

Nature Center Project: *Service-Learning Project*

Description – Nature Centers are gateways to the Preserves. Visit one of the District’s six Nature Centers for a service project. Group projects are based on location and time of year. (**Group Size:** Up to 25; **Time of year:** year-round; **Duration:** 2-3 hours)

Pre-visit Preparation

- Review** this entire document and **plan** your trip with the Nature Center staff. These steps are intended to highlight important talking points and activities, but please add your own stories and anecdotes to personalize the experience for your group. Discuss ideas with the Nature Center staff before your trip.
- Discuss** trip preparation information with students and chaperones. Refer to Teen Service-Learning blog (www.FPDCCteens.blogspot.com) *Get Ready for Service* and information provided by Nature Center staff.
- Copy** and hand out *Be Prepared to Get Outside, Get Active, and Give Back* to participants before the trip.
- Bring** paper, markers, etc. for students to write thank-you notes to Nature Center staff at the end of the trip.
- Locate** your site on a map and obtain directions to the site to share with the bus driver.
- Encourage** students to:
 - **Visit the Forest Preserve District website** (www.fpdcc.com) and learn about the **history** (<http://fpdcc.com/about/history>) and **mission** (<http://fpdcc.com/about/mission-vision>) of the FPDCC.
 - **Visit the Teen Service-Learning blog** (www.FPDCCteens.blogspot.com) to obtain resources and see what other groups are doing.
 - **Research the Nature Center site** your group is visiting and find it on a map.

Participate in a Nature Center workday

Introduction

1. **Locate** your starting point at the Nature Center.
2. **Coordinate** with the bus driver on pick up time and exchange cell phone numbers.
3. **Know your location** in case of an emergency and communicate it to all chaperones. Cross-streets or an address will help authorities find your group quickly.
4. **Listen carefully** to the Nature Center staff’s introduction to the site, instructions for work, and safety information given. **Remember**, teachers and chaperones are the group managers during the field trip. Be sure students are respectfully listening and following directions and safety measures.
5. **Review** safety information and workday duration, meeting place, and boundaries.
6. **Participate** in the service activity at the Nature Center.

Reflection – Discuss your experiences.

1. Was the workday what you expected? Was there anything you didn’t expect?
2. How did your actions affect the community? Wildlife? Individual participants?
3. What is the importance of the resource being improved?
4. How can we take what we learned from the experience and continue to affect change?
5. If you had to describe your Forest Preserve experience in one word, what would it be?
6. What would you post on Facebook about your experience today?
7. If you were going to text your best friend about your experience today, what would you say?
8. **Write thank-you notes** to the Nature Center staff. Take the opportunity to reflect on your experiences in the Preserves.

Continuation Ideas

Take it one step further and inspire others to get involved in Nature Center Projects.

1. **Submit** reflections, photos, and/or videos to the Teen Service-Learning blog. Email submissions to the Teen Service-Learning Project Coordinator (cassie.hatzfeld@cookcountyil.gov).
 - **Write.** Tell us about your volunteer experience. Get creative! Write a news article, poem, quote, or give details about your photos. Here are some topics to write about: Where and when did you volunteer? Was this your first visit to a Forest Preserve? What did you do? What was the coolest thing you experienced? What did you expect to find in the Preserves? What did you find? Did anything surprise you?
 - **Take photos.** Show the landscape or the smallest thing you can find. Snap a shot of something hidden or something that was hard to miss. Can you find one thing that represents your site or your service-learning experience?
 - **Share videos.** Submit footage of your workday or interview participants about their experiences in the Preserves.
2. **Spread the word** about the Forest Preserves and Nature Centers. Encourage friends and family to get involved in other service opportunities to help the local environment.

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS – IL State Learning Standards

State goal	Description
Science	
12.B.4a	Compare physical, ecological, and behavioral factors that influence interactions and interdependence of organisms.
12.B.5a	Analyze and explain biodiversity issues and the causes and effects of extinction.
13.A.4a	Estimate and suggest ways to reduce the degree of risk involved in science activities.
13.B.4b	Analyze a particular occupation to identify decisions that may be influenced by a knowledge of science.
13.B.5c	Design and conduct an environmental impact study, analyze findings and justify recommendations.
Social Science: Social Systems	
18.B.4	Analyze various forms of institutions (e.g. educational, military, charitable, and governmental).
Social Science: Geography	
17.A.5	Demonstrate how maps, other geographic instruments and technologies are used to solve spatial problems (e.g. land use, ecological concerns).
17.C.5a	Compare resource management methods and policies in different regions of the world.
17.C.5b	Describe the impact of human migrations and increased urbanization on ecosystems.
Social Science: Political Systems	
14.C.4	Describe the meaning of participatory citizenship (e.g. volunteerism, voting) at all levels of government and society in the United States.
Mathematics	
7.C.4b	Interpret scale drawings and models using maps and blue prints.
Social Emotional Learning Standards	
1B.4b	Analyze how positive adult role models and support systems contribute to school and life success.
1B.5b	Evaluate how developing interests and filling useful roles support school and life success.
1C.4b	Apply strategies to overcome obstacles to goal achievement.
2A.4a	Analyze similarities and differences between one's own and other's perspectives.
2A.4b	Use conversation skills to understand others' feelings and perspectives.
2B.5b	Evaluate how advocacy for the rights of others contributions to the common good.
3C.5a	Work cooperatively with others to plan, implement, and evaluate a project to meet an identified school need.
3C.4b	Plan, implement, and evaluate one's participation in a group effort to contribute to one's local community.