



# Program Planning Guide

A Complete Guide to Environmental Education  
Programs at Lacawac Sanctuary





## Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 3

K-12 Field Trips ..... 4

Special Needs Field Trips ..... 7

Program Add-Ons ..... 9

In-Classroom Programs ..... 11

Program Quick Guide ..... 13

Teacher Checklist ..... 14





## About Lacawac Sanctuary

Lacawac Sanctuary is a nonprofit nature preserve, environmental education center, and biological field station located in Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania along the shore of Lake Wallenpaupack. The sanctuary encompasses 550 acres of forests, wetlands, meadows, ponds, and a pristine glacial lake, providing diverse habitats for hands-on learning. Since 1966, Lacawac's mission of research, education, and preservation has inspired people of all ages to become stewards of the natural world.



## Environmental Education Programs

At Lacawac, we believe that the best learning happens through direct experience in nature. Our programs are designed to engage students of all ages and abilities in hands-on, inquiry-based activities that encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and problem solving while meeting academic standards. By exploring real ecosystems and conducting authentic investigations, students build environmental literacy and develop a deeper understanding of the natural world.

Through these experiences, we aim to inspire stewardship, foster a sense of responsibility for the environment, help students see the real-world relevance of STEM and ecological concepts, and envision themselves as future environmental leaders and innovators. Every program is designed to meet the needs of each group, ensuring an inclusive, engaging, and meaningful learning experience.

## Our Facilities

Lacawac offers a variety of spaces that support hands-on learning and exploration. Our Environmental Education Center includes interactive interpretive displays, indoor classrooms, and laboratory spaces for scientific investigation. Outdoors, students can learn in dedicated teaching areas, enjoy picnic spaces, and explore our nature play zone, creating a well-rounded and engaging field experience.

## Scheduling Your Program

Scheduling your program with Lacawac is easy! Start by exploring our selection of programs to find the experience that best fits your students' goals and needs. Once you've chosen a program, complete our Program Request Form to begin the scheduling process. We recommend scheduling your program in advance to ensure availability. Once we receive your form, our team will connect with you to confirm details, check availability, and support you every step of the way.



Access the Program Request Form by visiting [www.lacawac.org/education](http://www.lacawac.org/education) or by scanning the QR code.

**Scan Here**

## Contact

For any questions, concerns, assistance or more information regarding Lacawac's education programs, please contact us by emailing [education@lacawac.org](mailto:education@lacawac.org) or by calling **570-689-9494**.



## K-12 Field Trips at Lacawac

At Lacawac, our field trips offer students a fun and engaging nature-based learning experience where curiosity leads the way. Our programs combine environmental education and STEM concepts with exploration, giving students the chance to discover, investigate, and connect with the natural world. Led by our expert environmental educators, students of all backgrounds and abilities will engage with standards-aligned programs designed to meet educational goals. Students will explore Lacawac's 550-acre preserve, visiting diverse habitats including forests, wetlands, a pristine glacial lake, ponds, and on-site laboratories and classrooms, all while uncovering key environmental concepts along the way.



### Program Customization

Our field trips can be tailored to meet the specific needs and grade levels of your students. Contact us at [education@lacawac.org](mailto:education@lacawac.org) to discuss modifications and ensure the program is the right fit for your class.



### Field Trip Pricing

Lacawac's field trip prices are based on class sizes of 30 students, with an additional \$2 fee per student beyond this number (please note: teachers and chaperones attend free of charge). Program-specific prices can be found on the following pages alongside each field trip description.



### Discounts

- Schools scheduling more than 5 classes are eligible for a 10% discount on each additional class, provided they do not already have a scholarship in place.
- Schools scheduling an in-classroom program in addition to the field trip will receive a 50% discount on the in-classroom program price.

### Scholarships

Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation is committed to making environmental education accessible to all. We offer scholarships to help schools and groups participate in our field trips and programs. To learn more and apply, please contact us at [education@lacawac.org](mailto:education@lacawac.org).

## Weather & Cancellation Policies

As an outdoor education facility, Lacawac closely monitors weather conditions, with student safety being our top priority. Lacawac's programs run rain or shine; however, in the event of unsafe weather conditions, staff will determine if a program can safely operate and will notify schools of cancellations by 7:30 on the day of the program. In the event that a program is canceled due to weather, we will work with schools to reschedule within the same calendar year.

All other cancellations or rescheduling requests must be submitted in writing at least three weeks prior to the scheduled program date. Please note that Lacawac cannot provide refunds for canceled programs.

## Sense of Wonder

*Grades PreK-K | 2 Hours | \$125 per class of up to 30*

Students will use their senses to explore Lacawac's living classroom. Activities include looking for shapes and colors, listening to forest sounds, and feeling natural textures. This program nurtures curiosity and helps build an early appreciation for nature.

**PA Learning Standards for Early Childhood:** 3.3 PK.A.7, 3.2 PK.B.5, 4.1. PK.A, 4.2 PK.C

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## Life Cycles

*Grades K-1 | 2 Hours | \$125 per class of up to 30*

Students will explore the forest to observe how plants and animals change as they grow, looking for nymphs, larvae, seedlings, and other signs of different life stages while learning how the seasons shape these changes.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.K.A, 3.1.2.C, 3.1.3.A

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## Amazing Adaptations

*Grades 1-2 | 2 Hours | \$125 per class of up to 30*

Through hands-on activities, students will explore the traits animals use to survive in their habitats. They will learn how structure and movement help living things meet their needs and how nonliving elements influence survival. Students will play an interactive predator-prey game that highlights the importance of camouflage and other adaptations found in the forest.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.K.A, 3.1.2.C, 3.1.3.G

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## Nature Detectives

*Grades 2-3 | 2 Hours | \$125 per class of up to 30*

Students will search for clues to uncover the signs animals leave behind. This interactive excursion emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving as students collect and classify plants and animals based on their characteristics. Through inquiry and exploration, students will deepen their understanding of biodiversity and the habitat needs of different species.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.3.K.C, 3.1.3.F, 3.1.3.G

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## Watershed Connections

*Grades 4-8 | 3 Hours | \$175 per class of up to 30*

Using dips nets, students will collect and sort aquatic macroinvertebrates from a lentic ecosystem. During a lab station students identify organisms to determine water quality. A walk through the watershed will give students an opportunity to interact with wetlands and a forest ecosystem to determine how land use affects runoff, infiltration, and water quality. Students identify the boundaries of the Lacawac watershed using a topographic map. Data collected during the trip will be used to make conclusions about the role humans play in maintaining a healthy water supply.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.3.4.C, 3.4.6-8.C, 3.4.6-8.E

## Forest Ecology

*Grades 6-8 | 3 Hours | \$175 per class of up to 30*

Students will use a dichotomous key to identify trees in our woods. They will compare plant diversity inside and outside of a deer enclosure and use scientific methods to measure vegetation cover in the canopy and forest floor to determine the impact of deer populations. Through data collection and analysis, students will explore the relationship between deer populations, ground cover, and canopy structure, making predictions about how these factors influence forest ecology.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.6-8.I, 3.1.6-8.J, 3.1.6-8.L

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## Advanced Forest Ecology

*Grades 9-12 | 3 Hours | \$175 per class of up to 30*

Students will observe current scientific research being conducted in a terrestrial ecosystem. They will compare plant diversity inside and outside a deer enclosure and use scientific methods to measure vegetation cover in both the canopy and the forest floor to determine the impact of deer populations. Using statistical analysis of the data they collected, students will examine the relationships between deer populations, ground cover, and canopy structure, making predictions about how these factors influence the overall health of the forest.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.6-8.I, 3.1.6-8.J, 3.1.6-8.L, 3.1.9-12.I, 3.1.9-12.L

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## Advanced Water Ecology I

*Grades 9-12 | 3 Hours | \$175 per class of up to 30*

Students will use scientific equipment to collect aquatic samples from Lake Lacawac while on rowboats. They will work alongside one of Lacawac's lake scientists, who collaborates with international researchers, to analyze the collected data. Students will compare the biological and physical properties of Lake Lacawac and Heron Pond, exploring how different factors influence freshwater ecosystems. Throughout the program, the importance of STEM degrees and careers is emphasized, providing insight into real-world scientific research.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.6-8.I, 3.1.9-12.L, 3.4.6-8.E, 3.4.9-12.D

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## Advanced Water Ecology II: Making Connections Through Inquiry

*Grades 9-12 | 3 Hours | \$300 per class of up to 30*

The impacts of water quality on the aquatic ecosystem is explored through scientific literature and research currently being conducted on Lake Lacawac. Students analyze data and test water samples brought to the classroom. Students investigate chemical and sensor parameters, as well as biological parameters such as macroinvertebrates and plankton. All background information and equipment are supplied. Students are guided through the inquiry process to develop a question and design a field investigation. At Lacawac, student teams perform their investigation, analyze the collected data, and share their findings. Lacawac's PLEON lake scientist will present a lake ecology analysis and assist students in data analysis. This program consists of 2 classroom visits and a field trip to Lacawac Sanctuary.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.9-12.L, 3.4.9-12.D, 3.4.9-12.E

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## Special Needs Field Trips at Lacawac

Lacawac offers field trips for special needs groups designed to provide a welcoming, supportive, and accessible outdoor learning experience for students of all ages. Guided by skilled environmental educators, these programs are thoughtfully adapted to the unique needs, abilities, and goals of each group, ensuring every participant feels safe, included, and engaged.

Through purposeful interaction with nature, students enjoy hands-on learning, sensory-based exploration, and activities that encourage movement, curiosity, and confidence building. These experiences support fine and gross motor skill development while fostering meaningful connections with the natural world, helping each participant discover their strengths in a comfortable and empowering environment.

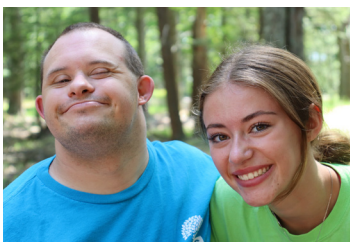
## Program Customization

Our field trips can be tailored to meet the specific needs and abilities of your students. Contact us at [education@lacawac.org](mailto:education@lacawac.org) to discuss modifications, adjustments, and accommodations, and to ensure the program is the right fit for your group.



## Field Trip Pricing

Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation is able to provide free field trips for special needs groups.



## Weather & Cancellation Policies

As an outdoor education facility, Lacawac closely monitors weather conditions, with student safety being our top priority. Lacawac's programs run rain or shine; however, in the event of unsafe weather conditions, staff will determine if a program can safely operate and will notify schools of cancellations by 7:30 on the day of the program. In the event that a program is canceled due to weather, we will work with schools to reschedule within the same calendar year.

All other cancellations or rescheduling requests must be submitted in writing at least three weeks prior to the scheduled program date.



## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Lacawac Sanctuary is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all individuals, regardless of ability, can connect with nature. We strive to provide equitable access to our programs and ensure everyone feels welcome, valued, and supported in their exploration of the natural world.

## **Amazing Adaptations**

*2 Hours | Free*

Discover tricks animals use to survive. Experiential activities support the discovery of living and nonliving things by exploring structure and movement. A tactile activity using skulls and furs will give students an opportunity to touch and learn about animal adaptations.

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## **Life Cycles**

*2 Hours | Free*

Students will explore forest habitat while discovering the changes that occur in nature over time. All things change, from plants and animals to weather and seasons. Observe life cycles while searching for nymphs, larva, seedlings, and more. Using insect and amphibian models, students will reconstruct the steps from egg to adult.

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## **Sense of Wonder**

*2 Hours | Free*

Students will use their senses to explore Lacawac's living classroom. Activities such as looking for shapes and colors, listening to forest sounds, and using their hands to find textures will foster an appreciation and curiosity for the natural world.

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## **Sensory Journey**

*2 Hours | Free*

Educators use a combination of activities from the programs above to meet the needs of the students. Students are encouraged to use their senses to experience forest and water habitats. Educators use manipulatives to help focus the students' attention and engage them during hands-on exploration.

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## **Water Ecology**

*2 Hours | Free*

Using dip nets, students will collect, observe, and identify aquatic macroinvertebrates to determine water quality at Heron Pond. An interactive walk gives students an opportunity to experience the unique aspects of a wetland. Students use their senses to interact with plants, soil, and "critters" along the way.



## Program Add-Ons

Lacawac offers a variety of additional programs that can be added to enhance your field trip experience. These hands-on, interactive add-ons give students the chance to explore new skills, engage with nature, and connect with environmental and STEM concepts. Each program provides opportunities for curiosity, discovery, and personal growth, making the experience both fun and meaningful.

Additionally, multiple add-ons can be combined to create a unique, customized program tailored to your group's interests and learning goals. Mixing and matching programs allows students to explore different aspects of nature, develop new skills, and engage with the environment in a variety of memorable ways.



### Program Add-On Pricing

Lacawac's program add-on prices are based on class sizes of 30 students (unless otherwise specified), with an additional \$2 fee per student beyond this number (please note: teachers and chaperones attend free of charge). Program-specific prices can be found on the following pages alongside each program add-on description.

### Add A Program

If you are interested in adding one of these additional activities to your field trip, please note that in the comments at the end of the digital program request form.

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## Magic Spots

*Grades K-4 | 30 minutes | \$15 per class of up to 30*

Research overwhelmingly supports the positive effects of unstructured play and connections to nature. Children today are rarely given the opportunity to spend time alone, to discover, and observe the natural world on their own. During this program, students are given the opportunity to spend time "alone" in the forest to make observations. Each student chooses a "magic" spot to spend an age appropriate amount of time in which they first get the wiggles out, then the boredom before settling into a time of quiet observation. It truly is magical to observe students quietly engaged in nature observation.

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## Art & Nature

*Grades 1-5 | 1 hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Put the A in STEAM! Grade appropriate activities are provided in which students use observation skills to create artwork using nature as a template. Topics to choose from include color, patterns, nature journaling, and Andrew Goldsworthy inspirations. Choose one or both depending on group size and time.

## Team Building

*Grades 3-12 | 1 hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Lacawac's team building programs consist of a series of challenging outdoor problems designed to foster leadership, self-confidence, communication, and teamwork within the class/group. The program requires participation of all team members to plan and execute the solutions to physically and mentally stimulating tasks. Each group's Team Building experience will be designed to suit the ages and abilities of the group. The focus of the program is on the process, so the number of activities completed may vary.

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## Fishing

*Grades 4-12 | 1 hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Students will be instructed on the types of fish found in Pennsylvania, fish habitats, safety, equipment, outdoor manners, and protecting our water resources. Each participant will learn basic fishing skills and get to put those skills to use by learning to tie a fishing knot, practice casting, and try to catch a fish in Heron Pond.

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## Forest Bathing

*Grades 4-12 | 1 hour | \$30 per class of up to 30*

A guided slow walk in the woods that focuses on a mind-body immersion practice of breathing in the forest. During this experience, students will be guided through observation and breathing techniques. Shinrin-Yoku, otherwise known as Forest Bathing. In the 1980s Japanese scientists began searching for ways to minimize all the negative impacts that urbanization was having on individuals and society as a whole. They discovered that a 2-3 hour immersion in which one relaxes and breathes in the natural chemistry of a forest, can reduce stress levels, improve mood, increase restfulness, and boost one's immune system. They called this practice "Shinrin-yoku" which literally translates as "forest bath," the art of taking in the atmosphere of the forest.

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## Geocaching: Map and Compass

*Grades 5-12 | 1 hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Use our GPS units to learn skills and find geocaches at Lacawac. Students learn and practice fun and useful skills with a map and compass. Students will use local topographic maps to find geologic features, read contour lines and legend symbols, orient the map with a compass, and match a location on the map to a location at Lacawac. Choose one or both depending on group size and time.

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## Canoeing

*Grades 6-12 | 1 hour | \$85 per class of up to 20*

Paddle on beautiful Lake Lacawac. Students are given instruction on water safety, paddling techniques, and fitted into lifejackets. This is a unique opportunity to paddle on what is considered the most pristine glacial lake in North America. Students are given a brief background on glaciation, lake ecology, and the current research happening on the lake. Maximum 20 students per time period.



## In-Classroom Programs

Can't make it to Lacawac? No worries! Lacawac's Environmental Educators will visit your school, daycare center, preserve, library, or community center with a nature-based program that supports your curriculum and learning goals. Each program is hands-on and interactive, giving students the opportunity to explore, investigate, and connect with the natural world. Through these experiences, students will deepen their curiosity, engage with key environmental and STEM concepts, and develop a lasting appreciation for the ecosystems around them.



### Program Customization

Our in-classroom programs can be tailored to meet the specific needs and grade levels of your students. Contact us at [education@lacawac.org](mailto:education@lacawac.org) to discuss modifications and ensure the program is the right fit for your class.



### In-Classroom Program Pricing

Lacawac's In-Classroom Programs prices are based on class sizes of 30 students, with an additional \$2 fee per student beyond this number. Program-specific prices can be found on the following pages alongside each in-classroom program description.

#### Discounts

- Schools scheduling more than 5 classes are eligible for a 10% discount on each additional class, provided they do not already have a scholarship in place.
- Schools booking an in-classroom program in addition to a field trip will receive a 50% discount on the in-classroom program price.



#### Scholarships

Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation is committed to making environmental education accessible to all. We offer scholarships to help schools and groups participate in our field trips and programs. To learn more and apply, please contact us at [education@lacawac.org](mailto:education@lacawac.org).

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## Avian Adaptations

*Grades K-3 | 1 Hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Students will explore the world of birds through hands-on activities that highlight the incredible adaptations that help them survive. Using skulls, feathers, and mounted specimens, students will role-play bird adaptations, match beaks to food sources, and classify birds based on their physical characteristics.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.3.D, 3.1.3.F, 3.1.3.G

## **Skins & Skulls: Mammal Adaptations**

*Grades K-3 | 1 Hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Students will identify local mammals and explore how their adaptations help them survive. Using fur samples, skulls, and field guide cards, they determine habitat needs, distinguish predators from prey, and build a simple food web.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.2.C, 3.1.3.D, 3.1.3.F, 3.1.3.G, 3.1.3.H

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## **CSI (Critter Science Investigations): Habitat & Adaptations**

*Grades 1-3 | 1 Hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Students become wildlife detectives as they uncover clues about an unknown animal. Through critical thinking and hands-on investigation, they will open clue envelopes to determine habitat needs, examine skulls, fur, tracks, and scat to discover adaptations, and problem-solve to identify which animal they've been studying and where it lives.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.2.C, 3.1.3.G, 3.1.3.H

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## **Awesome Owls: Discovery & Dissection**

*Grades 3-8 | 1 Hour | \$125 per class of up to 30*

Students will explore owl biology and food chains by examining skulls, feathers, and mounted specimens. They will dissect an owl pellet, identify the bones inside, and reconstruct a rodent skeleton to understand predator-prey relationships.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.3.D, 3.1.3.G

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## **Watershed Connections**

*Grades 4-6 | 1 Hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Students will follow the journey of water from their school to the ocean to explore how watersheds function. After mapping their watershed, they form a hypothesis and build surface-cover models to compare runoff and infiltration, learning how water cycles through the environment and why it is a vital resource.

**STEELS Standards:** 3.3.3.C, 3.4.K-2.D, 3.4.3-5.A, 3.4.3-5.B, 3.4.3-5.C, 3.4.3-5.D, 3.4.3-5.E, 3.4.6-8.H

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## **Aquatic Investigations: Macros in the Classroom**

*Grades 4-6 | 1 Hour | \$85 per class of up to 30*

Students will collect, sort, and identify aquatic organisms, classify macroinvertebrates by taxa, and analyze their findings to assess water quality. Through this hands-on investigation, they will explore how these organisms indicate ecosystem health and how human activities impact aquatic environments. (This program is designed for schools with access to a nearby stream or natural water source. If no site is available, Lacawac staff will provide the organisms. Schools without a nearby water source must schedule at least 6 weeks in advance to allow for preparation.)

**STEELS Standards:** 3.1.3.H, 3.4.3-5.A

## Program Quick Guide

K-12 FIELD TRIPS			
Program	Grades	Duration	Price
Sense of Wonder	PreK-K	2 Hours	\$125/class of up to 30
Life Cycles	K-1	2 Hours	\$125/class of up to 30
Amazing Adaptations	1-2	2 Hours	\$125/class of up to 30
Nature Detectives	2-3	2 Hours	\$125/class of up to 30
Watershed Connections	4-8	3 Hours	\$175/class of up to 30
Forest Ecology	6-8	3 Hours	\$175/class of up to 30
Advanced Forest Ecology	9-12	3 Hours	\$175/class of up to 30
Advanced Water Ecology I	9-12	3 Hours	\$175/class of up to 30
Advanced Water Ecology II:	9-12	3 Hours	\$300/class of up to 30

PROGRAM ADD-ONS			
Program	Grades	Duration	Price
Magic Spots	K-4	30 Minutes	\$15/class of up to 30
Art & Nature	1-5	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
Team Building	3-12	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
Fishing	4-12	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
Forest Bathing	4-12	1 Hour	\$30/class of up to 30
Geocaching: Map and Compass	5-12	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
Canoeing	6-12	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 20

IN-CLASSROOM PROGRAMS			
Program	Grades	Duration	Price
Avian Adaptations	K-3	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
Skins & Skulls: Mammal Adaptations	K-3	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
CSI: Habitat & Adaptations	1-3	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
Awesome Owls: Discovery & Dissection	3-8	1 Hour	\$125/class of up to 30
Watershed Connections	4-6	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30
Aquatic Investigations: Macros in the Classroom	4-6	1 Hour	\$85/class of up to 30



## Teacher Checklist: Field Trips

### 2–6 Months Before Program

- Designate a lead teacher to serve as the main point of contact between your school and Lacawac Sanctuary.
- Review our Field Trip and In-Classroom Program options and choose the program best suited for your students.
- Complete the Program Request Form with your preferred program and potential dates.
- Lacawac's Asst. Director of Environmental Ed. will send a Field Trip Agreement confirming your program, date, and time.
- Lacawac's Finance Department will issue an invoice to your school.
- Sign and return the Field Trip Agreement to officially reserve your date.
- Arrange transportation once your field trip date is confirmed.
- Inform parents, students, and the school nurse about the upcoming trip.
- Begin recruiting chaperones (recommended ratio: 1 adult per 10 students).
- Determine the final cost per student (if necessary for your school).
- Send an informational packet home to families.
- Set deadlines for permission slips and payments.

### 4–6 Weeks Before Program

- Lacawac's Asst. Director of Environmental Ed. will contact you to finalize your agenda and discuss accommodations.
- Collect all student paperwork and fees.

### 1–2 Weeks Before Program

- Review expectations and behavior guidelines with students and chaperones.
- Remind everyone to dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes.
- Encourage students to bring sunscreen, bug spray, and a water bottle.

### Morning of Program

- Contact the Education Director with your estimated arrival time and final student numbers.
- Check in with Lacawac's educators upon arrival and confirm departure time for loading buses.
- If the invoice has not been paid in advance, please bring payment with you.