

# Understanding Nature Through Outdoor Experience

Many of our students grow up away from nature and lack outdoor educational experiences. As communities spread, the amount of “wilderness” available decreases. Camp Tecumseh provides hands-on educational experiences that augment classroom learning with authentic opportunities. In addition, we seek to expose students to the impact of humans on nature with realistic scenarios involving water management and biodiversity.

Thinking and informed people can make environmentally informed decisions. We believe that the best way to inform students about nature is for them to be engaged in realistic learning opportunities in the field.

Outdoor experience is not limited to the science curriculum. Therefore, the Camp Tecumseh experience is an interdisciplinary approach involving language arts, mathematics, the practical arts, physical education, and social studies.

Environmental education is a style of teaching. It is not a collection of facts or concepts related only to science or social studies. It is a system of involving students in learning situations that will help them think reasonably and practically about their environment. One way to accomplish this is to encourage the students to become involved in the real life problems of nature.

The settings for our project will be two completely different environments. The classroom setting of Fishers Junior High School will function as our home base where students will study material that is best taught in a school. The Tecumseh YMCA Camp will serve as a living lab setting where the students will be able to experience first hand the obstacles encountered when humans and the environment interact.

# Outdoor Education Curriculum

Tecumseh includes a wide variety of learning activities. Students will conduct experiments, make observations, draw conclusions, and write as part of the Tecumseh experience. All assignments are whole group facilitated by high school counselors, though some assignments require individual observation and reflection. The following are the lessons taught by academic discipline.

## ***SCIENCE***

- Students will study physical animal adaptations on the camp mini-farm.
- Camp has three unique biomes and all will be studied and observed using a variety of science and math skills.
- While canoeing they will take lake water samples and observe the various organisms under the microscopes in the Tecumseh Nature Center.
- During hikes on the nature trail, students will constantly be conducting a visual scavenger hunt. This activity will force the students to be observant and get to know the environment around them.
- All study groups will also spend time examining the various layers of ground cover as well as the plant and animal life in the area. A basic soil analysis will be done.
- Students will study macroinvertebrates by sifting through the top layer of the creekbeds around camp.

## ***MATH***

- Students will learn to measure distances by pacing. This activity is designed to teach how practical math can be used in everyday life. This skill will come in handy while geocaching.
- Study groups solve a "timber cruising" problem that involves determining what trees should be cut and which trees should be left alone. This is a math activity using a Biltmore stick to measure various tree diameters to determine a tree's sawlogs. This activity builds on the pacing lesson and is tied into the biodiversity study.
- Practical math and teamwork are needed when the students calculate the rate of flow of a local stream and the amount of water that can be obtained from that stream. Students will learn how much water is needed to support a community.
- Weather observations will be made over the course of stay at camp. Students will graph observation data in order to make a weather forecast and will also use the information to predict the flight of their hot air balloons.

## ***LANGUAGE ARTS***

- Students will keep an educational journal and complete creative writing assignments while at camp.
- Science vocabulary will also be presented while at camp.

## ***SOCIAL STUDIES***

- Compass readings will be employed to increase awareness of physical and geographic features that could help or hinder an early explorer.
- Study groups will be given a handheld GPS that they will use, along with their compass and pacing skills, to do some basic geocaching.
- Students will also receive a brief history of Tecumseh himself.

## ***ART***

Study groups will work together to construct a hot air balloon made from tissue paper, glue, and string. The counselor will lead the group in the construction of the balloon. Teachers and parents will fill the balloons with hot air and launch them into the sky. This is a highlight activity for parents, teachers, and students.

## ***BASIC CANOEING***

The Camp Tecumseh staff will give all students a forty-minute course in basic canoeing and boating safety. Proper canoeing techniques will be demonstrated by the camp staff and practiced on the camp lake. All students must wear a flotation device and canoeing safety rules are taught and enforced.

## ***MT. WOOD***

Students will be given instruction in tower climbing that challenges them to trust themselves and the instructor. The Camp Tecumseh staff will demonstrate instruction of proper safety gear and climbing techniques. While the climbing is not required, all students are encouraged to participate.

## ***THE BLACK HOLE***

All students will be given an opportunity to slide down a tube that challenges them to trust their senses and their instructor while they are unable to visually detect the end of the slide. The camp staff will demonstrate the proper technique to use the slide. Like the balloons, this activity ties to a math lesson because students will calculate their velocity after several practice runs.

# Teachers and Staff

The Fishers Junior High teachers and staff have devoted many hours and a great deal of effort to make Camp Tecumseh a successful and memorable experience for our students. Co-directors Mike Fassold, Tony Sturgeon, and Maureen Randall will attend camp both sessions. Many other teachers and staff attend one of the sessions.

Mrs. Crystal Thorpe, principal, and Mr. Tige Butts, assistant principal, will each attend one of the two sessions to help supervise student activities. In addition, our school nurse, and another district nurse, will serve as our camp nurses.

Approximately ninety high school seniors, juniors, and sophomores will serve as counselors. These students are an absolute necessity in assuring the success of our program. The students have undergone an extensive interview process and have been hand picked by the program directors. They also have taken a four-week course of study in outdoor education. The high school counselors represent the very best of today's youth.

## Cabin Facilities and Meals

Though not a part of Hilton Hotel chain, the cabin and facilities at Camp Tecumseh should be quite comfortable. Each half of a double log cabin contains bunk beds for ten or more students, one or more counselors, and one parent. Restroom and shower facilities are located inside each cabin. All cabins are heated.

Other buildings at camp include a craft center, a trading post, several log cabins, a covered picnic area, an outdoor amphitheater, a nature center, and a huge dining hall and kitchen.

All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) will be provided by the camp personnel and will be of the same high quality of those served at school. Students attending the first session will not be served lunch on Monday to enable the cooks to prepare the kitchen for the remaining meals, thus students must bring a SACK LUNCH for Monday's lunch. Students attending the second session will not be served lunch on Wednesday, thus they must bring a SACK LUNCH for Wednesday's lunch.

# **Supervision**

As a result of the group structure, all students will be under constant supervision. High school students, teachers, or parents will be with the students at all times during the day. During evening activities, the entire group will be together under the supervision of all teachers, counselors, and parents. In the cabins, one parent and one or two high school students will be staying with approximately eleven students.

## **Class Structure**

Students are divided into small groups of five to six students. Each group will be assigned to a counselor (high school instructor) who will supervise the group's activities. A packet including assignments, activities, pencil, and paper will be given to each student. Each group leader will be given the necessary equipment and identification guides to complete all assignments and activities.

In order to encourage group interaction and student input the entire group will decide in which order assignments will be completed. The directors will predetermine group assignments to scheduled activities (canoeing, Black Hole, Mt. Wood). All other activities are completed in any order.

Group counselors are instructional “advisors”. All students will be encouraged to learn by investigation rather than by memorizing facts given by the group leader.

All assignments from the packet must be completed in the three-day period. Assignments will be collected at camp. After being graded, the material will be part of the student’s fourth nine weeks grade in each associated discipline. The number of assignments given should keep the students quite busy.

# **Basic Rules**

**The school dress code is in effect!**

1. All Fishers Junior High and Camp Tecumseh rules apply while at camp.
2. Boundaries will be set upon arrival at camp.
3. Hours for reporting to cabins, lights out, and wake up are set and enforced by the camp directors.

**Any student failing to follow the rules will have his or her parent contacted to come to the Camp Tecumseh and take the student home.**

## ***Students Unable to Attend***

Students unable to attend Camp Tecumseh will receive an individual assignment that involves the exploration of a science-based problem. Students will create a project to be turned in to their teachers at the end of their team's camp session. We encourage all students able to attend to do so, as the interaction between students, counselors, staff, and teachers will be the most valuable part of the experience.

# Cost

The cost for six meals, two nights lodging, bus transportation and educational supplies will be \$130.00. Please send a check for this amount to the junior high by **March 28, 2012** (Thursday). Please make checks payable to “Fishers Junior High School.”

## What to Bring

All students should bring the following to camp:

Chk	Number	Description
	1	Bedroll (sleeping back or warm blankets)
	1	Pillow
	1	Sack lunch - Monday (session I) or Wednesday (session II)
	3 days	Underclothing
	3 days	OLD clothing
	1 pair	Comfortable hiking shoes (no flip-flops, sandals, etc.)
	1	Sweatshirt or jacket
	1	Towel and washcloth
	1	Toothbrush and toothpaste
	1 set	Soap and shampoo
	1 set	Rain gear (raincoat/pancho, but no umbrellas)
	1	Hat for rain, sun, or cold
	1	Water Bottle
	1	Sun Screen

The following is a list of optional supplies:

		Insect repellent
		Camera (we recommend disposable, not an expensive digital one)
		Binoculars
		Money for trading post purchases

# Do Not Bring!

**Leave the following items at home:**

- Handheld games (PSP, DS, etc)
- Soft drinks
- *Excessive* snack food
- Knives

**We suggest you do not bring:**

- MP3 players (one gets lost or stolen every year)
- Cell phones (you will get no service down in the valley at camp)
- The above two items have to be kept in your cabin at all times while at camp. There is no way of locking these cabins. It is silly to risk having these items lost or stolen, just so you can have them on the bus.
- FJH and Camp Tecumseh are not responsible for these items if a student chooses to bring them against our suggestions.

Let it not be said

And to your shame

That all was beauty here

Until you came





# Schedule

<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>FIRST DAY</b>
8:15	Arrive at school - report to cafeteria
9:00 - 11:15	Bus ride
11:15 - 12:00	Arrive at camp, unload bus, eat lunch
12:00 - 12:30	Announcements, organize into groups at flagpole
12:30 - 4:30	Work on activities in small groups
4:30 - 5:30	Meet at flagpole- sports and recreation
5:30 - 7:00	Dinner and announcements
7:00 - 9:00	Olympics/balloons in dining hall or square dance in art center
9:00 - 10:00	Stories
10:00 - 10:30	Wash up in cabins
10:30	In bed
11:00	Lights out and quiet
<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>SECOND DAY</b>
7:00	Wake up
8:00 - 9:00	Breakfast and announcements
9:00 - 12:00	Work on activities in small groups
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch and announcements
1:00 - 2:00	Meet at flagpole- sports and recreation
2:00 - 5:25	Work on activities in small groups
5:25 - 7:00	Dinner and announcements
7:00 - 9:00	Olympics/balloons in dining hall or square dance in art center
9:00 - 10:00	Teacher and counselor skits in art center
10:00 - 10:30	Wash up in cabins
10:30	In bed
11:00	Lights out and quiet
<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>THIRD DAY</b>
6:30	Wake up, pack, and clean cabins
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast and announcements
8:30 - 11:00	Work on activities in small groups
11:00 - 12:00	Lunch and announcements
12:00 - 12:15	Counselors load buses
12:15	Leave for school
12:15 - 2:15	Bus ride
2:15	Arrive at school

**PARENTS PLEASE PICK UP  
YOUR STUDENT AT 2:15 P.M.**