

**School Programs
2026-2027**

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District
Email: Education@StJosephSWCD.org

**Request a
Program
here:**



Program Name	Grade Levels	Description	Location	Science Standards
Programs for K-3rd grade are 35-40 minutes. Programs for 4th grade and up are 40 min, or can be longer depending on your schedule.				
Most programs start indoors with a lesson and then go outdoors for an activity.				
Backyard Explorer	K-3	Discuss types of local habitats, and what animals live in those habitats and what they need to survive. Explore around your school yard looking for signs of animal life and do an "Animal Signs" scavenger hunt.	Indoor lesson, outdoor activity.	K-LS1-1, K-ESS2-2, K-ESS3-1, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS4-1, 3-LS4-3
Camouflage	K-3	Look at pictures of local animals and discuss how and why they are camouflaged. Play a game to show how it is harder to find camouflaged items/animals.	Need a video screen. Indoors and outdoors.	K-LS1-1; K-ESS3-1, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS4-1, 3-LS4-2, 3-LS4-3
Pollinator Power	K-4th	Learn what pollinators are and why they are important to nature and our food supply. Play a game to learn about the work of pollination.	Need a video screen. Indoors and outdoors.	K-LS1-1, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS4-1, 2-LS2-2, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS2-1, 3-LS4-3, 4-LS1-1, 4-LS1-2
Native Plants	K-5th	Learn about native caterpillars, plants, and birds. Discuss why our native caterpillars need native plants. Discussion will include butterfly & moth life cycle, the food web, and healthy ecosystems. Go outside to look for caterpillars and discuss plants found in the school yard.	Need a video screen. Indoors and outdoors.	K-LS1-1, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS2-1, 2-LS4-1, 2-ESS2-1, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS4-2, 3-LS4-3, 3-LS4-4, 4-LS1-1, 5-PS3-1, 5-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1
Native Plants - Upper Grades	6th-12th	Discuss the importance of native plants and biodiversity, and the effect of non-native and invasive plants on our ecosystem. Discuss how our landscaping choices can change our ecosystem and how we can improve it. Identify native/non-native plants in the schoolyard.	Need a video screen. Indoors and outdoors.	MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5, MS-LS1-4, MS-ESS3-3, HS-LS2-2, HS-LS2-4, HS-LS2-6, HS-LS2-7, HS-LS4-5, HS-LS4-6, HS-ESS3-3, HS-ESS3-4, HS-ENV1-1, HS-ENV1-2, HS-ENV2-7, HS-ENV4-2, HS-ENV5-3

Native Plants Growing Kit	K-6th	A limited number of growing kits will be distributed in March/April. Supplies provided to start seeds of a native wildflower in your classroom. Also must schedule a native plant program during this school year (preferably March-May). Call for details and to be added to the list.		K-PS3-1, K-LS1-1, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS2-1, 2-LS4-1, 2-ESS2-1, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS3-1, 3-LS3-2, 3-LS4-3, 4-LS1-1, 5-PS3-1, 5-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1, MS-LS1-6, MS-LS2-3, MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5, MS-LS1-7, MS-LS1-4, MS-LS1-5, MS-ESS3-3
Invasive Species Murder Mystery	5th-8th	Learn about invasives species and how they got here. Students will be "Detectives" in an activity to determine which invasive species committed the crime.	Indoors	4-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1, MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5, MS-LS1-4, MS-LS1-5, MS-ESS3-3
Trees	K-5th	Discuss what trees need to grow, what they provide for wildlife, what they provide for us. Measure a tree in the school yard and learn leaf shapes of common trees.	Indoors and outdoors	K- LS1-1, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 1-LS1-1, 2-LS2-1, 2-LS4-1, 2-ESS2-1, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS3-2, 3-LS4-3, 4-LS1-1, 5-PS3-1, 5-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1
Trees - Upper Grades	6th-12th	Discussion on the importance of trees can be tailored to what you are studying. Examples include - ecosystems, biodiversity, climate, energy, invasive species. Measure/identify trees in the school yard and learn to identify the leaves of common trees.	Indoors and outdoors	MS-LS1-6, MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-3, MS-LS2-5, MS-LS1-4, MS-LS1-5, MS-ESS3-3, HS-LS2-2, HS-LS2-4, HS-LS2-5, HS-LS2-7, HS-LS4-5, HS-LS4-6, HS-ENV1-1, HS-ENV2-7, HS-ENV4-2, HS-ENV5-3
Tree Factory	4th-6th	Learn about the structure and function of trees. Review tree parts and photosynthesis. Model the parts of a tree by acting them out in a whole-class activity. Observe various tree seeds and tree cookies with magnifying glasses.	Indoors and outdoors	4-LS1-1, 5-LS1-1, 5-ESS2-1, 5-ESS3-1, MS-LS1-6, MS-LS2-5
The Watercycle	K-6th	Learn how water moves through the water cycle with a fun activity. Discuss evaporation, condensation, precipitation and all the places water occurs on Earth.	Indoors	K-PS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 2-ESS2-1, 2-ESS2-3, 4-LS1-1, 4-ESS2-1, 5-EES2-1, 5-ESS3-1, MS-ESS2-4,
A Drop in the Bucket	5th-12th	Estimate the percentage of Earth's surface that is covered in water. Do an activity to learn how much is fresh water and available for use. Discuss human impacts on Earth's water resources and what we can do to conserve water.	Indoors	5-EES2-1, 5-ESS2-2, 5-ESS3-1, MS-ESS3-1, MS-ESS3-3, MS-ESS3-4, HS-LS2-7, HS-ESS3-1, HS-ENV4-2, HS-ENV5-3

Wonderful Watersheds	4th-12th	Discuss our local watershed and water bodies, and how pollution affects our waters. Learn about the impacts of human activities on our watershed and what we can do to ensure clean water for everyone.	Indoors	4-LS1-1, 4-ESS2-1, 5-EES2-1, 5-ESS3-1, MS-ESS2-1, MS-ESS2-2, MS-ESS3-1, MS-ESS2-4, MS-ESS3-3, HS-LS2-7, HS-ESS2-2, HS-ESS2-5, HS-ESS3-1, HS-ESS3-4, HS-ENV1-2, HS-ENV2-7, HS-ENV4-2, HS-ENV5-3
Wiggling Worms	K-3rd	Discuss what makes healthy soil and the role of decomposers. Observe live earthworms and do some simple worm "experiments". Option to make a small "worm bin" for your classroom if requested.	Indoors	K-PS3-1, K-LS1-1, K-ESS2-2, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS4-1, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS4-3
Soil Health & Soil Biology	4th-12th	Learn about the soil ecosystem and the amazing creatures living beneath our feet. Discuss what we can do to improve soil health. View soil invertebrates up close with our microscopes. Depending on grade level, we can discuss nutrient cycles, decomposition, symbiotic relationships, biodiversity, and human impacts.	Need a video screen. Indoors.	4-LS1-1, 4-LS1-2, 5-PS3-1, 5-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1, MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-3, MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5, MS-LS1-7, MS-ESS2-1, MS-ESS2-2, MS-ESS3-1, MS-ESS3-3, MS-ESS3-4, HS-LS2-2, HS-LS2-4, HS-LS2-6, HS-LS2-7, HS-LS4-5, HS-LS4-6, HS-ESS2-2, HS-ESS2-5, HS-ESS3-1, HS-ESS3-3, HS-ESS3-4, HS-ENV1-1, 1-2, 1-5, 2-1, 2-7, 4-2, 5-3
Intro to Nature Journaling	2nd-12th	Start nature journaling with your class to boost observation skills and incorporate more science into your curriculum. Journaling can keep students engaged, increase attention spans, and reinforce lessons from other subjects, especially English and Math.	Indoors and outdoors	2-LS4-1, K-2-ETS1-2, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS3-2, 3-LS4-3, 3-ESS2-1, 4-LS1-1, 4-ESS2-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS1-2, 5-ESS2-1, MS-LS1-6, MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-4, MS-LS1-4, MS-LS1-5, MS-LS4-2, HS-LS2-4, HS-LS2-6, HS-LS4-4, HS-LS4-5, HS-ENV1-5, 2-2, 4-1
Bats	K-5th	Learn about the bats of Indiana, where they live, what they eat, and why they are important for our ecosystem. Play a game to learn about echolocation.	Need a video screen. Indoors and outdoors.	K-LS1-1, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS4-1, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS2-1, 3-LS3-1, 3-LS4-2, 4-LS1-1, 4-LS1-2, 5-LS2-1
Furs and Skulls	2nd-12th	View furs and skulls of Indiana mammals and discuss the adaptations they have for their environments. Learn the characteristics of mammals and which animals are carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores.	Indoors	K-LS1-1, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 2-LS4-1, 3-LS1-1, 3-LS3-1, 3-LS4-2, 3-LS4-3, 4-LS1-1, 4-LS1-2, 5-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS1-4, MS-LS4-2
Energy Pyramid	4th-6th	Identify producers, consumers, and decomposers and learn how they interact in an ecosystem. Discuss the transfer of energy in an ecosystem. Do an activity to illustrate an energy pyramid.	Indoors	4-LS1-1, 4-LS1-2, 5-PS3-1, 5-LS2-1, MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-3, MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5

Oh Deer!	5th-9th	Discuss population dynamics in nature. Learn about carrying capacity and the relationship between animals and limited resources in a fun game. Record results of the game that can be used for a later math lesson.	Outdoors or Gym/large space	5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1, MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5, MS-ESS3-3, HS-LS2-1, HS-LS2-2
Checks and Balances	9th-12th	Learn about population ecology with a fun game and a little math. Identify limiting factors that can affect a wildlife population, discuss examples of habitat destruction and restoration, and learn about carrying capacity of a habitat.	Indoors	HS-LS2-1, HS-LS2-2, HS-LS2-6, HS-LS4-5, HS-ESS3-3, HS-ENV1-1, HS-ENV1-2, HS-ENV2-7, HS-ENV4-1, HS-ENV4-2, HS-ENV6-2

Custom Programs: Have a specific topic in mind? We can build a custom program for almost any environmental science topic.

Lesson Series: Any of the topics can be turned into a series of multiple lessons for an in-depth study.

Please share this list with other teachers in your school! We prefer to repeat a program for multiple classes in the same day.