FIELD TRIP PLANNING & EXPERIENCE GUIDE FOR K-12+ EDUCATORS

THE WILD CENTER
WELCOME

The Wild Center, and its new Wild Walk—an elevated trail across the treetops—is an all-day attraction, including 81-acres of outdoors, a 54,000-square-foot museum with engaging exhibits and live animals, movies and hands-on everything.

TOP 5 REASONS TO TAKE A FIELD TRIP TO THE WILD CENTER

1. We have River Otters!
2. Wild Walk allows you to take a walk on the wild side. Hang 25 feet up in the air in our giant spider's web, climb up into an eagle's nest, and explore all of Wild Walk's other magic.
3. Our outdoor Pines Play Area encourages play Adirondack style, allowing kids to use their imaginations to create forts and other structures, and run wild on this natural playground.
4. The Wild Center is home to over 450 species of live animals, including native fish, snakes, owls, and, of course, skunks,
5. Learning and education are fun at The Wild Center, with numerous interactive components that put a new spin on education across our campus.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Wild Center is located in the Adirondack Park, the biggest state park in the lower 48 states. It can hold Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Glacier, and Great Smokey National Parks inside its borders!
- The Wild Center uses all of the Adirondacks in its collection – from the summit of Whiteface Mountain to the meanders of the Raquette River. The Wild Center interprets all six million acres of the Adirondacks.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Use this guide to plan a meaningful and enriching learning experience for students before, during, and after your visit to The Wild Center.
- Adopt our suggested strategies to help students construct meaning.
- Empower chaperones to support student learning by using our planning documents.
- Use our ready-made student activities for planning your experience and assessing your students’ learning throughout your field trip.
A TRIP TO THE WILD CENTER IS...

- INTERACTIVE.
- EXPLORATORY.
- FOR EVERYONE!

We welcome ALL types of learners to The Wild Center. From homeschool students and co-ops, to public and private schools, to college students. Here, there’s something for everyone to learn, explore, and discover.

Check out everything we have to offer at wildcenter.org.

HOURS

Summer & Fall
Memorial Day to Labor Day: 10 am-6 pm
Seven days a week
Labor Day to Columbus Day: 10 am-5 pm
Seven days a week

Winter & Spring
Columbus Day to Memorial Day:
Seven days a week
10 am-5 pm
*Educational groups only
*For general visits see website for hours
*Closed the month of April for exhibit maintenance

DID YOU KNOW...
Teachers can visit The Wild Center prior to their field trip for free?” Just show your teacher ID at admissions.
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**The Adirondack Youth Climate Summit** is a participant-driven educational conference for youth held annually every November.

Student lead teams, from across the region, gather at The Wild Center, to learn, discuss and create their own Climate Action Plans.

Too far away to attend? Tune in online during the November summit or we can help you plan your own summit. Join our “Climate Newsflash” to receive updates from the climate movement.

For more information or to sign up for our newsletter contact: Katie O’Reilly Morgan, Youth Climate Program Coordinator kmorgan@wildcenter.org

bit.ly/YouthClimateInitiative

For questions, contact Patrick Murphy, Group Sales Coordinator pmurphy@wildcenter.org
RESERVATION INFORMATION

WHERE TO BEGIN
The Wild Center welcomes you and your group to visit and participate in a self-guided experience or select from an offering within our Wild Classroom Program Guide. Review the program descriptions and choose the option best suited for your group.

TO SCHEDULE A VISIT
1. Go to our website at bit.ly/WildClassroom
2. Look over the Wild Classroom Program Guide
3. Click on “Registration Form”

IMPORTANT: Please submit the form at least three weeks before your visit. You will receive an email confirmation when your visit has been booked.

Requested dates, programs and times are subject to availability. Animal availability is subject to change based on seasonal availability and care of our living collection.

CHAPERONES
One chaperone is required for every ten students under the age of 18. We suggest that chaperones familiarize themselves with The Wild Center by providing them with the Sample Chaperone Documents (located at the end of this guide). Students will understand the museum better and have a better learning experience when chaperones themselves are well prepared.

VISITING THE WILD SUPPLY COMPANY MUSEUM STORE
We would love for you to visit The Wild Supply Company! Because the space is limited, we ask teachers and trip leaders to please consider the following:

- Please stagger chaperones and their groups by pre-assigning a time to visit The Wild Supply Company so there are no more than 20 students in the store at a time.
- Before your trip date, please let us know that you’d like to visit the store so that we are prepared to accommodate your group. Occasionally, The Wild Supply Company is closed and we will let you know this ahead of time.
- Please ensure that chaperones closely supervise students while in the store.
GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

- While inside the museum and on our trails, stay with a chaperone at all times for safety.

- Walk inside the museum at all times; the floor is very hard and we want to ensure everyone’s safety.

- Be respectful of the live animals’ personal space. It’s safer for them and us if we don’t touch them or their enclosures.

- Please be gentle with our electronics.

- Do your part to keep the environment clean by disposing of trash and recyclables properly.
FACILITIES & ACCESSIBILITY

LUNCH
Student groups bringing bagged lunches are welcome to eat outdoors in the Esplanade Tent, Pines Play Area, or at any of the picnic table locations around our campus as weather permits. During winter or inclement weather, contingency plans will be made as needed by staff. Please note that the Waterside Café is unable to accommodate seating for school groups when the museum is open to the public. Prearranged lunches are possible through the Waterside Café with at least a three week notice. Be sure to fill out the lunch portion of the School Reservation Form to inform staff of this need.

IMPORTANT: The museum may occasionally need to coordinate lunch times and locations due to multiple groups and program scheduling. If needed, staff will provide this information during the reservation process.

WEATHER
Come prepared for variable weather all year. Being prepared with appropriate clothing and other personal belongings like a hat, water bottle and sunscreen will ensure a successful trip to The Wild Center no matter what season you and your students visit.

PARKING
Buses are welcome to drop off or pick up school groups at the entrance of The Wild Center. All school buses may park at the back of the parking lot. Please let the driver know they have access to the museum during the visit at no charge.

ACCESSIBILITY
The Wild Center strives to provide everyone with the opportunity to experience and enjoy the Adirondacks. We offer a variety of services to meet the needs of our visitors, some of which include:

- Manual wheelchairs and walkers available, free of charge
- Power scooter available – please call to reserve
- Wagons/Strollers for children, free of charge
- Universal design of main building and exhibit hall
- Accessible loop trail (0.2 miles) around Greenleaf Pond
- Accessible Wild Walk (Note: Entrance to Wild Walk is composed of a gravel path)
- Guided tour for the visually impaired (Please call in advance to schedule)
- Captioning available on select theater movies, scripts available for others – please call in advance or request services upon arrival at admissions
- Assisted listening devices available for theater presentations and shows
FIELD TRIP FUNDING

We understand that schools have limited funds to dedicate to field trips and that our rural location can limit visits for those schools that have to travel far. Below are some resources that can assist you in providing your students with a new perspective on the outdoors during a visit To The Wild Center.

- New York State Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) may offer aid towards educational field trips through a regional educational support program called Co-Ser. Check out the following available programs:
  - Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES - [Exploratory Enrichment Co-Ser](#)
  - The following BOCES regions can seek assistance from [Exploratory Enrichment Resources](#):
    - Capital Region BOCES
    - Champlain Valley
    - Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery
    - Questar III BOCES
    - Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex
  - Don’t see your BOCES district listed? Contact your regional administrator and ask about options for *cross contracting* services.

- Check with your local community foundations, Rotary or civic groups for assistance.

- [Target Field Trip Grants program](#)
Field Trip Check List

At least three weeks before your field trip

☐ Prepare to register.

☐ Choose three potential field trip dates.

☐ Look over the Wild Classroom Program Guide and choose an experience.

☐ Determine the total number of students and chaperones who will be visiting.

☐ Share any relevant special needs of your group/students with Wild Center staff.

☐ Complete the online field trip registration form at bit.ly/WildClassroom
  ○ Note: the registration form must be submitted three weeks prior to your visit.

☐ Complete necessary school paperwork (i.e. field trip documents, student permission slips, etc.).

☐ Coordinate transportation.

☐ Recruit chaperones (1 to 10 ratio).

☐ Prepare yourself and your students. If possible, visit The Wild Center prior to your field trip. General admission to the museum is free for teachers with staff card.

At least one week before your field trip

☐ Prepare chaperones by sharing maps and other information from this guide.

☐ Create chaperone groups. Remember to follow the chaperone-student 1 to 10 ratio.

☐ Prepare itineraries for chaperones including times to visit the museum store and gather any necessary materials for students. Scheduled program times will be provided by The Wild Center staff.

☐ Complete any needed pre-field trip activities in the classroom.

On the day of your field trip

☐ Distribute maps and itineraries to chaperones. Highlight important meeting times and locations.

☐ Lunch – The Wild Center has bins available to store lunch bags upon arrival.
PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE: COMMON CORE & NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

Educational standards have shifted from just *knowing* to having an emphasis on *doing*. The Wild Center provides a forum to apply the standards in multiple literacies and is a great resource for “stuff” that can be the basis for inquiry. Students have the opportunity to make a claim about science, find the evidence to back it up, and share their reasoning. A field trip can be part of in-depth, project-based learning that draws on classroom experience, independent conclusions, and the museum visit experience.

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<td>Obtaining, Evaluating, &amp; Communicating Information</td>
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<td>Evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats</td>
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<td>Present information, findings, and supporting evidence</td>
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EXHIBIT SPACE

ICE WALL
Glaciers shaped every part of the Adirondacks. Everything you’ll uncover during a visit has an icy story behind it.

MARSH OXBOW
Get up close and observe some of the residents in the Marsh Oxbow exhibit. There are many different species of animals including fish, turtles, and ducks. Can you spot them all?

DEEP LAKES
The fish you can see in the Deep Lakes are the direct descendants of fish that migrated to the Adirondacks 12,000 years ago.

TROUT STREAM
The trout stream allows students to learn more about the state fish, brook trout, and why intact habitats are so important. Younger students can play in our stream building dams, ripples and pools.
FOREST LAB
The forest floor is home to many animals from earthworms to wood frogs. Discover how important this habitat is by visiting the forest lab exhibit.

OTTER FALLS
Charismatic river otters can be seen swimming, foraging and playing right here at Otter Falls. This space provides the background to teach about adaptations, animal behavior and a species’ recovery.

PLANET ADIRONDACK
Planet Adirondack fills its own hall where you can watch the Earth come to life in an amazing display that will help you see the world with new eyes. Using this technology we are able to bring global events to a local level here in the Adirondacks. Check out the data sets we use at sos.noaa.gov/What_is_SOS/index.html.

ART STUDIO
The Artist Studio at the center of our Forest and the Trees exhibition provides the supplies for students to create and capture their own moments. By encouraging them to create their own art, we hope they gain new insights into the natural world.
PLANNING YOUR VISIT

Whether you are interested in a staff-led encounter or a self-guided exploration, connecting a field trip experience to classroom learning provides students focus and enough time to observe and closely examine the natural world around them.

In order to meet specific learning objectives, focus your field trip on one or two relevant themes. A focused field trip supports and enhances your students’ learning and provides students with necessary background information and time to reflect, making the trip meaningful.

There are three main parts to a focused field trip:

1. **Pre-field trip activities**
   completed in the classroom

2. **Field trip activities**
   at The Wild Center

3. **Post-field trip activities**
   done back in the classroom

**Trip Tip:**

Look over the ready-made activities found in the Educator Resource Guide for students to do while exploring the museum. See how these activities may bridge learning in the classroom before and after your visit.
BEFORE YOUR VISIT

A successful trip begins well before students board the bus.

GOALS

- Students have realistic expectations about what they will see and do at The Wild Center.
- Students understand the goals for learning at the museum.
- Students understand how the field trip fits into classroom learning.
- Students complete activities that prepare them for learning at The Wild Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Strategies: Students can…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for the Field Trip Experience</td>
<td>• Examine a museum map</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Explore The Wild Center website</td>
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<td>• Discuss students’ prior visits to The Wild Center or other museums</td>
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<td>• Communicate behavior expectations and consequences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Create a list of what students want to discover at The Wild Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare for the Field Trip Programs</td>
<td>• Review or introduce relevant content and vocabulary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Distribute field trip activity sheets and review directions</td>
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<td>• Model field trip activities/expectations</td>
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Trip Tip:

Use a book to introduce students to something they may see or do at The Wild Center. We recommend:
- **Owl Moon** – Interview a staff member about the owls that live at the museum.
- **Weslandia** – Visit the Pines Play Area and let students’ imaginations soar.
DURING YOUR VISIT

GOALS

- Students thoughtfully engage with the museum resources through focused activities to meet the trip’s learning objectives.
- Students build on concepts and skills learned during the pre-field trip activities.
- Students have fun learning!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Strategies: Students can…</th>
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</table>
| Obtain, Evaluate and Communicate Information | • Play “I spy”  
• Work in groups to create a scavenger hunt in an exhibit space, then exchange and complete another group’s hunt  
• Watch an animal in its enclosure for five minutes |
| Develop and Use Models | • Create detailed, scientific drawings of specimens  
• Take pictures or make sketches in preparation for creating a model after the field trip |
| Plan and Carry Out Investigations | • Ask a question and gather evidence at the museum to create an explanation (ex. How are the teeth of carnivores and herbivores alike and different?) |
| Practice Reading and Writing | • Create a comic strip to illustrate what happened before, during and after an event  
• Write a detailed description of a specific specimen  
• Take notes to write a newspaper article reviewing an exhibit |

Trip Tip:

As you plan how to empower chaperones to lead small groups around The Wild Center, consider the space and how it may take students extra time to travel from one place to another. Make sure to stress this to chaperones so students are on time to any scheduled programs.
**AFTER YOUR VISIT**

Encourage students to reflect on their experience at The Wild Center and synthesize learning after the trip.

**Goals**
- Students reflect on their field trip experience.
- Students share what they learned at The Wild Center.
- Students discuss and investigate questions that arose during their visit.
- Students connect field trip experiences to learning at school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Strategies: Students can…</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate Information</td>
<td>• Create a class book that illustrates field trip learning</td>
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<td>• Edit pictures or film to create a final presentation, public service announcement, or museum advertisement</td>
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<td>• Create a scientific poster to display evidence gathered at the museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and Use Models</td>
<td>• Create dioramas to represent a scene from the museum</td>
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<td>• Work in groups to design a museum exhibition; students can serve as naturalists for guests or another classroom</td>
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<td>Practice Speaking and Writing</td>
<td>• Share field trip findings during a classroom discussion</td>
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<td>• Write a journal entry about your experience</td>
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<td>• Present field trip observations and learning to another class or group of parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigate Further</td>
<td>• Investigate museum-inspired questions</td>
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<td>• Conduct experiments or investigations to learn more about what was explored at the museum</td>
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**TRIP TIP:**

No one can possibly know the answer to every question that students ask while visiting The Wild Center! Encourage students to make further observations. Prompt students to think about possible explanations for their questions and generate ideas about how they might find the answers.
Dear Field Trip Chaperone,

Thank you for joining us on our field trip to The Wild Center! Our visit is scheduled to take place on ___________________. Please meet us at __________________________ at _______________ . We will return to school by _______________.

During this field trip, the students will learn about ___________________________.

At The Wild Center, we will visit: __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

While visiting these spaces, students will ____________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________.

You will be assigned to lead a small group of students during the visit. Please make sure students stay with you at all times and are on task. If you have questions or need help, please contact me or find a museum staff member or volunteer.

Let me know if you have any questions before the trip. Again, thank you for sharing your time with us.

Sincerely,

____________________________________________
(teacher name)

____________________________________________
(contact information)
Group Leader/Teacher: _____________________________ Contact info: ___________________________

Number of Students in Your Group: ___________________________ Departure time: __________________

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<th>Itinerary</th>
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Lunch time and location: ___________________________ Museum store time: __________

Remember:

- Stay with your group at all times.
- Please arrive a few minutes early to scheduled programs.
- Bathrooms are located down the hall to the right of the entrance doors.
- Please closely supervise students while in the museum store.
- Have a question? Ask one of the museum staff members or volunteers wearing The Wild Center shirts.
Trip Tip:
Get involved! As you explore exhibits or participate in a program, encourage the students in your group to think about what they’re seeing and doing. Resist the temptation to supply students with answers! While exploring the exhibits, try asking your group some open-ended questions:

- What do you wonder?
- Why do you think about that?
- How do you know?
- Have you seen something like this before?
- How do you think it works?
- What do you think is happening here?
- What does this remind you of?
- What does this make you curious about?
- What did you discover?

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1. **Wildflower Field**
   - Accessible from the Pond Loop Trail.

2. **Picnic Tables**
   - Extensive trails can all be accessed from the outdoor café area.

3. **The Snag**
   - A forty-foot high tree trunk filled with stories about life in the woods.

4. **Spiders Web**
   - Hangout 25 feet above the ground.

5. **The Twig Tree House**
   - Experience life as it’s lived in the Adirondack forest.

6. **Canoe Docks**
   - Plus viewing decks for the marsh.

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[Map of the Wild Center](image)

*www.wildcenter.org*