

Kickapoo Reserve “Day-Use Program” Curriculum Descriptions

(Please use our [Curriculum Selections by Age Level](#) list to determine appropriate age ranges for each unit.)

Alien Invaders Invasive species have important economic and ecological consequences in Wisconsin and around the world. Students learn “citizen science” through hands-on experiments to determine the abundance of invasive earthworms and certain invasive plant species. Emphasis is placed on the importance of biodiversity and the role humans can play to prevent the spread of these “alien invaders”. If time allows, students can participate in the “tug-a-suckle” program to help remove invasive honeysuckle on the Reserve.

Ancient Living Skills Students learn how people of the far past lived and survived on the same materials the earth affords us today. Students participate in a variety of activities and discussions which highlight the history of ancient peoples and skills such as fire making, shelter building, rope making, and making containers for gathering food or water—all with only the materials nature offers.

Animal Signs Students explore the Kickapoo Valley Reserve to look for signs of animal life. This class focuses on clues that emphasize animal behaviors and habits. Students learn tracking skills; animal identification; and visit different habitats such as woods, wetlands, and open fields. This class is exciting in any season.

Animals in Winter Students explore why winter can be hard for animals and the many ways they have to cope. Through a puppet show, a winter exploration hike, and hands-on activities, students learn how nature has prepared animals to meet the challenges of winter.

Archery Students receive solid instruction on equipment selection, equipment use, and safety requirements. We concentrate on introducing the sport to beginners while helping refine archery skills in those students with more background. We use compound bows specifically designed for kids.

Beautiful Bats Students learn amazing facts about these misunderstood mammals. Through the use of story, games, and slide shows, students explore the myths about bats and learn bat ecology and the important niche these animals fill in the natural world.

Bat Bonanza A simplified version of Beautiful Bats for younger students.

Birds of the Season Students will be introduced to bird migration on the KVR and learn some of the resident species (what they look like and sounds like). They’ll learn how to use binoculars and take a birding hike to the bird blind on one of the KVR wetlands to see interesting species up close. In unfavorable birding weather students will explore the hazards of migration with the Great Migration Challenge Game.

Busy Beavers This class helps students explore basic beaver morphology, behavior, and habitat. Students work together to “dress” a classmate as a beaver to increase their understanding of the adaptations beavers have that make them specialists in their habitat.

Busy Blackcaps Blackcap Chickadees are amazing little birds! In an active hands-on class, students will learn chickadee songs and behaviors, then collect nesting materials to make their own chickadee nest.

Camo Critters This class introduces students to the concepts of predator and prey relationships. Students learn how animals are adapted to their environment in order to survive. Among other activities students play a game of “hide and seek” that tests out the effectiveness of certain kinds of camouflage.

Canoeing On one of the Reserve’s small ponds, students learn important paddling techniques and safety skills for canoeing on flat water. These basic skills are important to learn before paddling in moving water (like the

Kickapoo River). Students learn important techniques for entering and exiting the canoe and are given the opportunity to experience paddling in both the bow and stern. Each student will be outfitted with paddle and life vest.

Challenge Course Our Challenge Course or “low ropes course” is designed to teach students team building skills in positive and productive ways. Each component requires groups to work together and come to consensus to achieve success. Our instructors gently guide students through the process of conquering each element and lead them through a “de-briefing” after each one is completed. This is a great team building exercise that encourages cooperation, communication, and problem solving for grades 3 through adult.

Constellations Students will explore traditional constellations as well as make some of their own with a fun constellation scope making activity. Students will also learn about constellations that can be found in the night sky using shadows and story.

Coyote Capers Students take a hike to meet friendly Coyote who introduces shapes that can be found in nature. Students return to the classroom to meet Ms. Snake and create their own “shape snakes”. Then go outside with the shape snakes to play a game that teaches habitat and adaptation principals.

Dream Catchers This creative class teaches students about the importance of craft in different cultures. Students learn how to make a dream-catcher and also learn some of the cultural history that goes along with it. Each student can take home their creation.

Everybody Needs a Home Students explore and compare a variety of different habitats and become familiar with some of their inhabitants. They discover through a puppet show, outdoor games, and a habitat hike (where students also learn basic mapping skills) what makes each habitat suitable for certain organisms and not for others.

Fantastic Flying Machines Students become familiar with adaptations that make birds unique. A hike with binoculars and scope to our wetland bird blind allows students to see birds and other wetland creatures up close. Hands-on exploration of feathers, beaks, and nests allows students to learn about special birds attributes first-hand. A running game called Migration Obstacle Course allows students to move and play while learning about important migration hazards.

Flower Power Through simple hands-on activities students will learn the parts of a flower, go on a flower hunt, play a pollination game and read a story or do a flower craft.

Fish Printing An ancient Japanese art form, this activity introduces students to the parts of a fish’s external anatomy and how special adaptations allow fish to survive in varied environments. Students create beautiful and practical art through this printing exercise. Students may bring 100% cotton t-shirts to print on or poster-size paper will be supplied.

Flint Knapping Early humans perfected the techniques of flint knapping to craft beautifully shaped and functional arrowheads, projectile points, spear points, and knife blades. Students will learn the techniques of making these extraordinary tools, from material selections to spalling and direct and indirect percussion flaking. Observe, hold, and imagine these tools in action as you watch the chips fly!

Geology Discovery A simplified version of our “Geology Hike”, this class allows students to explore through a guided hike the unique geology of the Driftless region and introduces them to some basic rocks and minerals with fun hands-on activities.

Geology Hike Students discover the unique landscape of the Kickapoo Valley and the Driftless region through a challenging hike that takes them from valley floor to hilltop exploring the layers of geologic rock formations

(and rock shelters!) in between. Students also conduct hands-on activities in the classroom to help them learn common Kickapoo Valley rocks and which rocks demonstrate exciting geologic phenomenon such as erosion and glacial movement.

Human History/Homestead Hike Students take a walking tour from the Reserve's Visitor Center to explore the history of the La Farge Lake and Dam Project. The tour includes several old homestead and farm sites, the Old Highway 131 trail, the covered bridge, and the dam site. Students also learn about Native American use of the land and 19th century white settlement.

Ice Caves Hike This is the winter version of the Geology Hike. In winter, students are treated to beautiful ice formations formed at the mouth of many of the rock shelters they may visit on the Reserve.

It's a Hoot Younger children get a fascinating look at owls and their amazing adaptations through a short puppet show, owl calling exercise, and outdoor game. Students also get an opportunity to craft a little owl of their own to take home.

Key to the Trees This curriculum provides students the opportunity to explore tree identification by learning to use a dichotomous key to identify distinguishing characteristics of some of the Reserve's native trees. A chromatography activity allows students to learn about the cycles of deciduous tree growth and begin to appreciate the important role of trees in ecosystems and for human use.

Learning to Love Herptiles Students learn to recognize the differences and similarities of reptiles and amphibians. This program instills an appreciation of reptiles and amphibians, dispels common myths and fears, and explores contributing factors to the decline of amphibian and reptile populations. Students have a chance to learn common frog/toad calls before taking a hike that leads students on a search for herptiles. Another outdoor activity engages students in thinking about habitat that is suitable for specific herptile species.

Life Under the Ice What is life in the pond like under a layer of snow and ice? We'll auger holes and take several measurements to find out! Students will collect data to prove or disprove their hypotheses on what is happening under the pond ice. The closed winter pond system offers a unique glimpse of the amazing adaptations of pond life in winter.

Moon Mysteries Students will discover for themselves how the shape of the moon changes from day to day in a cycle that lasts about a month. They'll also learn about moon craters through a creative project and explore how different cultures and people view the moon.

Natural Play KVR instructor/naturalists guide young children to explore natural play areas which provide interest-led, inquiry-based play opportunities. Here, children use their imaginations, creativity, hand-eye coordination, balance, and physical strength to build tiny elfin towns, bake in the sand kitchen, play nature music, climb over logs, swing on ropes and balance on stumps. This program is best suited for Pre-K-First Grade.

Nature Drawing and Journaling Inspired by the journals of the likes of Aldo Leopold, Annie Dillard, Sigrid Olsen, and Mary Oliver, students will learn drawing and writing techniques that help them explore and observe nature. These techniques will help sharpen their observation, awareness, and identification skills. In the spring time students also learn to identify spring wildflowers.

New Games/Ice Breakers/Initiatives Fun, engaging team-building activities that help students feel more comfortable working together. These games draw out commonalities among group members, reduce tension and encourage safe "risk taking" and reflection. These carefully chosen activities are a great way to start out a day at the KVR, start the school year, bring together a group that is at disequilibrium, or just have fun trying new challenges together.

Orienteering Students learn how to use a compass, read contour maps, and measure distance with paces. These important life skills are useful in so many outdoor activities from hunting and fishing to simply enjoying wild areas. Students use their new knowledge of maps and compass to complete an outdoor orienteering course.

Patterns in Nature Patterns are everywhere in nature. While introducing students to basic mathematical concepts we'll take a hike to explore counting, sizes and the shapes that are found in nature. Since patterns can be located using the senses of sight, hearing and feeling we'll use our whole bodies to explore this fun topic!

Planet Walk The size of the planets and the distances between are difficult to imagine. Most models and charts of our Solar System show the many worlds as very close together. This lesson lets students construct a scale model of our solar system showing the relative sizes of the worlds orbiting our Sun and the immense distances between them.

Radical Raptors Through the exploration of different raptor species common to Wisconsin, students learn the delicate balance of predator/prey relationships, the ecology of raptors, and the importance of population dynamics. Amazing raptor facts and an interactive food gathering game make this one of our most popular classes.

Rendezvous Games Students participate in a variety of activities and games that are based on historic life skill activities and which also teach a cultural history lesson. Students take a trip back in time to experience skills and games used by the pioneers, lumbermen, and Native Americans of long ago.

Safe Solar Viewing This unit is designed to let students explore the star closest to the Earth, the Sun. Students will study shadows, prisms and will use equipment such as telescopes and rainbow glasses to safely view the sun.

Seeds Everywhere Through fun games and activities, students get a look at the many kinds of seeds that can be found in nature. Students learn about the special adaptations seeds have for getting themselves around, and learn to hone their observational skills along the way!

Skiing Students are outfitted with skis, poles, and boots and taught basic cross-country skiing techniques before hitting the trails near the Reserve's Visitor Center. This curriculum is (obviously) weather dependant.

Snowshoeing The Kickapoo Reserve now has about 60 pairs of snowshoes in sizes to fit toddlers through adults! Come explore the beauty of the Reserve in winter. Students learn snowshoe history and technique and get a close-up look at winter ecology.

Survival Skills Situations in which wilderness survival skills are needed can happen almost anywhere. This lesson provides students with the basic skills for tackling such experiences with thought and care. Students learn proper fire building techniques, proper site selection, and techniques for building shelters and will explore the hierarchy of human needs.

Water Canaries Adapted from a Project Wild Aquatics class, this hands-on course allows students to investigate a stream or pond using water sampling techniques. Students collect and identify macro invertebrates and relate their presence as indicator species to the overall health of the body of water.

Water Wonders A simplified version of Project Wild's "Water Canaries", this class introduces students to the pond and wetland and the organisms that live there. Students hunt for and examine macro invertebrates and learn how their presence helps indicate the overall health of the wetland ecosystem.

Where are We? Students will use hands-on activities to look at cues and methods used to recognize their surroundings and orient themselves in the natural world.

Wintergreen Trail Hike This newly created KVR trail offers students a glimpse of several fascinating ecosystems. Highlighting the ancient relic Hemlock Forest, students learn how geology and human history have affected the land as we see it today. Students also are introduced to unique plant communities and plant adaptations. Nature Awareness skills are also emphasized on this hike through thoughtful, hands-on activities.