

2025-2026

School Program Offerings



For program information,
or to reserve a program contact:

KCFPDeducation@kendallcountyil.gov,
or call (630) 553-2292



Visit us online at kendallforest.com

**Connecting Classrooms to Nature
for over 60 Years!**

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Teacher Professional Development

Kendall County Forest Preserve District offers a variety of opportunities for teacher professional development each year. The District's Education Division specializes in developing environmental education teacher workshops to integrate natural and cultural history curricular connections.

All District workshops are aligned with Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards.

Contact the District for support with developing a workshop or field trip opportunities specifically suited to meet your classroom and curricular needs at KCFPDeducation@kendallcountyil.gov, or call (630) 553-2292 to discuss training opportunities.



Fall 2025 Teacher Workshop



<https://www.enticeworkshops.com/>

Course Name: Oak Ecosystems

Location: Pickerill-Pigott Forest Preserve, Yorkville

Date(s): Saturday, October 18, 2025

Time(s): 9:00 am-3:00 pm

To register: <https://www.enticeworkshops.com/Registration.asp?WorkshopID=1435>

IDNR Resource Trunks and Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grants

Resources trunks/packs from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Division of Education are Illinois-specific units on 14 topics. Teachers, homeschooling educators, scout and youth group leaders, nature center personnel, librarians, day care center staff and families are among the people who can successfully use these resources.

Teachers are able to check out the following materials from the District's main office located at 110 W. Madison Street in Yorkville:



[Illinois Wild Mammals Trunk](#)

[Field Trip Pack](#)



Contact the Kendall County Forest Preserve District Education Department at KCFPDeducation@kendallcountyil.gov, or call (630) 553-2292 to check availability and schedule pickup.



IDNR Biodiversity Field Trip Grants

Does your District need financial support for field trips? The IDNR offers \$500 grants for teachers to fund classroom school field trips. There is also a \$20.00 per student (maximum allowance) for expenses that are not related to transportation costs or substitute teacher costs.

Application deadline is 11:59:59 p.m., January 31, 2025. Teachers of grades Pre-kindergarten through 12 in Illinois, including home-schooling teachers, may apply.

<https://dnr.illinois.gov/education/grants/grantsibftg.html>

Pre-K Program Offerings and Approaches

Nature Play!

The District's Education Department specializes in connecting young children to nature through physical play, engaging the five senses, and supporting social-emotional learning within both natural areas and classrooms. This program provides 1-hour minimum of nature play focusing on a variety of program topics including animals (mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, insects), pond and stream exploration, forests and prairies, and more. Work with our Education Specialist to design a field trip or classroom visit that meets your needs and interests.

Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards:

Learning Standard 12.A: Understand that living things grow and change.

Learning Standard 12.B: Understand that living things rely on the environment and/or others to live and grow.

Learning Standard 12.F: Explore changes related to the weather and seasons.



Program Reservation Information
Location: In-School or Field Trip
Duration: 1-hour per class for either
Field Trip: \$7.00 per student In-School: \$80.00 per classroom \$65.00 each additional class
Special Requirements: None
Available: Year-Round

Kindergarten through Second Grade Program Offerings

Animal Adaptations

Animals are adapted to the habitats and ecosystems where they live. Adaptations are needed to find food, water and shelter, protect animals from environmental conditions, and more. Students will learn about adaptations of animals found in Kendall County, relate these to our ourselves, and our stewardship responsibilities.

Next Generation Science Standard: K-ESS3-1. Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live.

Teeth! Carnivores, Omnivores and Herbivores

Discover the relationship between dental structure and the foods eaten by different animals. Students will learn about the specialization of teeth by herbivores, omnivores and carnivores that allows them to find nourishment. Tie this ecological concept into your health units.

Next Generation Science Standard: K-ESS3-1. Use observation to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

Reptiles Verses Amphibians

Students are introduced to herpetology of Kendall County, including hands-on introductions to two animal ambassadors to discover their unique features, and learn how each survives.

Next Generation Science Standard: K-LS1-1. Use observation to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

Program Reservation Information
Location: In-School or Field Trip
Duration: 1-hour per classroom 2-hours per field trip
In-School: \$80.00 per classroom \$65.00 each additional class
Field Trip: \$7.00 per student (18-minimum)
Available: Year-Round
Special Requirements: None



Kindergarten through Second Grade Program Offerings

BugFest[^]



Insects are a fascinating and diverse class of animals. Students will rotate through four stations where they will learn about identifying characteristics of insects, pollinators, the habitats where insects are found, and life cycles of insects.

*Notes: This program is only offered seasonally May 1 through October 15 each year.
BugFest in-school programs are 2-hours in length.*

Next Generation Science Standard: 1-LS3-1. Make observations to construct an evidence-based account that young plants and animals are like, but not exactly like, their parents.

Diversity of Life—Plants & Animals

Habitats provide resources and adequate space for plants and animals to survive. Students will learn about different habitats found in Illinois, and work together to compare wildlife found in different habitats.

Next Generation Science Standard: 2-LS4-1. Make observations to collect data which can be used to make comparisons of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.



Seed Dispersal[^]

Students will examine native plant adaptations for seed dispersal, including an introduction to “zoochory” where animals are actively involved with seed dispersal.

Next Generation Science Standard: 2-LS2-2. Develop a simple model that mimics the function of an animal dispersing seeds or pollinating plants.



Biomimicry

Humans adapt to their environments by drawing inspiration, ideas, concepts, and inventions from nature. Students will participate in hands-on activities that highlight the concept of “biomimicry” and how our inventions often have roots in nature.

Next Generation Science Standard: 1-LS1-1. Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow and meet their needs.



Program Reservation Information

Location: In-School or Field Trip

Duration: 1-hour per classroom
2-hours per field trip

In-School: \$80.00 per classroom
\$65.00 each additional class

Field Trip: \$7.00 per student (18-minimum)

Available: Year-Round

Special Requirements: Large indoor space or outdoor area (^)



Third through Fifth Grade Program Offerings



Animal Adaptations- Bird Beaks

Bird beaks provide clues for what a bird can and cannot eat. Students will learn about a variety of native birds and participate in an activity that challenges them to decide what each species can successfully eat in order to survive.

Next Generation Science Standard: 3-LS4-2. Use evidence to construct an explanation for how the variations in characteristics among individuals of the same species may provide advantages in surviving, finding mates, and reproducing.

Teeth! Carnivores, Omnivores and Herbivores

Students will participate in hands-on stations to explore the teeth of a variety of animals to learn about how different dentition adaptations allow different species to survive.

Next Generation Science Standard: 3-LS4-3. Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.



Fossils of Illinois

The flat topography of Illinois underlies a storied geologic history. Our fossil record reveals ancient swamps and oceans, providing clues to profound environmental changes over time. Students will learn about the creatures that once thrived in their own backyards by exploring local fossils.

Next Generation Science Standard: 4-ESS1-1. Identify evidence from patterns in rock formations and fossils in rock layers to support an explanation for changes in a landscape over time.

Program Reservation Information

Location: In-School or Field Trip

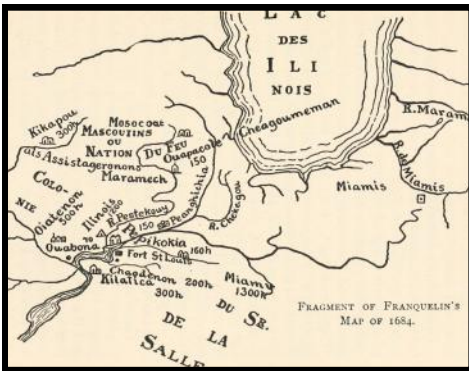
Duration: 1-hour per classroom
2-hours per field trip

In-School: \$80.00 per classroom
\$65.00 each additional class

Field Trip: \$7.00 per student (18-minimum)

Available: Year-Round

Third through Fifth Grade Program Offerings



Native Americans (In-School / Field Trip Offered Year Round)
Native Americans arrived and thrived in Kendall County thousands of years prior to European contact. As the climate changed, these early peoples adapted and flourished taking advantage of the abundant natural resources found in our woodlands, prairies, and wetlands. Students will participate in four stations to connect with cultural pathways and traditions, visit a recreated Potawatomi camp, practice fire and tool making, play skill-building games, and explore available resources found within local ecosystems.

Next Generation Science Standards—Disciplinary Core Ideas

ESS3.A: Natural Resources: Energy and fuels that humans use are derived from natural sources, and their use affects the environment in multiple ways. Some resources are renewable over time, and others are not.

4-ESS3-1 Crosscutting Concepts: Over time, people’s needs and wants change, as do their demands for new and improved technologies.

Ecology and Ecosystems of Illinois*

Illinois ecosystems are unique and diverse. Students will visit four stations including pond, prairie, and forest habitats. Students will explore the flow of energy between producers, consumers, and decomposers by exploring local species and their interconnections in nature.



Next Generation Science Standard: 5-LS2-1. Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.



Wetlands Study

Wetlands form the foundation of our nation’s water resources, vital to the health of waterways and communities. Students will explore the types of wetlands, wetlands reduce flooding and how wetland organisms provide indicators for pollution of nearby rivers and lakes.

Next Generation Science Standard:

5-LS2-1.

Develop a model to

describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.

Next Generation Science Standard: 5-ESS3-1. Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth’s resources and environment.

Program Reservation Information

Location: In-School or Field Trip

Duration: 1-hour per classroom
2-hours per field trip (Wetlands)
3-hours per field trip

In-School: \$80.00 per classroom
\$65.00 each additional class

Field Trip: \$7.00 per student (18-minimum)

Available: In-School Year-Round
(*) Field Trip April through October

Kindergarten through Fifth Grade—Specialty Program Offering

Making Maple Magic

Maple sugaring is a time-honored tradition. This program takes place in late February through March, introducing early to late elementary students to tree structure and plant photosynthesis, the process for turning sap to syrup, and differences in production approaches from Native Americans to modern times.

Note: This program is only offered seasonally February 15 through March 15 each year.

ESS3.A: Natural Resources—Energy and fuels that humans use are derived from natural sources, and their use affects the environment in multiple ways. Some resources are renewable over time, and others are not.

PS3.D: Energy in Chemical Processes and Everyday Life—The energy released [from] food was once energy from the sun that was captured by plants in the chemical process that forms plant matter (from air and water).



Program Reservation Information
Location: Field Trip
Duration: 1-hour per classroom
Field Trip: \$7.00 per student (18-minimum)
Available: February 15 through March 15

Middle through High School Programs



Wetlands Program

Wetlands are part of the foundation of our nation's water resources and are vital to the health of waterways and downstream communities. Through hands-on activities at Harris Forest Preserve students will participate in activities where they will learn that wetlands provide habitat for animals, help with flood control, and how wetland organisms provide indicators for pollution of nearby rivers and lakes. Students will learn how the health of the pond ecosystem interacts with the balance of nearby habitats while going on an interactive hike through the woods.

MS-LS 2: Collect data to analyze and interpret data. Use data and observations to develop models to increase understanding of the cycling of matter and energy flow in ecosystems. Look at abiotic and biotic factors and evaluate designs for maintaining biodiversity.

MS-LS 4: Increase understanding of the common ancestry of organisms and the diversity of organisms. Observe effects of natural selection and development of adaptations. Observe genetic variation to make sense of organisms surviving and reproducing.

HS-LS2-6 Evaluate the claims, evidence, and reasoning that the complex interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent numbers and types of organisms in stable conditions, but changing conditions may result in a new ecosystem.

HS-LS2-7 Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity.

Natural Areas Management Immersion

This program engages middle school and high school students within authentic habitat management projects. The program includes overarching concepts and field experiences introducing students to the rich natural, geologic, and cultural histories of Kendall County, while participating within landscape-scale habitat restoration initiatives.

LS4.D. Humans depend on the living world for the resources and other benefits provided by biodiversity. But human activity is also having adverse impacts on biodiversity through overpopulation, over exploitation, habitat destruction, pollution, introduction of invasive species, and climate change. Thus sustaining biodiversity so the ecosystem functioning and productivity are maintained is essential to supporting and enhancing life on Earth. Sustaining biodiversity also aids humanity by preserving landscapes of recreational or inspirational value.



Program Reservation Information
Location: Field Trip
Duration: 2-3 hours per field trip
Field Trip: \$10.00 per student (18-minimum)
Available: Year-Round

Special Requests

Kendall County Forest Preserve District works with individual teachers, grade levels and school districts to custom design teacher workshops, in-school programs, and field trip experiences.

Contact us today if there's a specific topic, or curricular goals you'd like addressed.



Extend your field trip experience with an hour of free play time.

- Utilizing a pavilion & picnic tables
- Use an open grassy area & sled hill.

Please ask for more details, when reserving your field trip.



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<https://www.facebook.com/KendallCountyForests/>