The Dubuque County Conservation Board strives to provide quality environmental education programs for all age groups. Our educational staff is dedicated to leading meaningful outdoor activities that connect students to the natural world and help nurture a love and respect for the world around them. Our goal is to create good stewards of the land in the next generation. Our programs are tailored to help fit curriculum standards so we invite you to visit one of our parks or have us come into your classroom for a wonderful learning experience!

Our main office is at the Swiss Valley Nature Center which is our most popular choice for field trips. Currently Swiss Valley Nature Center is our only area with an indoor meeting space but field trips can be done at any of other parks including: Heritage Pond/Heritage Trail, Mud Lake Park, Finley’s Landing, Swiss Valley Park, Massey Marina, New Wine Park, Bankston Park, Interstate Power Forest Preserve, Ringneck Ridge, and Whitewater Canyon.

Registration: All programs are free of charge and available year-round unless otherwise indicated. Dates are available on a first come first serve basis but we do prioritize onsite field trips compared to in school visits. Our calendar fills very quickly so please plan well ahead of time.

To schedule a field trip or school program:
Please fill out a Program Request Form and email to Naturalist, Kaytlan Moeller: kaytlan.moeller@dubuquecounty.us

Dubuque County Conservation
13606 Swiss Valley Rd.
Peosta, IA 52068
563-556-6745
Kindergarten

Nature Detectives: Students will use all their senses to uncover clues in nature. Hands-on observation will lead them through the forest to new discoveries.

Trees and Plants: Learn about the characteristics of plants and trees. We will compare different types of plants, learn about their lifecycles and how they make their own food.

Bug Bonanza: What’s the difference between a bug and an insect? We will discover the importance of bugs and get some hands on interaction exploring bug homes.

What’s That Habitat? What do animals need to survive? We will discover the basic components of habitat and what happens when critters can’t find them.

1st & 2nd Grade

Secrets of the Soil: Soil is a valuable resource. Students will learn just how valuable soil is and how everything connects back to it. Prepare to dig in and get dirty.

Bee the Hive: Honeybees are amazing creatures. Students will work to keep the hive alive while working like honeybees.

Beginner Birders: Learn the very basics of being a good birdwatcher. We will learn about common backyard birds and what sounds they make.

Rock On Rocks rock! We will discover the different properties of rocks and go on a rock hunt.

3rd & 4th Grade

Life on the Prairie: Tall grass prairie once covered much of Iowa’s landscape but today very little remains. The history of the prairie is rich and still remains. Students will learn about Native American culture and the pioneers who settled this area.

Geology Rocks: Students will discover how the rocks and landforms of this area tell the story of the land. We will look at fossils and learn about what it means to be a part of the Driftless Area.

Furs and Skulls: Investigate different animal adaptations by investigating the furs and skulls of various Iowa animals.

Birding Bonanza: Students will investigate different habitats to learn about bird adaptations, practice using binoculars, and learn identification techniques.
5th Grade and up

**Outdoor Skills:** This field trip is full of plenty exciting experiences. Outdoor skill options include: archery, fishing, kayaking, slacklining, survival, teambuilding, voyager canoes, and orienteering. Depending on options field trip may have to take place at a certain location. Voyageur canoes have very limited availability so if you have interest in this option please contact us well ahead of time.

**What is a Watershed?** We will discuss and discover the importance of water and how land use affects watershed health. This program involves hands on activities as well as water quality testing.

* Please note kayaking can be added to either of these programs but field trip must take place at Mud Lake Park, Heritage Pond or Massey Marina.

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**General Programs**

These programs can be adapted to any age group and added on to a field trip.

**Discovery Hike:** Every hike is a new and exciting experience, who knows what we will find!

**Live Animals of Iowa:** Meet some of the live animals that call the nature center home. Animals could include snakes, turtles, frogs, and salamanders.

**Creek Explorers:** Explore the depths of Catfish Creek and discover what lives beneath the surface.

**Nature Scavenger Hunt:** Head out on the trails and see if students can check everything off their list.

**Team Building:** Challenge your students to work together to accomplish a task

**Nature Jeopardy:** Choose from a multitude of nature-related topics and see who reigns supreme in this fun-filled game.

**Star Lab:** Dubuque County naturalists are trained to run the Keystone StarLab. The StarLab is an inflatable planetarium where students can explore the wonders of the night sky. Program is dependent on StarLab availability, please plan on requesting well in advance.

**Maply Syruping:** (available the first two weeks of March) From the tree to the bottle, students will learn what all goes into the process of the delicious maple syrup that they put on their pancakes. Maple syrup production may or may not be happening at Swiss Valley Nature Center at the time of your trip.

**Winter Adventure:** Discover the beauty of nature in the wintertime. Activities can include snowshoeing, kikesledging, tracks, and winter animal adaptations.
Preparing for your Field Trip

- Have students dress appropriately for both the weather and activities. Have students wear clothes they don’t mind getting dirty. If you are going to allow students to get into the creek for Creek Explorers session, have them bring an extra pair shoes.
- Please do not allow students to pick or take anything from trails/or park areas.
- Please have your students split up into the proper amount of groups before arriving so that we can begin sessions right away. We also recommend having nametags for the students with their group written on it as well.
- There must be an teacher or adult helper with every groups at all times.
- If having lunch as part of your trip please encourage students to pack an environmentally friendly lunch that generates as little waste as possible. Please bring trash bags for your garbage. We have a carry-in, carry-out policy at our programs.
- Most of our programs can be adapted to indoors if there is inclement weather. Our schedules do not allow for rain dates. If weather is severe and makes transportation dangerous the program will be cancelled.

Field Trip Planning

Dubuque County Conservation has created theme based field trips that help cover parts of curriculum standards. Each theme will have various activities that are run as rotations. See example schedules below. We have two full time educational staff members available to lead stations. Any additional stations will have to be led by teachers or parents. All field trips are free of charge. If you need assistance in transportation costs please ask about the Friends of Dubuque County Conservation Bus Scholarship Program!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Half Day Field Trip</th>
<th>Full Day Field Trip</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:15am Session 1</td>
<td>9:30-10:15am Session 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15-11:00am Session 2</td>
<td>10:15-11:00am Session 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am Have lunch at center or depart</td>
<td>11:00-11:30am Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:30-12:15 Session 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:15-1:00 Session 4</td>
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There are plenty of ways to make your visit special. Don’t see the program you are looking for? We can adapt any program to meet your needs. We’ll help you develop the best outdoor experience for your students! Thank you and we look forward to working with you!

- Dubuque County Conservation Board Naturalists