



# Hancock County Conservation Department Environmental Education Program Guide

*The following guide is a list of environmental education (EE) program topics that are presented by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic Naturalist with the Hancock County Conservation Department. The programs presented by Hancock County Conservation staff correlate to the essential concepts and skills of Life Science as described in the Iowa Academic Standards.*

*Some of the programs are designed for younger students (**preschool through third grade programs are marked with a (Y)**).*

*Other programs are designed for older students (**grades 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade programs are marked with a (O)**).*

*Most of the programs can be adapted for any grade level and can be modified to fit school needs are marked with **Y/O**. Additional programs can also be given upon request.*

*To schedule programs or to setup a field trip please contact the Naturalist by phone or email.*

*When you are contacting us to setup a program, please be prepared with providing the following information.*

- *Environmental Education Program(s) and/or Activities you would like*
- *The date and time you would like the program or field trip*
- *The date you would like a backup raindate/snowdate if needed*
- *Teacher(s) name, phone number and/or email address*
- *Number of students*
- *Grade level(s) of students*
- *Note any students that may have special needs*

## **Hancock County Conservation Department Naturalist Contact Information**

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## Indoor or Outdoor EE Classroom Programs

**All About Owls (Y/O)** - Discover the fascinating world of Iowa's Owls from their life habits to their calls. I will bring mounted owls ect. to your classroom to help students learn where they live and adaptations that help them to survive. *Optional Additional Activity*-There is a educational and fun owl pellet dissection activity I have that the students can do with this program too!

**Amphibians of Iowa (Y/O)** – This informational program will educate your class about the unique characteristics of Iowa's amphibians! After this program the students will be able to identify most of Iowa's amphibians by both their apperance and the sound of their call.

**Animal Adaptations (Y/O)** – By observing and touching various animal mounts and parts, students will see and learn about some of the amazing adaptations some of Iowa's wildlife use.

**Animals Preparing for Winter (Y/O)**-Whether it's hibernation or migration, animals have some unique strategies to survive Iowa's brutal winter season. Students will learn what a variety of animals are doing to survive during those cold Iowa winter months.

**Animal Tracks, Signs & Skulls (Y/O)** -Students will see what signs wildlife leave behind and how to identify common Iowa wildlife by their footprint and other signs. *Optional Additional Activities*-Additional hands on activities I have for this program are animal track rubbing plates and animal track molds (Students fill the track mold with plaster and can have a animal track cast of their own to paint or color if they'd like).

**Banquet for the Birds (Y)** -Students will discover information about some of our feathered friends that live in Iowa during the winter, what foods they like to eat and different types of bird feeders people place in their yards. *Optional Additional Activity*-Students can make a pinecone birdfeeder to take home and see what birds eat from it.

**Birds of Prey (Y/O)**-Imagine a hawk or an owl in your classroom! Mounted birds will help demonstrate the unique adaptations of Iowa's raptors.

**Canoeing 101 (Y/O)**-Canoeing is a great outdoor activity and Hancock County has many wonderful lakes, rivers and marshes to explore. Students will learn about canoeing, water safety, entering and exiting a canoe and paddling techniques. After that the pupils will then get their chance to work with a classmate or adult to paddle the canoe around and get some great exercise at the same time. Canoes, paddles, lifejackets and other required safety equipment will be provided.



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**Fishing Basics (Y/O)**-Hancock County Conservation has a variety of open water fishing and ice fishing equipment (fishing poles, tackle, ect.) to take your class out fishing throughout the year. *Optional Additional Activity*-The naturalist can show the kids proper casting techniques and then the students can take a turn and cast a fishing pole and try to hit a target with a casting plug. The students can do this activity in a gym or outdoors. As with the canoeing presentation, this program can also be combined during a field trip.

**Furbearers Showcase (Y/O)**-Learn identification and amazing facts about many of Iowa's furbearing critters with this hands-on pelt program about mammals.

**Iowa Geology Rocks! (O)**-Students will learn the different ways rocks are formed and a variety of information about Iowa's geological history. Topics such as minerals, Iowa's state rock, Devonian fossils and fossil formation as well as, information about different Iowa landform regions will be discussed. Students will get to look at rock kits, fossils and unique rocks I've collected during the program. During the program I will also share a volcano and earthquake activity with them.

**Iowater Monitoring/Pond Study (Y/O)**-This wonderful hands-on water monitoring program will let your students collect true scientific data to unveil the general health of a natural body of water. Students will learn how to collect chemical, physical and biological data. Students will also learn and will get to use aquatic dip nets to capture and identify the benthic macroinvertebrates they find.

**Leaf Identification (O)**-Students will learn the important role trees play in nature. Participants will also learn common leaf shapes, arrangements and margins by looking at actual preserved specimens. Groups of students will then use a key to try and find out what tree the leaf originated from. Weather permitting, we can go outdoors to take a close look at some of the trees and plants in your schoolyard or a county/state park.

**Native American History of Iowa (Y/O)**-Native Americans were living in harmony with the land long before pioneer settlers arrived. An educational video, program and Native American games will show the students how some of the different tribes lived and dressed. *Optional Additional Activity*-An activity called "Putting The Pieces Together" will let your students work in small groups and take a clay pot to create their own decorations on it. They then break their decorated pot and give it to a different group. That group then work as archaeologists and try to putting the pot back together.



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**Orienteering and/or Geocaching (O)**-*Orienteering*-After learning the basics of compass reading, students will put their skills to use by constructing a basic compass map for others to follow. *Geocaching*-is an outdoor activity that is gaining popularity most recently! It combines technology (GPS systems) with hiking to create a modern-day “treasure hunt”. Participants will learn about this activity and how to use a GPS unit. This program perfectly ties in with latitude and longitude lessons. Temporary geocaches can be hid in the schoolyard or in a county park to give students a chance to use a GPS unit and search for some “treasures”!

**Prairie Life (Y/O)**-Students will get to see some of the animals, grasses & forbs that live in a tallgrass prairie habitat.

**Recycle today, for a better tomorrow (Y)**-With the help of a video and two books, students will learn how reducing and recycling their garbage can help out our environment. They will also see what can be made from recycled materials. During the program, I also talk about biodegradable products. This program makes an excellent program especially around Earth Day.

**Snowshoeing (Y/O) (up through 5<sup>th</sup> grade)**-Students will get to see different types of snowshoes and learn about each one, as well as basic snowshoeing techniques. Snow permitting, the class can even try out this fun outdoor activity!

**Soil & Water Conservation/Enviroscape (Y/O)**-Your class will learn about different conservation management practices they can do indoors and outdoors to help protect soil & water natural resources by observing and using a hands-on model called the “Enviroscape”. The model perfectly demonstrates how a river or lake watershed can be polluted and then cleaned up.

**Star Lab (Y/O)**-This portable and inflatable planetarium provides a unique way for students to learn about astronomy without leaving the school building! Besides sharing detailed information about star creation, students will also learn about Greek constellations and a variety of information about our solar system within the Milky Way Galaxy. The inflatable planetarium is can hold approximately 30 people. The starlab will not work in an average classroom, but it does work well when setup in a gymnasium or a large room with 12 foot tall ceilings.

**Turkey Talk (Y/O)**-The turkey is a truly unique bird that is becoming more common here in north Iowa. Students will learn about the different sounds and interesting facts about the wild turkey and the remarkable comeback it has made. This program can be done anytime of the year but could add a nice touch to your Thanksgiving celebrations!



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**The Butterfly King (Y/O)**-Learn about the incredible life cycle of the Monarch butterfly through a informational program and video. *Optional Additonal Activity*-Students will become “wildlife biologists” as they will use insect sweep nets to capture Monarch butterflies to tag and release them during their fall migration. *If you would like to schedule a monarch tagging program it is best to schedule it from mid-August through midlate-September while the monarch butterfly migration is occuring in the area.* Tagging information the students collect will then be submitted to the University of Kansas Monarch Watch Program. At this time, five butterflies that students have tagged in Hancock County have been refound over 1,500 miles away in their Mexico hibernation grounds! Monarch butterflies that students bring in to school or rear in the classroom work perfect to tag duing this program too!

## **Hancock County Environmental Education Field Trip Destinations**

The following list of destinations are wonderful local places in Hancock County and North Central Iowa for field trips that can provide educational and fun outdoor learning experiences for your students or group. The Naturalist is familiar, has extensive knowledge and has or is currently employed at all of these areas. The activities for each trip will be customized, depending upon your wishes, as well as the size and grade level of your class, and the length of time involved.

If you would like a field trip to another local area, just ask!

### **Eldred Sherwood Park, 3 miles east & 1 mile north of Goodell**

Wooded trails, native and restored prairie areas, a butterfly garden and a 22 acre lake can provide countless oppourtunities for your students to explore and discover the natural world! There is an enclosed shelter house with electricity and a fireplace in the park. Modern restrooms and drinking water are available May – October.

### **Crystal Lake Park, ½ mile north of Crystal Lake**

This park offers a beautiful 260 acre natural lake, a wooded lakeshore trail and a nine hole frisbee golf course, basketball course and sand volleyball court are great physical education areas for people of all ages. There is an open shelter house with electricity and a fireplace in the park. Modern restrooms and drinking water are available May – October.



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## **Other Hancock County Environmental Education Field Trip Destinations**

### **Eagle Lake State Park, 3 miles east of Britt**

This 21 acre park offers wooded trails and a handicapped accessible elevated observation deck that provides the public with a spectacular view of the 900 plus acre Eagle Lake marsh and its myriad of wildlife that live and migrate through the area. There is a partially enclosed shelter house with electricity and a fireplace in the park. Pit toilet restrooms is available in the park.

### **Pilot Knob State Park, 4 miles east of Forest City**

This park offers excellent trails that traverse through several unique habitats. At the 700 acre park you can view the glacier carved landscape of north central Iowa from one of the highest points in the state atop the rustic CCC constructed tower.

## **Other Local Environmental Education Field Trip Destinations**

### **Lime Creek Nature Center, north Mason City**

A beautifully restored prairie, polliwog pond, Mason City's first business, wooded and prairie trails and a nice nature center full of educational exhibits and wildlife provide a perfect place for your students to enjoy and learn more about the outdoors.

### **Floyd CCB Fossil and Prairie Preserve, 2 miles west of Rockford**

For an unforgettable fossil hunting experience, you can't beat this Floyd County park! This park is known throughout the world as a premier site for its Devonian fossils. It has scenic prairie trails and wetlands and a nature center full of educational displays about Iowa's geological past.

### **Waters Edge Nature Center at Smith Lake Park, 3 miles north of Algona**

This beautiful nature center located within Smith Lake Park overlooks Smith Lake and has many educational exhibits and wildlife mounts.

## **For More Information about Hancock County Conservation**

[www.hancockcountya.org](http://www.hancockcountya.org)  
[www.mycountyparks.com/County/Hancock.aspx](http://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Hancock.aspx)