

It has been proven that direct experiences in nature facilitate better long-term science learning. Nature-based learning experiences help engage the scientific mind and provide a framework on which children can build upon, leading to a stronger scientific understanding and lifelong appreciation of the natural world. While technology and classroom instruction have their places in a child's development, they cannot replicate, duplicate, or replace essential outdoor learning experiences.



Medina County  
Park District



# Environmental Education PROGRAM GUIDE

Medina County Park District's environmental education curriculum is designed to meet criteria outlined in the content themes for science under the Ohio Content Standards for Education. The park district's dedicated team of naturalists will help enhance your curricular classroom studies with practical applications in the natural environment.



## Scheduling Information

Call Oenslager Nature Center at (330) 239-4814 between 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday, to schedule programs.



### Minimum Notice for Scheduling

Plan ahead. A minimum of six weeks' advance notice is required for reservations, but popular month's (October, April, and May) fill early.

### Please be prepared to provide:

- Program choice
- School/group name, grade, and number of students and adult chaperones (1 per 15 required)
- Contact information for school and person scheduling program
- Preferred date/time and alternate date/time
- Special requirements or needs of any student



### Program Times

Programs are offered Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., at Oenslager Nature Center. Groups are welcome to stay for lunch after the scheduled program, then explore the sanctuary grounds on their own. Naturalists can provide self-guided activity options upon request.

### Group Size

Group size is limited to two classes or up to 60 students. Students may be divided into smaller groups for the best low student-to-naturalist ratio before the program begins. Please inquire about the feasibility of accommodating larger groups.

### Fees

Programs are free for Medina County schools/groups. Out-of-county schools/groups are charged \$3 per student.

### Confirmation

Confirmation of your reservation and specific details about selected programs will be sent to the contact person.

## Other Important Information

### Cancellations

Please call if you are unable to keep your scheduled reservation.

### Weather

Programs are held regardless of weather. Outdoor activities will be adapted to the indoors in unsafe weather conditions.

Ensure all children are dressed appropriately for hiking and outdoor activities, including proper footwear.



### Lunch

Picnic tables outside under a covered porch are available for your use for lunch.

### Take Only Memories

Collecting of any kind is not permitted at Oenslager Nature Center or on any other park district properties.

### Discipline

Teachers are expected to handle any discipline issues that may arise.

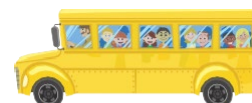
### No Phones/Cameras

Students are not permitted to use cell phones or cameras during programs.

### Connecting Children and Nature

#### Transportation Assistance Grant Program

The Friends of Medina County Parks, Inc., a 501 (C)3 supporting organization of Medina County Park District, offers a grant program to schools to assist with transportation costs associated with traveling to Oenslager Nature Center for field studies. Grants are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. During the regular school year, all Medina County school groups in grades K through six are eligible to apply. Grant monies are limited to actual busing costs up to \$250 per bus.



Once you have scheduled a program, a grant application can be requested. Applications must include each date for which funds are being requested, be filled out completely, signed by the school principal, and received by the park district's program scheduler within three weeks of scheduling your field study date. Your application must be approved prior to attendance of the scheduled program.

Applications with incomplete or incorrect information may result in failure of approval of application.

Grant checks (not to exceed \$250 per bus) will be mailed after the scheduled program has taken place and an invoice has been issued by the district or school for payment.



**All programs are held year-round and will be primarily outdoors unless noted otherwise.**

## **Seasonal Discoveries**

### **PreK through 1<sup>st</sup> Grade; 1 hour**

Through observation of living things in their unique natural environments, students will gain understanding of the interrelationships and adaptations that allow living things to survive throughout the changing seasons.

## **What's Wild?**

### **PreK through 1<sup>st</sup> Grade; 1 hour; *may include live animals***

Nature provides wild animals with everything they need to survive without human intervention. Students will learn about the differences between wild animals and pets and discover why wild animals do not make good pets.

## **Feathers, Fur, Scales, and Skin**

### **1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades; 1 hour; indoor program**

With help from a few live animal ambassadors and hands-on objects, students will learn the many fascinating and unique characteristics of different animals, how they use these characteristics for survival, and how they compare to humans.

## **Focus on Food Chains**

### **1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

Where do living things get their energy? Why do animals live in certain types of habitats? Students will explore these habitats and discover how animals and plants depend on one another to survive.

## **Fossil Investigations**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

Students will investigate the process of fossilization, fossil animals, and some of the adaptations that helped them survive (and caused them to become extinct). Students will then hike to explore some of the characteristics of modern animals that enable them to thrive in their environments.

## **Nature Adaptations**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

Animals can both impact and be impacted by the environments in which they live. Students will explore ways that animals change their environments as well as learning about how animals have adapted to their particular habitats.

## **Nature Hike**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

Our parks offer limitless educational opportunities. On the hike, a naturalist will help students look for plants and animals and share interesting facts about Ohio's wildlife.

## **Magnificent Monarchs**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours; *Available only in September***

Students will engage in a study of monarch butterflies learning about their life cycle and migration and how scientists study populations through tagging.

## **Tracks and Scat**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

We don't often see our larger mammals of Ohio, but we know they are here by the evidence they leave behind. Students will learn how tracks and scat (the scientific word for "poo") are important to discovering the hidden animals around us.

## **Life Cycles**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

All living organisms have unique life cycles. Students will learn about the life cycles of different animal groups. We will take a hike to focus on a seasonally relevant animal.

## **Earth's Foundations**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

Many forces contribute to earth's changing landscapes. Students will investigate the different processes that occur to form various rocks and the unique characteristics of rocks.

## **Aquatic Ecosystems**

### **4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades; 2 hours**

#### ***Only available April 15 – October 15***

Our aquatic ecosystems are teeming with life! Students will investigate several aquatic ecosystems throughout our watershed by conducting studies in search of macroscopic insects, tadpoles, fish, and other aquatic life, and learning about their impacts on water quality.

*Revised August 8-2023*

## **Learning is an adventure at Oenslager Nature Center!**

If the program offerings listed do not meet your exact educational objectives, please call to discuss modifications or additional options. A minimum of six weeks' advance notice is required to schedule a program, but don't wait too long – our schedule fills up quickly. Call 330-239-4814 to schedule your class program today!

Would you like to encourage your students to extend their natural learning experiences with their families? Medina County Park District offers a wide variety of free family nature programming all year long. Check out the program listings at [medinacountyparks.com](http://medinacountyparks.com), and please share these opportunities with your parents. Inspire them to get outside!