

*Experience the Outdoors....*

# CENTRAL IOWA OUTDOOR EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE



*“Enriching the classroom  
curriculum with  
environmental education”*

*Funds provided by REAP Grant*



# Table of Contents

Planning an Environmental Education Experience . . . pg 3

Benefits of Environmental Education . . . . . pg 4

EIC Experiential Learning Model . . . . . pg 5

Overnight Environmental Education  
Field Trip Agencies . . . . . pg 6-7

Day Field Trip Environmental Education Agencies . . . pg 8-12

Grant and Teacher Workshop Information . . . . . pg 13

Program and Activity Grid . . . . . pg 14-15



This resource guide was made possible by funding from a Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Grant. This booklet has been designed to provide educators with a quick guide to environmental education opportunities and resources within an hour radius of the Des Moines Metro area. This guide was compiled by Lori Foresman-Kirpes, Naturalist, Polk County Conservation Board, 515-323-5300.

# Planning an Environmental Educational Experience

*Break-out of the four walls to hands-on experiential learning in the great outdoor classroom....*

## Steps to Ensure a Quality Outdoor Experience

1. Review your curriculum and plan a field trip as a natural outdoor learning extension for the class.
2. Utilize the Outdoor Education Resource Guide in selecting sites and topics.
3. Schedule a field trip/residential experience early. Fall and spring times fill quickly.
4. Visit our Web site. Use the field trip planning tools on the Web site.
5. After your field trip, record your insights and input on the Web site.

[www.conservationboard.org](http://www.conservationboard.org)  
*click on educator resources.*



## Benefits of Environmental Education

*“High test scores in science and social studies may be indicators of positive influence of EE methods”*  
- The Educational Efficacy of EE, 1997

Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC) for learning study has many proven educational benefits. This is the first study to confirm that using the environment as a context for learning enhances the efficacy of education in many subject areas.

- EIC students tended to read more
- EIC students scored high on tests
- EIC students had fewer discipline problems
- EIC at-risk students worked better and learned more effectively
- EIC students developed better interpersonal and citizenship skills
- EIC students had greater pride and ownership in accomplishments

Most teachers in EIC programs felt rejuvenated and reported greater enthusiasm for teaching in general and their own subjects specifically. They enjoyed better interaction with students, learned new teaching methods and discovered new opportunities for professional growth. (Information from *“Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning”* [www.seer.org](http://www.seer.org))

# EIC Experiential Learning Model:



*Student gains hands-on knowledge about wetlands from a Polk County Conservation Board Naturalist*



# Overnight Environmental Education Field Trips

*Within one hour from the Des Moines Metro area*

## **Conservation Education Center, Springbrook State Park**

2473 160th Road, Guthrie Center, IA 50115  
641-747-8383 Fax: 641-747-3951  
www.iowadnr.com  
e-mail: [ajay.winter@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:ajay.winter@dnr.state.ia.us)

Hands-on environmental learning emphasized with lake, pond, marsh, stream, prairie and forest habitats, plus, numerous animal mounts and interpretive personnel available for groups. Facility includes: dormitory style overnight accommodations, classrooms with library, dining hall (seats 150) and exhibit area for year-round use.

## **Des Moines YMCA Camp**

1192 166th Drive, Boone, IA 50036  
515-432-7558 or in Des Moines area 515-243-0100  
www.y-camp.org  
e-mail: [ycamp@dmymca.org](mailto:ycamp@dmymca.org)

Located on 330-acres of beautiful wooded bluffs and situated on the Des Moines River. Y-Camp offers a 50-foot climbing and rappelling tower, high and low ropes course, canoeing, live birds of prey, and boundless opportunities for environmental education. Accommodations for 300 people with meeting and break-out rooms and food service make this a year-round option for school groups.

## **Iowa 4-H Center**

1991 Peach Ave, Madrid, IA 50156  
515-795-3338 Fax: 515-795-2107  
www.extension.iastate.edu/4hcenter  
e-mail: [tracis@iastate.edu](mailto:tracis@iastate.edu)

Open year-round with 360 beds among 6 villages, the 4-H Center consists of 1,100-acres of native timberland, prairie, and wetlands along the Des Moines River Valley just south of the Iowa Arboretum. Staff employed by Iowa State University lead programs in team challenge, outdoor camping, environmental education, and archeology field schools.

### **Camp Hantesa/Campfire USA**

1450 Oriole Road, Boone, IA 50036  
515-432-1417 Fax: 515-432-1294  
www.hantesa@hantesa.com  
e-mail: hantesa@hantesa.com

Scenic 144-acre camp and conference center includes nature building with some displays, 10 heated cabins and lodges, and 14 unheated cabins (capacity is: 350 in summer, 225 in spring/fall, 175 in winter, and meal seating for 400).

### **Camp Mitigwa/Boy Scouts of America**

Administrative Office  
1659 E. Euclid, PO Box 3009, Des Moines IA 50313  
515-266-2135 or 1-800-999-scout  
www.bsa-ia.org

Primitive outdoor camping opportunities. No interpretive staff available but facilities are available for use by groups when reserved in advance.

*"95% of the students felt the outdoor school experience is one that every 6th grade student should have, and 90% indicated the outdoor school was better than all of their other field trip experiences during twelve years of schooling"*

*- excerpt from Orange County, CA survey.*



# Environmental Education Day Field Trips

## **Polk County Conservation Board**

Jester Park, Granger, IA 50109  
515-323-5300 Fax: 515-323-5354  
www.conservaionboard.org  
e-mail: pccb-info@co.polk.ia.us

Abundant opportunities for hands-on environmental education with a naturalist at any of their 16 park and wildlife areas (over 10,000 acres) including prairies, wetlands, woodlands, ponds and live elk and bison exhibit. Call for a copy of the Teacher Newsletter to preview the variety of environmental education programs offered for field trips and in-classroom environmental education programs. Free school programs!

## **Other County Conservation Boards as a Polk County School Resource**

*Within one hour from the Des Moines Metro area*

### **1. Dallas County Conservation Board**

1477 K Ave, Perry, IA 50220 515-465-3577 Fax: 515-465-3579  
www.dallascountyconservation.org e-mail: info@dallas25.org

### **2. Boone County Conservation Board**

1601 322 Ln, Madrid, IA 50156 515-795-2809 Fax: 515-353-4237  
e-mail: mmking84@hotmail.com

### **3. Madison County Conservation Board**

PO Box 129, Winterset, IA 50273 515-462-3536 Fax: 515-462-3536  
www.madisoncountyparks.org e-mail: madccb@madisoncountyparks.org

### **4. Marion County Conservation Board**

1378 Hwy G28, Otley, IA 50214 641-627-5935 Fax: 641-627-5148  
e-mail: cordovapark@hotmail.com

### **5. Warren County Conservation Board/Annett Nature Center**

15565 118th Ave, Indianola, IA 50125  
515-961-6169 fax: 515-961-7100  
www.warrencb.org e-mail: wccb@mindspring.com

## Day Field Trips (continued)

### Blank Park Zoo

7401 SW 9th St, Des Moines, IA 50315  
515-323-8330 Fax: 515-256-2593  
www.blankparkzoo.com  
e-mail: amshimerdla@dmgov.org

Explore the habitats of over 400 animals from around the world! Call the education office to schedule a program for your group, such as, field trip programs for schools, self-guided tours, special programs for youth groups, and programs on the ICN. Fees for school groups.

### Botanical Center

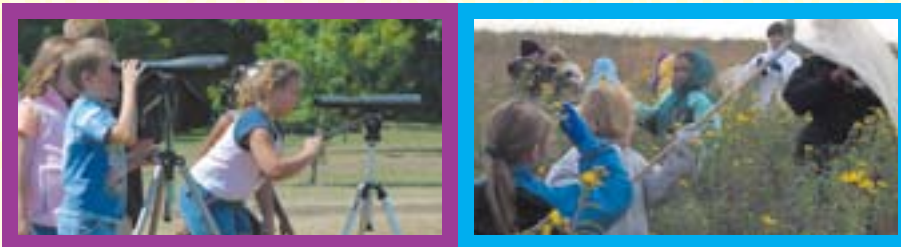
909 East River Drive, Des Moines, IA 50316  
515-323-8900 Fax: 515-323-8999  
www.botanicalcenter.com  
e-mail: skferguson@dmgov.org

The Des Moines Botanical Center provides educational, recreational and community resources to thousands. Fees for school groups.

### Iowa Arboretum

1875 Peach Ave, Madrid, IA 50156  
515-795-3216 Fax: 515-795-2619  
www.iowaarboretum.com  
e-mail: arbiowa@iowatelecom.net

Interpretive walks showcasing a diverse plant collection. A meeting area/office building is available in this 378-acre area that includes woodland trails and a 40-acre "library of living plants" with hundreds of cultivated species.





### **Living History Farms**

2600 111th St, Urbandale, IA 50322  
515-278-5286 Fax: 515-278-9808  
www.livinghistoryfarms.org  
e-mail: djones@lhf.org

Educational museum where interpreters in period clothing demonstrate and explain the historical crafts and equipment of rural Iowa and re-create the daily routines of Iowa farm life of four eras. Fees for school tours.

### **Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge/Prairie Learning Center**

PO Box 399, 9981 Pacific Street, Prairie City, Iowa 50228  
515-994-3400 Fax: 515-994-3459  
www.tallgrass.org  
e-mail: buffalo@tallgrass.org

Experience the breathtaking beauty of 5,000 acres of tallgrass prairie and native wildlife. Visit the hands-on displays at the Visitor Center. Call to schedule a field trip/environmental education program with a park ranger.

### **Reiman Gardens**

1407 Elwood Drive, Ames, IA 50011  
515-294-2710 Fax: 515-294-4817  
www.reimangardens.iastate.edu  
e-mail: lnaeve@iastate.edu

ISU Reiman Gardens has beautiful educational display gardens with a butterfly flight house, conservatory, meeting rooms, dining facility and children's garden. Call at least two weeks in advance to schedule guided tours with your school group. Fees for school groups.

### **Saylorville/US Army Corps of Engineers**

5600 N.W. 78th Ave, Johnston, IA 50131  
515-276-4656 Fax: 515-276-2088  
www.saylorvillelake.org  
e-mail: leah.c.morrow@usace.army.mil

Scheduled programs are offered on prairies, forestry, geology, water quality, and wildflower walks. Visitor Center offers a theater, exhibits, and gift shop.

### Science Center of Iowa

4500 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50312-2499  
515-274-4138 Fax: 515-274-3404  
www.sciowa.org  
e-mail: info@sciowa.org

The Science Center of Iowa is committed to engaging and inspiring participants through exhibits, hands-on activities, special programs and outreach education at schools throughout Iowa.

### State Forest Nursery

2404 South Duff, Ames, IA 50010  
515-233-1161 Fax: 515-233-1131  
www.iowadnr.com  
email: kandy.weigel@dnr.state.ia.us

State forest nursery tours are one to two hours in length. Guided tours demonstrate how the native plants are grown and planted for conservation purposes in Iowa.

### State Historical Building

600 E. Locust, Des Moines, IA 50319  
515-242-5193 Fax: 515-242-6498  
www.iowahistory.org  
e-mail: sarah.macht@iowa.gov

Programs offered on Iowa history, by systemically providing historical and technical services, programs, exhibitions and materials to help Iowans comprehend who they are and can become.

*"...see the potential value of EE methodologies that incorporate problem-solving, hands-on learning approaches, scientific method, complex thinking strategies, cooperative learning, relevant subject matter and topics that engage students in the educational process"*



## Urban Environmental Partnership (UEP)

(Des Moines Water Works, Metro Waste Authority, City of Des Moines Storm Water Utility, and Wastewater Reclamation Authority)

Education Specialist @ Des Moines Water Works, 2201 George Flagg Pkwy.  
Des Moines, IA 50321-1190 phone: 515-283-8753 Fax: 515-283-8727  
e-mail: peckumn@dmww.com  
website: www.dmww.com

Education Specialist @ Metro Waste Authority, 300 E. Locust, Des Moines,  
IA 50309-1864 phone: 515-323-6505 Fax: 515-244-9477  
e-mail: mpg@mwatoday.com  
website: www.mwatoday.com

The UEP's experienced Education Team offers 16 different FREE environmental education presentations for K-12 classrooms. The highly interactive presentations cover a wide variety of environmental topics, such as the water cycle, recycling, water and wastewater treatment, understanding watersheds, water and health, landfills, household hazardous waste, and storm water issues. Student follow-up activities, as well as teacher follow-up packets are included in each presentation. Tours of the UEP treatment facilities can also be arranged.

## West Des Moines Park and Recreation/ Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge

PO Box 65320 West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-222-3435 Fax 515-222-3658  
www.wdm-ia.com  
e-mail: Melanie.perry@wdm-ia.com

Provide environmental education programs for primarily preschool to 6th grade in West Des Moines. The Raccoon River Nature Lodge has a classroom and small nature display area. Fee of \$1 per student.



*A student learns  
about amphibians  
by exploring  
a live salamander*

## Grants and Teacher Workshop Resources

**Iowa Environmental Education - [www.iowaee.org](http://www.iowaee.org)**

Get the latest news on curriculum development, grant opportunities, upcoming workshops and more.

**Iowa Conservation Education Council –  
e-mail: [wzicec@aol.com](mailto:wzicec@aol.com)**

Grant opportunities, teacher workshops and trip opportunities.

**Polk County Conservation Board -  
[www.conservationboard.org](http://www.conservationboard.org)**

Free teacher resources and copy of the Central Iowa Outdoor Education Guide.



Page Number	Agencies								
		Amphibians	Archery	Astronomy	Birding	Campfires	Canoeing	Climbing Wall/Rappelling tower	Composting
	■ EE Day Field Trips								
	■ Overnight EE Field Trips								
9	Blank Park Zoo	■							■
9	Botanical Center				■				■
7	Camp Hantesa		■	■	■	■	■	■	
7	Camp Mitigwa						■		
6	Conservation Education Center/Springbrook	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
6	Des Moines YMCA Camp	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
6	Iowa 4-H Center		■	■		■	■	■	
9	Iowa Arboretum								
10	Living History Farms								
8	Polk County Conservation Board	■		■	■	■	■		■
10	Prairie Learning Center				■				■
12	Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge	■		■	■		■		■
10	Reiman Gardens								
10	Saylorville Corps of Engineers	■			■				
11	Science Center of Iowa	■		■					
11	State Forest Nursery								
11	State Historical Building								
12	Urban Environmental Partnership							■	

### Quotes to Consider:

“...capitalizing on a child’s “intrinsic interest” in the natural world and actively engaging that child in the educational process would create an enthusiastic learner for a lifetime.”

– The Educational Efficacy of EE, 1997

“If children are to keep alive their inborn sense of wonder, they need the companionship of a least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with them the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”

– Rachel Carson



Polk County Conservation Board  
11407 NW Jester Park Dr.  
Granger, IA 50109

*“A learning experience that  
lasts a lifetime...offering the  
very best in environmental  
education.”*