

JUN 13 1989

macbride nature recreation area



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The University of Iowa
Division of Recreational Services

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Environmental Education 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 consumptive, 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 doomsayers getting in the way of “progress.”

In this century many hardworking and farsighted individuals have spoken out in support of preserving wilderness, natural ecosystems, clean air, and clean water. Silent 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 importance of scientific knowledge, but also emphasized the need for “a sense of wonder” toward nature. It is this sense of wonder, combined with ecological understanding, that many environmental educators strive to cultivate. 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 important 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 context for exploration, play, and fantasy. We recognize that children often learn better when they are active physically 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 interpersonal and environmental ethics we are working to promote.

Each field trip to Macbride is an outdoor learning experience 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 important elements of the environmental science curriculum. The learning experiences build on and complement each other.

The field trips are designed by Burke Thayer, environmental education coordinator for Macbride Nature Recreation 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 educational goals and objectives. Activities are chosen and created to meet the needs of the attending age group and to support a central theme.

Fifth- and sixth-grade classes may attend one, two, or three full-day programs in a school year. **Earth Connections** is offered in the fall. On this field trip we focus on the concepts of energy flow, cycling, and interdependence, which form the core of ecological understanding. **Wildlings** is offered in the winter months. Through activities both indoors and out, we study adaptations of wildlife 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 exploring 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 respectively. The activities in these programs take advantage of the seasonal changes occurring with an emphasis placed on awareness and aesthetic appreciation.

First-, second-, third-, and fourth-grade classes may choose a half day (2 hours) program entitled **Wingbeats**. This program focuses on birds and their adaptations.

Full-day programs are from 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., with some flexibility to accommodate schools traveling long distances. The half-day program is from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. or from 12:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Children bring sack lunches, pencils, and name tags, and dress comfortably for the weather. They are provided with colorful journals and writing boards. Teachers receive a teacher's manual prior to the date of the field trip. The manual outlines the activities and schedule for the day and provides suggestions for preparation along with travel information.

Fall and spring programs are limited to 72 students. Winter programs are limited to 30. Teacher aides, student teachers, and interested parents are welcome but not required.



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**, **Awakenings**, and **Nature's Harvest** all utilize the Raptor Center 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 \$.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.

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–mid-April ☐ **WINGBEATS: The Lives of Birds**—adaptations of passerines and raptors, observation skills, nature appreciation

Name _____

Address _____

Phone #(wk): _____ (hm): _____