



Audubon Center of the North Woods

K-12 Trip Planner

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History of ACNW

Established in 1968, the Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 residential environmental learning center (RELC) and green retreat and conference center on Grindstone Lake near Sandstone, MN.

In the 1800s, what is now the Audubon Center property was used by local Ojibwe families for hunting and gathering. Portions of the forest were logged prior to the Hinckley Fire in 1894 and the land was farmed under the Schwyzer family ownership for the first half of the 20th century.

The current 535-acre Audubon sanctuary is a mix of old-growth white and red pines and second-growth mixed hardwood forest. Birch stands and sugar maple forests are just part of the natural abundance and variety. Old farm fields have been restored to wetlands. Pine plantations and a restored prairie offer contrasts to the natural areas. Marsh and old beaver pond waters are teeming with life. Over 54 species of woody plants and 225 species of birds have been identified on our property.

Our Vision

A healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth

Our Mission

To instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning

Our Core Values

- We demonstrate respect, care, and passion of the earth, all people, and all living things
- We strive for excellence in everything we do through integrity, open communication, and teamwork
- We value, engage, and appreciate individuals for their unique contributions
- We believe in life-long learning through positive shared experiences with the natural world
- We encourage others to recognize their interconnectedness with the earth through their actions

Dear K-12 Group Leaders,

Our staff is looking forward to your visit to the Audubon Center of the North Woods. We value your commitment to providing experiential learning opportunities for your students and we are thrilled that you've chosen the Audubon Center to have your residential field trip experience.

Our goal is to make the process of planning your school's visit as easy and streamlined as possible. In this planner you will find a sample schedule, class descriptions, dorm and classroom information, meal guidelines, a campus map, all the necessary paperwork, deadlines for returning paperwork, and everything else you need to plan a successful trip to our Center.

We strive to make to make all our classes student-focused and discovery-based. We feel this is critical given the evidence that supports the idea that fostering discovery and learning in the outdoors is effective at creating a lasting connection between the student and their environment. This concept is exciting for us as educators and aligns well with the mission of our Center. We know you will see the positive results!

Thank you again for choosing the Audubon Center for your field trip experience. Your questions and feedback are always welcome, as is your willingness to evolve with us as we strive to best meet your needs.

--ACNW Education Staff
schools@audubon-center.org

Daily Schedule

7:25	KP Breakfast
7:45	Breakfast
9:00-11:00	Class 1
11:00-11:30	Journaling/Free time
11:10	KP Lunch
11:30	Lunch
12:30-2:30	Class 2
2:30-3:00	Switch!
3:00-5:00	Class 3
5:00-5:30	Journaling/Free time
5:10	KP Supper
5:30	Supper
7:00-8:00	Naturalist Evening Program
8:00-10:00	Optional Teacher-Led Activities
10:00	Quiet Hours/Bedtime

1. **Time frame:** Decide when you'd like to visit and for how long. Contact us to check date availability – schools@audubon-center.org or 888-404-7743. Pricing depends on your length of stay. *See page 4 for details.*
2. **Confirmation:** At least **four months** before your trip, complete and send back your **Reservation Agreement** to confirm your reservation dates. Please take a look at the cancellation policy detailed on the form so you are aware of what the potential fee will be should you need to cancel or severely decrease your numbers.
3. **Classes:** At least **two months** before your visit, complete and return your **Scheduling Form**. We can't wait to learn more about how your chosen classes fit your goals for your trip! Please see the chart below for due dates.
4. **Parents:** Distribute **Required Health and Liability Forms** to students and chaperones. Please use your own Health Form if you'd prefer, but attendees cannot participate in classes here at the Audubon without a signed liability form. **Please bring all signed liability releases along with a copy of each participant's health form with you** (in case of emergency). We will collect these upon your arrival, give you back the health forms, and keep the liability forms for our records. Please note that the Health Form Summary is due 2 weeks in advance (so that we can plan menus around allergies and order food appropriately).
5. **Details:** At least **two weeks** before your arrival, complete and return the **Pre-Trip Logistics** (KP Assignments, Room Assignments, **Health Form Summary**, and Group Assignments).

Trip Tip: Keep an eye on your e-mail! Our Education staff will help you throughout the scheduling process to ensure that all your planning goes smoothly. This includes helping you to meet key deadlines...

If your trip is in:	Your Scheduling Form is due:
September	June 10
October	August 30
November	September 10
December	October 10
January	November 10
February	December 10
March	January 10
April	February 10
May	March 10
June-July	April 10
August	May 10

- Each learning group of up to 15 students must be accompanied by at least one adult chaperone.
- There is no charge for required adult leaders -- one per 15 students. Additional adults will be charged the normal student/adult helper cost (see below).
- We will bill small groups for a minimum of 12 people.

Residential Cost Per Participant (valid for 2017-2018 school year)

The residential costs listed below are package rates and include lodging, meals, equipment, and instruction. These rates cover the time from arrival to departure; they do not include snacks or costs for transportation to and from the Audubon Center.

Days	Overnights	Meals	Classes	Cost per participant
2	1	4	3	\$90
3	2	7	6	\$116
4	3	10	9	\$155
5	4	13	12	\$195

Changes and Cancellations

In order to cancel your reservation at no cost to your school, you must do so at least four months before the reserved date. Schools canceling later than that are required to pay a percentage of the fee based on the following schedule.

Notice time	Cost
60 days or less	50% of fee
61-90 days	40% of fee
91-120 days	30% of fee
>120 days	0% of fee

Payment

The final billing will be made upon your departure. The total cost is calculated on the actual numbers indicated in your final number confirmation plus any last minute additions. Repair costs for damage caused by anyone in your group to facilities and equipment is also included in this bill. Full payment may be made within 30 days with no interest. Thereafter, an interest charge of 1.5% per month will be applied to your unpaid balance.

Arrival

Most groups arrive at the Audubon Center between 10:30-11:00am. If you arrive later than 11:00am, your afternoon schedule may have to be altered a bit to make up for lost time.

PLEASE CALL us at 320-245-2648 if you are running more than 15 minutes late or early! Thank you!

During Your Stay

Cell phone policy: While we strongly discourage cell phone use by students while staying at the Center, we do understand that students may want to use their phone as their camera. Lead teachers are given the authority to allow their students to bring phones to the Center, or not. If students will be allowed to bring them, they should only be used as cameras. Audubon Center teaching staff and naturalists have the right to ask students to put cameras away if they feel they are being used for functions other than a camera, if they're detracting from the learning atmosphere, or are creating an unsafe situation. Cell service is not reliable at our location, so texting or calling may not be possible. We do have open Wi-Fi, however, so if there is concern that students may use their phones in undesired ways, it would be a wise decision to not allow them to be brought to the Center. The Audubon Center of the North Woods is not responsible for lost, stolen, damaged or missing items.

General Supervision: We ask teachers and adult leaders to help us ensure student safety while here. Supervision of students is necessary at all times. There should always be an adult present during classes, free times, meal times, and in the lodges.

At Class: We ask that each Learning Group (**of 15 students**) has at least one adult leader with them. If you choose to take our High Ropes class, **at least 3** adult leaders are necessary to create a safe and fun learning environment. Cross-country skiing and canoeing require 2 adults.

Evening Activities: To wind down from a busy day of exploring and learning, students participate in Naturalist-led evening activities and/or your own group-led activities. Let your adult leaders know if they are needed to assist in these activities.

Free time: Please remind your students that they are liaisons of their school while here at Audubon. This means treating all other students and adults, as well as equipment, facilities, and the environment, with respect. Some suggestions during free time include:

- *Take a hike!* We have 535 acres to explore AND trail maps so you don't get lost (though that's fun, too).
- *Recess games!* We have lots of lawn space and a small assortment of recreation items for volleyball, football, and etc. We **do** encourage you to bring your own items, especially if you have a larger group.

Trip Tip: We have some great options for teacher-led activities on page 7. Please indicate on your Scheduling Form if you would like to utilize our supplies & lesson plans.

- *Nature Playscape!* This special wooded area near Crosby has been set aside for exploration and general mucking-about. It's particularly geared towards elementary students.
- *Journaling and group meetings* are great ways to reflect on the amazing experience happening here.

Departure

Before breakfast on your last day, ALL luggage and personal belongings must be removed from your lodging to give our Housekeepers access to your rooms. Most groups depart by 12:30pm, though it's possible to arrange for a bag lunch so your group can leave sooner and eat on the way home.

Meals

We want our guests, especially those with food allergies and special dietary needs, to feel safe as they sit down to eat in our dining hall and leave satisfied. We cook nutritious meals in a safe manner to ensure our guests are comfortable and well fed. However, we cannot accommodate every situation and need.

The following is a brief list of what we CAN do to help.

1. We can provide any and all information regarding the food being served in as timely and accurate manner as possible. This includes access to all food labels.
2. In many cases, we can provide an alternative to our standard menu items (e.g. gluten-free bun). We can also provide nut-free meals. These require advanced notice – at least **two weeks** ahead of your program.
3. We can provide limited storage space for supplemental food and drinks for our guests, both dry storage and temperature controlled (food cannot be kept in the dorm). A microwave is available for guest use.
4. We can, within reason, prepare alternative food items (that you provide) when necessary. Prior communication (two weeks) and approval from the kitchen is required for food preparation: heating, baking, or assembly (such as sandwiches, etc.)
5. We can help our guests with special food needs integrate in a discreet manner while being respectful of the needs of the rest of the group

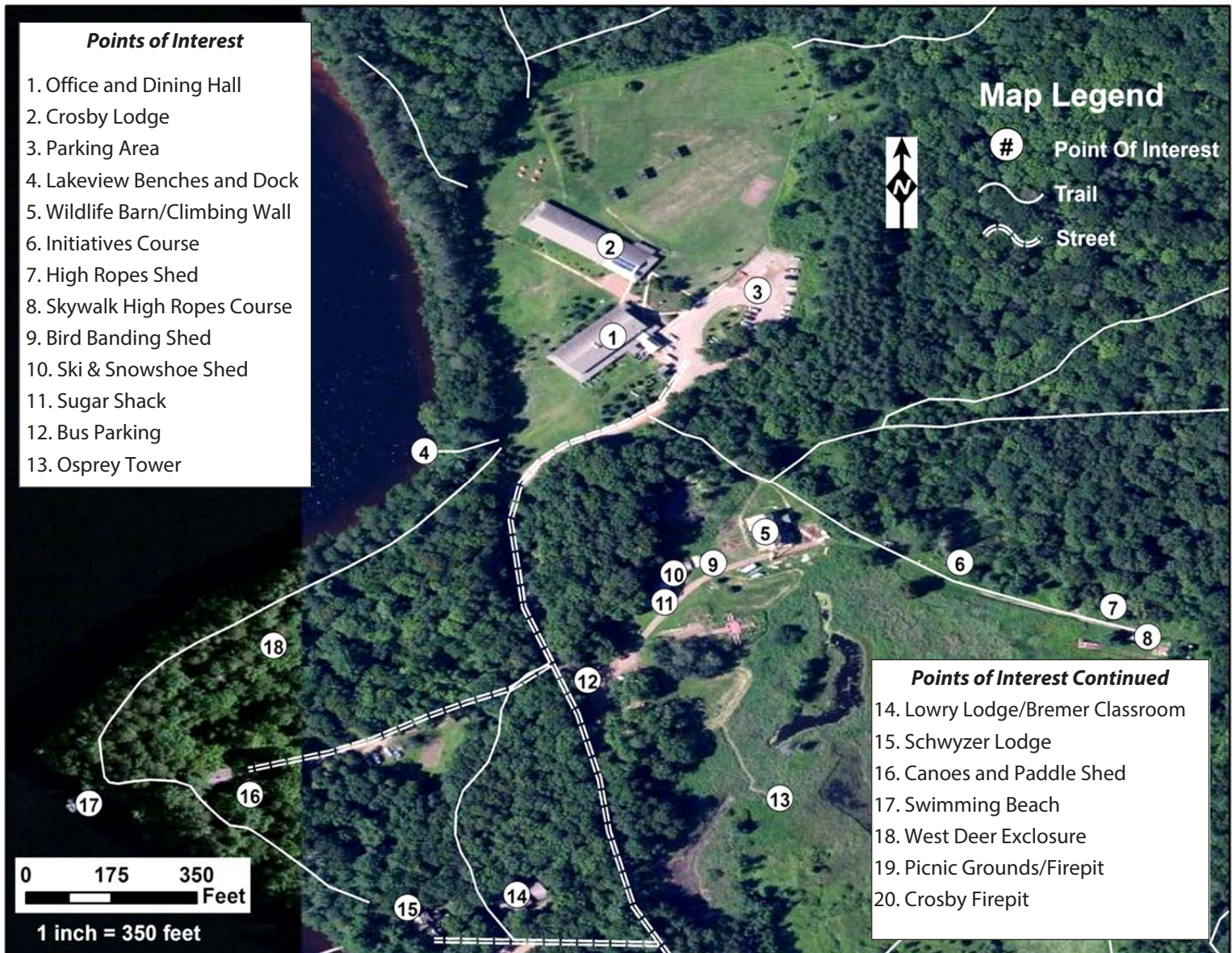
The following is a list of things that we CANNOT do at this time.

1. Accommodate special dietary needs without a **two week** notice.
2. Though we can provide nut-free meals, we cannot guarantee a nut-free facility. We serve items with nuts and traces of nuts (both ground and tree nuts) on a regular basis. We encourage parents to send supplemental desserts and snacks, as these are the two areas where there is the biggest risk of accidental ingestion.
3. Beyond offering PB&J, we cannot make special accommodations for picky eaters. Supplemental foods can be sent with these students by their parents.
4. We cannot allow any guests to use any kitchen equipment. This is a safety, sanitation, and liability issue and no exceptions will be granted.

- We cannot accommodate certain specialty diets (e.g. low-carb, low sodium). We encourage guests with such special needs to contact the Reservations Coordinator, (schools@audubon-center.org) BEFORE their visit to make arrangements, if necessary. We will be happy to do what we can to help their visit be a safe and nutritious one.

The following information should be provided for EACH guest, both child and adult, with allergies or other dietary needs.

- The specific kind of allergy or sensitivity
- The severity of the allergy, i.e. can you be around the allergen? Is it ingestion only or contact? etc.



Your Liaison

An liaison will be assigned to serve as your guide and troubleshooter for the entirety of your stay. Upon your arrival, your liaison will greet you, help you settle in, give your group an orientation to the Audubon Center expectations, and meet with your adult leaders. Throughout your stay, your liaison will keep frequent contact with you to answer questions, arrange necessary equipment, and assist you in meeting your needs. Please relay any questions or concerns to your liaison.

Medical Services

Please make sure you remember to bring **completed** health forms and liability release forms for all participants, students and adults alike. These forms should be handed to your liaison when you get off the bus.

At a minimum, all Audubon staff are trained in CPR & First Aid and some are Wilderness First Responders. All Audubon Center instructors carry a basic first aid kit during classes for minor emergencies such as cuts and scrapes. First aid kits are also located in each building for use by adult leaders.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, please report to Audubon Center staff and call 911. Sandstone is the nearest town with a clinic and emergency room (7 miles/10 minutes by car). You must have a vehicle available to you for health situations that require medical attention. It is the full responsibility of all schools to plan for the medical needs of their students.

Trip Tip: To reduce extra paperwork, feel free to make copies of your school's existing health forms for students. The Audubon Center's health forms will always be available to use, and we do ask that you use them for all adults attending.

Games & Recreational Equipment

If your group desires board games for free time or other recreational equipment (such as sports balls or hula hoops), please let your liaison know. We have a limited selection of items here, so if your group is large please plan on bringing supplemental equipment.

Extra Clothing

A small variety of extra clothing for inclement weather is available to groups at the Audubon Center. Please return any used clothing to your liaison or the front desk so they can be laundered before being loaned again.

WILDLIFE

A Bug's Life (K-5, fall & spring only)

From zooming through the air to crawling through the grass, insects are the most numerous group of animals on earth. Explore the life cycles of insects, how they are classified by scientists, and their role within an ecosystem.

Animal Habitats (K-3 only)

Just like you, animals need a place to eat, drink, sleep and live. Investigate numerous habitats through active discovery in the woods, role playing and hands-on activities.

Animal Signs (grades 3 and up)

Animal signs are a picture; a moment in an animal's day. Discover the basics of tracking and investigate clues to solve a variety of animal sign mysteries.

Bird Basics and Beyond

All birds have some basic features in common, but it is their unique design and features that allows them to survive in every habitat on earth. Explore bird characteristics, biology, and simple field identification techniques.

Creek Creatures (fall & spring only)

The survival of a whole world of under-water life depends on how we care for our lakes, rivers and streams. Collect and identify macroinvertebrates in order to better understand the importance of water quality in this hands-on class.

Creepy Crawly Creatures (fall & spring only)

Breathing and drinking through their skin, the presence of MN amphibians can give us clues about the health of the environment. Become herpetologists in this class! Experience the creepy, crawly and often misunderstood world of reptiles and amphibians.

Ecosystem Engineers (grades K - 6, fall & spring)

Like you build with Lincoln Logs or Legos, beavers build with trees to radically change their environment and create their home. Engineer your own beaver dam and lodge in this class and explore the physical adaptations of these smart and savvy mammals.

Fish Function (grades 4 and up; fall & spring only)

Eat or be eaten; your adaptations as a fish make all the difference in your survival. Explore how Minnesota native fish function and are functional through interactive observation, discussion, and activities. We will go fishing on Grindstone Lake at the end of class! Participants over age 16 must have a valid MN Fishing License.

Minnesota Mammals (grades 2 – 4 only)

All mammals have two things in common, but what makes them different determines where they live and what they eat. Determine what makes a mammal a mammal and learn more about some of your favorite MN Mammals.

Predator & Prey Relationships (grades 4 and up)

For an animal, life and death hinges on their instincts and abilities. Experience life as a hunter, or the hunted, through a high energy game. Become acutely aware of the adaptations and strategies that are necessary for animals to survive in the wild.

Wolves of the North Woods

Wolves live a fine line between life and death; their survival is determined by their abilities and behaviors. Step into a wolf biologist's role to learn more about wolf pack structure, behavior and adaptations using scientific tools and methods, such as radio telemetry.

ECOLOGY

Forests

- **Forest Flow** (grades 3 - 6) - Through the death of a tree in the forest, resources are now available for new life to begin. Discover the interconnectedness of a forest ecosystem by constructing food chains, investigating decomposing logs, and conceptualizing decomposers' role in a forest ecosystem.
- **Forest Stories** (grades 7 and up) - Every forest has a story, and that story can shape how care for and manage a forest ecosystem. From a forest manager's perspective, consider the factors that limit a forest's health, the biodiversity that can strengthen it, and the often tough decisions that are made to manage it.
- **Maple Syruping** (March & early April only) - For thousands of years, spring warmth has resulted in a sweet treat from the sap of maple trees. Visit our sugar bush, tap a tree, collect sap and taste pure maple syrup.
- **To Be A Tree** (K-2) - Just like our bodies, a tree has many parts that function together to help the tree grown and become strong. Become a tree and experience the role each part of the tree plays.

Lake Layers *(grades 5 and up, fall & spring)*

The properties of water allow life to survive in a lake. Explore the basic components of lake function and collect hands-on data from Grindstone Lake.

Renewable Energy S.T.E.M. Class Options

(Grades 4 & up) See how the Audubon Center harnesses natural resources to power buildings and turns food waste into soil!

- *Clean, Green Energy Solutions*
- *Wind Power* - From the pumping of water, to the milling of grain, to the generation of electricity, the design of windmills has changed over hundreds of years. Analyze windmill blade design through observation and experimentation, and then engineer a functioning windmill.

STEWARDSHIP

We have stewardship and career path discovery in the following areas for high school students. Please contact us to learn more.

- *Adventure Education and Maintenance*
- *Culinary Arts*
- *Gardening and Grounds Maintenance*
- *Wildlife Care and Husbandry*

CULTURAL HISTORY

Nature Journaling

Just like you might keep a diary or journal, Naturalists and Scientists keep journals to record their nature observations and investigations. Review a variety of examples of nature journaling styles and entries and then create a nature journal of your own.

Ojibwe Hike

Ojibwe culture and traditions are a rich part of Minnesota's history. Through games, stories, and sensory experiences, students will learn about a culture intimately linked with nature for survival.

Quillwork *(grades 5 and up)*

Instead of yarn and thread, Ojibwe people use porcupine quills and birch bark for their crafts. Create and take home a birch medallion decorated with real porcupine quills.

Twining & Shell Ornaments *(grades 5 and up)*

When we need twine or rope we go to the store. Before stores existed, where did Ojibwe people get their twine? Make a piece of twine and fashion a mussel shell to decorate it.

ADVENTURE EDUCATION

Archery *(grades 4 & up; fall & spring only)*

Over the last thousand years, the purpose of Archery and the equipment has gradually changed and modernized for hunting and sport. Experience the ancient art of atlatl throwing, and then sharpen your skills at the archery range.

Canoeing *(grades 9 & up; requires 2 adults; fall & spring only)*

The art of paddling is more than sticking a paddle in the water. Discover the art of paddling using the forward stroke, c-stroke and j-stroke. Work together in the bow and stern to practice your new skills on beautiful Grindstone Lake.

Climbing Wall

Whether climbing a real rock face or an indoor wall, there is a challenge for everyone. Experience bouldering and top rope climbing on our indoor rock wall! Teamwork and goal-setting will be emphasized during this challenging sport.

Cross Country Skiing *(grades 4 & up; requires 2 adults; winter only)*

Different cultures have responded in different ways to the necessity of traveling in deep snow. Experience the rich history of this 5,000 year old activity on quiet, snow-covered trails.

High Ropes Course *(grades 5 & up; requires 3 adults)*

The world looks different from a bird's eye view; challenge yourself to climb high and to be brave as you soar to new heights. ACNW's high ropes course also boasts a fun zip-line ride at the end of the course.

Orienteering *(grades 4 & up)*

With only two tools you can navigate an unfamiliar environment. Use a compass and your own two feet to navigate ACNW's orienteering course using techniques like pacing, leapfrogging, and land-marking.

Survivor

You can survive three weeks without food, three days without water, three hours without heat, but the first key to survival happens within the first three seconds. Build a shelter and a fire with a team, and recognize that teamwork is also an important factor in survival.

Teambuilding

- *Total Team* – Just as you can't seesaw by yourself, there are many challenges in life that will be easier and more fun with a team. Solve problems and overcome obstacles as a team by striving for improved caring, communication, and cooperation.
- *Low Ropes (grades 4 & up)* – Off the ground elements provide an extra set of challenges in this teambuilding class.

NATURALIST EVENING PROGRAMS

Leap, Creep, Slither (*grades K-5, not recommended if taking Creepy, Crawly Creatures*)

From water, to land, to trees, reptiles and amphibians have special abilities that help them survive.

Minnesota Wildlife

Meet three native animals of Minnesota and explore their habitats, diet, and adaptations for survival.

North Woods Niches

Different species have specific adaptations to their environment. Move through the levels of the forest, starting from the ground up!

Raptors

- *Hunting From on High (K-2 only)* ... Raptors, also called birds of prey, have unique features called adaptations that make them excellent hunters. Meet three of our birds!
- *Through Stories (K-2 only)* ... By reading books aloud that feature birds of prey, students will hear new stories as well as meet live raptors!
- *By Family* ... Meet live birds of prey from three different families, while learning about the adaptations of these birds that make them successful hunters and fliers.
- *Silent Hunters* ... Meet native Minnesota owls while exploring the unique adaptations and perceptions they have.
- *Of Raptors & Men* ... What is falconry? When and where did it start? Learn the answers to all these questions and more while meeting live birds of prey.
- *Endangered* ... Meet our live raptors and learn how to classify species as well as how to help prevent animals from going extinct.

Stargazing Stories (*winter only*)

Throughout history, cultures from around the world have looked at the same stars to make meaning of their lives.

Voyageur Rendezvous (*grades K-8 only*)

Meet “live” voyageurs who share stories of their lives during the fur trade era. Students will create skits and dramas to make history come alive.

Wolves in Our World (*grades 3 & up*)

Today and throughout history, wolves have been viewed as a threat to humans; but is this really the case?

Trip Tip: Many of our classes can be adapted in both content and standards to meet your specific learning objectives and individual student needs.

More detailed descriptions and academic standards for each class can be found on our website.

If you have questions about our curriculum, please contact our education team. We will work with you to find the best fit for your students.

SELF-LED EVENING ACTIVITIES

Campfire

Gather around one of three fire pits on our main campus. This is a perfect end-of-trip experience for your group to appreciate the beauty of the night at the Audubon Center. If you desire s'mores supplies, please indicate so on your Snack Request Form or feel free to bring your own.

Nature Scavenger Hunt

Become acquainted with the Audubon Center of the North Woods through a list of activities and challenges. These will test the group's communication skills, cooperation, mathematical skills, and problem solving.

Night Hike

See the Audubon Center in a whole new light – with no lights! Enjoy the evening skies with your group by utilizing our trails to open up students' curiosity and maybe get over some fears. Ask your liaison or any staff member for their favorite trail to hike at night.

Invent Your Own!

The possibilities are endless... Please let us know if we can help you brainstorm any other activities.

All of the required forms below are available online at:
<http://audubon-center.org/education/schools/k12-forms/>
(or simply click on the form name below).

Reservation Agreement

- required to confirm your reservation dates. We must receive this **as early as possible (at least four months)** prior to your trip). Reservations are not confirmed until we receive this completed, signed form. Please note that dates in September, October, April, May and June are in high demand. Lock yours in now!

Scheduling Confirmation

- complete and return **at least two months prior to your trip**

Pre-Trip Logistics

- complete and return **at least two weeks prior to your trip**

Collect the following from students/parents/chaperones prior to your trip - please collect and submit to ACNW in one batch:

Student Health Form Required for overnight trips

Spanish version online – [Formulario Salud de Alumno](#)

Adult Health Form Required for overnight trips

Spanish version online – [Formulario Salud de Adulto](#)

Liability Release Required from all students and adults before participation in any program

Spanish version online – [Formulario Responsabilidad](#)

IMPORTANT: We must have a signed liability form for each student before they can participate in Audubon Center of the North Woods programs.

What to Bring packing list

Spanish version online – [Que debo traer al Centro](#)

Information for Parents

Spanish version online – [Informacion_padres](#)

If you need forms in another language, please contact us to see what translations are available.

Please print this checklist and use it to keep track of deadlines.

- Sign and return Reservation Agreement – As soon as possible**
Your trip is not confirmed until ACNW receives this form, and many schools book a year in advance.
- Contact parents and sign up students and chaperones**
Many schools host an info meeting for parents to learn more about the trip. An ACNW staff member would be happy to attend this meeting and answer questions about the student experience.
This is also a great time to do fundraising, if needed.
- Fill out Scheduling Form – Two months before your trip**
This form allows you to tell ACNW more about your students and goals. It's important that we receive it on time to allow for staff scheduling.
- Send home required paperwork**
Every student and chaperone needs to have a health form (a copy of your school's form is acceptable for students) and signed liability form to participate at ACNW.
You will also want to send home your school's permission slip and the ACNW packing list.
- Complete Pre-Trip Logistics form – Two weeks before your trip**
Assign your students to Learning Groups, dorm rooms, and KP duty, and choose snacks.
Use participants' health forms to fill out the Health Summary – this step is crucial for our kitchen to provide healthy, safe meals for all participants.
- Bring along all health and liability forms – The day of your trip**
Make sure you have everyone's forms with you – ACNW staff will collect them when you arrive.
- Have fun!**
The most important part of any trip is to have fun and learn. We can't wait to have you here!

