



# Outdoor Experience Information

- Dress in clothes and shoes that can get dirty. **Requiring students to wear long pants and comfortable close-toed shoes for walking is best.**  
However, shorts and/or sandals (**NO flip flops**) may be worn for the following outdoor experiences:
  - *Birding Bonanza - Shorts permitted*
  - *Bird Nerds - Shorts permitted*
  - *I Spy - Shorts permitted*
  - *Outdoor Day - Shorts and sandals permitted*
  - *Pond Study - Shorts permitted*
- **Fall and Spring:** It is usually cooler at the parks than in town. Have students dress in layers: t-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, sweater or sweatshirt, and jacket. A hat with a bill provides protection from the sun.
- Bring **rain gear**, insect repellants, and sunscreen if needed.
- In the **winter**, wear a warm winter coat, snow or insulated pants, mittens or gloves, and a scarf. Wear a stocking cap and warm (preferably water-proof) boots.
- If your outdoor experience trip includes lunch, encourage your students to pack an environmentally friendly lunch that creates as little trash as possible. Please bring **garbage bags for your trash**. We have a carry-in, carry-out policy at our parks.
- **Composting education** is now available for full-day outdoor experiences at McFarland Park. Please indicate upon scheduling if you would like this to be included.
- We request **one adult helper for every five students**. Adult helpers are expected to participate fully in all activities, dress appropriately, sit with the children, and help keep them on task. We ask that adult helpers **not** bring young children or smoke in the presence of students. Please ask helpers to quiet AND NOT USE their cell phones.
- **Teacher and/or parent led activities** are a part of the following outdoor experiences:
  - *Nature Detectives*
  - *Prairies*
  - *GPS and Geocaching*
  - *Insectology*
  - *Pond Study*
  - *Birding Bonanza*
  - *Iowa History Day*
  - *Service Learning*
  - *Tree-rific*
  - *Naturally Sensational*
  - *Bird Nerds*
  - *Hatchet*
- **Have each student bring a water bottle.** Some areas in the parks do not have easy access to drinking fountains.

## Story County Conservation Contact Information

Phone: 515-232-2516

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## Potential Dangers in the field and what you can do to protect yourself:

### Lyme disease



- Transmitted through the bite of a deer tick.
- Symptoms of the disease include fatigue, muscle aches, headache, low-grade fever, chills, sore throat, and swollen glands.
- Removing a tick within 24 hours can greatly reduce chances of transmission.
- Treated by doctor with prescribed antibiotics.
- **Protect yourself by: wearing light-colored clothing, pants tucked inside of socks, and closed-toe shoes. Always do a head to toe check after being outdoors.**

### Poison Ivy



- Allergic reaction is caused by urushiol found in all parts of the plant and is released when the plant is touched.
- It causes an allergic reaction characterized by red, itching welts followed by water-filled blisters.
- Treat rash with calamine lotion, 0.5% hydrocortisone, and/or antihistamines.
- **Protect yourself by recognizing this plant. Wash skin and clothes exposed to poison ivy with soapy water.**

### Wild Parsnip



- Non-allergic reaction is caused by chemicals called psoralens contained in the plant juices. Reaction intensifies in the presence of sunlight.
- Reaction burns the skin causing the formation of blisters.
- Relieve burning by covering the exposed area with a cool cloth. If blisters pop, they should be treated with antibiotic cream and covered with a band-aid.
- **Protect yourself by recognizing this plant and staying clear of it!**

### West Nile Virus

- Carried by mosquitoes that become infected when they feed on birds carrying the virus.
- Most people who are infected don't develop symptoms.
- A minority of people may develop a mild illness with fever, headache, body aches, and swollen glands.
- Infection can lead to a severe illness known as West Nile encephalitis. However, risks for contracting this disease are low.
- **Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and pants with dense fabric and insect repellent containing DEET.**

### Story County Conservation's Weather Policy

- Students need to come dressed for the weather conditions.
- Outdoor experiences will be postponed or canceled if there is lightning or other severe weather.
- **Busses need to stay onsite** on days of questionable weather in case the weather becomes severe and the program must be canceled.
- We have a multi-purpose room at the conservation center to utilize for some rainy outdoor experiences. However, not all experiences can be moved indoors and may need to be canceled.
- **On days of questionable weather conditions, if you call before 8:30 AM, please leave a message on Jerry's direct line 515-598-4765.**