

5-8 GRADE PROGRAM LIST

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION 2026-2027

JASPER COUNTY
CONSERVATION

Middle School 5th-8th Grade Programs

2026-2027

Welcome Educators!

We are thrilled to offer a variety of engaging and informative environmental education programs designed to empower teachers and inspire students. Our programs are hands-on, curriculum-aligned, and adaptable to various age groups and learning environments.

Explore the options below and discover how we can help bring the wonders of the natural world into your classroom and beyond!

5th Grade Spring Field Trip

Fifth grade classes travel to Ashton Wildwood Park (7 miles west of Baxter) and spend a day in the woods focusing on Iowa geology, trees, wildflowers and animals. Students will experience the changing spring forest through observational and sensory activities. They will contribute their observations to a large phenology wheel. A student workbook, provided by the conservation department, will track each student's journey from the classroom to the woods and back again to the classroom.

***5-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1, 5-PS3-1**



Earth's Spheres



Students will review geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and atmospheres and through several demonstrations and a water cycle game, will see how the spheres interact.

****5-ESS2-1, 5-ESS2-2***

Outdoor Survival

If your students are reading “Julie of the Wolves,” “Hatchet,” or other survival-themed book, we have a great program that ties in! The naturalist will bring a variety of outdoor skills to share with students, including finding direction, what to do if you’re lost, finding wild edible foods, how to build a shelter, building a fire, and how to use a compass. A great program even if you’re not reading the book!



What’s in the Night Sky?



Students will review how the earth and moon move in relation to the sun and how the moon cycles each month. We’ll briefly review the planets in our solar system and some constellations in our sky, along with other deep sky objects. Students will learn how a sky map is used and hear about what exciting things are currently happening in the universe!

****5-ESS1-1, 5-ESS1-2***

6th Grade Fall Field Trip

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***

7th Grade Enviroscope Model and Fall Field Trip



The Enviroscope 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 Enviroscope 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-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-4, MS-ETS1-1***



Watershed Investigations at Mariposa Park

Upon arrival at Mariposa Park, 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-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-3, MS-LS2-4, MS-ETS1-1***

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***

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 gardens, schoolyard plantings, aquatic habitat construction and raised produce beds. Naturalists will be available throughout the planning and implementation process of the project.

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



Physical Education Programs and/or Field Trip Activities

Archery 101

Students will practice their skills using recurve bows, compound bows, or both. We can set this up inside the gym with a net. Equipment will be provided.

Fishing

You bring the worms and we'll bring the poles. Students will learn basic fishing techniques and how to identify some common fish in Iowa's ponds and streams. We have 20 fishing poles available for schools to use.

GPS 101

Students will learn the basics of using a Global Position System (GPS) unit. Students will then practice their skills in a scavenger hunt. Equipment and instruction will be provided.

Kayaking 101

Students learn the basics of kayaking on the lake at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve. Basic safety rules will be reviewed and expected to be followed at all times. Students are required to have a parent/guardian sign a waiver and must wear a life jacket provided by the conservation department.

Cross-Country Skiing

Skiing is one of the best ways to exercise almost every muscle in your body! The naturalists will provide the equipment and basic instruction. Skiing can be done at a local park or even the school yard.

Snowshoeing

Another great program if there is snow on the ground! A little history and instruction on snowshoes will be given by the naturalist and students can practice walking around the school yard. This would also be fun as part of a winter field trip to a park and combined with tracking wildlife and other winter activities.

Hammocking

Hang out with us! We have 25 hammocks that can be used for a school program or as a field day station at a park. Students can read, journal, draw, bird watch or just relax in a stress-free environment.

[Contact Us](#)

Ready to book a program or have questions?

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Next Steps

1. **Explore our offerings:** Review the program descriptions to find the best fit for your students. Please limit your selection to a total of 3 programs during the school year, including field trips.
2. **Contact us:** Reach out via email at the beginning of the school year to guarantee a time.
3. **Book your program:** We'll work with you to schedule your chosen environmental education experience. Plan for 20-30 minutes per program.
4. **Prepare for an amazing learning adventure!** Please plan to sit with your class and enjoy the presentation along with your students!