

Nature Studies for Homeschooled Students K-6th

Eagle River Nature Center

FALL 2018 SCHEDULE

PLANT STUDIES *Tuesday, September 4, 10:30am – 12:30pm*

We'll start by exploring seeds, plant growth & functions. We'll go on a walk collecting leaves, using a leaf key to identify trees. We'll wrap up with a discussion about how plants defend themselves.

OUTDOOR SKILLS *Tuesday, September 4, 1-3pm*

Work as peers and learn how to prepare for outdoor adventures, how not to get lost by using map and compass skills, practice building an emergency shelter, and discuss wildlife safety.

BIRD STUDIES *Tuesday, October 2, 10:30am – 12:30pm*

Examine our collection of nests, wings and feathers, and explore the mechanics of flight. We'll practice using binoculars and explore why some birds migrate and others don't. Finally, learn how researchers study beak deformities in our local winter bird population.

FUNGUS AMONG US *Tuesday, October 9, 1-3pm*

Fungi are neither plants nor animals but comprise their own kingdom. We'll go on a "Detritus Safari" to discover how saprophytic fungi help break down forest garbage, and develop some simple tools to start identifying the diverse fungi that are essential to our boreal ecosystem. Finish this session with some ideas about how to cultivate your own fungi and how fungus just might save the world!

ECOSYSTEMS AND NATURAL CYCLES *Wednesday, October 24, 1-3pm*

How is a wetland like a sponge? We'll explore biotic and abiotic natural cycles such as the water cycle, the carbon cycle and forest succession, as well as trace salmon and their nutrients through our forest.

FANTASTIC BEASTS (A STUDY OF ADAPTATIONS) *Wednesday, November 7, 10:30-12:30pm*

For younger kids (ages 5- 9): Do dragons and hippogriffs live at Eagle River Nature Center? Probably not, but what would it take for a legendary Tizheruk or Sasquatch to find a home here? Discover how creatures—both real and mythical—might be adapted to their environments, then create your own beast to share!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT *Tuesday, November 20, 1-3pm*

For older kids (ages 8 and up): Discover how the food we eat impacts the world around us by making a "climate change pizza". Try some unlikely ingredients and walk away feeling hopeful about the future and choices we can make to make the world a better place.

GEOLOGY ROCKS *Wednesday, November 28, 1-3pm*

What can fossils and rocks tell us about the earth's past? Study plate tectonics, volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and of course, Alaska's dinosaurs, and find out why Geology rocks!

SNOW STUDIES *Thursday, December 6, 1-3pm*

Take a close look at snowflakes and learn about how rain/hail/snow are formed in the atmosphere. We'll study the phase changes of water, learn about avalanches, and go snowshoeing, weather permitting.

SPRING 2019 SCHEDULE *Registration starts Nov 1, 2018 for those enrolled in the Series.*

HOMESCHOOL ORIENTATION January 8, noon

Ask questions and meet the staff. Uncover the mysteries of microbial fermentation by making some sourdough pancakes for lunch!

INTERNAL SYSTEMS January 8, 1-3pm

Extract DNA from fruit, figure out how organs and body parts work together, get an idea of how different bones hold our bodies up. Learn about the different habitats inside of us and how parasites could live there.

WINTER SURVIVAL Date TBD

Practice survival skills such as preventing hypothermia, building a snow shelter, and making a fire. Take a look at the various adaptations that Alaska animals use to survive winters. Weather permitting, we'll go snowshoeing and look for animal tracks.

CELESTIAL BODIES Date TBD in late afternoon or early evening

For younger kids (ages 5- 9): We'll start with some constellations storytelling inspired by the night sky. We'll study the phases of the moon, learn about the solar system, and look through a telescope at the night sky. We'll wrap up by making a night sky journal for recording your observations.

NATURAL RESOURCES CAREERS Date TBD

For older kids (ages 8 and up): What does a Forester or a Wildlife Biologist do? Explore a few different Natural Resources career paths with us. Participate in some Citizen Science Projects, including monitoring water quality and surveying wildlife and vegetation.

MOUNTAINS, GLACIERS AND RIVERS Date TBD

Unearth the mysteries of how rocks form, how mountains are built and worn down again, and how glaciers have shaped our landscape. We'll do some hands-on activities such as "mining a cupcake" and a "jello glacier".

RECYCLING AND WASTE Date TBD

Calculate how much waste a typical family produces. What happens to our garbage after we put it in the bin; could worms & microbes eat it? How does recycling even work? Try your hand at upcycling!

SEASONAL CYCLES Date TBD

What's the significance of a solstice or equinox? Investigate how seasonal changes affect life around the Nature Center. We will see evidence of the special relationship between the snowshoe hare and the lynx, and discover how disturbances like floods and wildfires maintain nature's checks and balances.

CREEKSIDE EXPLORATION Date TBD

Bring your rubber boots so we can capture such macro-invertebrates as the larvae of caddisflies, stoneflies and mayflies. What do these bio indicators tell us about the health of the creek?

BUGGING OUT Date TBD

What would happen if we managed to squish all the bugs? Discover what makes insects special and how their life cycles is different than ours. Meet some unique and gentle insects, then go on an expedition to catch and identify the Nature Center's most underrated residents.

Eagle River Nature Center's 2018-19 Nature Studies for Homeschoolers K-6th

Individual classes cost \$15/student and includes a day parking pass.

Members of ERNC receive a discount when they register for one of the following options:

- **Fall Series:** \$50 per student for 5 classes during the fall semester;
- **Spring Series:** \$50 per student for 5 classes during the spring semester;
- **FLEX Series:** \$70 per student for 6 classes during either fall or spring semester;
- **School Year Series:** \$90 per student for 5 classes during fall and 5 classes during spring.

REGISTRATON DETAILS

- 1) There are no refunds once payment is made. We suggest you try an individual class before committing to a series if unsure.
- 2) We need a minimum of 5 students to hold a class. If a class is cancelled due to low enrollment or bad weather, you will be able to substitute another class.
- 3) Those registered in the series get first pick: Register for classes up to one month before registration opens to the public.
- 4) No changes once registered for a class. Please note that you do not need to select all the classes immediately upon enrolling for the series – you can register anytime, for just a few classes and hold off on registering for the remainder until you have a better idea of your family's schedule.
- 5) Registration for classes is done online and convenient. Those enrolled in the series will receive a username and password to sign up your child(ren) for classes. You can register up to 48 hours before a class starts.
- 6) Wait list is on a family group basis (assuming you want to be placed as a group), but you can also put an individual child on a wait list. Once your group is moved from the wait list to being placed in the class, you are committed to that class and cannot make changes. However, you can ask us anytime to remove your name from the wait list by emailing us.
- 7) If your child is sick and you're enrolled for a series, please let us know ASAP. You may select a different class as "make-up", assuming space is available. If you fail to attend a class without letting us know, you lose your chance of selecting a make-up class.
- 8) Questions? Attend the Homeschool Orientation on August 30, 2018 or January 8, 2019, or contact us: Ute Olsson and Samantha Russell, (907) 694-2108 or naturalist@ernc.org

SAFETY POLICY:

- 1) All children need to be accompanied by a designated adult who is responsible for the children's safety and behavior at all times.
- 2) Siblings are welcome, but for safety reasons, each adult may only have 1 independently-walking pre-school child in their care during fieldtrips (not counting babies in backpack or stroller).
- 3) All participants are asked to walk behind the guide, stay together, and follow instructions.
- 4) Dogs are not allowed during guided walks (except service dogs).

PARENT SIGNATURE I have read and agree to these policies.

_____ Date _____