



Byron Forest Preserve District Educator Guide



Life Science

Earth & Space

History

Service Projects

- Next Generation Science Standards in the real world. History on hand.
- 2,000 acres of prairie and oak savanna. Miles of trails. Access to gullies, creeks, and the Rock River.
- Newly renovated natural history museum. Immersive theater. Exhibits that are designed to engage.
- Observatory, sun scope, telescopes, and solar filters.
- Sessions adapted for your grade. Individualized programs to reflect Disciplinary Core Ideas, Cross-Cutting Concepts, and Practices that match your in-class learning.
- Dedicated and educated staff who love what they do!

Contact Us!

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We are dedicated to education.

The Byron Forest Preserve District has been following its mission of Preservation, Education, and Recreation for more than 30 years. The district encompasses: 2,000 acres of prairie, wetland, and woodland habitats; dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves; Monarch Waystations; restored vernal ponds at the confluence of the Rock and Leaf Rivers; Indian mounds dating back 5,000 years; a heritage farmhouse, barns, and antiques; maple syrup and beekeeping facilities; a quarry used for fossil hunting; and a 4,000 square foot, newly renovated natural history museum.



Our field trips meet your needs.

Choose your sessions, and we'll relate them to your grade and what you're learning in the classroom.

For each session topic on the right, we have created specialized, grade-specific activities that reflect the Next Generation Science Standards or Social Science learning standards. We emphasize Cross-Cutting Concepts such as patterns, change, and cause and effect, and utilize Science and Engineering Practices as much as possible.

During **Life Science** sessions, students engage in hands-on experiences in the field with living plants and animals, and can get a closer look at prairie and woodland habitats in our museum. Our Weiskopf Observatory, with telescopes, solar filter, and sun finder, is a great resource for **Earth and Space** topics. We also have a quarry for fossil hunts, and new stations for observing weather. Mix or match with **History**, and visit our 1800s Heritage Farm Museum or canoe the Rock River in a replica Voyageur canoe. **Plus:** Connect language arts. Students make their own journal and have time to quietly reflect and observe, or will use their senses to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the woods and prairie.



The Jarrett Prairie Center Museum and Weiskopf Observatory

Choose your sessions:

prairie habitats

Hike through remnant and restored native prairie ecosystems.

forest habitats

Explore our native oak savannas and mixed woodlands.

pollinators & decomposers

Insects and other small animals and their importance in the ecosystem.

biodiversity lab

Insects and other arthropods, amphibians, birds, mammals, and reptiles.

museum

Our native ecosystems and their diversity. Includes time with our live snake and turtles.

geology

Walk the glacial landscape of the Jarrett Prairie. Topics can include minerals, rocks, soil cycle, fossils, erosion, and more.

astronomy

Our planet, our solar system, our universe.

weather

The water cycle, weather systems, and how they affect us and the landscape.

farm life

Restored 1860s farm house and many barns. A bus is recommended to transport students to the Heritage Farm Museum.

explorers

Fur traders and the history of early European settlement in Illinois.

native people

A history of people who lived in Illinois before European Settlement.

journaling

Students make a simple notebook and have supervised, guided time to reflect.

earthwalk

Explore our woods and prairie using sight, sound, smell, and touch.

service project

Collect or spread flower seeds, pick garlic mustard, inventory bluebird houses.

The Jarrett Prairie Center Museum and Weiskopf Observatory

Our field trips are individualized.

The themes below are specific to each grade, and are applied to session topics to create a field trip catered to your classroom. For example, a first-grade class attending both a prairie session and pollinator/decomposer session would explore adaptations and life cycles of prairie plants and animals, and then adaptations and life cycles of insects and arthropods. In this way, sessions become a cohesive, themed field trip instead of a jumble of unrelated facts that are soon forgotten. Our staff ask questions, engage students in gathering information, and encourage hands-on exploration.

first grade

- Structure, function, adaptations, and life cycles
- Patterns in the sky and seasons
- People of the past
- Collect, record, and share observations

Our sessions are hands-on.



Students conduct a macroinvertebrate study at our Howard Colman Hall Creek property. Creek study is available seasonally.

second grade

- Diversity, adaptations, and connections
- What has shaped our landscape
- How our community has changed
- Collect, record, and share observations



Students learn how a telescope functions, and can view the sun with a solar filter.

third grade

- Habitat diversity, change, and relationships
- How the weather and climate affect us
- How people have adapted to life on the prairie
- Write to convey ideas and details



Students explore life as a pioneer by making candles and cornbread.

fourth grade

- Structures, growth, survival, behavior
- Fossil records, erosion, and natural resources
- How our culture and environment change
- Gather information about the natural world



We don't just encourage kids to learn, but also to enjoy the process!

fifth grade

- Air, water, and soil cycles; food chains
- Orbits, patterns, and earth's processes
- How humans use natural resources
- Process information and observations