

Grades

3 - 4

Half and Full-day Field Trip Options



Overview

Take your students' curiosity and love of nature to a new level! Our 3rd and 4th grade programs aim to connect young students with their environment and the scientific inquiry process while tying into state science standards. They get students outdoors, observing and investigating the world around them and becoming familiar with scientific tools, while also providing ample opportunities for games, reading and FUN.

Half-day (2 hour) and full-day (4 hour) programs are available

Want to learn more? Curious about other programs?

Visit cedarcreek.umn.edu/ed
Contact Caitlin Potter:
caitlin@umn.edu, 612-301-2602



Half-day program options:

Half-day options can also be combined with the Biomes of Minnesota hike to make a full-day trip.

Biomes of Minnesota

Season: year-round

The Cedar Bog Lake trail is a unique experience that lets students walk through representations of all three biomes present in Minnesota before emerging at the shores of Cedar Bog Lake. Deciduous forest, tallgrass prairie and boreal coniferous forest, as well as swamps and a lake – they all contribute to make this a “Walk Across Minnesota!” There are lots of opportunities along the way to stop and ask questions about the different types of nature the students are exploring. Total distance is ~1 mile.

Sort like a Scientist: The Importance and Power of Classification

Season: year-round

Students observe and/or collect a variety of items from around Cedar Creek and use their observational skills to sort them and come up with a basic classification scheme (dichotomous key). They then test out their key with a handful of surprise items or a visit to a novel area. Older groups can refine existing keys or create their own key, and learn why and how to identify specific groups of plants like trees or grasses in our experimental plots.

Animal Adaptations

Season: year-round

What animals live in Minnesota, and what makes them unique? Through a game, a hands-on investigation and lots of items to touch and explore, students will learn about adaptations our local animals use to make it through to spring. Most of the program will be indoors, but we will be going outside as part of our investigation - dress for the weather!

Visit to Biodiversity Experiment (bus required)

Season: April – November

Dr. Dave Tilman’s Big Biodiversity experiment is known worldwide for its insights into the way plant communities function and its role in helping scientists, policy makers, and the general public understand biodiversity. Explore this enormous experiment using a guided scavenger hunt that encourages students to figure out Dr. Tilman’s main results on their own. They’ll leave with an appreciation for biodiversity and science that’s hard to replicate anywhere else!

The Power of Observation

Season: April - November

The most important tool in a scientist's toolkit is their ability to look closely at the world around you. Hone your students' observation skills with a color-based scavenger hunt in nature! We will read a story, then go on a nature hike armed with paint chips and work together to see how many different shades and colors we can find. Once we are expert observers, we'll turn our attention to the plants and animals found around Cedar Creek's main campus building.

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Full-day program options:

Half-day options can also be combined with the Biomes of Minnesota hike to make a full-day trip.

One Small Square

Season: April - November

How do we make observations when everything around you is SO INTERESTING? After going on a nature hike and learning how to make observations as a group, we'll gather around a big square: a huge PVC quadrat with room for everyone to peer in. The group naturalist will model how to use scientific equipment like magnifying glasses, rulers, soil corers and thermometers to investigate what's in the big square. Then, groups of students will get their own "small square": a kid-sized quadrat that sections off the perfect amount of land for little hands and eyes to explore. Armed with their own bag of tools, students will count, measure, draw, collect and get their hands dirty in their squares. We'll come back together as a group to share the most exciting things from our squares. The day will wrap up with a game of Food Web Tag!

Water Water Everywhere

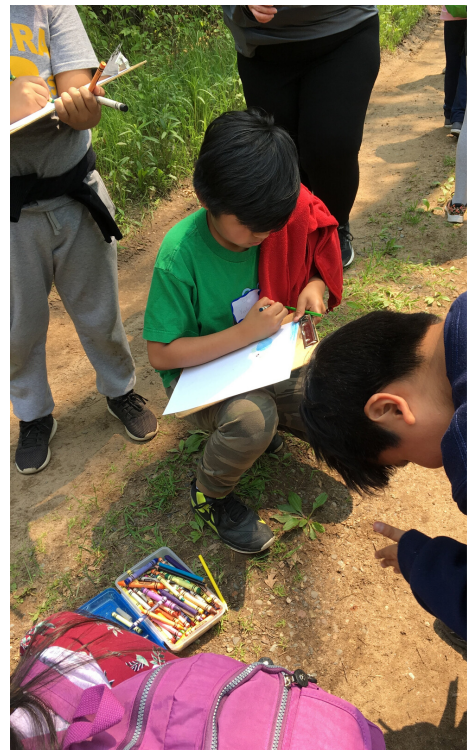
Season: year-round

Learn about the importance of water to people through a game, an observational hike and a hands-on demo. Students will experience the water cycle through stories and a game of water cycle tag. They will then visit either a wetland or a swamp, and spend some time observing and drawing what they see. They will also get to get their hands wet using our stream table, where a naturalist will demonstrate the way water shapes landscapes through processes like erosion and deposition. Students will be tasked with building houses along the watershed and making real-world engineering decisions related to flood control, development and landscaping.

Leaves and Forests

Season: April - October

Students explore and investigate two of Minnesota's three biomes - the coniferous and deciduous forests. Go on a hike that passes through several forest types, learn how to identify trees, and discuss the importance of trees and forests for humans. Collect a leaf of your own, and then learn how the shape a leaf tells you something about its function as well as the type of tree it came from. Wrap up the day with a leaf art project or a game of forest tag.



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Cedar Creek

Full-day program options:

Half-day options can also be combined with the Biomes of Minnesota hike to make a full-day trip.

Focus on Food Webs

Season: April – October

Did you know that the first scientist to study how energy moved through food webs worked here at Cedar Creek? Expose your students to Lindeman's legacy through Food Web Tag, a hike out to his research site (~1 mile total), and an investigation of adaptations in either animal skulls or pinned insects.

Animal Adaptations

Season: year-round

What animals live in Minnesota, and what makes them unique? Students will learn how to reconstruct the story of our local wildlife by looking for clues on a nature hike, and will investigate some of the adaptations found in Minnesotan animals. We'll play games, design our own adapted animals, look at skulls and pelts, go tracking and more!

Fees

Full-day field trips are \$330 for a "classroom" of approximately 30 students and at least one teacher/adult chaperone. Half-day programs are \$210 per "classroom". These fees cover the cost of a trained naturalist to guide and teach your group throughout the day, and provide access for your group to areas of the property not open to the public.

If this cost is prohibitive for your school, please get in touch with Caitlin (caitlin@umn.edu) - we are happy to work with you to subsidize the cost of your visit!



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