

Making the Grade: School Program Menu for 8th Grades 2025-2026



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The following is a list of presentations offered to eighth 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!

Schoolyard Habitat Project

Your students can make a difference by providing local wildlife habitat on school grounds, no matter what size of space is available. Students will gain real life skills by exploring and researching the needs of local wildlife and developing a master plan to create a schoolyard habitat. Examples for habitat include but are not limited to:

- Pollinator Garden
- School Courtyard Planting
- Aquatic Habitat Construction
- Raised Produce Beds

Naturalists will be available throughout the planning and implementation process of the project.

***MS-ETS1 -(1,2,3), MS-LS2-5**



Uhlenhopp Arboretum Field Trip

A local option for a fall field trip is to visit the Uhlenhopp Arboretum, located in eastern Jasper County. Here, students will learn about Iowa's natural history, geology, and the present work being done to protect and restore our natural resources. Students will 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 can also incorporate recreational activities such as archery, fishing, pond netting, navigating with GPS, and hiking.

***MS-LS2-5, MS-ESS3-3, MS-ETS1 -1**



Endangered Species in Iowa

Students learn which species in Iowa are endangered and why. We'll then explore recent research, discuss possible solutions, and discover efforts being undertaken to help wildlife. A trunk of wildlife items confiscated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will further demonstrate how wildlife is being used and the problems of illegal wildlife trade around the world.

***MS-ESS3-3, MS-ESS3-4**



Fossils of Iowa

Students will review how fossils are made, what they tell us of the past, and how to identify common fossils found in Iowa. The naturalist will bring examples for small group study. We will cover a general geologic time line of how Iowa has changed and what life forms have changed with it.

***MS-LS4-1**



Spring Field Days

End-of-the-year spring field trips have been very popular with 8th 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 systems (GPS), fishing, hiking, orienteering with a compass, canoeing, kayaking, teambuilding activities, and stewardship projects such as planting trees, picking up litter, clearing brush, etc. Please refer to our Physical Education program menu for a more detailed description or contact the naturalists.

Careers in Conservation

Through use of various media, open discussion, and Q/A with a naturalist, students will explore various career opportunities in natural resource conservation. Students will be able to describe at least five potential careers in the field of conservation and demonstrate increased knowledge of local conservation issues.

***MS-ESS3-3**

