

## **Willson Outdoor Center Outdoor Education Curriculum Summary**

The curriculum is the core of the student's experience at the Center. The classes chosen can provide students with a sampling of all academic areas or a concentration on specific areas. Many classes can be taught throughout the year, although some classes are best taught in a particular season. We hope that the program will be able to meet the curriculum guidelines of your school and provide the students with a fun and challenging program.

We have divided the classes into unit topics for you to choose from:

### **CRITTERS ABOUND**

**Pond Probe:** Students discuss aquatic food chains and characteristics of aquatic life. They then go to the lake, collect microscopic organisms, and identify them under microscopes. (Great all seasons and highly self-discovery oriented.)

**Fishing:** Especially great for overnight groups who do not have enough time for everyone to fish during recreation. Students will go to Lake Mac-O-Chee with fishing pole in hand to see if they can catch their trophy fish. We encourage students *not* to bring their own fishing equipment as it often gets broken. (One hour, Fall (Sept to mid-Oct), Spring (Mid-April to June)) May also be offered to 12 children at a time during recreation, weather permitting.

**Invent an Animal:** Class begins with a discussion of animals and their unique adaptations which enables them to live in specialized environments. The students will be given paper and crayons and asked to create an organism that will be able to adapt to a fictitious environment as described by the instructor. All creations and their different adaptations will be shared with the class.

**Habitat Hunt:** Students will discuss Ohio animals, their adaptations and then explore the different habitats camp has to offer.

**Reptiles and Amphibians:** Using collected live specimens of frogs, snakes, turtles, salamanders, and toads, students learn the differences and similarities between the local reptiles and amphibians. Students will learn the proper handling and care of these animals. (All seasons - indoors).

**Winter Birds:** Using study skins and discussion, students will better understand the characteristics of birds and features that make them unique. The students then try to identify the common birds of the season at the bird feeders through the "window on wildlife". (November-March)

**Horse Sense:** Students discuss the physical and mental capacities of the horse, as well as pet, groom, guide and practice how to mount and dismount the horse. This is not the trail ride, which is available for an additional charge. (All seasons) (horseback riding release form not required.)

**Horseback Ride:** This is a highlight for many students where they mount and go on a one hour, single-file, instructor-led trail ride. Two/three staff supervise each ride and helmets are provided. There is an additional cost for this class. (See Director, all seasons) (horseback riding release form is required for all adults and students.)

## THE GOOD EARTH

**Ecosystems:** Through games and activities, students learn or reinforce the concepts of food chains and webs, the balance of nature, life cycle and other environmental concepts. (All seasons, inside)

**Mac-O-Chee Manor:** Give students the opportunity for some in-depth decision making about land use through role playing. Taking on the roles of various people and animals of the community, students determine the future land use of Camp Willson. (All seasons, inside)

**Edible Plants:** Hiking around the Center, students learn and taste some local edible plants. Poisonous plants will also be discussed. These edibles can be related to the early Ohio settlers, and how they were used. Depending on the length of time, teas may also be brewed. (Early Fall, Spring)

**Tree Encounter:** Students learn to identify deciduous trees using leaves, and a simple key while trying to solve a mystery. (Early Fall, late Spring, 5th grade and up)

**Twig-O-Mania:** Using only buds and branches, students will identify trees without their leaves, while trying to solve a mystery. (Late Fall, Winter) (5th grade and up)

**Recycling:** Students will examine ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. We'll take a look at household items that are recyclable as well as what resources are renewable. Students will learn how to properly dispose of waste items and other hands-on activities to reinforce the wise use of our good earth. (indoors, all seasons)

**Down on the Farm:** Students will have a hands-on experience with Willson's farm animals, which include a pig, goat, sheep, chickens and rabbits. Students will also explore their care and feeding as well as products derived from them.

**Wild, Wild Weather:** Students will learn basic weather concepts through activities and experiments. Basic terminology and weather elements will be discussed, and ideas will be reinforced through hands-on experiences. (All seasons)

## A WALK BACK IN TIME

**Early American Crafts Fair:** Students learn some of the crafts and skills that the pioneers used in every day life such as candles, soap, butter making, spinning and much more. All crafts made are for the students to keep. Schools may bring their own supplies or purchase supplies (\$40 fee) from the Center. (Two hours - all seasons)

**Shawnee Celebration:** A one or two-hour class that focuses on the ways of the Shawnee Indians of the 1700's. The students will participate in some of the games, trapping, and sign language of the Shawnee Indians who lived in the Bellefontaine area. In the two hour class or as an evening program, students will then recreate the Treaty of Greenville (1795), through role playing. (All seasons)

**Pioneer Tools:** Using the authentic tools of the 1800's, students will learn about the construction of a log cabin and make projects such as a milk stool, candle holder, mallet or other items. All completed projects are student's to take home. This class will give students a better understanding of the hardships of the frontier. (All seasons)

**Pioneer Living:** Visit the resident of our 1800's log cabin. Students learn first hand about everyday life on the frontier by interacting with an historical figure through first person role playing. (one hour, best for class sizes of 15 and under)

**Living History:** Go back in time to the early 1800's and meet residents of the Lake Mac-O-Chee area at their wigwam, log cabin, trapping area or other locations using role playing. (two hours)

## SKILL AND CHALLENGE

**The Beast:** Working on communication skills, a group of four or five must build a “beast” by telling one another how it is built. This is similar to the game "telephone" or "gossip", with the message to be passed relating to the building of the Beast. (All Seasons - good evening program also - inside)

**Dream Team:** Promoting the skills of cooperation and communication students will complete a variety of initiatives/challenges. This class will encourage the students to reason and depend on one another to solve mutual goals. An all time favorite. (Outside, All seasons, one or two hours)

**Survival:** Students discuss and practice survival techniques such as fire building, shelter building, and signaling. This can be a two hour class by incorporating orienteering skills to take students from one site to another. (All seasons, one or two hours)

**Orienteering:** The students learn the basics of map and compass work and then go on a simple course to check their skills. (A favorite! All Seasons)

**Outdoor Cooking:** In this one hour class, students will learn to build a fire, cook and eat cinnamon apples, and other delights. (Inside or out, weather dependent; all seasons)

**Mission Impossible:** Using large tinker toys and a diagram, the students will work together to build a nearly “impossible” structure. It is truly possible with teamwork and cooperation. (Inside, all seasons)

**Climbing Wall:** With helmet and safety harness, students are belayed in their 25' climb to the top of the wall. Teamwork, challenge by choice and encouragement by their classmates is paramount to the success of each student. Only for those groups attending 3 days and longer between March 1 and December 1. (Outside, temperature dependent)

## THE SENSORY EXPERIENCE

**Enchanted Forest:** Using the senses of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell, students learn the importance of each. The class culminates with a blindfold hike where students hold onto a rope and enter the “Enchanted Forest” to heighten the use of all their senses. (All Seasons)

**Tremendous:** Using the tree, we will explore our senses of hearing, taste, touch and smell. (Fall, Spring, best with primary grades).

## AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

Each afternoon, Willson staff offer a wide variety of recreational activities. Indoor, outdoor, active and passive activities will be offered. **Teachers and cabin leaders will have a meeting at this time.** The students will choose the activity they wish to participate. Some of these activities could include:

Hike around the Lake	Sports Field	Charades
Arts and Crafts	Capture the Flag	Fishing
Horse Grooming	Reptiles & Amphibians	Group Games
Broomball	Visit the Farm Animals	Minute Mysteries
Hikes (critters, tracking etc)	Outdoor Cooking	Photography Hike
Tobogganing	and much more...	

## EVENING PROGRAMS

You may select two activities per night, depending on the length of each activity. A snack is provided each evening.

**Campfire:** An all-time favorite of singing, skits and storytelling around the campfire. (Inside or out, depending on the weather)

**Dutch Auction:** An action-packed event where students develop/fabricate various items to receive points for their team. You have to see it to believe it. Much cooperation is needed and developed. (Indoor scavenger hunt)

**New Games:** Non-competitive, group cooperative games, both active and passive, outdoors. (Daylight savings time only)

**Outdoor Relay Races:** Cabin against cabin relay races to build cabin unity and get students active! (Daylight savings time only)

**Night Hikes by Study Groups:** Students explore the world after dark with stargazing, hiking and games. (Eastern standard time only)

**Bag Skits:** Give your students the chance to perform! Using props provided, each study or cabin group will create a 3-5 minute skit to perform in front of an audience of their peers. (All seasons)

**Ecodramas:** Short skits where students must act out basic ecological concepts. Others students will guess what concept they are acting out.

**The Beast:** See class listing. (All seasons)

**Earth Defenders:** Students have the chance to learn about our role as stewards of the Earth in a fun, outdoor activity. Different characters (staff) will interact with them as they go about collecting "Energy Orbs" to save our planet. (Daylight savings time only)

**Indian Medicine Hunt:** A scavenger hunt where students must use their creativity to find items that will help keep their dying chief alive. (Daylight savings time only)

**Treaty of Greenville:** Using role playing, the students return to 1795 to meet with General Anthony Wayne to determine whether to sell their land to the Americans or keep it and possibly go to war. A quiet, candlelight, indoor activity. (5th grade and up)

**Square Dance:** A true Camp Willson experience! Students learn traditional dances like the "Virginia Reel" from one of our staff callers, while being accompanied by some great dancin' tunes.

**Alpha Beta:** An activity where cultural diversity is explored. Students are divided into 2 groups (Alphas & Betas) and through the exchange of "ambassadors" learn of each other's society.

**Balderdash (Liar's Club):** Students are shown a variety of *strange* items and told even stranger stories for each one. They must then decide who is telling the truth.

**Where's Waldo:** A fun, active game where students team up to find all the clues about the identity of "Waldo" while running from the laugh-crazy "Odlaws". (Outdoors, Daylight savings time only)