

School Program Guide



ODC Network programs provide hands-on experiences that encourage a sense of wonder of the natural world.. We are advancing outdoor education and conservation in West Michigan.



©Mike Lozon



Outdoor Discovery Center
4214 56th Street, Holland, MI 49423
616.393.9453
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DeGraaf Nature Center
600 Graafschap Road, Holland, MI 49423
616.393.9453
degraaf@outdoordiscovery.org

NATURAL HISTORY PROGRAMS

The programs described below are examples of our most popular program themes. Educators are encouraged to work with staff to customize their program including activities, demonstrations, and key concepts which pertain to the Michigan Department of Education's teaching standards.

A River Runs Through It

Students will learn about the water cycle, soil permeability, watersheds, and how pollution can affect river ecosystems. Outdoors, they will explore the wetlands at the Historic Van Raalte Farm and look for macro invertebrates in the river.

Location: VRF

Grades: 3 and up

Program Length: 2-3 hours



Exploring Our Dunes

One of the largest groups of fresh-water dunes in the world can be found along Lake Michigan's eastern shoreline. On the guided hike students will learn about the geology, natural history, and forces of nature that have created this unique environment.

Location: City, county and state parks

Grades: 4 and up

Program Length: 2-4 hours

Habitat Exploration

(formerly let's stay connected - includes animal characteristics)

Exploring both plant and animal life and the living versus non-living elements of a place facilitates the student's understanding of each habitat or ecosystem that is visited. Tools such as magnifying lenses, sampling nets, and journals may be used to take a closer look at what makes a place special.

Location: ODC, DGNC, VRF, Local Park

Grades: 1 and up

Program Length: 2-4 hours



Live Birds of Prey

Using our live raptors, students will learn about the different role organisms play in the natural world including predator and prey interactions, trophic levels, bird biology and the characteristics of birds versus other animal groups. Artifacts such as wings, talons, feathers and skulls may be used during the presentation in addition to live, non-releasable birds of prey. Teachers may add a hike outside to explore different habitats where these birds may live and explore the outdoors for wild birds.

Location: ODC, School

Grades: 2 and up

Program Length: 1-4 hours

ODC = Outdoor Discovery Center, 4214 56th Street, Holland
DGNC = DeGraaf Nature Center, 600 Graafschap Rd, Holland
VRF = VanRaalte Farm, 1076 East 16th St, Holland

Plants and Landforms

While taking a hike with one of our naturalists, students will learn about the parts of a plant, how those parts work and learn more about specific species that are found either at the Outdoor Discovery Center, Van Raalte Farm, or in a natural area near your school. The group will also discuss different landforms and how they are created. Hands-on activities may include using an EnviroScape model, a sand box or play-doh to illustrate landform types.

Location: ODC, VRF, Local Park

Grades: 2 and up

Program Length: 2-4 hours



Plants on the Move (Fall only)

Plants and their seeds need to grow. Seeds spread using a variety of methods so they do not compete with their parent plant. Students will discover the many different ways seeds travel through demonstrations, hands-on activities, and a hike.

Location: ODC, VRF, Local Park

Grades: 2-4

Program Length: 2-4 hours

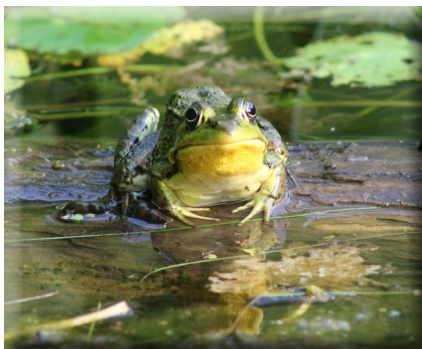
Sensory Adventure

Animals use their senses in their everyday lives to survive. Using live animal examples we will illustrate various animals' special sensory abilities. The students will also experience the natural world by using their own senses on our trails.

Location: DGNC, ODC, VRF

Grades: Prek-2nd

Program Length: 1.5-2 hours



Seasonal Surprises - Ecology

Explore our natural areas in any season with a naturalist. Students will look for signs on animal life as they explore many different habitats. We will discuss the elements that make a habitat or ecosystem, predator-prey relationships, carrying capacity, food webs, and other subjects. If scheduled during the winter and there is at least 4 inches of snow, students grades 3 and up can snowshoe.

Location:

ODC, VRF

Grades: 3 and up

Program Length: 2-4 hours

DGNC

Grades: 1-2 (no snowshoeing)

Program Length: 1-2 hours

Other Location - TBD

Spring in the Maple Sugarbush

Students will learn about the early signs of spring such as bird migrations and wildflowers. They will also learn about the parts of a tree and how trees make sap. Students may tap a tree or help gather sap to take to the evaporator. They will also see the evaporator in action and taste the final product!

Location: VRF

Grades: Kinder and up

Program Length: 2 hours (Late February through March only)



Up Close & Wild

Using our collection of live reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds this program gives students the opportunity to learn about various habitat requirements, adaptations and life history information for a number of animals.

Grades: All

Location: DGNC, ODC, School, Local Park

Program Length: 30-60 minutes



Wetland Investigation and Life Cycles

Aquatic systems are teeming with life. Vertebrates such as reptiles, amphibians, and mammals, invertebrates such as dragonflies, giant water bugs, and whirligig beetles can be found with simple observation or collection. A key element to investigations will include observing life cycles, food chains and food webs. While exploring a pond or wetland, a variety of tools may be used by students including magnifying glasses, sampling nets, and microscopes.

Grades: 1 and up

Location: ODC, Local Park

Program Length: 2-4 hours

Wildflowers in Spring

Come enjoy the beautiful wildflowers that bloom at DeGraaf Nature Center in the spring. Students will learn about plant and flower parts, plant life cycles, wildflower identification, and the natural history surrounding an amazing variety of plants.

Grades: 2-5

Location: DGNC, Local Park

Program Length : 2 hours



Wondrous World of Water

Using a watershed model called an EnviroScape this program includes learning about the water cycle, run-off, soil permeability, and human impacts on the environment. The outside segment of this program, if included, has students visiting several habitats with water, looking for erosion and identifying the way water moves across the land.

Grades: 4 and up

Location: ODC, School, Local Park

Program Length: 2-4 hours (at ODC), 60-90 minutes (at school)

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CULTURAL HISTORY PROGRAMS

The programs described below are examples of our most popular program themes, however educators are encouraged to work with staff to customize their program including activities, demonstrations, and key concepts which pertain to the Michigan Department of Education's teaching standards.



Cultural programs are supported by the MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS and the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS.



A Day in the Life of a French Voyageur

Learn about the Great Lakes fur trade and French Voyageurs using replica clothing, tools, and an interactive presentation. This program can be paired with the Michigan's Indigenous People program.

Grades: 3 and up

Location: ODC, School

Program Length: 1-2 hours



Michigan's Indigenous People

Using artifacts, language, traditional houses, games, hunting tools, and common life skills, our educators will share some of the basic life activities of Michigan's Indigenous Peoples before and after contact with Europeans. Winter programs may include the use of Ojibwa style snowshoes (minimum of 4 inches of snow required).

Grades: 3 and up

Location: ODC

Program Length: 2-4 hours

Homestead Holiday

Students will experience some of the ways early settlers prepared for the holidays. They will visit the log cabin where they will learn about pioneer life and hear a story. Students will also learn about evergreens on a short evergreen walk, hand-dip candles, and make a craft to take home.

Grades: 1-3

Location: DGNC

Program Length: 2 hours



Pioneer Living

Learn how the pioneers fed, clothed, and sheltered themselves with a visit to our Pioneer Cabin. Students participate in pioneer chores such as carding wool, sawing wood, grinding corn, and cooking over the fire.

Grades: 3-5

Location: DGNC

Program Length: 2 hours

SCHOOL PROGRAM GRADE LEVEL TO CONTENT CORRELATIONS

Nature Theme	Pre-k	Kinder	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Middle	High Sch
A River Runs Thru It									
Exploring Our Dunes									
Habitat Exploration									
Live Birds of Prey									
Plants and Landforms									
Plants on the Move									
Sensory Adventure									
Seasonal Surprise - Ecology									
Spring in the Sugarbush									
Up Close and Wild									
Wetland Investigation									
Wildflowers in Spring									
Wonderous World of Water									
Cultural Themes									
Homestead Holiday									
Pioneer Living									
Michigan's Indigenous People									
Life of a French Voyageur									

To learn more about school programs including program fees, go to:
<https://outdoordiscovery.org/programs/school-programs/>

SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP PROGRAM

Registration begins the first Monday of August. Program registrations are taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. Call early to have the best chance to have your preferred program date available on our program calendar.

To schedule a program contact our office
616.393.9453 - odc@outdoordiscovery.org

Please have the following information available:

1. School / Organization Name
2. Teacher / Contact Name
3. Contact Information
4. Estimated number of participants
5. Theme / Concept that you would like for the program
6. Preferred season, week, date for a program

