

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

VIEWPOINT Each student has a different reaction to environmental education. Most students can be encouraged to enjoy outdoor living and to appreciate nature. A majority will be able to learn or apply skills that are appropriate for their grade level. A few of them will begin to fathom the range of natural processes and begin to understand the complexity of social and technical solutions to environmental problems. A rare student will discover career-related interests.

Everyone makes decisions about using the environment. We hope that students that have been to FIELDGUIDES will make those decisions as people who care about the natural world.

METHOD As tools for learning we use; immersion in the out-of-doors, nature games, hands on study, exposure to scientific methodology, and social interchange. Names and facts can be interesting, but concepts are more useful.

CURRICULUM The following list of topics and activities forms the basis of our teaching. Sites, length of program, and the interests of classroom teachers and our group leaders vary, and so, each group of students is exposed to different items on the following list.

Outdoor Living

basic camping
outdoor use ethics
safety
trail skills
fear of darkness

California History

California Gold Rush
 placer and hydraulic mining
 Sierra Nevada Geology
 Living history-lifestyles
 Historic people and places
 Women in the Gold Rush
Native Americans of California

Characteristics of Living Things

energy gathering & energy flow
water use
reproduction
respiration
shelter/protection
elimination of wastes
responses to the environment
death

Ecology

adaptation
natural selection
niches/habitats/ecosystems
communities (pygmy forest, tide pools, coastal strand, marsh, riparian, forest, and grassland)
cycles (water and nutrients)
energy vs. entropy
competition
energy/food webs
succession
associations/interdependence
tidal zones
diversity
change over time

Botany

physical characteristics/adaptations
photosynthesis
taxonomy
plant lore & Native American usage

Geology and Earth Sciences

plate tectonics
glacial cycles
soil composition
acid soils and nitrogen depletion
micro climates
tides
wave dynamics

Conservation

land management and current issues
population dynamics & quality of life
resources and development

Astronomy

Earth and its atmosphere
time and size perspectives
stellar evolution
constellations and mythology

Zoology

tide pool animals & their adaptations
misc. info. on birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians and fish
nighttime habits & adaptations

Social/Interpretative/Communication Skills

mapping
measuring & estimating
identifying trees and tide pool animals
using dichotomous keys
comparative studies of different communities
use of soil/water test kits
cooperative games, chores, & presentations
roll playing and debate
campfire entertaining