



Merry Lea

Environmental Learning Center
of Goshen College

Exploring Nature

K - 2nd

Program Description

Students will experience the natural world using most or all of their senses, exploring seasonal changes in Indiana ecosystems. Grade-level specific objectives vary, and include concepts such as needs of living things, life cycles, and habitat.

Program Objectives

Students will:

- Discover there is great diversity among plants and animals
- Learn about sequencing through life cycles and the seasons, exploring what plants and animals are doing in the spring
- Explore what it means to be "non-living" and "living"
- Learn what a habitat is and what it provides for living things

Program Outline

1. Hike

Students head out on our trails to get a close-up view of what plants and animals are doing this time of year. They participate in age-appropriate scavenger hunts, games and other hands-on activities.

2. Vernal Pond Exploration

While on the hike, students stop at one of our vernal ponds to search for macroinvertebrates and amphibians living in the water.

3. The afternoon is filled with a variety of age-appropriate activities. Options include:

- Songs
- Games
- Stories
- An introduction to Merry Lea's Ambassador Animal

Vocabulary

- Seasons
- Living
- Ecosystem
- Senses
- Habitat
- Non-living
- Life Cycle

Quick Facts

Season Spring: April - May
Summer: June

Grades K - 2nd

Program Length 4 hours

Maximum # of Students 80 Students

Standards Correlation

ETS1.A: Defining and Delimiting an Engineering Problem: A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering. Such problems may have many acceptable solutions. (K-2-ETS1-1) (secondary to K-PS2-2)

ESS3.A: Natural Resources: Living things need water, air, and resources from the land, and they live in places that have the things they need. Humans use natural resources for everything they do. (K-ESS3-1)

LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy

Flow in Organisms: All animals need food in order to live and grow. They obtain their food from plants or from other animals. Plants need water and light to live and grow. (K-LS1-1)

LS1.A: Structure and Function: All organisms have external parts. Different animals use their body parts in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water and air. Plants also have different parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) that help them survive and grow. (1-LS1-1)

LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms

Adult plants and animals can have young. In many kinds of animals, parents and the offspring themselves engage in behaviors that help the offspring to survive. (1-LS1-2)

LS3.B: Variation of Traits: Individuals of the same kind of plant or animal are recognizable as similar but can also vary in many ways. (1-LS3-1)

LS3.A: Inheritance of Traits: Young animals are very much, but not exactly, like their parents. Plants also are very much, but not exactly, like their parents. (1-LS3-1)

LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Plants depend on water and light to grow. (2-LS2-1)

LS4.D: Biodiversity and Humans: There are many different kinds of living things in any area, and they exist in different places on land and in water. (2-LS4-1)

ESS2.C: The Roles of Water in Earth's Surface Processes: Water is found in the ocean, rivers, lakes, and ponds. Water exists as solid ice and in liquid form. (2-ESS2-3)