

NATURE

Prepared by:

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Target Group:

Any Scout

Time Allotted:

Two one-hour blocks

Pre-Requisites:

None

Materials Needed – Staff:

Plaster of Paris
Mixing container
Trowel
Food Chain Poster
Materials and tools to construct a birdfeeder
Pins with round heads
Insect collecting nets
Insect Identification Book
Tree Identification Book
Shovel

Materials Needed – Scout:

Pencil/ Pen
Notebook
Nature Merit Badge Book

Instructional Outcomes:

Upon completion of this activity, Scouts will possess a good knowledge base of nature as a whole. This will include the areas of birds, plants, trees, mammals, reptiles & amphibians, soil and water conservation, rocks & minerals, insects & spiders, food chains and symbiotic relationships.

MONDAY

Requirement 1

Name three ways in which plants are important to animals. Name a plant that is protected in your state or region, and explain why it is at risk.

Requirement 2

Name three ways in which animals are important to plants. Name an animal that is protected in your state or region, and explain why it is at risk.

Requirement 4b

Mammals:

- (1) In the field, identify three species of wild animals.
- (2) Make plaster casts of the tracks of a wild animal. *May need to make your own*

**Note: Take a short walk on the nature trail to find animals in the wild, if you are unable to find any, show the scouts the animals we are currently keeping in the nature lodge.*

**Activity: Split scouts into 2 groups, name one group the red squirrels and the other the black squirrels. Explain to the group that this game is based off of the survival instincts of squirrels to save up food before winter comes. Black squirrels are only able to take and hide 1 acorn at a time, while red squirrels can hide 5 at a time (but all together). Have one group go inside with a staff member to look at mammals inside, while they are inside the first group with hide their acorns around the outside of the nature lodge....give them 30 seconds to do so. Then rotate groups, have the second group do the same thing. After that bring both groups out and explain to them they need to find the food now, however they are only able to pick up and bring back 1 acorn at a time. Once you have found 10 acorns you are done and can have a seat. Discuss which group it was easier for and which group had to work harder. Talk about how they depended on each other to find the food.*

TUESDAY

Requirement 3

Explain the term “food chain.” Give an example of a four-step land food chain and a four-step water food chain.

*Have scouts create their own food chains with 4 or more steps and share it with the group.

Requirement 4a

Birds:

- (1) In the field, identify eight species of birds.
- (2) Make and set out a birdhouse OR a feeding station OR a birdbath. List what birds used it during a period of one month.

** Note: Bird feeders are made with Pretzel rods dipped in peanut butter and then rolled in bird seed. Be sure scouts leave room to tie a string onto the pretzel rod. Have scouts place these feeders around camp, and make sure they are out of sight, and discuss Leave No Trace Practices when considering where to place them.*

WEDNESDAY

Requirement 4c

Reptiles and Amphibians:

- (1) Show that you can recognize the venomous snakes in your area.
- (2) In the field, identify three species of reptiles or amphibians.
- (3) Recognize one species of toad or frog by voice; OR identify one reptile or amphibian by eggs, den, burrow or other signs.

Requirement 5

Discuss the importance of the Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code and how they relate to nature. Explain how you have followed the Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code while in natural areas during field observation, specimen collection, and identification.

**Note: Use the Missouri Department of Conservation frog and toad sound CD to complete requirement #3. Be sure to use the corresponding poster for the scouts to follow along. Also have scouts mimic the sounds they hear on the CD.*

**If you have time at the end of the activity period provide scouts a hands on opportunity with one of the reptiles or amphibians (APPROVED BY THE NATURE DIRECTOR) we currently have on display.*

THURSDAY

Requirement 4g

Plants:

- (1) In the field, identify 15 species of wild plants.
- (2) Collect and label seeds of six plants; OR the leaves of 12 plants.

**Note: By taking the scouts on the mapped out Camp Geiger tree Walk and collecting leaves from each of these trees will fulfill this requirement. Have the Nature Director or Conservation Director take you on the tree walk during staff week.*

Requirement 4h

Soil and Rocks:

- (1) Collect and identify three different types of soil that represent soils high in sand, clay and humus.
- (2) Collect and identify five different types of rocks from your area.

**Note: It is good to have a rock collection pre-collected to use throughout the summer to help scouts better identify different rock types. You can also go through the minerals guide, and encourage scouts to use the field guides we have.*

FRIDAY

Requirement 6

- (a) Explain what succession is to your counselor.
- (b) Visit a natural area (forest, grassland, meadow, water feature) and explain what stage of succession (both plant and animal) the area is in. Talk about what community/succession stages may have been there before and what community/succession stages may replace what you see now. Discuss what disturbances or changes have taken place in the past to create this landscape and what changes may occur in the future to change the landscape further.

Requirement 7

- (a) Identify three career opportunities that would use skills and knowledge in Nature. Pick one and research the training, education, certification requirements,

experience, and expenses associated with entering the field. Research the prospects for employment, starting salary, advancement opportunities and career goals associated with this career. Discuss what you learned with your counselor and whether you might be interested in this career.

(b) Identify how you might use the skills and knowledge in Nature to pursue a personal hobby. Research the additional training required, expenses, and affiliation with organizations that would help you maximize the enjoyment and benefit you might gain from it. Discuss what you learned with your counselor and share what short-term and long-term goals you might have if you pursued this.

*Note that requirement 7 the scouts will only need to do one of the two. This will need to be done in the museum.

**Note: Requirement 4 only requires completing five of the eight fields, but there is enough time to complete six of the fields during this class. In addition, it gives the Scout a better understanding of the subject matter.*

**If you have any extra time talk to the Nature Director about doing a small conservation project around the Nature Lodge.*