

# Wood Lake Nature Center

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6710 Lake Shore Drive  
Richfield, MN 55423

[www.woodlakenaturecenter.org](http://www.woodlakenaturecenter.org)

Wood Lake Nature Center is a 150-acre park operated by the City of Richfield. Walking trails wind through the forest, marsh, and prairie, and across a floating boardwalk over the marsh. The trails are either blacktop or crushed limestone and most are wheelchair accessible during summer months.

Professionally-trained naturalists lead programs year-round, available for children and adults of all abilities (ages 4 and up). Classes are usually 1½ hours in length and have a naturalist/participant ratio of 1:15. Please call several months in advance to schedule a trip. There is no charge for parking.

**Fees:** \$4.00 per participant (\$40 minimum per group)  
(School Groups: \$3 per student with a \$40 minimum)

Additional fee for snowshoe and cross-country ski rental and taxidermy supplies

Classes are listed in order of topic, with seasonal availability and recommended grade levels. Most programs can be adapted to fit all ages, but the grade levels listed below are the staff's recommendations.

## **Animal Camouflage** (All Seasons) **PreK-2nd**

Investigate how animals hide with a 'hide and seek' hike to find hidden animals. End the class with a look at the camouflage on a live snake.

## **Apple Cidering** (Fall) **PreK-5th**

Using an old-fashioned cider press, make apple cider and learn about the natural and cultural history of apples. Enjoy a fall hike, time allowing.

## **Animal Homes & Habitats** (All Seasons) **PreK-5<sup>th</sup>**

Learn how animals' size and adaptations define their shelters. Hike to survey different animal homes in their habitats.

## **Animal and Plant Adaptations** (All Seasons) **3-5th**

Discover how adaptations aid in animal survival with a scavenger hunt, adaptation activity, and a look at live animals.

## **Animal Tracks** (All Seasons) **PreK-5th**

Study track identification basics and hike to search for and identify tracks of resident animals. Make plaster casts of animal prints to take home.

## **Animals in Winter** (Winter) **PreK-2<sup>nd</sup>**

Discover how animals adapt to the harshest time of year. Students observe animal furs, hike outside to find animal shelters and food sources, and meet a live turtle.

## **Bees & Honey** (Spring, Summer, Fall) **PreK-5<sup>th</sup>**

Collect insects and learn about the bees' hive and life cycle. Finish the program with a sample of Wood Lake honey.

## **Birds Around Us** (All Seasons) **PreK-8th**

Look at birds' amazing adaptations for survival in various habitats. Study real bird parts, learn bird behavior and identification skills, and see what kind of birds can be seen at Wood Lake Nature Center. (Lesson adapted for age groups)

## **Cold-Blooded Critters** (Spring, Summer, Fall) **1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>**

Learn the attributes of animals with no fur or feathers, observe live specimens in their habitats, and participate in a 'hands-on' visit with some live cold-blooded critters.

## **Critter Walk** (All Seasons) **PreK-2<sup>nd</sup>**

From trees to bees and everything in between, explore Wood Lake to observe and learn about nature's critters and their habitats.

## **Cross-Country Skiing** (Winter) **5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

Learn the basics of cross-country skiing with an indoor demonstration followed by practice outdoors. Snow conditions permitting. Additional ski rental cost: \$4 per participant under 16 years old, \$8 per participant 16 or older.

**Dead or Alive** (Spring, Summer, Fall) 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>

Observe characteristics of living, dead, and inanimate (never alive) things and learn the difference between the three. Sort objects into the three categories and go on a hike to identify how all three things fit into nature's cycle of life.

**Endangered Species** (All Seasons) 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Discover the major causes of why animals become endangered due to habitat loss, human impact, and climate change. Understand how humans can help these animals from becoming endangered. Then go on a hike to learn about animals and their need in the habitats around Wood Lake.

**Flight** (Spring, Summer, Fall) 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Discuss and see examples of the four types of flight and go outside to experiment with boomerangs and water rockets.

**Food Web** (All Seasons) 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Observe the interdependency of all living things and how energy moves through the food chain with an interactive game and a hike.

**Human Impacts on Earth's Resources** 6-8<sup>th</sup>

Identify the many ways that humans impact earth's natural resources such as energy, material, renewable and nonrenewable resources. Learn the key elements of conservation and sustainability to protect biodiversity.

**Insect Study** (Spring, Summer, Fall) 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Using sweep nets and magnifying 'bug boxes' to find and observe insects and other invertebrates in the prairie and forest. Use classification key to understand the unique adaptations of these mini beasts. (Lessons adapted for age groups)

**Invasive Species** (Fall) 6-8<sup>th</sup>

Learn what an invasive species is and how they decrease biodiversity in an ecosystem. Help us restore our native species at Wood Lake through a service project by safely removing Buckthorn trees from our forest.

**Life Cycles** (All Seasons) 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>

Review the life cycles of plants and various animals such as amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and insects through a fun puppet show. Hike outside to discover the different stages of the life cycle through a life cycle bingo game.

**Light and Energy** (All Seasons) 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Observe properties of light and energy through hands-on experimentation and a fun game to test vocabulary knowledge.

**Maple Syruping** (Winter) PreK-8<sup>th</sup>

Learn about the natural and cultural history of maple syruping. Identify and tap maple trees, collect sap, and turn syrup into a maple sugar treat. (Lessons adapted for age group)

**Marsh Explorers** (Spring, Summer, Fall) PreK-8<sup>th</sup>

Discover the incredible variety of animals, insects, and plants that live in the marsh. Dip into the marsh with a collection cup to explore the hidden depths of this diverse wetland. (Lessons adapted for age group. Older students will examine caught specimens under microscopes).

**Migration and Hibernation** (Fall, Winter) 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Identify the ways animals (including humans) adapt for winter. Hike to find signs of animal activity and play a migration game to learn about the importance of habitat for migrating animals.

**Muskrat Safari** (Winter) 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>

Learn about adaptations of aquatic and land mammals. Go out to the marsh to search for muskrat lodges and get a glimpse of life under the ice.

**Native American Life** (All Seasons) 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Experience what life may have been like for Native Americans in North America prior to European settlement. Cook stick bread over a fire, use bone tools, play battledoor, and learn about the plants and animals used for their survival.

**Nature's Needs** (Spring, Summer, Fall) PreK-2<sup>nd</sup>

Identify the things both animals and plants need to survive, listen to a story, and then explore Wood Lake's forest and prairie. End the class with a visit from a live salamander.

**Predator/Prey** (All Seasons) 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Compare the adaptations of predators and prey by looking at skulls of herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores. Play a game to simulate predator/prey relationships and watch a video of predators in action. (Lesson adapted for age group).

**Snowshoeing** (Winter) 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Experience the joy of walking on top of snow, conditions permitting. Additional snowshoe rental cost: \$1 per participant.

**Soil, Rocks, & Minerals** (Spring, Summer, Fall) 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Learn the difference between igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks and compare their characteristics. Discover how they turn into a key component of soil and explore soil's other ingredients. (Lesson adapted for age group).

**Survival Shelters** (All Seasons) 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Learn about the basics of survival and then test survival skills by making a shelter out of natural materials.

**Trees, Leaves, and Seeds** (Spring, Summer, Fall) 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>

Discover how plants grow and learn about their leaves and seeds. Collect seeds to find out how plants are able to spread out without being able to move.

**Water Cycle** (All Seasons) 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Learn how water moves around the planet by becoming a water molecule and going on an incredible journey around the globe. Discuss how humans affect water supply and what actions we can take to protect our water close to home using a ground water model.

**Water Quality** (Spring, Summer, Fall) 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Test the quality of water at Wood Lake with testing kits and an up-close look at living water quality indicators.

**Weather** (All Seasons) 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

What is weather and where does it come from? You students will be able to answer these questions and learn to predict a weather forecast using thermometers, anemometers, compasses, and identify cloud types. (Lesson adapted to age group).

**Wild Edible Plants** (Spring, Summer, Fall) 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Discuss how to identify, collect, and prepare wild edible plants. Sample some of Wood Lake's wild edibles and prepare a simple wild edible recipe.

**Adults and groups with special needs:** All of Wood Lake's programs and classes are adaptable to meet the needs of the participants, including adults, seniors, people with disabilities, at-risk youth, or other special populations. Please call Wood Lake to discuss which program would be appropriate for your group and any special needs your group may have.