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

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