a variety of challenges that require them to communicate and work together. Trained staff members help students process their experiences at each stop along the course.

For registration materials or more information about any of these programs, contact School Enrichment Camps, Attn: Judy Levings, 4-H and Youth Program Assistant, 33 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011.

--S.A.A.