

Field Trip Information

Activity Selection: Select the lessons you are most interested in. Based on the age/grade level, class size, and time spent at the Bissell Nature Center, we will customize the lessons to fit your needs.

Cost: All programs are provided free of charge.

Grades: Most activities are designed for grades Pre K – 6th grade. Each lesson will be adapted and taught with target developmental needs in mind. Vocabulary and concepts will be age appropriate. Many topics can also be adjusted for older groups.

Group Size: The Bissell Nature Center can accommodate up to 100 participants for a field trip. Because we believe that smaller groups make for more effective programs, your group may be divided and rotated through lessons. Chaperones will be required to accompany each small group.

Location/Weather: Programs may be held both indoors and/or outdoors. Please come prepared for any weather – rain or shine, warm or cold as we only cancel outdoor activities in the case of extreme weather.

Outdoor Activities: As many our activities take place out of doors, we recommend wearing long pants and long sleeves, with sturdy closed-toe shoes suitable for hiking. Participants might also consider wearing sunscreen and insect repellent.

Chaperones: We require one adult chaperone for each small group. The exact number needed will be decided upon registration. One chaperone per 8 students is typical.

Lunch: If you plan to stay for lunch, we have picnic tables under a pavilion at the Center.

Seasonal, Custom, or Outreach Programs: The Bissell Nature Center season is April through October. Flexibility and the ability to meet your needs are important to the Bissell Nature Center. Therefore, if you need a program off-season, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Youth Safety: The Nature Conservancy is committed to youth safety. Our staff and Bissell Nature Center volunteers complete a comprehensive youth safety training program. We know youth safety is equally a priority for the groups that visit us. Three documents are prepared in advance of all field trips involving youth:

- Collaboration Agreement – a set of standards and practices agreed upon by the organization and The Nature Conservancy to keep youth safe during their field trips.
- Youth Safety Plan – select and applicable sections from our youth safety manual act as a guide for keeping youth safe during specific field trip activities at the Bissell Nature Center, including plans and best practices in the event of an emergency.
- Youth Participant Agreement – an agreement that lets youth and parents know the activities that will be involved in the field trips with the associated risks involved. Each child must return a completed form the day of the field trip.

Groups are invited to make additions and suggestions to these documents prior to the field trips.

To Create your Custom Field Trip:

Contact the Bissell Nature Center at bissellnaturecenter@TNC.org or 440-563-3081 ext. 301.

The Nature Conservancy 

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Educational Programs

Dr. James K. Bissell Nature Center



The Dr. James K. Bissell Nature Center offers dynamic programming that brings the natural history of Morgan Swamp Preserve to life. Its K-12 wetland curriculum is designed to support state educational standards. Let this guide be your first stop in planning your next field trip.

Activity Descriptions

Grand River Hike &

Hemlock-Yellow Birch Hike – *Nature walk and observation*

Nothing brings nature to life like spending time in the great outdoors. Our guided hike includes a ½-1 mile trail. Participants will learn about our natural scenic communities in northeast Ohio.

Target Grade: K-Adult

Time Recommendation: 40 minutes

Needed Physical Capacity/Skills for

Activity: Ability to hike uneven terrain

Potential Hazards of this Activity: Extreme weather conditions, slippery trail conditions, biting/stinging insects and ticks, physical strain, sun exposure, and poison ivy.



Unseen inhabitants of Bliss Pond – *Pond Study, Aquatic Organisms*

Participants will learn about pond ecosystems and animal adaptation by examining sediment for macroinvertebrates. Dip nets will be used to collect sediment/examine the life within. Participants will learn about the roles of macroinvertebrates in ponds.

Target Grade: 5, but appropriate for grades 4 through adult

Time Recommendation: 45 minutes

Needed Physical Capacity/Skills for Activity:

Ability to hike uneven terrain

Potential Hazards of this Activity: Extreme weather conditions, exposure to water, slippery trail conditions, biting/stinging insects and ticks, physical strain, sun exposure, and poison ivy.

Beavers, Watersheds, and Rotting Log Life – *Nature Center Tour*

Participants will tour the Bissell Nature Center and focus on three interactive exhibits. The beaver pond exhibit demonstrates the ecosystem resulting from beaver activity. The watershed map informs visitors on watersheds, rivers, and the effects of glacial activity in Ashtabula County. The rotting log display offers a close-up view into the microenvironments of a rotting log and the resulting ecosystem.

Target Grade: 5, but appropriate for grades 4 through adult .



Sensory Tour – *Nature Center Tour*

Visitors will tour the nature center using their senses to examine our exhibits. Participants will use their observe and identify animals by the feel of their pelts and the sounds of their calls. They will use binoculars and magnifiers to get an up-close view of nature.

Target Grade: All, accessible activity.



Birds and Beaks! – Animal Adaptations – *Nature Center Tour*

Participants will learn about animal adaptations through a hands-on bird and beak activity by discovering how different shaped beaks allow birds to reach and partake of specific types of food.

Target Grade: 3

Time Recommendation for Each: 45 minutes
Needed Physical Capacity/Skills for Activity: NA
Potential Hazards of this Activity: Sharp corners and slipping in the Nature Center.

Earth/Animals Waking Up in Spring! – *Nature Center/Hike*

Participants will experience the Bissell Nature Center and learn how to look for signs that the earth/animals are waking up in spring through the use of stories, songs, puppets, and hands-on artifacts. A short hike along the river will follow to look for signs of spring.

Animals/Earth Getting Ready for Winter! – *Nature Center/Hike*

Participants will experience the Bissell Nature Center and learn how to look for signs that the earth/animals are getting ready for winter through the use of stories, songs, puppets, and hands-on artifacts. A short hike along the river will follow to look for signs of winter's approach.



Target Grade: PreK

Time Recommendation: 90 minutes

Needed Physical Capacity/Skills for Activity:

Ability to hike uneven terrain

Potential Hazards of this Activity: Sharp corners and slipping in the Nature Center, Extreme weather conditions, exposure to water, slippery trail conditions, biting/stinging insects and ticks, physical strain, sun exposure, and poison ivy.



David Ike