The MacKenzie Center's programs include environmental education and outdoor skills classes. Each program is tailored to the group's needs, grade level, and learning goals. Many of the lessons are flexible and timing can be adjusted. Topics include conservation, ecology, wildlife, forestry, aquatic and water issues, outdoor recreation and skills, team building, and more. If you would like to do something that is not listed here, talk to a MacKenzie Educator, and we will help create a class that fits your group’s needs.

**Nature Exploration:**
- Bird Watching
- Nature Hikes
- Scavenger Hunts
- **Wisconsin Weather**

**Sustainability:**
- Conservation Museum Tour
- Invasive Species Service Learning

**Wildlife:**
- Hazardous Links, Possible Solutions
- How Birds Make a Living
- How Many Bears Can Live in a Forest?
- Oh Deer!
- Owl Pellets
- Predator/Prey Activity
- Secrets of the Skull
- Sound Off
- Tracking and Animal Signs
- Wildlife Habitat Area Tour
- Wolf/Deer Activity

**Forestry:**
- Forestry & Woodcutting
- Learn to Make Maple Syrup
- Logging Museum Tour
- Looking at Leaves
- Nature’s Recyclers (Decomposers)
- Tree Identification

**Outdoor Skills Classes:**
- Archery
- Compass Skills 101
- **Cross-Country Skiing**
- Fishing Clinic
- Geocaching 101
- **Ice Fishing Clinic**
- Nature Photography
- Shooting Safety & Skills
- **Snowshoeing**
- Team Building
- Team Building Trail

**Survival Skills:**
- Fire Building
- Shelter Building

*bold indicates new class
*♦ indicates lodge groups only
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The Wildlife Exhibit, Conservation Museum, and Logging Museum are open for 10am-4pm in the summer daily, from the first full weekend in May thru the last full weekend in October. During the winter those exhibits are only open Monday – Friday, 10am-4pm, from November through April.
MacKenzie Center Class Descriptions

NATURE EXPLORATION

BIRD WATCHING
Grades: all ages
Length: 60 min
Many different species of birds call MacKenzie home or pass through during migration. Students will learn how to use binoculars and will use guides to identify local species.

SCAVENGER HUNTS
Grades: all ages
Length: 30-90 min
Using a check-off sheet as a guide, students examine the surrounding area identifying things to see, hear, smell, feel and think about. Scavenger hunts are tailored to each group’s interests and age level.

NATURE HIKES
Grades: all ages
Length: 30-90 min
There are five self-guiding trails on the MacKenzie Center grounds. Please take some time to hike these with your students or use them with some of your own activities.

WISCONSIN WEATHER
Grades: 4th - 7th
Length: 60 min
Step outside to examine and understand the basic elements of weather here in Wisconsin. Students will participate in a discussion about clouds and the water cycle, wind, air pressure, and humidity. By building their own anemometer, students will have a chance to become citizen scientists and calculate wind speed.

SUSTAINABILITY

CONSERVATION MUSEUM TOUR
Grades: all ages
Length: flexible (30 min)
Examine this conservation themed museum and discuss some of the issues and themes found within. Worksheets and guide packets are available.

INVASIVE SPECIES SERVICE-LEARNING
Grades: 6th and up
Length: flexible (30-90 min)
Students will learn to identify invasive plant species and participate in management techniques to control them.
HAZARDOUS LINKS, POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS  
*Grades: 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>*  
*Length: 60 min*  
This engaging activity simulates the spread of harmful pesticides throughout a food chain. Students will act as grasshoppers, shrews and hawks while they interact in their habitat. Students will be able to see how harmful pesticides stay in the food chain and actually increase in intensity at the top; this process is known as biomagnification.

HOW BIRDS MAKE A LIVING  
*Grades: 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>*  
*Length: 60 min*  
Birds have special adaptations that allow them to survive. This activity discusses the many types of specialized foot and beak structures that help birds exist in different habitats. Later, students try to “beak the clock” by securing food in different habitats using their own specialized “beaks”.

HOW MANY BEARS CAN LIVE IN A FOREST?  
*Grades: 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>*  
*Length: 60 min*  
This engaging game allows the students to act as bears while focusing on the interaction between animals and their habitat. Students will learn that there is a finite amount of food available for animals in a given habitat. This limiting factor inhibits the individual number of bears that can live in an area. See how many bears can survive here at the MacKenzie Center habitat!

OH DEER!  
*Grades: 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>*  
*Length: 60 min*  
During this entertaining game, students will be able to recognize the essential needs for survival in any habitat. This lesson also teaches an ever changing balance between a species (deer) and the factors which affect its population.

OWL PELLETS  
*Grades: 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>*  
*Length: 60 min*  
Students will be able to construct a simple food chain by examining owl pellets and reconstructing prey skeleton. Using the eating habits of the owl and its food sources as reference students will hypothesize what the owl might have eaten. *Groups need to supply their own owl pellets for this activity.*

PREDATOR/PREY ACTIVITY  
*Grades: 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>*  
*Length: 60 min*  
Students will learn principles of predation and predator-prey relationships by becoming predators themselves as they explore an artificial population of animals (caramel and chocolate candies).

SECRETS OF THE SKULL  
*Grades: 5<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>*  
*Length: 60 min*  
Through observations such as tooth size & shape, eye socket placement, nose & ear size students will characterize the animal whose skull they hold. These details will place skulls into groups such as carnivore, herbivore, and omnivore as well as shed light on other details about an animal’s life and adaptations. *Not available for day groups in the winter.*
WILDLIFE Continued…

TRACKING & ANIMAL SIGNS
Grades: 4th-8th
Length: 60-90 min
Students will learn about different animals and the tracks and signs they leave for us to find. This activity can include making plaster track casts if requested.

WILDLIFE EXHIBIT TOUR
Grades: all ages Length: 60-90 min (Wildlife exhibit only)
By seeing native Wisconsin animals up-close, visitors can study the animal’s adaptations, habitats, human interaction and more. There are 15 different species of wildlife to learn about here at the MacKenzie center.

WATER

POND LIFE
Grades: 1st-7th
Length: 60-90 min
To acquaint the students with the pond as a natural community, and introduce them to the wide varieties of life found there. Students will spend time exploring the pond and identifying the critters they find. Available in Spring, Summer & early Fall.

STREAM STUDY & WATER QUALITY
Grades: 4th-8th
Length: 2.5 hours
Students will act as fish managers and learn to use the tools necessary to collect data for measuring survival, habitat requirements, and water quality. Students will study a section of Rowan Creek to determine whether or not the German Brown Trout can survive in Rowan Creek. Groups are responsible for transportation to and from the stream off site. Available in late Spring, Summer & early Fall.

SOUND OFF
Grades: 4th-8th
Length: 60 min
After assuming a role of an organism, blindfolded students try to find their partner using only the sounds from musical instruments while avoiding an equally blindfolded predator using his own instrument.

WOLF/DEER ACTIVITY
Grades: 4th-8th
Length: 60 min
After a basic introduction to the natural history of gray wolves and white-tailed deer, students have a chance to become members of a wolf pack or deer herd. They will then take part in a simulated “hunt”, the deer laying down a scent trail (scented sponges) and the wolves following it.

WATERSHED PROGRAM
Grades: 4th-12th
Length: 60 min
Students will learn about the environmental, ecological, and human components of a watershed. Students will be able create this own watershed and learn about how water moves through the land by using the groundwater model. Not available for day groups in the winter.
FORESTRY

FORESTRY & WOODCUTTING
Grades: 4th-8th
Length: 60-90 min
Develop an understanding of forest ecology, basic forestry and woodcutting skills. Explore WI history of the lumberjack and use a traditional “two-man saw” to cut your own slice of the log or a wood “cookie.”

LEARN TO MAKE MAPLE SYRUP
Grades: 4th-8th
Length: 2 hours
(morning or afternoon program)
Learn about how Native Americans traveled to the sugar bush and how they made maple sugar. Learn to identify a maple tree and about maple tree ecology. Your students will receive a hands-on experience tapping a tree all while learning the history of how the Pioneers made maple syrup. Walk away with a taste of maple syrup made from the MacKenzie Center’s sugar bush. Available for visits in March only

LOGGING MUSEUM TOUR
Grades: all ages
Length: flexible (30 min)
Examine this forestry themed museum and discuss some of the issues and themes found within. Worksheets and guide packets are available.

LOOKING AT LEAVES
Grades: K-4th
Length: 60 min
Students will be able compare and contrast, classify and categorize different leaves & needles of a variety of tree and plant species. Students will understand how leaf shapes, sizes, and other characteristics vary from plant to plant.

NATURE’S RECYCLERS (DECOMPOSERS)
Grades: K-8th
Length: 60 min
Students will learn the basics of decomposition and biodegradation during this hands-on activity. This lesson includes exploration and discussion of nature’s decomposers as well as a demonstration on composting here at MacKenzie. The biodegradable relay portion of this lesson offers the chance for students to learn about which waste items can be recycled, placed in a compost bin, or end up in a landfill while participating in friendly competition. Information gathered during this lesson will allow the students to start their own compost at home or school!

TREE IDENTIFICATION
Grades: 6th-8th
Length: 60-90 min
Students will be able to recognize and describe characteristics that differentiate trees. In addition they will be able to recognize common trees of WI by examining those characteristics and use a key to learn how to identify them.
OUTDOOR SKILLS CLASSES

ARCHERY
Grades: 4th - 12th
Length: 90 minutes
Spend time learning the basics of archery safety and shooting form, then put that knowledge into practice with our National Archery in the Schools Program equipment. Each class is taught by a NASP certified instructor. Not available for day groups in the winter.

COMPASS SKILLS 101
Grades: 4th - 12th
Length: 60-90 minutes
Develop a basic compass knowledge and instill a sense of awareness of the environment. Enable students to meet challenges and make decisions, while navigating thru our orienteering course(s).

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING
Grades: 4th and up
Length: flexible
Venture into the snowy landscape using the MEEC cross country skis available for your group. This equipment can be used by Lodge groups as an unguided activity, or with an educator. Pair this activity with a guided ecology hike to learn more about the plants and animals on the MacKenzie Center property while also learning a new outdoor skill.

FISHING CLINIC
Grades: 4th - 12th
Length: 4 hours
Students will learn basic fishing skills like baiting and casting. Students will also have the opportunity to practice the new skills while fishing at Lake Wisconsin, just 12 miles from the MacKenzie Center. If students are over 16 years of age a valid WI fishing license is required. Fishing poles and bait included. Groups are responsible for transportation to and from the lake, off site.

GEOCACHING 101
Grades: 4th - 12th
Length: 60-90 min
Participate and learn the basics of this growing outdoor entertainment game. Use a GPS to find several treasures! Great all group activity, treasures and GPS units provided.

ICE-FISHING CLINIC
Grades: 4th - 12th
Length: 4 hours
Students will begin by learning the basic skills and equipment involved with fishing during the winter. Students will then have the opportunity to test their newly learned skills fishing at Lake Wisconsin, just 12 miles from MEEC. Students over 16 years of age a will need a valid WI fishing license. Fishing poles and bait included. Groups are responsible for transportation to and from the lake, off site.

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY
Grades: 5th - 12th
Length: 60 min
Learn the basics of photography, before exploring the natural world around you through the lens of a camera.

TEAM BUILDING
Grades: all ages
Length: 60 min
Students will work through a selection of team building activities appropriate to their age level and group focus.

TEAM BUILDING TRAIL
Grades: 4th - 12th
Length: 60 min
Through direct interaction students will cooperatively decide on a solution to a carefully designed problem and then carry out a plan of action, while working through a trail of activities.
OUTDOOR SKILLS Continued…

SHOOTING SAFETY & SKILLS
  Grades: 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>
  Length: 2 hours
  Learn a traditional skill among Wisconsin residents. Trained instructors will lead the students to learn the basics of shooting safety and how to aim and shoot an air-gun using our self-contained shooting tent.

SNOWSHOEING
  Grades: 4<sup>th</sup> and up
  Length: flexible
  Venture into the snowy landscape using the MEEC snowshoes available for your group. This equipment can be used by Lodge groups as an unguided activity, or with an educator. Pair this activity with a guided ecology hike to learn more about the plants and animals on the MacKenzie Center property while also learning a new outdoor skill.

SURVIVAL SKILLS

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<th>FIRE BUILDING</th>
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<td>Learn about the science behind building a fire and different fire starting techniques.</td>
<td>Students will learn how to build a primitive survival shelter, such as a debris hut.</td>
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For more information on any of our classes or to reserve your group today please contact our group facilitator at (608) 635-8105 or email DNRMacKenzieCenter@wisconsin.gov

*The MacKenzie Center Shuttle can be available for stream study and fishing classes upon request. Please contact our group facilitator for more information.