

Dodge Nature Center Programs

Updated May 2011

KEY



Spring



Summer



Fall



Winter

Air Around Us



1.25 hours

From a gentle breeze to a gale, air is always around us, constantly on the move and impacting our lives. In this program, students will explore the ways air is used and needed by plants and animals, and how humans put wind to work. (1st-3rd)

Animal Tracks and Signs



1.25 hours

There are stories in the clues left behind by the animals that live here at Dodge. Learn to find tracks, patterns, signs, nests and scat, then unravel the story of an animal's adventures from your careful observations. (K-Adult)

Aquatic Life



1.5 hours

The ponds and wetlands of Dodge are home to a multitude of different plants and animals. Students will collect, observe, and study aquatic plants and animals in their habitats in this hands-on exploration. (K-6th)

Bee Ecology (August – September)

1.5 hours

From their role in pollinating crops to the sweet honey they make, bees are an important part of our world. Learn more about their life cycles as you watch a beekeeper open a working hive. Then watch honey extraction and taste the sweet results. (K-Adult)

Birds in their Habitats



1.5 hours

Prairies, woodlands, ponds – these are the homes to many species of birds found at the nature center. Hike, observe and identify birds in the various habitats and learn about the adaptations that help them survive. (3rd-Adult)

Bones, Bones, Bones



1.5 hours

Skeletons provide structure, protection and movement. Students will analyze bones from different animals to compare their forms and functions by dissecting sterilized owl pellets and assembling an animal skeleton. ***This program has an additional fee for materials.*** (3rd-Adult)

Ecosystem Exploration



1.5 hours

The DNC Lilly Preserve allows students to see and experience a variety of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. By exploring this area students will be able to see not only the ecosystems but also how they blend into one another. (5th-Adult)

Fall Orchard (September – October)

1 hour

Enjoy the fresh taste of fall in the Dodge orchard. Students will explore the apple orchard by comparing size, color, and taste of a variety of apples and by helping press apples for cider. (PreK-Adult)

Farm Tour



1 hour

Come back “down on the farm” as you tour our barn, chicken coop and pastures. You’ll enjoy the sights and sounds (and smells) of a small, sustainable farm as you can see and learn about farm life, farm animals and the roles they play in peoples’ lives. *Children must be at least three years old. (PreK-Adult)

Forestry Exploration



1.5 hour

What does it take to become a forester? Students will practice the skills that foresters use including tree identification with a key and determining a tree’s health, size and age. (4th-Adult)

Hens and Roosters



1.25 hours

The most common farm animal in the world is also one of the most interesting. Get a very close look at the life cycle of chickens on our farm. Tour the coop, hold a chicken, check for eggs and see the free range flock as the roosters crow all the while. (K-4th)

Honey Bees and Apple Trees



1.25 hours

The interaction between honey bees and apple trees in the spring, allows us to enjoy the harvest of honey and apples in the fall. Students will gain an understanding of how bees act as pollinators, and how various life cycles are connected. (K-2nd)

Insects



1.5 hours

Grab a net and a jar and we'll be off to the prairie and the woods to see what 6-legged creatures live here at Dodge. We'll look for eggs and larvae while learning about insects' life cycles, find predators and prey and catch and release a bug or two. No log shall be left unturned in this insect adventure. (K-5th)

Introduction to Prairies



1.5 hours

Explore one of Minnesota's special biomes – the prairie. Learn about the historical changes that have occurred to prairies and how Dodge is working to restore this invaluable asset. (5th-Adult)

Landforms



2 hours

The land around us is changed over time by a variety of different factors. Explore the bluffs of the Mississippi to find the changes caused by oceans, glaciers, streams, rivers and people. This program takes place at Lilydale Park Reserve and involves extensive, rugged hiking. (5th-Adult)

Mammals



1.5 hours

Investigate the lives of Minnesota's mammals and uncover what foods they prefer to eat. Learn to classify mammals as herbivores, carnivores or omnivores by examining clues from their skulls. (3rd-Adult)

Maple Syruping (March)

1.5 hours

Celebrate the return of spring by observing the age-old process of turning tree sap into syrup. Students will help tap a tree, collect sap, visit the evaporator and sample some delicious maple syrup. Dress for the snowy, muddy trails. (PreK-Adult)

Meet the Milk Makers



1.25 hours

Learn about milk-producing animals on the farm and the products we make with milk. Students will meet goats, cows, and sheep, and have an opportunity to make butter and milk our demonstration cow. (K-4th)

Minnesota Wildlife



1.25 hours

What wild animals live where we are? This program will introduce students to some of Minnesota's wildlife through hands-on experiences with artifacts and visits with live animals. (PreK-1st)

Orienteering



1.25 hours

Finding your way is a skill. Practice with a compass to find direction and pacing to measure distance. Then use teamwork as small groups head outside to navigate one of our orienteering courses. Compasses are provided. (4th-Adult)

Papermaking (January)

1 hour

Make your own paper from recycled and natural materials. Students will compare different types of paper and paper products and learn the process of making paper by doing it themselves.



Physics on the Farm

1.5 hours

From pulleys to levers, ramps to wheels, the farm is filled with simple machines that illustrate principles of physics. Students will discover the physics used in farm machinery, tools and building design, and work together to complete farm tasks using simple tools and physics. (5th-Adult)



Plant Cycles

1.5 hours

What does it take to make a plant thrive? Students will compare the various ways plants compete for their basic needs as well as learn about the cycles that make up many parts of how plants work. They'll hike to see plants outdoors and take home their own plant from a cutting. (4th-8th)



Plant Diversity

1.5 hours

Through games, discussions and hands-on field experiences, students will gain an understanding of the importance of diversity in a good habitat and how restoration works to reestablish the dynamic variety needed for healthy ecosystems. *Special discount rate for groups participating in this program.* (4th-8th)



Predator-Prey

1.5 hours

Animals know that life boils down to eat or be eaten. Students will explore the complexities of predator-prey relationships by playing a fast-paced game with unexpected consequences that focuses on concepts like habitat, food chains, population dynamics and carrying capacity. (4th-8th)



Raptors: Hunters from Above

1.5 hours

Meet one of nature's most amazing groups of animals – raptors. See a live raptor and participate in hands-on activities to better understand the critical role these birds play in the environment. (3rd-Adult)



Reptiles and Amphibians

1.25 hours

Discover the world of the cold-blooded creatures as students compare and contrast the reptiles and amphibians in our live animal collection. Students will be able to observe and interact with many native species in this hands-on adventure. (K-Adult)

Rocks and Fossils



1.5 hours

The shale beds of Lilydale Regional Park are filled with ancient fossils. Guided by a Dodge Naturalist, you'll learn about sedimentary rock strata laid down by a prehistoric sea, the actions of glaciers, weathering, local history and of course, fossils. This program takes place at Lilydale Park Reserve and involves extensive, rugged hiking. **Requires special permits and additional fees.** (2nd-Adult)

Seasons Hike



1 hour

Each season is unique and brings many changes to the land as well as the plants and animals living there. In this program students will explore the prairies, ponds, and forests of Dodge using their five senses to find the best of what each season has to offer. (PreK-Adult)

Sky-Watching



1.5 hours

The night sky has been a source of wonder for thousands of years. Today we still gaze in amazement. Participants will learn about our location in the solar system and discover the stories behind constellations we will view in Dodge's portable starbag. This class is designed for either day or night programs, regardless of the weather. (2nd-Adult)

Soils



1 hour

Get the "scoop" on soils. Examine the living and non-living components of the soil in some hands-on activities. Learn about the importance and different types of soil as we collect and compare soil samples from the prairie, forest, and wetlands of the nature center. (1st-4th)

Sounds of Nature



1.5 hours

Sound surrounds us every day and is an important way for people and animals to gather information about what is happening around us. Learn to identify the sounds found in nature and their patterns. (3rd-Adult)

Trees



1.25 hours

Mighty oaks from little acorns grow. Students will be looking for both as they learn what trees need to grow. They'll use their senses to explore and discover similarities and differences in the leaves, bark, branches and seeds of the trees of Dodge's woods. (K-4th)

Waterworks



1.5 hours

Water is the basis of all life on earth. The quality of water in ponds, lakes, and streams has an impact on our health. Students will examine samples of water from around the DNC grounds and draw conclusions about how water quality is impacted by activities in and around the property. (4th-Adult)

Weather Forecasting



1.25 hours

You don't need a Doppler radar or other high tech equipment to predict the weather. The observation of cloud types, air pressure, and wind direction can all be used to formulate a weather forecast. Students will learn the basics of weather as they collect information they'll need to predict the weather. (2nd-Adult)

Wilderness Skills



2 hours

What does it take to survive in the wild? This class gives students insight into how the environment has an impact on humans in a survival situation. Students will be introduced to the skills of fire-building and survival shelter construction. Do you have what it takes to build a shelter and a one-match fire? (3rd-Adult)

Winter Adaptations



1.5 hours

Hike the wintry landscape to observe the strategies used by plants and animals for coping with the cold, snow, ice, wind and drought. When conditions permit, students of all ages will be able to try out kicksleds; students 3rd grade and older may be able to snowshoe. (K-Adult)

Winter Ecology



1.5 hours

Explore winter through hands-on discovery of the elements that affect the plants and animals coping with the conditions created by cold temperatures, snow and ice. Investigate these unique features of winter by drilling into ice to find out what is happening below the surface of the pond. Make predictions and collect data to learn more about the properties of ice and snow. (4th-Adult)

Winter Water Walk



1.5 hours

In winter, water can be found in nature as a solid, liquid or a gas. Students will examine snow and ice crystals under a microscope, measure snow and ice conditions, and make and test predictions as they explore water in winter. (1st-3rd)

Coming Soon

Renewable Energy (5th-Adult)



1.5 hours