

Rensselaer County Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center Outreach Programs



These programs use hands-on, fun-filled activities to discover nature and the connections between ourselves and all living things. Participants will actively explore the topic of the day through hands-on activities, games and crafts. Emphasis will be on sensory awareness, creative thinking and lots of fun to explore the natural world around us.

Creatures of the Soil: Can you Dig it? Dig in and investigate who lives in the soil all around you. Discover an assortment of creepy crawlers such as insects, worms and millipedes. Use microscopes and other scientific tools to closely observe these amazing creatures. Discover our red wiggler worms living in a portable worm composting bin and learn how soil is made. Create your own animal to bring home.

Traveling Pond A traveling pond will “splash” its way into your library with live fish, salamanders, frogs and insects. Children will be able to touch live animals and will learn how these animals survive in a watery environment. (No craft with this lesson)

Fishing

A traveling pond will visit your library with an emphasis on fish and their natural habitats. Learn how to identify species of common fish and what makes them unique. If your library has an outdoor space or larger indoor room, children can practice casting with fishing poles. Next, create a fish print poster using brayers and ink.

Birds

Through games and activities youth will learn what makes a bird a bird, learn about bird adaptations and identify common species most likely to be at a birdfeeder. Craft can include one of these options: Create a birdfeeder, a pinecone owl, or a bird journal to record observations.

Owls

Learn about these fascinating night hunters, and dissect a real owl pellet to find out what they eat (additional materials fee apply for the pellets).

Insects

Enter the fascinating world of insects and their role in nature. Create your own insect to camouflage in a fun game and learn fun facts about being an insect.

Nature and Art

Use seasonal natural items to create beautiful works of art which may include milkweed angels, wall hangings using natural inks and dyes, splatter paintings. Call for details.

Nature Journals and Micro Universes

Create a beautiful hand-made journal and learn ways to write, draw and record your personal observations of nature. Look at nature up close using magnifying glasses, loupes and microscopes.

Paper-Making The paper wasp was the first living creature that made paper. Find out how this small insect makes his paper and then find out how people make paper today. Create your own recycled paper to bring home.

Wildlife Discovery Animal furs and skulls will be used to teach about mammals that are native to New York State. Make a plaster track.

Bats Bats are misunderstood animals with bad reputations. They actually have an important role in the ecosystem. Learn about how this animal lives, its behavior and why they are important. Play bat games and make a bat mask.

Water No one can survive long without water. Learn the importance of clean water and the water cycle. Make a traditional rain stick.

Know Your Trees Is it a deciduous or a conifer? Learn to identify five common trees. Create a leaf rubbing, tree identification booklet or a nature mobile.

Plants Learn the parts of a plant and their importance in our everyday lives. Make a bookmark with pressed leaves or a solar print.

Teamwork and Team Play Groups participate in adventure games and activities that create safe and fun situations that challenge the abilities of the group to collectively solve problems. Each challenge has a story that is read by the group. A large space is needed for this activity. No craft.

Fee: \$85 Includes most materials fees.

Mileage fee applies outside of Rensselaer County. Call for details.

Program length: 1 hour

Maximum group size: 20 students. This is a **firm number** based on the nature of our hands-on activities.

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