



School Nature Program Guide

Dakota County Parks offers both nature and recreation based outdoor education programming. Most programs are held at Lebanon Hills Regional Park, but many can be conducted at other Dakota County Parks, at your school as an Outreach Visit or as a Virtual Program. Unless otherwise stated, all programs available for grades pre-K-12. Please see our webpage for more information about what’s included, pricing and registration – [School Nature Programs](#). Recreation programs with a star (*) may incur an additional \$50 equipment usage fee.

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Animal Adaptations	Explore the world of Minnesota’s animals and the adaptations that help them survive in the wild. Students will observe and compare how different animals interact with varied environments.	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2; 0.4.2.1.1 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1 3 rd grade- 3.1.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.2; 3.4.3.2.2	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park Miesville Ravine Park Reserve	All year	Park Field Trip Virtual Program Outreach Visit

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Bison 101	Explore how bison are well adapted to the prairie environment and learn about important stages in their lifecycle.	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2; 0.4.2.1.1 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1; 1.4.3.1.2 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1. 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.1.3.2.1; 3.4.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.2; 3.4.3.2.1; 3.4.3.2.2 5 th grade – 5.1.1.1.1; 5.1.3.4.1; 5.4.1.1.1; 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.2; 5.4.4.1.1	Spring Lake Park Reserve	All Year	Park Field Trip Virtual Program Outreach Visit

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Bison on the Prairie	Survey and learn about the plants and animals that inhabit the prairie ecosystem and how bison are an integral part of this community.	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2; 0.4.2.1.1 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1; 1.4.3.1.2 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1; 2.4.1.1.1; 2.4.2.1.1; 2.4.3.1.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.2; 3.4.3.2.2 5 th grade – 5.1.1.1.1; 5.1.1.1.4; 5.1.1.2.1; 5.1.3.4.1; 5.1.3.4.2; 5.3.1.2.1; 5.4.1.1.1; 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.2; 5.4.4.1.1	Spring Lake Park Reserve	May-October	Park Field Trip

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Birding Basics	Give your observational skills a lift as we learn how to identify birds through behavior, habitat, and physical characteristics.	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2 1 st grade- 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.2.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1; 2.2.2.1.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.1.1.2.1; 3.1.1.2.3; 3.1.3.4.1 5 th grade – 5.1.1.2.2; 5.3.4.1.3; 5.4.4.1.1	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park Miesville Ravine Park Reserve	All Year	Park Field Trip Virtual Program Outreach Visit

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Case of the Missing Bison	Bison have been missing from the prairie for over a century. Look for clues that they have been returned and how that benefits the land.	1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.1.1.2.1; 3.1.1.2.2; 3.1.1.2.3; 3.1.3.2.1; 3.1.3.2.2 4 th grade – 4.1.2.1.1; 4.1.2.2.1 5 th grade – 5.1.1.1.3; 5.1.1.2.2; 5.1.3.2.1; 5.3.4.1.3; 5.4.1.1.1; 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.2	Spring Lake Park Reserve	All year	Park Field Trip
Connections in Nature	Life cycles and food chains come to life. Students explore the park as they discover the roles plants and animals play to keep ecosystems healthy.	Kindergarten – 0.4.2.1.1 1 st grade -1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1 7 th grade – 7.4.2.1.3; 7.4.2.2.1; 7.4.2.2.2; 7.4.2.2.3	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park	All year	Park Field Trip Outreach Visit

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Energy in Nature	Explore different forms of energy in the environment through observations of light and sound.	Kindergarten – 0.3.2.2.2 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.2.1 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.1.1.2.1; 3.1.1.2.3; 3.1.1.2.4; 3.1.3.4.1; 3.2.3.1.3	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park	All year	Park Field Trip Outreach Visit
Exploring Ecosystems	Minnesota has four different biomes. Discover what makes each biome unique and conduct a field study of biotic and abiotic factors in Dakota County biomes.	Kindergarten – 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2; 0.4.1.1.3; 0.4.2.1.1 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1; 2.4.1.1.1; 2.4.2.1.1; 2.4.3.1.1 3 rd grade – 3.4.1.1.2; 3.4.3.2.2 5 th grade – 5.1.3.4.2; 5.4.1.1.1; 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.2; 5.4.4.1.1	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Spring Lake Park Reserve	All Year	Park Field Trip

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
How Low Can You Go?	Bathymetry is the system of measuring a body of water's depth. Take measurements and plot depths to find the deepest point in the Schulze Lake.	1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.2.1 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.2.4; 3.1.3.4.1 4 th grade – 4.2.1.1.1 5 th grade – 5.1.1.1.1; 5.1.1.1.4; 5.1.1.2.1; 5.1.1.2.2; 5.1.3.4.1; 5.3.1.2.2	Lebanon Hills Regional Park	January-March (Schulze Lake must have a minimum of 6" of ice)	Park Field Trip
Insect Investigations	Explore the life cycles of insects. Investigate and classify insects found different habitats.	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1; 1.4.3.1.2 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.1.1.2.3; 3.4.1.1.2	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park	May-October	Park Field Trip Virtual Program Outreach Visit

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Lake Study 101	Explore the lakeshore by collecting and identifying aquatic organisms with dip nets. Students will learn the importance of aquatic ecosystems and how macroinvertebrates can be used as indicators of water quality.	<p>1st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1; 1.4.3.1.2</p> <p>3rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.1.1.2.3; 3.1.3.4.1; 3.4.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.2</p> <p>5th grade – 5.1.1.1.1; 5.1.1.2.1; 5.1.3.4.1; 5.1.3.4.2; 5.4.1.1.1; 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.2; 5.4.4.1.1</p> <p>6th grade – 6.1.3.1.1</p> <p>7th grade – 7.1.3.4.1</p> <p>8th grade – 8.3.4.1.2</p>	<p>Lebanon Hills Regional Park</p> <p>Whitetail Woods Regional Park</p> <p>Thompson County Park</p> <p>Lake Byllesby Regional Park</p>	May-October	<p>Park Field Trip</p> <p>Virtual Program</p>

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Lake Study 102	Dive into the physical and chemical traits of lakes in Dakota County Parks. Hands on experiments and activities will look at the science behind pH, oxygen and nutrients and what their levels in local waterways indicate about water quality.	<p>4th grade – 4.1.2.1.1; 4.3.2.3.1; 4.3.4.1.1</p> <p>5th grade – 5.1.1.2.1; 5.1.3.4.1; 5.1.3.4.2; 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.2; 5.4.4.1.1</p> <p>6th grade – 6.1.3.1.1</p> <p>7th grade – 7.1.1.1.2; 7.1.1.2.1; 7.1.1.2.3; 7.1.1.2.4; 7.1.3.4.2; 7.4.2.1.3; 7.4.4.1.2</p> <p>8th grade – 8.1.1.1.1; 8.1.3.4.2; 8.3.4.1.2</p> <p>Grades 4 and up</p>	<p>Lebanon Hills Regional Park</p> <p>Whitetail Woods Regional Park</p> <p>Thompson County Park</p>	All Year	Park Field Trip
Minnesota Rocks	Can you tell a piece of talc from taconite? Learn about the geologic history of Minnesota's rocks and minerals and spend time exploring your local geology and landscape.	<p>1st grade – 1.3.1.3.1; 1.3.1.3.3</p> <p>4th grade – 4.3.1.3.1; 4.3.1.3.2</p> <p>5th grade – 5.3.4.1.1; 5.3.4.1.2</p> <p>8th grade – 8.3.1.1.1; 8.3.1.1.3; 8.3.1.2.1; 8.3.1.2.2; 8.3.1.3.2</p>	<p>Lebanon Hills Regional Park</p> <p>Whitetail Woods Regional Park</p> <p>Spring Lake Park Reserve</p>	May-October	<p>Park Field Trip</p> <p>Outreach Visit</p>

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Prairie Prowl	Learn about what makes the prairie ecosystem distinctive and what it provides as we survey the flora and fauna of this special habitat.	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2; 0.4.2.1.1 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 4.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1; 1.4.3.1.2 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1; 2.4.1.1.1; 2.4.2.1.1; 2.4.3.1.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.2; 3.4.3.2.2 5 th grade – 5.1.1.1.1; 5.1.1.1.4; 5.1.1.2.1; 5.1.3.4.1; 5.1.3.4.2; 5.3.1.2.1; 5.4.1.1.1; 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.2; 5.4.4.1.1	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Spring Lake Park Reserve	May-October	Park Field Trip

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Sensing the Seasons	Penology studies the changing seasons and documents what's happening in nature over time using all your senses	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.3.2.2.1; 0.3.2.2.2; 0.4.1.1.1 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.3.1.1; 1.4.3.1.2 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1; 2.3.2.2.1; 2.4.3.1.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.2.3; 3.1.1.2.4; 3.1.3.2.1; 3.1.3.2.2; 3.1.3.4.1; 3.3.3.1.1 5 th grade – 5.1.1.1.1; 5.1.1.1.2; 5.1.1.1.3; 5.1.3.2.1	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park Miesville Ravine Park Reserve	All Year	Park Field Trip Virtual Program Outreach Visit
Soil Science	Get the dirt on dirt! Learn about processes that help create soil. Observe soil samples to identify organisms that help keep soils healthy	Kindergarten – 0.4.1.1.1 1 st grade – 1.3.1.3.2 5 th grade – 5.3.1.2.1	Lebanon Hills Regional Park	May-October	Park Field Trip Outreach Visit

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
That's Classified!	What makes a bird a bird or a fish a fish? Learn characteristics of different classes of animals who live in Minnesota.	Kindergarten – 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.3.1.1; 1.4.1.1.1; 1.4.2.1.1; 1.4.2.1.2; 1.4.3.1.1; 1.4.3.1.2 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.2	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park Miesville Ravine Park Reserve	All Year	Park Field Trip Outreach Visit
Trees, Trees, Trees	Compare similarities and differences of trees and leaves. Learn how trees (and other plants) grow from seeds, what they need to survive and how they change throughout the year.	Kindergarten – 0.1.1.2.1; 0.4.1.1.1; 0.4.1.1.2; 0.4.2.1.1 1 st grade – 1.1.1.1.1; 1.1.1.1.2; 1.1.3.1.1 2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1; 2.4.1.1.1; 2.4.2.1.1; 2.4.3.1.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.1.1; 3.1.1.2.3; 3.1.3.2.1; 3.4.1.1.1; 3.4.1.1.2 5 th grade – 5.4.1.1.1	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve	All Year	Park Field Trip Virtual Program Outreach Visit

Nature Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Weather Watchers	We experience weather every day. Learn about the history of weather forecasting, the difference between weather and climate and take measurements of today's conditions to make your own forecast.	2 nd grade – 2.1.1.2.1; 2.3.2.2.1 3 rd grade – 3.1.1.2.1; 3.1.1.2.2; 3.1.3.2.1; 3.1.3.4.1 5 th grade – 5.1.1.2.1; 5.1.1.2.2; 5.1.3.4.1 8 th grade – 8.1.3.4.1; 8.1.3.4.2; 8.3.2.2.2; 8.3.2.2.3	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve Lake Byllesby Regional Park	All Year	Park Field Trip Virtual Program Outreach Visit

Recreation Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Archery*	Draw, aim, release! Learn the basics of archery and work on your skills during this introductory class. This program requires 3 hours and is led by NASP certified instructors.	5 th grade – 5.2.2.1.2; 5.2.2.1.3 6 th grade – 6.2.2.1.1; 6.2.2.2.1; 6.2.2.2.2; 6.2.2.2.3; 6.2.3.2.1 Group size limited to 25 or less. Grades 4 and up	Spring Lake Park Reserve	April-October	Park Field Trip

Recreation Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Canoeing*	Experience the quiet glide of the paddle through the water as you learn and practice basic canoe skills.	5 th grade – 5.2.2.1.2; 5.2.2.1.3 6 th grade – 6.2.2.1.1; 6.2.2.2.1; 6.2.2.2.2; 6.2.2.2.3 Group size limited to 20 or less Grades 5 and up	Lebanon Hills Regional Park	May-October	Park Field Trip
Cross-Country Skiing*	Learn the history of cross-country skiing, equipment, and technique, then hit the trails to practice your skills.	2 nd grade – 2.1.2.2.2; 2.2.1.1.1; 2.2.2.1.2; 2.2.2.2.1 5 th grade – 5.2.2.1.2; 5.2.2.1.3 6 th grade – 6.2.2.1.1; 6.2.2.2.1; 6.2.2.2.2; 6.2.2.2.3; 6.2.3.2.1 Group size limited to 25 or less Grades 2 and up	Lebanon Hills Regional Park	January-March (snow conditions permitting)	Park Field Trip

Recreation Program Topic	Description	MN Science Standards	Park Locations Offered	Months Offered	Format Available
Geocaching	Learn the basics of GPS navigation then head out to find up to five caches to solve a puzzle.	3 rd grade – 3.1.1.2.3; 3.1.3.2.1; 3.1.3.2.2; 3.1.3.4.1; 3.3.3.1.1 5 th grade – 5.1.1.1.1; 5.1.1.1.2; 5.1.1.2.2; 5.1.3.2.1; 5.1.3.4.1 7 th grade – 7.1.3.4.1; 7.1.3.4.2 Group size limited to 30 or less Grades 3 and up	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park	All Year	Park Field Trip Outreach Visit
Snowshoeing*	Compare traditional and modern snowshoe technology by looking at different materials and designs of snowshoes over time. Hit the trail to find out if they really keep you above the snow!	2 nd grade – 2.1.2.2.1; 2.1.2.2.2; 2.1.2.2.3 6 th grade – 6.1.2.1.2; 6.1.2.1.3 Group size limited to 30 or less	Lebanon Hills Regional Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Thompson County Park Spring Lake Park Reserve	January – March (snow conditions permitting)	Park Field Trip Outreach Visit

Contact us

For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/> - School Nature Programs or contact us at 651.554.6534.