

Teacher Planning Packet

2016-2017



Day Programs

www.mcdowellec.com
Phone: 205.387.1806

105 DeLong Road
Nauvoo, Alabama 35578

Welcome to the McDowell Environmental Center!



Welcome to McDowell Environmental Center! Welcome to the most incredible field trip experience your students will ever have! At McDowell Environmental Center (MEC), our philosophy is to teach students in the great outdoors and give them an experience impossible to have in an indoor classroom. They will learn by seeing nature up close... wading into a stream to catch invertebrates, touching sandstone canyon walls, identifying trees using a dichotomous key... You get the idea!

We offer the best in hands-on environmental science in a 1,140-acre outdoor classroom. We also offer fun, team-building classes that work wonders for the group dynamics of your class and individual challenges that build students' self-confidence. Our instructors have been trained in a child-centered, experiential approach to teaching and are passionate about sharing the natural world with students and adults.

Once you contact us and confirm your trip with our Program Coordinator, Carrie Evans, she will guide your planning process. **Please read through this packet very thoroughly as the first step in planning your trip.** If you plan to bring multiple grade levels, consult with the coordinator about how to provide different classes for each grade level. Each class variance allows students who are returning to receive new information and experiences.

We can't wait to meet you and your students! This trip will be the most magical and educational trip of their lives!

Jen Kopnicky, Director
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Carrie Evans, Program Coordinator
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TRIP COST: \$25 per person

For every ten students who attend, one adult may come free. Additional adults may attend for full price. **Please note that lunch may be an option for day groups, but has an added cost of \$7, making the price \$32.** To utilize the Climbing Wall, Power Pole, and Trust Swing, add \$10 per field group/per class.

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PROGRAM DETAILS

Facilities

Our diverse forests, streams, canyons, ponds, waterfalls, meadows, hiking trails, and ropes course serve as our classroom, rain or shine. In case of truly inclement weather, we use indoor teaching areas.

Meals

Depending on the number of residential students in attendance at the time, we may be able to provide lunch for day groups, for an additional cost of \$7.00. If our dining hall is full, or we are unable to provide your group with lunch, your group will need to bring their own lunches. We can provide water coolers and a picnic location for your students' lunch.

Services Provided

Our experienced staff handles the entire program for you. We plan, teach and supply materials for all classes. We are here to help with pre-trip planning and are available to make a presentation for teachers, students, parents or school administration as needed.

The Lead Teacher's Role

Most of the Lead Teacher's responsibilities deal with pre-trip preparations. The enclosed Contract (pgs. 5-7) lists your responsibilities and the Lead Teacher Timeline (pg. 3) helps you to sequence them. During the program we encourage you to be a participant, learning along with your students.

Making a Reservation

To make a reservation, call or email us (see previous page for contact information). New schools must send a non-refundable confirmation fee within 2 weeks of your request to be placed on the calendar. The fee is \$200.00 for reservations of 50 or fewer students, and \$400.00 for reservations of more than 50 students. The confirmation fee is waived for annually returning schools. We try to honor all date requests, however, this is not guaranteed. Availability is based upon space that residential groups have not filled.

Cancellation Policy

An accurate count of student participants is due at least 60 days prior to your scheduled trip date in order to be fair to all schools. Once the 60 day deadline has passed, the school is responsible for a minimum payment of 90% of the number of reserved student participants as stated in our Reservation Confirmation.

Risk Acknowledgement Forms

If you choose Climbing Wall, Trust Swing, Power Pole, or Team Challenge classes, you must have Acknowledgement of Risk forms signed by parents/guardians for the students. It is important that you bring all of the original *Student/Adult Acknowledgement of Risk Forms* on arrival day.

Emergency Guidelines

Upon your arrival you will be briefed on emergency procedures by the MEC staff. If advanced medical care is required, the patient can be taken to Walker Baptist Medical Center in Jasper, 15 miles away. One chaperone or teacher must drive separately so that a vehicle will be at the center in the event that an emergency should occur.

Students with Special Needs

We can customize our classes to make them fun and accessible for most students. Please discuss any special needs with us ahead of time so that we can be prepared to meet them.

Teacher and Chaperone Guidelines

There must be a minimum of 1 adult chaperone for each field group. MEC recommends a 1:10 adult/student ratio including teachers. Chaperones can help make your trip easier, but if not chosen properly, they can make it more difficult. It is worthwhile to take the time to choose your chaperones carefully.

Teacher Credit

The MEC program provides people of all ages the vital tools needed to understand the environment in which they live. Teachers are given a certificate reflecting the time spent in classes and activities at McDowell Environmental Center (MEC) which most school systems accept for professional development credit.

State Standards

Our curriculum is correlated to the Alabama and Mississippi State Standards for Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Language Arts. A full listing of the correlations is available on our website.

LEAD TEACHER TIMELINE

As Soon As Possible

- Email **Reservation Confirmation** (as well as **deposit** for new schools)
- New Schools: Arrange a parent and/or student pre-trip meeting at your school
- Recruit *physically-active* chaperones: at least one for every field group
- Arrange for transportation
- Collect a deposit from students to secure their spot on the trip (suggestion)

3 MONTHS prior

- Email the completed and signed 3-page **Contract** (pgs. 5-7)
- Send out the **Student & Adult Risk Forms** (pgs. 18 & 20) (if taking ropes classes)

1 MONTH prior

- Email the **Field Group Lists** (pgs. 8)
- Confirm your final numbers of participating students and adults
- Collect all **Student/Adult Risk Forms**
- Collect the remainder of student payment (suggestion)
- Have a meeting with your chaperones to prepare them for the trip expectations (see pgs. 19-21)

1 WEEK prior

- Contact us by email or phone to check for any last minute updates and details
- Make enough copies of the Field Group Lists for the adults

DAY of the TRIP

- Be sure everyone has appropriate clothes for weather, and water bottles
- Hand out copies of the Field Group Lists to the adults
- Bring the original **Student/Adult Risk Forms** and **Signed Risk Form Cover Sheet** (pg. 22)

ARRIVAL at CAMP:

- Meet the MEC staff greeters at the Welcome Center
- Give any last-minute group changes to the staff greeters
- Relax and have a great time!

Helpful Hints For Planning Your Trip

Here are some helpful hints for planning your day trip to the McDowell Environmental Center:

Have your students wear nametags.

They can be as simple as pieces of masking tape with the student's names on them. This allows our staff and your chaperones to call the students by name in class.

Divide the students into Field Groups of 10-12.

By dividing them before you come, no time is wasted once you get here, and we can move right into the classes. Also, please assign one or two chaperones to each field group.

Plan snacks into your trip.

Especially for younger students (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade), it is a good idea to plan for snacks. Possible snack times include: on the bus, immediately after you get here, mid-morning, or right before you leave. For an additional \$2, participants may get a canned Gatorade and snack from canteen. ***Please let us know when you plan these, so that we can adjust our schedule accordingly. Also, if students are taking their snacks with them to MEC classes, have them carry their own snacks in a light backpack.***

Bring signed *Student/Adult Risk Forms* and *Risk Form Cover Sheet* (pg. 18 & 20, 22)

If your students are taking *Team Challenge, Power Pole, Climbing Wall, or Trust Swing* they need to have a signed risk form to participate. Please **alphabetize** these forms prior to your arrival to expedite the check in process of these forms.

Have students bring a change of shoes and possibly clothes.

If your students are taking *Pond, Aquatic Adventures, Stream Studies or Canoeing* they will get wet and muddy and may need a change of shoes and clothes.

Have students bring water bottles.

Students need to keep themselves hydrated while outside as their activities are often physical in nature.

Have students dress appropriately.

Rain gear, warm clothes (if cold) and hats are great! Closed-toed shoes only: no sandals or crocs.

McDowell Environmental Center CONTRACT

page 1 of 3

EMAIL to pc@campmcdowell.com

Please email this contract 3 months prior to your visit.

School: _____ Grade(s): _____ Reserved dates: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Lead Teacher: _____ Email: _____

Cell Phone: (____) _____ School Phone: (____) _____

Other School Contact: _____ Email: _____

Best way to contact (circle one): School Phone/Cell Phone/Email Best Time to Contact: _____

Arrival time: _____ (8:30am recommended) **Departure time:** _____ (*2:30pm recommended)

Are you bringing a snack for your students? YES / NO If so, what time during the schedule? _____

STUDENTS: # of boys : _____ # of girls: _____ TOTAL # of STUDENTS: _____

***ADULTS:** # of men: _____ # of women: _____ TOTAL # of ADULTS: _____

Please include all **teachers in the adult count* **TOTAL #:** _____

FIELD GROUPS: _____ (limit to 12 students/group)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTER: Assist with pre-trip planning; provide complete educational programming; inform participants of their responsibilities, camp rules and emergency procedures; prepare meals and evening snacks; clean and maintain facilities and grounds; and provide a safe and wholesome atmosphere.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEAD TEACHER: Make a reservation (new schools- submit deposit) and return contract; arrange transportation; arrange for one physically-able chaperone for each cabin and field group; communicate with students, parents and chaperones about the trip; collect fees & medicines; email field group and cabin lists one month prior to trip; mail health and risk acknowledgement forms at least 2 weeks prior to your trip; participate in the program with chaperones and students; and submit final payment.

DAMAGE: The Center reserves the right to send home any child who becomes ill, destroys property, behaves aggressively or takes any other action detrimental to other students or the program. The school will be responsible for providing transportation in such cases, and for any damage to the facilities and equipment. No refunds will be made under these conditions. The Center cannot be held responsible for loss or damage to property brought to the Center. Please encourage students to leave valuables and large amounts of cash at home.

INVOICE: On your last day at McDowell, we will give you an invoice for the balance of your payment. Payment is due within 30 days after your trip.

I agree to the terms of this contract and agree that my group will abide by all McDowell policies.

Signature of Lead Teacher

Date

****PLEASE complete the next two pages.....**

6/2016

DAYTIME CLASS SELECTION

Choose 3-6 hours depending on your schedule.

Choose extra classes for large groups- all students will not be able to take the same classes.

Class descriptions are on pages 9-16.

1.5 Hour Classes

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing (5th & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet a Map (3rd-5th) | <input type="checkbox"/> Creepy Crawlies (2rd-5th) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mysterious Medley (All) | <input type="checkbox"/> Survival Skills (4th & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Trust Swing (5th & up)* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Team Adventure (3rd-5th) | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Critters (2nd-5th) | <input type="checkbox"/> Climbing Wall (5th & up)* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pond (3rd-5th) | <input type="checkbox"/> Compass Skills (4th-7th) | <input type="checkbox"/> Power Pole (7th & up)* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Hike (All) | | |

3 Hour Classes

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native Americans & Earth (3rd- 6th) | <input type="checkbox"/> Stream Studies (6th & up) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Down to Earth(4th & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mysterious Medley (All) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet a Tree (3rd & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Authors and Explorers (4th & up) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Value of a Tree (6th & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Survival Skills (4th & up) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Query (3rd & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Orienteering (6th & up) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Team Challenge (5th & up)* | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Connections (4th & up) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Adventures (3rd-6th) | |

*Classes that require Student and Adult Risk Forms

What **experiences** have your students had with the outdoors, environmental education or field trips?

Please list any **objectives, themes, goals, vocabulary, teaching philosophies or local environmental issues** that you would like for us to emphasize while you are here:

****PLEASE complete the last page.....**

6/2016

GROUP PROFILE

The following information will help the staff at MEC have a better understanding of the needs of your group.

Have any of your teachers and chaperones attended MEC before? _____

Have any of your students attended MEC before? _____ If so, approximately how many? _____

How would you characterize your school? (Choose all that apply)

Private Public Religious Affiliation Open classroom Montessori
 Self-contained classroom Students move from class to class Block Schedule
 Below grade level Above grade level At grade level Urban Suburban
 Rural

Please include a description of the dynamics or your group:

What specific **student needs** should we be aware of? (i.e. social/emotional/behavioral concerns, severe allergic reactions, physical limitations, learning needs, etc...)

How will your group be arriving at MEC? (#'s if known) _____ Bus(es) _____ Car(s)

FIELD GROUP LISTS

*Please confirm the number of field groups your school will have with the Program Coordinator before creating this list!

Divide your class into field groups of 10 to 12 students and at least 1 adult.

At least one adult must be with a field group at all times.

It is important to group students in socially compatible groups.

If you are bringing multiple grade levels, group by grade.

If teachers are “floating,” and not assigned a group, please still list all teachers’ names on the bottom.

* EMAIL to pc@campmcdowell.com

Please email this list 1 month prior to your visit.

Please organize field group lists in the following format (or one similar):

Excel Spreadsheets will suffice as well!

Field Group #1	Field Group #2	Field Group # 3	Field Group #4
1. STUDENT NAME	1. STUDENT NAME	1. STUDENT NAME	1. STUDENT NAME
2. STUDENT NAME	2. STUDENT NAME	2. STUDENT NAME	2. STUDENT NAME
3. STUDENT NAME	3. STUDENT NAME	3. STUDENT NAME	3. STUDENT NAME
4. STUDENT NAME	4. STUDENT NAME	4. STUDENT NAME	4. STUDENT NAME
5. STUDENT NAME	5. STUDENT NAME	5. STUDENT NAME	5. STUDENT NAME
6. STUDENT NAME	6. STUDENT NAME	6. STUDENT NAME	6. STUDENT NAME
7. STUDENT NAME	7. STUDENT NAME	7. STUDENT NAME	7. STUDENT NAME
8. STUDENT NAME	8. STUDENT NAME	8. STUDENT NAME	8. STUDENT NAME
9. STUDENT NAME	9. STUDENT NAME	9. STUDENT NAME	9. STUDENT NAME
10. STUDENT NAME	10. STUDENT NAME	10. STUDENT NAME	10. STUDENT NAME
11. STUDENT NAME	11. STUDENT NAME	11. STUDENT NAME	11. STUDENT NAME
12. STUDENT NAME	12. STUDENT NAME	12. STUDENT NAME	12. STUDENT NAME
Mrs. Parent (Chaperone)	Mrs. Parent (Chaperone)	Mr. Parent (Chaperone)	Mrs. Parent (Chaperone)
Mr. Parent (Chaperone)	Mrs. Teacher (Teacher)	Mrs. Teacher (Teacher)	Mr. Teacher (Teacher)
Ms. Teacher (Teacher)			

Mr. Teacher & Mrs. Teacher will float.

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Mission Statement

The Mission of McDowell Environmental Center is to connect people to the environment, teach respect for the Earth and its beings, and to promote a commitment to lifelong learning.

Program Objectives

- The students will increase awareness and understanding of the environment.
- The students will develop a sense of responsibility for the environment.
- The students will gain a better sense of cooperation and community.

Outdoor environmental education embraces teachable moments which happen regularly in an outdoor classroom. The MEC Instructors are professional educators with college degrees. Each instructor will have their own teaching style and choose activities for classes that best suit their personality. Your students will not stay with the same instructor for the entire time. Because of this, your student groups will not have an identical experience in every class. Instructors will cover the key terms and principles of each class, which are correlated to the Alabama and Mississippi Courses of Study.

DAYTIME CLASSES

DOWN TO EARTH

3 hours; 4th grade & up; Moderate 1 mile hike

OVERVIEW: Hiking to a reclaimed coal mine, students examine geologic history, coal, and electricity and witness the effects of surface coal mining and reclamation on the local ecosystem. Additionally, students explore the relationship between natural resource use and conservation.

PRINCIPLES:

- Water plays a key role in the formation of sedimentary rock.
- Coal is one of Alabama's valuable natural resources and is a major source of energy for production of electricity.
- Human use of coal affects the environment.
- Each of us can conserve electricity and help the environment.

KEY TERMS: sandstone, coal, ground water, fossil fuel, photosynthesis, sediment, pollution, surface mining, reclamation, conservation, energy, electricity

ROCK QUERY

3 hours; 3rd grade & up; Strenuous 1.5 mile hike

OVERVIEW: Students kinesthetically explore rock types, the rock cycle, and the structure of the Earth. Hiking into a sandstone canyon, they observe how the rock affects the present ecosystem and reveal clues about the past.

PRINCIPLES:

- The face of the Earth is constantly changing as rocks move through a cycle.
- Rocks provide information about past environments.
- Geology affects our present ecosystem.
- Humans are dependent on rocks and minerals.

KEY TERMS: geology, rock cycle, sandstone, layers, sedimentary, metamorphic, igneous, canyon, erosion, weathering, mineral, groundwater

AUTHORS & EXPLORERS

3 hours; 4th grade & up; Mild ¼ - ½ mile hike

OVERVIEW: Inspired by the fragrances, sounds, textures and tapestry of nature, students learn to express themselves articulately through nature journaling. Sequenced drawing, sensory awareness and observation activities help students evolve as talented crafters of language. Surrounded by creeks and canyons, even reluctant writers find that words come easily.

PRINCIPLES:

- Details and analogies improve descriptive writing.
- Careful observation brings new awareness, knowledge and perspective on natural objects.
- Both authors and explorers utilize writing and sketching in nature journals as tools to improve their trade.

KEY TERMS: nature journal, observation, metaphor, simile, adjective, detail, naturalists, senses, explorer

NATIVE AMERICANS & THE EARTH

3 hours; 3rd-6th grade; Moderate 1/2 mile hike

OVERVIEW: Interacting with artifacts, playing games, and listening to stories, students gain a better understanding for the lifestyle of early southeastern Native Americans. Students visit a Mississippian Era replica village and explore the concepts of natural resources, culture, and sustainability.

PRINCIPLES:

- Basic human needs-food, clothing and shelter- are provided by the natural world.
- Throughout history, people have developed technologies to meet their needs.
- The early Native American lifestyle, which was directly connected to nature, exemplified knowledge of and respect for the environment.

KEY TERMS: hunter/gatherer, replica, artifact, technology, primitive, prehistoric, rock shelter, debris hut, village, roundhouse, atlatl, migrate, Bering Strait

AQUATIC ADVENTURES or POND

Aquatic Adventures: 3 hours, 3rd -6th grade; Moderate ¼ mile hike

Pond: 1.5 hours, 3rd -5th grade; Moderate ¼ mile hike

Students should come prepared to get wet in these classes. Many students bring rain boots or water shoes for this activity.

OVERVIEW: Students capture, observe and compare aquatic life from a pond and sometimes a stream as well. They review the water cycle, study adaptations, and examine the importance of freshwater ecosystems.

PRINCIPLES:

- Ponds and streams are unique habitats that are connected to the water cycle.
- Aquatic creatures are diverse, with specialized adaptations for feeding, breathing and moving.
- Aquatic organisms are interconnected.

KEY TERMS: water cycle, macro invertebrate, insect, adaptation, niche, larvae, nymph, detritus, habitat, food web, bio assessment

STREAM STUDIES

3 hours; 6th grade & up; Moderate/Strenuous ½ mile hike

Students should come prepared to get wet in these classes. Many students bring rain boots or water shoes for this activity.

OVERVIEW: Through biological sampling and chemical testing of a stream, students gain an understanding of water quality parameters, learn how to assess water quality and become aware of the impact that humans can have on waterways.

PRINCIPLES:

- Aquatic creatures have different tolerance levels to pollution based on their adaptations.
- The physical and chemical properties of a body of water determine what organisms can live there (tolerance).
- Human actions can alter the chemical and physical properties of a stream thus affecting its water quality.
- Each of us can monitor and improve water quality.

KEY TERMS: aquatic, adaptation, nymph, larvae, species, indicator species, pollution, tolerance, erosion, sediment, dissolved oxygen, pH, acid, base, turbidity, water molecule, watershed

MEET A TREE

3 hours; 3rd grade & up; Moderate 1 mile hike

OVERVIEW: Activities that focus on the structure, function and identification of trees help students see every tree as a unique living organism. The students hike through the forest, studying the interdependence of living and non-living components.

PRINCIPLES:

- A tree is composed of specific parts that function together to create a life-supporting system.
- Each tree species has unique physical characteristics that can be used to identify it.
- Air, water, animals, plants, and soil are interdependent components of the forest community.

KEY TERMS: community, photosynthesis, oxygen, decomposer, soil, heartwood, sapwood, xylem, phloem, bark, root, dichotomous key, opposite, alternate, biodiversity, forest ecology, transpiration, succession

VALUE OF A TREE

3 hours; 6th grade & up; Moderate 1 mile hike

OVERVIEW: Through a hike, discussions, and measurement activities, students explore human impact on forest ecosystems and how trees are valuable economically, ecologically, and recreationally.

PRINCIPLES:

- People value different uses of the forest.
- The science of forestry strives to develop and maintain forests for human and natural uses.
- Human use of the forests can have both positive and negative impacts.

KEY TERMS: value, habitat, forestry, natural resources, recreation, economic, ecological, board-feet, diameter at breast height, photosynthesis, conservation, dichotomous key

FOREST CONNECTIONS

3 hours; 4th grade & up; Moderate ½ mile hike

OVERVIEW: Visualize the connections among many biotic and abiotic components of the forest community. Students explore these connections through a hike, primary artifacts, interactive games, and discovery.

PRINCIPLES:

- Forest communities contain both biotic and abiotic factors.
- Specific habitats require different adaptations for animals to survive.
- Organisms in a community are interconnected through many different relationships.

KEY TERMS: adaptation, habitat, niche, camouflage, community, biotic, abiotic, predator, prey, food chain, food web, producer, consumer, interconnections, symbiosis

FOREST CRITTERS

1.5 hours, 2nd - 4th grade; Moderate ½ mile hike

OVERVIEW: Students participate in activities that illustrate the importance of animal adaptations. Students hike and search for evidence of animals in their habitats, examine animal pelts and skulls, and discuss relationships within a forest.

PRINCIPLES:

- A habitat is where an animal obtains food, water, shelter and space.
- An adaptation is a physical or behavioral attribute that enables an animal to survive in a particular environment.
- Habitat destruction is the #1 problem for wildlife today.

KEY TERMS: adaptation, habitat, camouflage, niche, food chain, predator/prey, community, carnivore, herbivore, omnivore

CREEPY CRAWLIES

1.5 hours; 2nd - 5th grade; Easy walk

OVERVIEW: Students collect and study small creatures in their natural habitats. Through direct observation, students explore the adaptations and niches of the animals they find.

PRINCIPLES:

- Insects are the most common animals on earth and have many unique adaptations specific to their niche.
- Many small creatures are beneficial to humans.
- These animals play invaluable roles in ecological processes such as decomposition, pollination, and the food web.

KEY TERMS: niche, adaptation, invertebrate, decomposer, pollinator, herbivore, predator, carnivore, head, thorax, abdomen, arthropod, habitat

NATURE HIKE

1.5 hours; All grade levels; Level of physical challenge varies with trail

ACTIVITIES: This class is a new favorite at McDowell! During this class, students have the opportunity to visit unique trails on a hike through the forest with one of our naturalist. This option allows students to learn interpretive skills such as identifying plants, insects and other animals and their tracks!

PRINCIPLES may include:

- Using a dichotomous key for plant and tree identification.
- Using a variety of field guides.
- Using loupes and nature journals.

SURVIVAL SKILLS

1.5 or 3 hours; 4th grade & up; Moderate ½ mile hike

OVERVIEW: This class is designed to teach students how to plan for and travel in wilderness or backcountry. Students will practice individual and teamwork skills needed for trip planning and preparation, being lost and overnight survival.

PRINCIPLES:

- Nature provides everything needed to meet a human's basic needs.
- Key concepts for wilderness survival are: planning, preparation, positive attitude, meeting basic needs and being found if lost or injured.

KEY TERMS: Survival, prevention, preparation, basic needs, Leave No Trace, itinerary, positive mental attitude (PMA), S.O.S., dehydration, hypothermia, debris shelter, microorganisms, navigation, topographic map, compass, trail blaze, rule of 3's

MEET A MAP

1.5 hours; 3rd-5th grade; Moderate walking

OVERVIEW: In small teams, students enjoy using a map to locate stations on an established course. They will learn to work together cooperatively and build self-confidence as they practice navigation.

SKILLS:

- Learn and practice basic map skills.
- Use a map to locate stations on a course.
- Experience the value and usefulness of a map.

KEY TERMS: scale, symbols, map key (legend) orient, cardinal directions, communication, cooperation, degrees, title

COMPASS SKILLS

1.5 hours; 4th -7th grade; Moderate walking

OVERVIEW: Through demonstrations, explanations and hands-on activities, students gain an understanding of how a compass functions. Students apply their knowledge by completing an outdoor compass course.

SKILLS:

- Use a compass to determine the cardinal directions.
- Read bearings and apply them properly.
- Navigate through a course relying on a compass.

KEY TERMS: degrees, bearing, magnetic field, housing, direction of travel arrow, magnetic north, cardinal directions, landmark, base plate, waypoint

MYSTERIOUS MEDLEY

1.5 or 3 hours; All grade levels; Level of physical challenge varies with trail

OVERVIEW: Instructors choose a class topic of special interest to them and then design a lesson suited to the environs of McDowell. Students may visit a special landmark at Camp McDowell, discover the world of moss and lichens, take a sensory hike, or explore patterns in nature. This exciting option allows our professional educators to shine in their area of expertise. The class may also be designed around specific objectives provided by the teacher. Please be sure to make a note on your contract or speak with your program coordinator so that this magical class can be catered to meet your objectives.

ORIENTEERING

3 hours; 6th grade & up; Strenuous Hiking- Off Trail

OVERVIEW: After reviewing map and compass basics, students hike in the forest. Students apply their skills to establish a bearing and navigate from one point to another.

SKILLS:

- Read a topographic map to determine a safe and practical route.
- Navigate safely using a compass.
- Listen to others, cooperate and make group decisions.

PRINCIPLES:

- Topographic maps are models which represent 3D landscape.
- An understanding of scale, map orientation and landforms are all important in the use of a topographic map.
- Use a map to locate landmarks and a compass to avoid high-risk areas.

KEY TERMS: degrees, bearing, magnetic field, orient, scale, symbols, landmark, legend, direction, sighting, contour lines, orient, north, south, east, west

CANOEING***

1.5 hours; 5th grade & up; Moderate 1/8 mile walk with steep stairs

Students should be prepared to get wet during this activity. Canoeing is not recommended for cold months! In cases of extreme weather, high wind or high water, please choose an alternate activity for your group.

OVERVIEW: Paddling below 80-foot bluffs and near cascading waterfalls, students practice teamwork and communication skills. All participants wear life jackets and stay within sight of our trained instructor.

SKILLS:

- Practice basic water safety.
- Learn the proper name, function and care for equipment.
- Practice basic strokes and maneuvers.
- Communicate and work effectively with a partner.

KEY TERMS: stern, bow, keel, lifejacket, blade, back paddle, cooperation, communication, t-grip

****** We must give first choice of Canoeing class to residential groups who are here for multiday programs. We only have one creek and a limited amount of canoes. Please be understanding if your day group cannot canoe due to a large number of residential schools requesting this class.***

TEAM ADVENTURE

1.5 hours; 3rd -5th grade; Moderate physical activity

OVERVIEW: Group problem solving activities encourage students to cooperate to reach consensus. Vital components of this class are goal setting, sequencing, processing, cooperation, communication, problemsolving, and trust. Students will be encouraged to review experiences, link them to relevancy in their daily life and extend new ideas as they approach situations at home or in school.

****The challenge course or low ropes elements will not be used. MEC facilitators will choose the activities based on the individual group's needs. Because of this, each student group will have a unique experience using different activities.***

PRINCIPLES:

- Working with others to solve problems is a beneficial life skill.
- Active sharing and listening are important for teambuilding.
- There may be a variety of solutions to a problem. Problem-solving skills must be practiced.

KEY TERMS: problem-solving, compromise, cooperation, trust, communication, leadership, support, planning, respect, goal, strategy, teamwork

TEAM CHALLENGE**

3 hours; 5th grade & up; Moderate physical activity

*****Risk Acknowledgment Forms are REQUIRED***

OVERVIEW: Group problem solving activities encourage students to cooperate to reach consensus. Vital components of this class are goal setting, sequencing, processing, cooperation, communication, problem-solving, and trust. Students will be encouraged to review experiences, link them to relevancy in their daily life and extend new ideas as they approach situations at home or in school.

****The challenge course or low ropes elements may be used. MEC facilitators will choose the activities based on the individual group's needs. Because of this, each student group will have a unique experience using different activities.***

PRINCIPLES:

- Working with others to solve problems is a beneficial life skill.
- Active sharing and listening are important for teambuilding.
- There may be a variety of solutions to a problem. Problem-solving skills must be practiced.

KEY TERMS: problem-solving, compromise, cooperation, trust, communication, leadership, support, planning, respect, goal, strategy, teamwork, perseverance

CLIMBING WALL**

1.5 hours; 5th grade & up; Moderate mental challenge & significant physical challenge

****Risk Acknowledgment Forms are REQUIRED**

We charge an additional \$10.00 equipment fee per field group for this activity.

OVERVIEW: Striving to climb a 40-foot wall with hand and foot holds, students not only experience rock climbing, but also feel the exhilaration of attempting a daunting feat. Encouraged by their peers and lead by a trained ropes course instructor, students truly enjoy this thrilling experience.

PRINCIPLES:

- Give and receive group encouragement.
- Set and achieve personal goals.
- Confront fear and gain self-confidence in an environment of perceived danger.

KEY TERMS: safety, success, belay, fear, personal challenge and choice, goal setting, hardware, harness

TRUST SWING**

1.5 hours; 5th grade & up; Moderate mental challenge & moderate physical challenge

****Risk Acknowledgment Forms are REQUIRED**

We charge an additional \$10.00 equipment fee per field group for this activity.

OVERVIEW: Suspended from cables, like a giant rope swing, students enjoy the thrill of a great ride while developing trust in their group. Participants control the amount of risk they are comfortable with while their classmates use a certified pulley system to hoist them up to 20 feet into the air. This activity requires only minimal physical activity on the part of the participant.

PRINCIPLES:

- Demonstrate trustworthiness through words and actions.
- Provide the group support which is critical for success.
- Develop a trust that is inclusive of all group members.

KEY TERMS: safety, trust, group support, hardware, harness, personal choice, trustworthiness

POWER POLE**

1.5 hours; 5th grade & up; Moderate physical challenge and significant mental challenge

****Risk Acknowledgment Forms are REQUIRED**

We charge an additional \$10.00 equipment fee per field group for this activity.

OVERVIEW: Students challenge themselves by climbing a 25-foot high telephone pole and diving for a bell suspended in mid-air! This activity provides our most significant mental/emotional challenge. The group setting offers emotional support while trained ropes course instructors ensure physical safety. Group discussion afterwards helps students apply the lessons learned to everyday life.

PRINCIPLES:

- Set and achieve personal goals.
- Confront fear and gain self-confidence in an environment of perceived danger.
- Trust in oneself, others and safety systems.

KEY TERMS: safety, success, trust, belay, courage, fear, personal challenge, self-esteem

Parent Information & Student Forms

PARENT LETTER



McDowell Environmental Center

105 DeLong Road
Nauvoo, AL 35578

Dear Parent or Guardian,

McDowell Environmental Center's philosophy is to teach students in the great outdoors and give them a lifetime of memories and experience. Your child will be learning through hands-on environmental science classes, seeing nature up close in a 1,140-acre outdoor classroom. Our instructors have been trained in a child-centered, experiential approach to teaching and are passionate about sharing the natural world with students and adults. We would like to mention a few important items worth emphasizing about your child's upcoming visit to ensure their safety and comfort while away from home.

Appropriate Clothing: We offer hands-on science and team building classes, so we spend most of our time outdoors, even in the rain and cold. Please help your child be prepared with appropriate clothing and gear, as indicated below. In truly inclement weather, we have ample indoor teaching space.

Wear:

Old clothes and closed toed shoes (*For safety, no sandals or crocs please!*)

Bring a daypack with:

Rain Coat

Water Bottle

Lunch & Snack (if suggested by the teacher)

Extra set of clothes if taking Pond, Aquatic Adventures, Stream Studies or Canoeing

1 pair of shoes and socks that can get wet or muddy

Acknowledgement of Risk Form: If your child's teacher has chosen either our Team Challenge or one of the "high ropes elements," an Acknowledgement of Risk Form should accompany this packet of information. Please ensure that the student's name and your signature are on this form so that your child can participate in all of the activities.

Your child's school teachers will sent home all information. The teachers from your school will select chaperones for the trip. If you have any questions regarding our program, personnel or facilities, please contact your child's teacher or feel free to call us or visit our web site at www.mcdowellec.com.

Jen Kopnicky, Director
jenk@campmcdowell.com
205.387.1806 ext. 109

Carrie Evans, Program Coordinator
pc@campmcdowell.com
205.387.1806 ext. 108

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK FORM

WAIVER OF LIABILITY for McDowell Environmental Center

Camp McDowell - 105 Delong Road - Nauvoo, AL 35578



Dear Parent / Legal Guardian,

Your child's teacher has chosen one or more of the following for your child to participate in at McDowell Environmental Center: Team Challenge, Power Pole, Climbing Wall and/or Trust Swing.

Team Challenge is a series of challenges and obstacles for a group to overcome. The purpose of the course is to teach teamwork and cooperation. At times, participants will be two to six feet off of the ground on ropes, cables or logs. During these activities, your child will depend on their classmates for physical and emotional support and on our instructor to guarantee strict adherence to safety guidelines.

The Power Pole, Climbing Wall and Trust Swing are all twenty to thirty feet high ropes course elements. While off the ground, all participants will be secured by a rope and harness safety system operated by a trained instructor. The purpose of these activities is to build group trust and selfconfidence.

Our insurance carrier requires that all participants have a signed waiver which holds Camp McDowell and its staff harmless from any and all liability if an accident should occur. Camp McDowell has used these activities since 1974, and this requirement is not the result of any problems, injuries or accidents at the camp, but simply a requirement of the liability insurance carrier.

By signing this waiver, you accept responsibility for your child who is willingly participating in a program where there are certain inherent risks and dangers. **Please note that your child has the choice to not participate.** You must understand that the risk involved in participation may also include loss or damage to personal property, physical or psychological damage and/or injury not excluding fatality due to accidents which may occur. You understand that, in case of injury, initial treatment may be performed by the staff of Camp McDowell and there may be need for transportation to medical facilities in Jasper, Alabama.

After reading above, I certify that my child is completely healthy (both physically and emotionally) and capable of participating in these activities. I understand that it is solely my responsibility to determine whether there is any medical reason that he/she should not participate in any of the activities.

I assume all of the above inherent risks and any other ordinary risks incidental to the nature of these activities which are not specifically foreseeable. I will hold Camp McDowell harmless from any and all liability, actions, causes of action, debts, claims and demands of every kind and nature whatsoever, whether for bodily injury, property damage or loss otherwise which may arise from my child's participation. By signing this waiver I release Camp McDowell and its staff from any negligence incurred. My child enters into this activity voluntarily, and I take full responsibility for the decision for him/her to participate or not to participate.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR CHILD CAN NOT PARTICIPATE UNLESS YOU RETURN THIS SIGNED FORM!

Parent/Legal Guardian Name (Please Print)

Name of Student (Please Print)

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

CHAPERONE LETTER & INFORMATION



McDowell Environmental Center
105 DeLong Road
Nauvoo, AL 35578

Dear Chaperone,

Thank you for agreeing to accompany students on their exciting trip to McDowell. As a chaperone, you will play an important role in creating a fun, safe and non-competitive learning environment. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about your role as a chaperone.

The lead teacher from your school will assign to you a field group of 10-12 students to supervise during the day. You will be with the students the entire time during your stay. You are directly responsible for the safety and supervision of your field group.

During classes, the McDowell Instructor will be directly responsible for the group, but they will rely on you for support and attentiveness. Please actively participate in all classes and activities that you attend. Look forward to active classes which may include hiking or wading in a stream. We appreciate your enthusiasm during these classes, as it can be a great motivator for the students!

Here are some GENERAL POLICIES FOR ADULTS:

- Smoking is not allowed indoors or in front of students. Alcohol is not allowed.
- Try not to use your cell phone around the children.
- Corporal or harsh verbal punishment is not allowed. If you experience difficulty managing the student's behavior, speak to their teacher for help.
- When you come to the Center, it is most likely that you will share our campus with other schools. We believe positive interactions among all participants create potential new friendships. Please be a model of respect to the other schools, both children and adults.

Your school may eat lunch a picnic-style lunch as a group. Work with your lead teacher to help ensure the safety of all students during lunch and do not allow students to leave the immediate area without permission. Water coolers will be provided.

In some of the classes, you and the children will get wet and muddy so wear OLD clothes and shoes. A rain coat is essential, because classes are held rain or shine. Our classes are hands-on, so be sure to bring a daypack with a water bottle. **Wear comfortable, closed toed, hiking shoes.**

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for agreeing to be a chaperone. Please feel free to call us if you have any questions. We look forward to meeting you!

Jen Kopnick, Director
jenk@campmcdowell.com
205.387.1806 ext. 109

Carrie Evans, Program Coordinator
pc@campmcdowell.com
205.387.1806 est. 108

ADULT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK FORM

WAIVER OF LIABILITY for McDowell Environmental Center

Camp McDowell - 105 Delong Road - Nauvoo, AL 35578



Dear Adult Participant,

Your group has chosen one or more of the following for your school to participate in at McDowell Environmental Center: Team Challenge, Power Pole, Climbing Wall and/or Trust Swing.

Team Challenge is a series of challenges and obstacles for a group to overcome. The purpose of the course is to teach teamwork and cooperation. At times, participants will be two to six feet off of the ground on ropes, cables or logs. During these activities, participants will depend on one another for physical and emotional support and on our instructor to guarantee strict adherence to safety guidelines.

The Power Pole, Climbing Wall and Trust Swing are all twenty to thirty feet high ropes course elements. While off the ground, all participants will be secured by a rope and harness safety system operated by a trained instructor. The purpose of these activities is to build group trust and selfconfidence.

Our insurance carrier requires that all participants have a signed waiver which holds Camp McDowell and its staff harmless from any and all liability if an accident should occur. Camp McDowell has used these activities since 1974, and this requirement is not the result of any problems, injuries or accidents at the camp, but simply a requirement of the liability insurance carrier.

By signing this waiver, you accept responsibility for willingly participating in a program where there are certain inherent risks and dangers. Please note that you have the choice not to participate. You must understand that the risk involved in participation may also include loss or damage to personal property, physical or psychological damage and/or injury not excluding fatality due to accidents which may occur. You understand that, in case of injury, initial treatment may be performed by the staff of Camp McDowell and there may be need for transportation to medical facilities in Jasper, Alabama.

After reading above, I certify that I am completely healthy (both physically and emotionally) and capable of participating in these activities. I understand that it is solely my responsibility to determine whether there is any medical reason that I should not participate in any of the activities.

I assume all of the above inherent risks and any other ordinary risks incidental to the nature of these activities which are not specifically foreseeable. I will hold Camp McDowell harmless from any and all liability, actions, causes of action, debts, claims and demands of every kind and nature whatsoever, whether for bodily injury, property damage or loss otherwise which may arise from my participation. By signing this waiver I release Camp McDowell and its staff from any negligence incurred. I enter into this activity voluntarily, and take full responsibility for the decision for myself to participate or not to participate.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU CANNOT PARTICIPATE UNLESS YOU RETURN THIS SIGNED FORM!

Name (Please Print)

Name of Child, if attending (Please Print)

Signature

Date

PLEASE RETURN TO THE TEACHER ASAP

STUDENT & CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

Hints for Lead Teachers

Preparing Your Students

The more prepared your students are for the trip, the quicker they will acclimate and start enjoying their experience. Essential topics to discuss with your students:

1. Daily Schedule
2. McDowell Classes: activities you have chosen, what to wear, level & type of physical activity.
3. Their responsibilities: your school's guidelines, expected behavior and consequences.
4. McDowell's location and travel time. Find us on a map of Alabama.
5. Their questions, fears and/or concerns.
6. Rules for students at McDowell Environmental Center:
 - a. Always ask a chaperone if you leave the group. Take a buddy with you. Tell the chaperone when you return.
 - b. Please help keep camp free of litter and graffiti.
 - c. MEC staff must approve the collection of any plants, animals, and other natural things.
 - d. Please don't chew gum at camp. Animals cannot digest gum that they find on the ground.
 - e. The team adventure course and any construction areas are off limits.
 - f. Walk, don't run- there are many roots and rocks to trip over.
 - g. "If you can't say something nice...Don't say nothin' at all." -Thumper, from Bambi
 - h. Do not ring the bell in front of the dining hall- It is for emergencies only!

Helpful Hints for Choosing Chaperones

- Make sure they will be a positive role model for the group. We want them to set a good example to the students in terms of their own values, behavior, appearance and attitude.
- Chaperones need to be physically fit. The classes at McDowell Environmental Center are very active. Most of them require some degree of hiking and hill climbing. Hikes vary from 1/4 mile to 3 miles, depending on the classes you choose.
- The chaperones must be able to keep up with the students. Some chaperones may see this as a vacation or as time to spend alone with their child. In reality, it will be a lot of work. They will be with the students all day.
- Make sure they are committed to being on the trip for all of the students and to taking an active role in supervision. Taking care of one's own child is different from supervising a whole group. Different skills are required. Having some adults with previous experience could be helpful. Examples: scout troops, youth groups, school trips, boys and girls clubs, etc.
- Our classes are held outdoors rain or shine. We encourage getting wet and muddy. If the chaperone is not enthusiastic about being outside, they will lessen the students' experience.
- We recommend no more than two adults per Field Group. We have found that too many chaperones detract from the experience for the children. In this case, sometimes the main emphasis shifts away from supervising the students to socializing with other chaperones. We have found that some students are distracted by their own parents and are more likely to participate when their parents are not immediately present. Also, too many chaperones can lead to the "someone else is watching them" syndrome, which means that no one is supervising the students.
- Consider asking parents to complete an application if they are interested in being a chaperone. This can help you make a well-informed decision about who to choose.

RISK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT COVER SHEET

PLEASE BRING ALL STUDENT RISK ACKNOWLEDGMENT
FORMS TO MEC AND TURN IN UPON ARRIVAL

McDowell Environmental Center staff is not able to verify prior to class that all students attending Environmental Center Day Programs have a Risk Acknowledgment form that is signed and dated by the student's parent or legal guardian. We therefore request the Lead Teacher to sign below to verify that all students who participate in today's Team Challenge, Trust Swing, Power Pole or Climbing Wall have a Risk Acknowledgement form (pg.11) that is signed and dated by that student's parent or legal guardian.

I, _____, verify that all students who participate in
(Print Your Name)

Team Challenges, Power Pole, Trust Swing, or Climbing Wall on _____ have a signed
(Trip date)

a Risk Acknowledgement Form that is signed and dated by their parents or legal guardian.

List below any students who DO NOT have a signed Risk Acknowledgement form or are NOT to participate:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

This form **MUST** be signed and accompany all student's risk acknowledgement forms.
All students must have a signed risk acknowledgement form before they participate.

Signature of Lead Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Name of School: _____

Directions to Camp McDowell

Birmingham and Montgomery:

Take I-65 North in Birmingham. Get off at exit 265A, headed onto I-22 towards Memphis. Take Exit 63 and turn right onto 269 North into Jasper. Turn right at second light onto 18th St. and an immediate left onto 9th Ave. which will turn into HWY 195. Take Highway 195 North 13 miles to Camp McDowell. Camp entrance will be on your right.

From Huntsville:

Take I-65 South to Cullman; take U.S. 278 west to Double Springs; take Highway 195 South 10 miles to Camp McDowell. Camp entrance will be on your left.

From Tuscaloosa:

Take Highway 69 north to Jasper; take Highway 195 north 13 miles to Camp McDowell. Camp entrance will be on your right.

From the Shoals:

Take Highway 43 south from Florence to Russelville; take 243 from Russelville until that road ends then take 195 south to Double Springs; take Highway 195 South 10 miles to Camp McDowell. Camp entrance will be on your left.

From the Tupelo, MS area:

Take I-22 to the Hamilton/Highway 278 exit. Follow highway 278 about 40 miles to Double Springs. Turn right on Highway 195 South. Take HWY 195 South 10 miles to Camp McDowell. Camp entrance will be on your left.

Please come to the Welcome Center, the second building on the left side of the camp road (about 1 mile from Highway 195).