

OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Our activities complement classroom lessons and align with several state standards for science, math, SEL, ELA, and social sciences. The curriculum is designed to provide students with hands on learning in an engaging environment. Through experiential education, students develop a better understanding of the natural world around them. All classes are facilitated outdoors rain or shine. In the event of inclement weather, classes are adapted for indoor lessons.

Classes are designed for all ages and weather, unless otherwise specified.

- **Two Night Stay** - Choose 7 daytime activities and 4-5 evening activities.
- **One Night Stay** - Choose 3 daytime activities and 2-3 evening activities.
- **Day Trip** - Choose 4-5 daytime activities. The number of activities is dependent on arrival/departure times.

*The number of daytime and evening activities scheduled will vary depending on arrival/departure times, as well as activity choices.

Activities built into every schedule and are facilitated by school staff:

Free Time (7:30-8:00am and 4:00-5:30pm): During this time, students are free to enjoy activities such as basketball, kickball, volleyball, visit the retired horses, or just simply bond with one another. We also offer a corn maze in season.

Journaling (average time 6:15-6:45pm): This is an opportunity for students to write about the activities they experienced during the day. WPR does not provide journals. However, upon request, the ranch can send documents to help schools create their own journal topics or pages.

Daytime Activities

Field Study/Canyon Hike: White Pines Ranch (WPR) has natural features such as deciduous/pines forests, meadows, water formed canyons, and natural springs. This activity introduces key concepts such as symbiotic relationships, interdependence, seed dispersal, and plant identification.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Aquatic Study: This study emphasizes the effects of water on the landscape. Geologic features are studied firsthand, and students learn to interpret the landscape by observing natural phenomena and making inferences. Students also collect aquatic macro invertebrates to test water quality.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall

Project Wild: Through simulations and group games, students are introduced to concepts relating to wildlife ecology such as population density, carrying capacity, predator/prey, and adaptations.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Animal Survivor: Students participate in a simulation game that introduces the basic concept of ecological food chains/webs as it pertains to predator and prey animals. Students are assigned a role to play within an ecosystem (herbivore/carnivore/omnivore), and they need to collect resources to survive. It is a high energy activity that is best suited for 5th -12th grades.

Time: 90 minutes Seasons: All

Wilderness Survival: This activity is designed to engage students in problem solving and reaching a consensus. Students will focus on the basic needs of humans as they work cooperatively through an activity which requires them to consider survival in the wilderness.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Daytime Activities Continued

Quarry/Fossil Study: A visit to the Ordovician dolomite quarry for fossil hunting is the highlight of this activity. There is a brief classroom introduction, which includes an explanation of the rock formation and the types of fossils found at WPR.

*Students are welcome to take home any fossils found during this activity.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall

Cemetery Study: Mt. Zion Cemetery is used to study math, social studies, science and language arts. Children are involved in finding, recording and processing data. After an introduction to the cemetery, students are assigned a data scavenger hunt.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Orienteering: Students receive a basic introduction to the use of a compass. They are then split into small groups to successfully navigate a preset course, complete with stories and group problem-solving activities.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Initiative Tasks/Groupwork Team Building: Students are given problems to solve or tasks to accomplish as a group. Emphasis is given to cooperation, patience, persistence, planning, and strategizing. Students discuss their performances and suggest ways to improve them for the next task.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Tree Study: Project Learning Tree activities are used to investigate the properties of trees and to help students realize the importance of trees in the natural environment and as a valuable resource to our society.

Time: 90 minutes Seasons: All

Birding: Students will use their powers of observation, data collecting, and sharing information to understand that birds have various adaptations that make them well suited to eat specific foods and live in specific habitats.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Archery: With an emphasis on safety, students learn about techniques for using a recurve bow and arrow. Then they have the opportunity to put those skills to use.

Time: 60 minutes Seasons: All

Sense Walk: Students use their sense to explore their daytime environment. This activity is hands-on and is designed to encourage an appreciation of nature and increase the wonder of their surroundings. Best suited for 3rd-6th grade students.

Time: 90 minutes Seasons: All

* **Horsemanship & Trail Ride:** The horsemanship includes trail etiquette, safety, and how to work with WPR horses and is required for all riding guests. Depending on scheduling, horsemanship is sometimes offered as a 30-minute evening activity. Once all guests have completed the horsemanship, they enjoy a 45-minute trail ride designed for first time riders but is also enjoyed by experienced riders.

Time: 45-90 minutes Seasons: All

* **Horse Grooming/Horse Saddling:** The horse grooming and saddling class is a great compliment to the horsemanship and ride. Students get hands on experience learning about the care and tacking of horses.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

*Note: Some school districts do not permit horse related activities. Please check with your school's administration before choosing this option.

Evening Activities

Hayrides: Students enjoy this laid-back ride on a hay filled wagon pulled by a farm tractor. It is a great time to make connections, enjoy the sunset, look at the evening sky, and enjoy this classic country past-time.

Time: 30 minutes Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall

Country Line Dancing: This activity gives students a chance to let loose and try western style dance. A ranch staff will lead the group through one or two simple line dances, at a pace that beginners or experienced line dancers will enjoy.

Time: 30 minutes Seasons: All

Games: Evening games involve active play, generally in a non-competitive structure. This is a great activity to let some energy out before the students return to their dorms for their night-time routine.

Time: 30 minutes Seasons: All

Ranch Bingo: This activity offers the group an opportunity to review material covered during the daytime activities through a fun and engaging game of bingo. Prizes are given!

Time: 30-60 minutes Seasons: All

Campfire Sing-along: Students gather as a group around the campfire to sing silly songs, laugh, and bond. If you are interested in a campfire story related to the nearby cemetery, ask the WPR staff. No s'mores provided, but you are welcome to bring your own and have adults roast the mallows.

Time: 30 minutes Seasons: All

Campfire: A simple campfire is all it takes to create life-long memories. Perhaps you want to facilitate story telling or time with the students. WPR can do all the prep and get the fire ready for you to enjoy. We do not provide s'mores, but you are welcome to bring your own!

Time: 30-90 minutes Seasons: All

Night Hike/Walk: This is a sensory activity where students participate in several engaging activities that demonstrate why we see what we see and hear what we hear... in the dark. The students are discouraged from using flashlights to gain confidence with navigating the wilderness at night.

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Alpha Wolf: This outdoor game will help students explore the concepts of a wolf pack. While playing, students will learn about the social structure of the pack in an engaging simulation.

Time: 60 minutes Seasons: All

Partnership options for evening activities at an additional cost:

Atwood Environmental Center

From Rockford, IL

Birds of prey are the focus for this outreach program. Atwood brings a variety of non-releasable birds to deliver a powerful presentation.

Cost: \$6 per student (20 student minimum)

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: All

Burpee Museum of Natural History

From Rockford, IL

Reptiles - Learn all about the reptile classification and meet them in person!

Mammals- Learn about the different adaptations of mammals. No live animals presented.

Fossils/Dinosaurs- Burpee brings real fossils ranging from the Ordovician to Cretaceous period.

Cost: Approximately \$15 per student (Price varies by program and number of students)

Time: 60-90 minutes Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall