



Severson Dells Nature Center Field Trips



2026



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS



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Meet Severson Dells Nature Center

Who We Are

Severson Dells Nature Center sits on 369 acres of prairie, savanna, and forest and features a winding creek lined with ancient rock walls. The land and lodge were donated to the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County by Harry and Fannie Severson in 1975, and the Nature Center was established in 1976. Our mission is to link people to nature through education and research.

Your group leaders will include our staff, AmeriCorps service members, and fabulous volunteers.

What We Do

The better question is: what don't we do? In addition to field trips, we offer in-school programs, guided hikes, lectures, workshops, canoe trips, homeschool classes, scout programs, photography exhibits, musical and dance performances, family activities, and so much more.



Types of School Programs

We offer Field Trips at Severson as well as In-school Field Trip Programs where we visit your classroom! Our Field Trips are \$8/student/one program and \$14/student for two programs, and our In-School Programs start at \$100 for the first session and \$50 for each additional session. All of these programs are tailored to their grade levels and meet Illinois Learning Standards and NGSS.

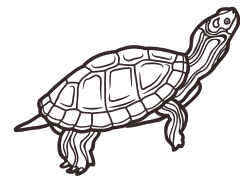
Why Choose Severson Dells?



369 acres of distinct habitats



Minutes from the heart of Rockford



Over 30 years of experience



Small Group Sizes



Aligned with NGSS Standards



Grove Nature Playscape



Planning the Perfect Day

We pride ourselves in collaborating with teachers to plan amazing experiences for their group! Our staff will work with you to answer questions and optimize your field trip's schedule. We are happy to propose suggestions and accommodate some special requests within reason. Here's a step-by-step start to planning a field trip with us.

1. Choose how many days your group will need.
 - a. We can accommodate up to 60 students a day. Consider your class sizes to determine if your group will need one or multiple days.
2. Choose at least 3 date options for your group.
 - a. [The form listed on our website](#) will ask for three dates, or you can always email elly@seversondells.org.
3. Choose the number of programs.
 - a. You can book 1 or 2 programs per day.
 - b. Plan for a lunch break with 2 programs. Lunch is optional with one program.
4. Choose your program(s)
 - a. Check out the table on page 4 to select a program or two that are appropriate for the grade(s) of your students.
 - b. If booking 2 programs, we highly suggest pairing the Discover Nature Hike with another program! That pairing is a great blend of structured learning and hands-on exploration.
 - c. If booking 2 programs and one is an "O" or Outdoor Program, choose an "M" or Mixed Program to make sure your students have a blend of high-energy and low-energy activities.
 - d. Keep in mind that Pre-School and Kindergarten programs are 40-60 minutes long.
5. Submit a Field Trip Request
 - a. Our website has a handy field trip request form.
 - b. Make sure to fill out as much information as you can so we can streamline your registration process!
6. Finalize with Severson Dells
 - a. We will reach out to you via email or phone to confirm your group's plan.
7. Prepare for the field trip
 - a. Think ahead about how you will group your students. We require students be divided into groups of 10-15 before arriving on site.
 - b. Tell your students about the upcoming field trip to get them excited!
 - c. Select chaperones. We require 1 chaperone/teacher for every 8 students for elementary and older groups, and have a maximum of 3 chaperones/teachers per field trip grouping of 10-15 students. If your group might differ from this, please let us know!
 - d. You'll get letters to send out to families and chaperones to let them know how to dress their student and what to pack for their day.
 - e. Return photo-release forms to Severson Staff
 - f. Read our What to Expect + Bring Section**
8. Plan for payment
 - a. Severson Dells can take payment in the form of a check, credit card or cash. We are happy to provide an invoice and receipt for payments if needed. We prefer payment to be made on the day of the field trip or before, but understand that some district finance offices work differently. All outstanding balances must be paid within 30 days of the date of your field trip.
9. Get excited!

Standards Alignment



The following codes are used to indicate how our programs align with the Next Generation Science Standards. For more information on Illinois Learning Standards, please go to the following website: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Standards-Courses.aspx>

Engineering Design Standards, K-12

- ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions

Elementary (K-5) Science Topic

Arrangements

- Kindergarten: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems (KLS1-1, KESS2-2, KESS3-1, KESS3-3)
- First: Structure, Function, and Information Processing (1LS1-1, 1LS1-2, 1LS3-1)
- Second: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems (2LS2-1, 2LS2-2, 2LS4-1)
- Third: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems (3LS2-1, 3LS4-1, 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4)
- Fourth: Structure, Function, and Information Processing (4PS4-2, 4LS1-1, 4LS1-2)
- Fifth: Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems (5PS3-1, 5LS1-1, 5LS2-1)

Middle School (6-8) Science Topic

Arrangements

- Life Science: Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems (MSLS2-1)
- Life Science: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems (MSLS2-2, MSLS2-5)
- Earth Science: Human Impacts (MSESS3-3)

High School (9-12) Science Topic

Arrangements

- Life Science: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems (HLSL2-1, HLSL2-2, HLSL2-7, HLSL4-6)
- Earth Science: Human Sustainability (HSESS3-1, HSESS3-4, HSESS3-6)

Mathematics

- M1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- M2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- M3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
- M4. Model with mathematics.
- M5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
- M6. Attend to precision.
- M7. Look for and make use of structure.
- M8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

English Language Arts

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

At Severson Dells, we like to use the BEETLES method of environmental education, which "Provides opportunities for students to engage in meaning-making discussions that build on prior knowledge and promote divergent thinking, and is key to helping them develop deep understandings about the natural world." BEETLES is a program of UC Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science. The following ELA standards can be met through our classes in this way.

Comprehension and Collaboration

- CC1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and
- collaborations with diverse partners
- CC3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- PK14: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence
- PK16: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks

Our Programs



This handy chart shows all of our current offerings, their time length, location, and most appropriate grade levels. All Outdoor and Mixed programs can only happen at Severson Dells Nature Center. In-school field trip programs are designed to come to schools but can be done at Severson Dells Nature Center as well.

Most groups will select 1-2 programs for their field trip. Refer to the step-by-step registration guide on page 2 for more information on structuring your day. Program descriptions can be found on pages 7 and 8.

Types

O= Outside Only

M= Mix of Indoor and Outdoor

I = In-school Field Trip

K= Can be an indoor option for Kindergarten

R= Can be indoors-only if bad weather

Location	Time (min)	Programs	PS	K	1	2	3	4	5	MS	HS
O	90	Discover Nature Hike			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
O	40-60	Nature's Alphabet	X	X							
O	40-60	Needs of Plants and Animals	X	X							
M, I	90	Animal Homes and Habitats			X	X	X	X			
M, R, I	90	Predator-Prey Palooza			X	X	X	X			
M, R	90	Bird Beak Mystery			X	X	X	X			
M, O	90	Outdoor Skills				X	X	X	X	X	X
O	90	Aquatic Studies- Sept, April, May only					X	X	X	X	X
O	90	Stewardship and Conservation								X	X
O	90	Compasses: Finding Your Way								X	X
I, R	40-60	Outstanding Owls *Added Fee			X	X	X				
I, R, K	40-60	Backyard Animals: Skins and Skulls		X	X	X					
I, R	40-60	Outdoor Skills: Knots and Cordage				X	X	X	X	X	X
I, R, K	40-60	Beautiful Bats		X	X	X	X				
I, R, K	40-60	Fantastic Frogs		X	X	X	X				
I, R, K	40-60	Winter Animals and Tracking		X	X	X	X				
I	90	Water Management							X	X	X

Field Trip Descriptions



Grades 1-12 | Outdoors | 90 minutes

Discover Nature Hike

This classic program is also our most requested. Explore nature with hands-on, sensory-based, guided activities. Each hike is different as we discover all that nature has to offer. Many standards apply, and hikes can be tailored to subjects being taught in the classroom.

Grades Preschool-K | Outdoors | 40-60 minutes

Nature's Alphabet

Nature is filled with letters, numbers, shapes, and colors! Join a hands-on scavenger hunt as we recognize patterns and more in nature. KLS1-1; CCI; PKI4, M5

Grades Preschool- K | Outdoors | 40-60 minutes

Needs of Plants and Animals

Using movement and games, students discover how plants and animals have many of the same needs. KLS1-1, KESS2-2, KESS3-1, KESS3-3, CCI, PKI4, MI, M2

Grades K-2 | Indoors | 40-50 minutes

Backyard Animals: Skins and Skulls

We'll discuss amazing backyard animal adaptations and investigate real pelts and furs! KLS1-1, ILS1, 2LS4-1, CCI, CC3, PKI6, MI

Grades 1-4 | Mixed | 90 minutes

Predator-Prey Palooza!

Students learn the traits of predators and prey animals, and then test their ability to "fill the shoes" of these animals in fun activities. Includes sneaking and stalking games out in the field. ILS1-1, ILS1-2, 2LS4-1, 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4, 4LS1-1, 4LS1-2, CCI, CC3, PKII, PKI6, MI, M3

Grades 1-4 | Mixed | 90 minutes

Animal Homes and Habitats

Discover how animals interact with and rely on our prairie, forest, pond, and creek through an interactive habitat-building experience and outdoor investigation. ILS1-1, ILS1-2, 2LS4-1, 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4, 4LS1-1, 4LS1-2, CCI, CC3, PKII, PKI6, MI, M3

Grades 2-12 | Mixed or Outdoors | 90 minutes

Outdoor Skills

Outdoor Skills can be used every day! Put engineering principles to the test when building a shelter, see chemistry in action when starting a fire*, think critically about survival skills, and use fine motor skills to tie knots. *Content varies by age, time, and season. ETSI.B, MESS3-3, CCI, CC3, PKII, PKI6, MI, M2, M3, M5

Grades 3-12 | Outdoors | 90 minutes | Sept, April, May

Aquatic Studies

Students and teachers should be prepared to get wet in this ultimate "immersion" program about what lives in our waters! Activities include sampling macroinvertebrates, determining water quality, and learning about watersheds. If the temperature is above 70°F at the time of the field trip, we will go in the creek for this program. If the temperature is below 70°F, we have a variety of options to choose from, including water cycle and property of water activities, as well as pond-side macroinvertebrate sampling. 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4, 4LS1-1, 5LS2-1, MSL2-1, MSL2-2, MSL2-5, MS-ESS3-3, HSL2-1, HSL2-2, HSL2-7, HSL4-6, CCI, CC3, PKI4, PKI6, MI, M2, M4, M5

Grades 6-12 | Mixed or Outdoors | 90 minutes

Compasses: Finding Your Way

Apply math and geography skills as we learn how to use compasses and maps to navigate the old-fashioned-way. ETSI.B, CCI, CC3, PKII, PKI6, MI, M2, M3, M5, M6

Grades 6-12 | Outdoors | 90 minutes

Stewardship and Conservation

Experience what it is like to work in the field of Ecology and Environmental Science while helping us with research and conservation efforts. Activities vary based on season. MESS3-3, HSESS3-1, HSESS3-4, HSESS3-6, ETSB.1, CCI, CC3, PKI4, MI, M5, M6

Grades 1-4 | Mixed | 90 minutes

Bird Beak Mystery

Use clues about bird beaks, feet, and feathers to solve a mystery. During the second half of the program, students learn how to use binoculars and do a short bird walk. ILS1-1, ILS1-2, 2LS4-1, 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4, 4LS1-1, 4LS1-2, CCI, CC3, PKII, PKI6, MI, M3

In-School Field Trip Descriptions



Let us bring nature to you with hands-on, standards-based lessons that will foster inquiry and excitement! The In-school field trip programs can accommodate up to 30 students (usually one class) at a time, unless otherwise noted. The In-school field trip program fee is \$100 for the first session and \$50 for each additional class.

We require teachers to remain in the classroom at all times during our presentations. Teachers are asked to monitor their students to be sure they are getting the most out of our programs.

5th Grade | Indoors | 90 Minutes

NEW: Water Management Program

Watch the water cycle to life and explore watersheds with state-of-the-art models! Students will learn all about their local watershed and what they can do to protect it.

Funded by Four Rivers Sanitation Authority and the City of Rockford Public Works. 5-ESS2-1, 5-ESS3-1, SS.5.G.1., SS.5.G.3, SS.5.G.4., SS.5.CV.1.

Grades 1-5 | Indoors | 40-60 minutes

Outstanding Owls - added fee

Owls are masters of the night for a reason! Our team will guide your class through an owl vs human field-day style activity set to see how their adaptations stack up to ours. We'll bring mounted owl specimens, owl feathers, and other incredible items to help students imagine what life is like as an owl. This lesson has an optional 30-minute owl pellet dissection add-on for \$5 a student. (K-LS1-1, K-LS1.C, K-ESS2-2, K-ESS2.E, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3.A, K-ESS3-3, K-ESS3.C, 1-LS1.A, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS1.B, 1-LS1.D, 2-PS1.A, 2-LS4-1, 2-LS4.D, 3-LS1.B, 3-LS2.C, 3-LS2.D, 3-LS4.D, 4-LS1.A, 4-LS1-2, 4-LS1.D, 5-PS3.D, 5-ESS3.C)

Grades 1-5 | Mixed | 40 - 60 minutes

Animal Homes and Habitats

Discover how animals interact with and rely on our prairie, forest, pond, and creek through an interactive habitat-building experience. 1LS1-1, 1LS1-2, 2LS4-1, 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4, 4LS1-1, 4LS1-2, CC1, CC3, PK11, PK16, MI, M3

Grades 1-5 | Mixed | 40 - 60 minutes

Predator-Prey Palooza!

Students learn the traits of predators and prey animals by solving a mystery using our collection of skulls and pelts. 1LS1-1, 1LS1-2, 2LS4-1, 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4, 4LS1-1, 4LS1-2, CC1, CC3, PK11, PK16, MI, M3

Grades 1-5 | Mixed | 40-60 minutes

Bird Beak Mystery

Use clues about bird beaks, feet, and feathers to solve a mystery.

walk. 1LS1-1, 1LS1-2, 2LS4-1, 3LS4-3, 3LS4-4, 4LS1-1, 4LS1-2, CC1, CC3, PK11, PK16, MI, M3

Grades 1-5 | Indoors | 40-60 minutes

Beautiful Bats

Beyond being the world's only flying mammals, bats have specialized features that will blow your mind! Our team will guide your class through a bat vs human field-day style activity set to see how their adaptations stack up to ours. We'll bring replicas of bat skeletons and some other surprising items that are associated with bats!

(K-LS1-1, K-LS1.C, K-ESS2-2, K-ESS2.E, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3.A, K-ESS3-3, K-ESS3.C, 1-LS1.A, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS1.B, 1-LS1.D, 2-PS1.A, 2-LS4-1, 2-LS4.D, 3-LS1.B, 3-LS2.C, 3-LS2.D, 3-LS4.D, 4-LS1.A, 4-LS1-2, 4-LS1.D, 5-PS3.D, 5-ESS3.C)

Grades 1-5 | Indoors | 40-60 minutes

Fantastic Frogs

We know that frogs are fantastic critters, but do you know just how wild their adaptations are? Our team will guide your class through a frog vs human field-day style activity set to see how their adaptations stack up to ours. Students will also learn how to identify local frogs based on their calls. (1-LS1.A, 1-LS1.B, 1-LS1.D, 2-PS1.A, 2-LS4.D, 3-LS1.B, 3-LS3.B, 3-LS2.C, 3-LS4-4, 3-LS4.C, 3-LS4.D, 4-LS1.A, 4-LS1-2, 4-LS1.D)

Grades K-2 | Indoors or Mixed | 40-60 minutes

Winter Animals and Tracking

Where do animals go in the winter? We'll answer that question and more as we learn what it takes to survive the winter and how to track some four-legged friends in the snow. KLS1-1, 1LS1-1, 2-LS4-1, CC1, CC3, PK16, MI

Grades 2-5 | Indoors | 40-90 minutes

Outdoor Skills: Knots & Cordage

Learn how to tie essential everyday knots and make your own cordage out of natural materials! We'll also discuss outdoor preparedness and basic survival skills to make sure your students know how to hit the trail safely. ETSB.1, CC1, CC3, PK14, PK16



What to Expect + Bring

Sample Schedules

We are happy to accommodate your schooling and transportation scheduling needs! These are just some examples of what the day could look like. Your group is welcome to stay and play in the Grove Nature Playground as long as they want after scheduled programming is over, but Severson staff will not supervise those activities. Please note that Aquatic Studies field trips will require extra time to change clothes if needed.

Half-Day Field Trip		Full-Day Field Trip		Half-Day Kindergarten Field Trip	
9:00-9:15	Introduction	9:00-9:15	Introduction	9:00-9:15	Introduction
9:15-10:45	Morning Programs	9:15-10:45	Morning Programs	9:15-10:15	Morning Programs
10:45-11:15	Lunch Break	10:45-11:30	Lunch Break	10:15-10:45	Grove Time
11:15-11:45	Grove Time	11:30-1:00	Afternoon Programs	10:45-11:15	Lunch
11:45-12:00	Send-Off	1:00-1:15	Send-Off	11:15-11:30	Send-Off

Lunch at Severson Dells

Lunch looks a little different at Severson Dells, so we want to make sure your group is prepared!

Lunch breaks involve a waste-sorting presentation by Severson staff, time to play in our Grove Nature Playscape, and of course, time to eat! **You are expected to supervise your group during their eating and recess time so Severson staff have time to prepare your next program.** The usual lunch break goes as follows:

- 5-minute low-waste lunch presentation
- 15 minutes to eat
- 5-minute lunch waste sorting session
- 20 minutes of Grove recess

On good weather days, we spend our lunch break in our Grove Nature Playscape. There are no formal tables or chairs, but there are plenty of spaces for both students and adults to eat. We spend some of our lunch in our classroom on poor weather days. We can set up tables and chairs in the classroom depending on group size and programs requested. If the weather allows, students can still enjoy recess in the Grove Nature Playscape. Otherwise, we have floor puzzles, coloring pages, and books for an indoor recess.

We try to promote low-waste-lunches as much as reasonably possible! Encourage students to bring re-usable containers and water bottles in their lunches. There are so many benefits to low-waste-lunches: limiting plastic in the environment, cutting back on carbon emissions, restoring soil nutrients, saving space, saving money, and so much more! Your students will sort their lunch waste into garbage, recycling, and compost. Teachers who share the Low-Waste-Lunch resource in the appendix with their class normally get a lot out of the experience.

What to Expect & Bring



Packing Lists

We recommend students come with the following items to have an amazing experience at Severson.

Teachers, be sure to bring any medicine or medical devices your students need, as well as emergency contact information.

Standard Program

1. Closed-toed shoes
2. Clothes that can get a little dirty
3. Layers
4. Reusable water bottle
5. Lunch (if needed)

Cold Weather Program

1. Water-resistant or waterproof boots
2. Plenty of layers
3. Warm socks
4. Coat
5. Thick mittens or gloves
6. Snowpants
7. Hat
8. Reusable water bottle
9. Lunch (if needed)

Aquatic Studies

1. Closed-toed creek shoes
 - a. Old tennis shoes
 - b. Adventure sandals with strap
 - c. Water shoes
2. Shorts (preferably an athletic material)
3. Extra pair of clothes, socks, and shoes in backpack
4. Reusable water bottle
5. Lunch (if needed)

Weather

We try to be outside as much as we can! However, in the event of a storm, we are required to wait under cover for thirty minutes after the last lightning strike before we can resume outdoor activities. If there is cold rain, we will consider the comfort level of your class and your adults. Wind advisories will keep us out of the forest, but don't prevent us from going outside. We may have to switch up your programs or program locations in the event of inclement weather, but do our best to keep the original schedule. We understand that cold days with a lot of rain can be a challenge if groups don't have the right gear.

The best option for any kind of bad weather is to dress for it. We encourage you to communicate with your students and their families to make sure they are dressed for hours outside. We do have a limited amount of rain gear, gloves, and hats for students to borrow if they need them, but we do not have enough to equip a whole class. We find that well-prepared groups can handle cold, windy, or wet weather with no problem!

We reserve the right to cancel and refund or reschedule field trips in the case of extreme weather. If you have concerns about upcoming weather, don't hesitate to contact us so we can make an action plan that is best for both parties! Rescheduling may be difficult in September, October, April, and May due to high demand.

If you book a field trip from November to March, know that cold, windy, wet weather is a strong possibility. In addition to making sure your students dress for the weather, it's best to plan for some indoor programs to give them time to thaw.

If you have a field trip on a day with potential for thunderstorms, reach out to us so we can have indoor options ready for your group in case we are forced inside.

What to Expect & Bring (Continued)



Chaperones

Chaperones play an important role in the success of your visit to Severson Dells! We have some tips for making the most of their service.

- Send Chaperones the letter included in this brochure
- We require 1 chaperone/teacher for every 8 students for elementary and older groups, and have a maximum of 3 chaperones/teachers per field trip group (groups of 10-15 students not field trip class as a whole).
- We require 1 chaperone for every 5 kids for kindergarten and younger groups have a maximum of 5 chaperones/teachers per field trip group.
- Chaperones are expected to help facilitate programs through active participation, supervision, and behavior management.
- Chaperones may be excused if they are inhibiting the program through excessive background conversation or other distracting activities.