

Making the Grade: School Program Menu for 6th Grades 2025-2026



Katie Cantu kcantu@jasperia.org

Greg Oldsen goldsen@jasperia.org

The following is a list of presentations offered to sixth grade classes in Jasper County. This is not a complete list, and for other options or questions about a program, please contact the naturalists. We work with teachers to fit our programming with their curriculum!

- All programs are free and materials will be provided unless otherwise noted.
- Although descriptions are for in-class, all programs can be adapted for outdoor locations.
- Please call or email at the beginning of the school year to guarantee your desired day and time.
- Plan for 30-40 minutes per program.
- Have your students come up with a list of questions for the naturalists before the scheduled program time.
- Please plan to sit with your class and enjoy the presentation along with them!

Enviroscape—Depending on school district, this is also offered for 7th grades

The Enviroscape is a watershed model that demonstrates the effect of soil erosion, chemical and fertilizer use, and other water quality issues. Water quality problems will be identified on the Enviroscape and students will work together to solve those issues, using conservation practices to improve water quality. We will also discuss a little history of land-use in Iowa and prepare students for their Mariposa Park field trip (see below). Students will be expected to follow and fill in an outline provided by the naturalists.

***MS-ESS3-1, MS-ETS1-1, MS-ETS1-3**

Watershed Investigations at Mariposa Park—

Depending on school district, this is also offered for 7th grades. Upon arrival at Mariposa, students will take a bus ride around the watershed to identify conservation practices that are beneficial or harmful to the watershed. They will perform chemical water tests, go pondnetting to determine species diversity in the lake, and take an observational hike on the nature trail to identify problems and improvements in the watershed. At the end of the day, they will give the watershed an overall score and write a short report justifying their score.

***MS-ESS3-1, MS-ETS1-1, MS-ETS1-3**



Uhlenhopp Arboretum Field Trip

Another local option for a fall field trip is to visit the Uhlenhopp Arboretum, located just on the eastern side of Jasper County. Here, students will take part in a variety of activities, including hiking, archery, and using GPS for navigation. Students can take part in a stewardship activity, which can include but is not limited to, seed harvesting, seed cleaning, planting, and creating seed packets for pollinator garden distribution. We may be able to schedule bird banding as an activity with the local Audubon Society group, depending on availability.

****MS-ESS2-1, MS-ESS2-2, MS-ESS2-3, MS-ESS3-1, MS-ETS1-1***



Environmental Values

This late fall/early winter program is a follow-up to the Watershed Investigation or Uhlenhopp Arboretum field trip. Students will address others' environmental values and explore their own. A simulation of community members deciding on land use can be played out in the classroom. An optional outdoor activity can involve a stewardship project in the community or creation of schoolyard habitat (see next).

****MS-ESS3-1, MS-ESS3-2***

Geology Rocks!

Students will "dig" into our ever-changing earth and discover how geology rocks the world every day! The naturalist will review what the three types of rock are and show examples. Students will learn that the earth is always changing and that fossils are important tools in understanding Earth's history.

****MS-ESS2-1, 2, 3***



Spring Field Days

End-of-the-year spring field trips have been very popular with 6th grade classes. We try to schedule the last 2 weeks of May for programs such as these. Ideal locations for a day-long program include Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, Mariposa Recreation Area, the Izaak Walton League grounds in Newton, or other county or city parks close to your school. Activities we can provide include archery, global positioning sys-

tems (GPS), fishing, hiking, orienteering with a compass, canoeing, kayaking, teambuilding activities, and stewardship projects such as planting trees, picking up litter, clearing brush, etc. We also have a number of fun and educational games including The Food Chain Game, Invent An Animal camouflage game, and many more!

