

Planning a Forestry Field Day

School Teachers and youth leaders often use field trips and tours to enrich their students' learning experience beyond the classroom. There are many opportunities for field trips within the urban environment. Trips to zoos, museums, and businesses are examples. However, event planners may not be familiar with organizing field trips into the forest environment. This publication is intended to be a resource for use in planning and successfully carrying out natural resource field events for students.

Finding local professional resource people to deliver programs in the field is important. They can be professional foresters, private woodland owners, fisheries biologists or retired science teachers. Start by contacting the public land management agencies in your area. They may include the Oregon State University Extension Service, US Forest Service, the US Bureau of Land Management, the Oregon Department of Forestry, the Oregon Department of fish and Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (US Department of Agriculture). Additional resources include local watershed councils, timber companies, private woodland owners, environmental organizations, and various park management agencies. You will usually find that resource professionals genuinely believe that education is important and will be willing to help. These folks are very busy so plan several months in advance.

Talk to the people that you contact about what kind of sites may be available for a field trip. Discuss what your educational goals and objectives are. Let them know the age and grade of your students and what they have studied so far. If they are unfamiliar with working with children, you could send them a copy of the Oregon State University Extension Service publication, "Middle Child and Adolescent Development" (EC 1527). Let them know how many students and volunteers will be involved. This will help them and you select a site that is within a reasonable distance, will be safe, and will meet the educational needs for both you and the presenter.

There are some safety considerations that are different about organizing a field day in the forest compared to an urban trip. This publication provides information about such safety considerations as well as guidelines for a field day for those who have never organized one before. Also provided is a sample field day schedule to give you a picture of how a field day could be structured.

One good resource for background information on forestry and for activities to use both indoors and in the forest environment is the Oregon 4-H Forestry Leader Guide (4-H 331L)

This and member manuals (4-H 331) for students are available from the Oregon State University Extension Service. Other sources for activities are included in Appendix II.

Often it is possible to gain media coverage for your field tour. A brief news release to the local TV stations one to two weeks in advance will often draw attention. Be sure to include your school's name and phone number and the name of a key contact to answer questions (See Appendix I).

Appendix III provides a few suggestions for sources of funds to help pay for the field trip. Also look to local sources such as timber companies for assistance.

Safety Considerations for Field Trips and Excursions

1. Students should be under adult supervision at all times. A recommended adult to student ratio is 1 adult to 10 students. Adults can include teachers, parents, volunteers or resource people who have been trained and approved in advance by the school. The school may also have an approval system for volunteer drivers.
2. It is prudent to have some form of communication at the field site in case of accident or health emergency. Most foresters and resource professionals have CB's and two-way radios in their vehicles. A cell phone will also work in most locations, but verify coverage in the area you are planning to visit.
3. Contact landowners on the phone and in writing to receive permission.
4. Verify the presence and location of range cattle, logging or construction activities. Try to avoid situations where there can be conflicts between school buses or volunteer drivers and log trucks.
5. Always have a lead vehicle (flag vehicle) and a follow-up vehicle (to eliminate stragglers). The lead and follow-up vehicles should be in radio communication.
6. Know the road system. If possible, do an advance dry run. Look for low-hanging branches and obstacles. School buses are not well designed for off-highway travel so look for steep grades, tight turns, and narrow stretches of road. They also are not allowed to go any place where they have to back-up.
7. Have adequate parking and places to turn around. Continuous loop tour routes work best.
8. Establish clear communications with bus drivers.
9. Communicate with other adults to establish who is trained in first aid. Take at least one fully stocked first aid kit.
10. Cover rules with the students ahead of time, and then remind them of the most important ones on arrival at the site. Be sure they know how to recognize poison oak and poison

ivy. Also be sure the students know how to avoid other possible site hazards such as poisonous snakes, rough-skinned newts, yellow jacket nest locations, cliffs or sharp drop-offs, wet or slippery rocks, and stinging nettle or other unpleasant plants.

11. Remind students to bring plenty of water (and be sure to have extra water available for students who forget to bring their own.)
12. Arrange for stops at restrooms (example: a public park) or make arrangements to have adequate port-a-potties at the site.
13. If the field trip requires walking or biking to the site, be sure to scout the route in advance. Try to pick a route with minimal traffic. Look for sidewalks and street crossings with traffic lights if possible. On rural roads, a lead car and a following car provide added safety. Hazard blinkers and warning signs will help alert other motorists.
14. Be sure to provide adequate time to send home and receive the school's parent permission slips or other documentation that the school requires. Then be sure to take these with you during the field trip.

Guidelines for a Successful Field Day

- When arranging transportation to and from the site, be sure to allow ample time for travel. Anticipate the unexpected: late start, heavy traffic, and rest stops along the way.
- Provide all drivers with a map and directions to the site.
- Review safety and behavior rules with the students before you leave. Send rules home for parents to review with their children.
- Send a list of suggested clothing home prior to the field day. Possible items to suggest include boots, rain gear, and layers of clothing for warmth. Wet and cold students don't learn well.
- Chaperones should be informed of rules and their duties before the Field Day.
- Plan no more than four activities in a 2-hour period. Activities should be about 20-25 minutes in length. Choose activities that require students to use different senses to explore the forest: see, hear, smell, and feel.
- Visit the site ahead of time and choose locations for activities. Set up the activities before students arrive when possible. Parent volunteers and resource professionals could help with this and with the leadership of activities.
- Provide clear instructions to all volunteers about their responsibilities.

- Divide the class into groups, one for each activity. Rotate the groups through the activities. Allow sufficient time between activities to move students from one station to another. Use a whistle to alert instructors 5 minutes before the activity is to end and then again when students are to move to the next station.
- Have more than one group do a given activity at the same time if needed to keep group sizes manageable.
- Allow time at the end for students to talk about their experiences.
- Bring sack lunches to allow more flexibility for arriving and leaving.
- Very Important: Have discussion or do activities in the classroom to prepare students for their field day and follow-up activities to reinforce what students have learned.

Sample Field Day Schedule

(Grades 4-6)

8:30 am	Activity stations are set up and volunteer instructors are ready for students.
9:00 am	Students arrive at site. Divide into groups.
9:15 am	Groups are guided to their appropriate stations.
9:30 am	Activities begin.
9:55 am	First warning whistle is blown to notify instructors there are 5 minutes left.
10:00 am	Whistle blown again. Students rotate to next station.
10:10 am	Begin second activity.
10:35 am	Warning whistle.
10:40 am	Whistle blown again. Students rotate to next station.
10:50 am	Begin third activity.
11:15 am	Warning whistle.
11:20 am	Whistle blown again. Students assemble for discussion lunch.
11:30 am to noon	Lunch.
12:10 pm	Begin fourth activity.
12:35 pm	Warning whistle.
12:40 pm	Second whistle. Students rotate to next station.
12:50 pm	Begin fifth activity.
1:15 pm	Warning whistle.
1:20 pm	Second whistle. Students assemble for transportation home.
1:30 pm	Return to school.

Appendix I

Sample Letter to Media

The Daily Times
486 S. Main St.
Smithville, OR 97xxx

Dear Mr./Ms. Jones,

The 4th and 5th grade classes of Smithville Public School are planning a unique event that we thought would be of interest to the citizens of Smithville. On Thursday, April 29 we will have our first forest field day. 126 students and teachers will travel to the local National Forest.

While there, we will study how forests grow, how forests provide homes for wildlife, how forests provide safe drinking water, and much more. Eight local natural resource professionals will assist the teaching staff in leading the studies.

We would welcome your participation and your inquiries for further information. Please call Mr. Jonathan Westcott or me at 679-4238 during my school day between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Sincerely,

Marie Smith
Principal, Smithville Public School
1735 Ash Ave.
Smithville, OR 97xxx

Appendix II

Publication Resources

<i>Source</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Summary</i>
OSU Extension Service – County Offices	4-H Tree Cookie Kit	A ready-to-go kit of tree slices to show, feel, and learn about
Contact 4-H Staff	4-H Entomology Group Activity Helper's Guide 4-H 3220L	Teacher's guide for entomology series. Provides additional learning-by-doing activities.
	4-H Discovery Series Learning Outdoors 4-H 3002L	Covers forestry, energy, marine, soil, water, air and wildlife
	4-H Wetland Wonders Water Quality Project 4-H 3801L	6-week curriculum on water, wetlands, and watersheds. Workshop provided for teachers. BENCHMARKS
	4-H Give Water a Hand 4-H 3802L and 4-H 3802	Activity/learning to do a watershed project. Leader and action guides.
	4-H From Ridges to Rivers 4-H 3803L	Watershed exploration, soils, life underground, habitats, and rocks.
	4-H Entomology 4-H 3221L and 4-H 3221	Insect identification, key, life cycles, collection and mounting techniques. Leader guide and student manual.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Summary</i>
	Oregon 4-H Forestry 4-H 331L and 4-H 331	Explains what trees are, how they grow, why they are important, and discusses the nature and components of a dynamic forest system. Includes lessons on tools used in forest management. Leader and member guides.
	“What can we learn at the Pond?” 4-H 3101L and 4-H 3101	Guide to activities to explore the diversity of life in the pond environment. Leader and member guides.
	Oregon 4-H Forestry Fact Sheets 4-H 33100L	Collecting plants, making a plant press, and mounting
	Oregon 4-H Forestry Quiz Series 4-H 33120	Designed as a teaching tool for learning shrubs and trees of Oregon.
	4-H Earth Sciences 4-H 340L	Activities that explore the geology of Oregon and plate tectonics. BENCHMARKS
	Of People and Fish 4-H Natural Science EESC 50	Youth Watershed Stewardship Action information Packet including The Rosa Raindrop Water Cycle Game
OSU Department of Wood Science and Engineering http://wood.orst.edu/teachers.htm	Resources for Teachers Web Site	What’s a Tree Done for You Lately?, Trees and The Products We Get From Them, Products from Trees, Microscopic Images of Wood
Bonneville Power Administration, Public Information Center 1-800-275-4272 www.bpa.gov/Corporate/KR/ed/reslist/reslistx.shtml	A Salmon’s Story: The Journey of Oncorhynchus poster Science Outreach – Learning thru Discovery (SOLD)	Colorful 17”X20” poster depicting 10 stages of the life cycle of the salmon Thirty stand-alone science lessons on water, energy, and fish and wildlife.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Summary</i>
	Bonneville Power Administration: Resources for Teachers	Curricula, books, activities, posters, videos, and exhibits dealing with water, hydroelectricity, energy conservation, salmon, electrical safety, and resource planning.
	Hydromania II	Designed for 10-day science camp. Focus on salmon life cycle. Use with Journey of the Oncorhynchus, salmon hexoflexagon, and The Magnificent Journey poster.
	Journey of the Oncorhynchus: A Story of the Pacific NW Salmon	24-page storybook depicts life cycle of salmon for the viewpoint of Hydroid, a droplet of rainwater.
	Jornal del Oncorinco: Una Historia del Salmón del Pacifico Noroeste	Spanish versión.
	Pacific Salmon Life Cycle Hexaflexagon	Cut-and-fold activity.
	Water Cycle Hexaflexagon	Manipulative device students construct, which shows the parts of the water cycle.
	Columbia River Watershed Poster	Geographic/hydrologic/scaling/creative writing activity that teaches students the Columbia River Watershed.
Oregon Forest Research Institute (OFRI), 317 SW 6 th Ave., Suite 400, Portland, OR 97204 1-503-229-6718 x29. Or OSU College of Forestry, Oregon Forestry Education Program 1-541-737-2128	Project Learning Tree, Pre K-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide, American Forest Foundation, 2001	96 hands-on, standards correlated, easy to use, supplemental activities. See www.plt.org .

<i>Source</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Summary</i>
OSU College of Forestry, Oregon Forestry Education Program 1-541-737-2128	Project Wet	Collection of innovative, water-related activities that are hands-on, easy to use, and fun.
	Project Wild	Collection of habitat activities. Can stand along or serve as the basis for a comprehensive curriculum.
EPA, Office of Environmental Education. www.epa.gov/enviroed/index.html	Environmental Protection Agency Resources for Teachers	Educational materials developed or funded by EPA.
North American Association for Environmental Education www.naaee.org/html/pubdesrips.htm	North American Association for Environmental Education	Publication descriptions for environmental education materials.
Ranger Rick's NatureScope National Wildlife Federation 703-438-6000 www.nwf.org	Trees are Terrific	Many tree and forest activities, schoolyard habitats, nature activities.
Sea Grant Marine Education, Globe Franchise, Sea Grant. 1/541/867-0257	The Globe Program	Activities in environmental monitoring
Talk About Trees – Women in Timber 530-626-5187 www.talkabouttrees.org/main.html	Talk About Trees	A hands-on, activity-centered program encouraging awareness and appreciation for the value of trees and forests in ecosystems and our economy.

Appendix III

Sources of Funding for Teachers

Environmental Education Funding Sources for the Pacific NW

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

(206) 553-4973 or 1-800-424-4372

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/clearinghouse.nsf/>

To get to the document, go to the above site, and click on the picture. Then under **Resource Type** check the **Grant/Loan/Funding** box. Scroll down and select **FIND**. Scan the search results for the publication title and click once to open it.

Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI)

317 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 400

Portland, OR 97204-1705

(503) 229-6718

<http://www.oregonforests.org>

Local timber companies with forest product businesses

Local Watershed Councils

Diack Family Oregon Ecology Education Fund

Assistance for teachers in Oregon that enhance children's knowledge and appreciation of our interconnectedness with all living things.

<http://www.tlgrant.r9esd.k12.or.us/english1/reynolds/mert/diack.html>

Oregon Parks Foundation, Inc.

5440 SW Westgate Drive, Suite 250

Portland, OR 97221-2422

(503) 297-6043