Macbride
Nature
Recreation Area
Field Trips

our philosophy

The vast majority of Americans have little understanding of ecological relationships in nature and are therefore unaware of the extent to which human activities are impacting the environment that provides us with our most basic needs. A way of life that is overly consump­
tive, wasteful, and often poisonous to our environment has become entrenched in America—so much so that many Americans casually dismiss environmental concerns and view environmentalists as little more than doom-sayers getting in the way of “progress.”

In this century many hardworking and farsighted indi­
viduals have spoken out in support of preserving wilder­
ness, natural ecosystems, clean air, and clean water. Sil­
ent Spring, published in 1962, awakened millions of
Americans to facts that could no longer be ignored. Like
others before her and after her, Rachel Carson sought to
instruct minds and stir hearts. She acknowledged the im­
portance of scientific knowledge, but also emphasized
the need for “a sense of wonder” toward nature. It is this
sense of wonder, combined with ecological understand­
ing, that many environmental educators strive to culti­
vate. This combination of objectives provides a basis for
the environmental education program at Macbride.

the experience

The process of learning in the out-of-doors is as impor­
tant as the knowledge gained. In fact we find it difficult
to separate process from content. We believe that student
motivation and interest are critical factors in long-term
retention. We encourage high levels of motivation and
interest through enjoyable activities, providing the con­
text for exploration, play, and fantasy. We recognize that
children often learn better when they are active physi­
cally as well as mentally, and our activities reflect this.
Finally we know that children often learn more from the
actions and attitudes of adults than from their words. We
strive, therefore, to illustrate with our actions the interper­
sonal and environmental ethics we are working to pro­
 mote.

Each field trip to Macbride is an outdoor learning ex­
perience that has been carefully thought out and tested.
It stands on its own as a mini environmental education
unit, especially when supplemented by appropriate
classroom activities. Teachers and students who elect to
take more than one field trip to Macbride find that the
field trips introduce or reinforce many of the most impor­
tant elements of the environmental science curriculum.
The learning experiences build on and complement each other.

The field trips are designed by Burke Thayer, environ­
mental education coordinator for Macbride Nature Rec­
reation Area. He is assisted in teaching by well-trained
student teachers and student interns from The University
of Iowa and other area colleges. In most cases,
classroom teachers are not required to lead activities.
Instead, they are given the opportunity to observe their
students learning and interacting in a unique
educational setting.

program choices

Presently programs are offered to first- through sixth-
grade classes. Each program (field trip) has specific ed­
cucational goals and objectives. Activities are chosen and
created to meet the needs of the attending age group
and support a central theme.

Fifth- and sixth-grade classes may attend one, two,
or three full-day programs in a school year. Earth Con­
cections is offered in the fall. On this field trip we focus on
the concepts of energy flow, cycling, and interdepen­
dence, which form the core of ecological understanding.
Wildlings is offered in the winter months. Through activi­
ties both indoors and out, we study adaptations of wild­
life with special attention given to birds of prey and wild
passerines. We also explore some environmental issues
affecting wildlife. Diversity, change, and structure are
themes for the spring offering entitled Miracles. In ex­
ploring these concepts attention is focused on plant life
and natural communities.

Third- and fourth-grade classes are invited to attend
one or two programs in a school year. Nature's Harvest
and Awakenings are offered in the fall and spring re­
spectively. The activities in these programs take advan­
tage of the seasonal changes occurring with an empha­
sis placed on awareness and aesthetic appreciation.

Raptor Center Educational Programs

The Macbride Raptor Center provides an important
resource for environmental education programming. The
live display at Macbride Nature Recreation Area
includes eleven species of eagles, hawks, and owls, all
permanently disabled and unable to return to the wild.
Many of these beautiful raptors are trained for carefully
controlled presentations. Wildlings, Wingbeats, Awaken­
ings, and Nature's Harvest all utilize the Raptor Cen­
ter as an exciting resource. On each of these field trips,
meeting a live hawk or owl is a memorable thrill and
highlight for the students.
In addition to the environmental education field trips that utilize the Raptor Center, other educational opportunities are available for groups interested in learning more about raptors. Programs are offered for all ages from preschoolers to senior citizens. Raptor Center educational programs introduce audiences to the world of birds of prey and provide insights into issues affecting all wildlife.

"Iowa Birds of Prey"

This is a traveling educational program designed for the classroom, auditorium, gymnasium, church basement, or any other suitable meeting place. The goal of the program is to introduce audiences to a variety of raptors seen in Iowa with emphasis on adaptations, predator/prey relationships, and human impact on natural ecosystems. Depth of content is tailored to the audience, but the program always includes beautiful slides of raptors and, of course, live birds of prey (30 to 90 minutes, depending on the audience).

**Raptor Center Tours**

Tours of the Raptor Center are given to youth and adult groups, with presentations tailored to the interests of each group (approximately 1 hour).

**Sponsorship**

Schools and other youth organizations may become sponsors of the Raptor Center with a donation of $100 or more. The sponsorship period is from September through August. A program including live raptors is conducted free of charge for each sponsoring group and is tailored to the needs and interests of the group. Through the sponsorship, the students have an opportunity to do something concrete for the benefit of wildlife. They sponsor one of the center’s nonreleasable birds, but understand that they are supporting all of our rehabilitation and education efforts. Adult organizations, businesses, and individuals may become Raptor Center sponsors by matching the funds raised by school groups.

**Fees**

Fees for field trips to Macbride are $1.00 per child for a full-day program and $0.75 per child for a half-day program. Bus transportation may be provided for an additional fee.

Fees for Raptor Center programs are $1.00 per person or $10.00 minimum for presentations or tours at the Raptor Center, and $40.00 plus mileage for off-site programs. All Raptor Center program fees go directly to support the work of the Raptor Center.

Assistance may be available through grants and fee adjustments for schools or groups in need.

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**Information**

To obtain more information on Raptor Center programs or Environmental Education field trips offered, teachers may call Burke Thayer at 335-9293 or check the programs listed on the form provided and mail to Burke Thayer, Environmental Education Coordinator, E216 Field House, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242. A teacher's manual will be sent for each program checked.

The programs are popular and dates are limited, so it is recommended that scheduling be done as far in advance as possible.

☐ I would like to receive information on the following environmental education field trips:

**Fifth and Sixth Grades—full day**

Fall

☐ EARTH CONNECTIONS: Cycles and Interrelationships in Nature—energy flow, photosynthesis, food chains, decomposition, chemical components of life, cycling of matter, interrelationships among living and non-living things

Winter

☐ WILDLINGS: Wildlife, Adaptations, and Survival—nature in winter, needs of wildlife, population dynamics, adaptations, avian structure and behavior, predation, human impact on wildlife

Spring

☐ MIRACLES: Life in the Forest Community—tree structure and function, tree identification, diversity, succession and climax communities, poetry

**Third and Fourth Grades—full day**

Fall

☐ NATURE’S HARVEST: The Patterns and Changes of Autumn—observation skills, seeds, trees and leaves, bird migration, special characteristics of hawks

Spring

☐ AWAKENINGS: Flowers, Insects, and the Renewal of Spring—observation skills, insects and spiders, flowers and pollination, predation, special characteristics of owls

**First through Fourth Grades—half day**

November

☐ WINGBEATS: The Lives of Birds—adaptations of passerines and raptors, observation skills, nature appreciation

Name ________________________________

Address ________________________________

Phone #(wk): ______________________ (hm): ______________________

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