

What a Great Field Trip!

Three perspectives on a hypothetical natural area field trip...to help you plan your next one, even better.

The Student's Perspective

10-3-00 Journal Entry

Will, 4th grade

Today we are in the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest. There are over a million acres, and guess who they belong to? Us! There are **9** of us in the Oak group. The other groups will meet us at the top of the mountain for lunch. Oaks are the best. We have hiked a long way up the trail, and **I found** a salamander and some bones, deer, I think. Our leader is so fun. She lets us **explore**, and shows us cool stuff. **My friend's Dad** helped us jump over the stream, and **I climbed** up in an owl tree. It is good that there are a few dead trees here for nests. So far, I have **caught** a big spider in my bug box. It had 4 green eyes, maybe more. Now I am sitting under my adopted oak tree, who I named Barkley. **We have to draw a picture** of one of the leaves.

Now here is my picture. This is a little one, and it is green, but I only have a pencil.

Barkley is very tall. At least 30 meters, I think. **I can touch** my fingers when I put my arms around him. These are the living things **I have found** on Barkley: a black and white moth, big and little ants, moss, a caterpillar (maybe it will be a moth) and me.

Sounds **I hear** while I am writing.

4 birds, a beetle walking in the leaves, an airplane and someone sneezing.

10-4-00 Journal Entry (The teacher is following up! Directed entry items were on the board.)

1. 3 things I liked about yesterday's field trip.

I liked eating lunch at the top of the mountain, exploring and playing the Tree Tag game.

2. 3 things I didn't like about the field trip.

It was hot in long pants, portapotties, and I got a tick.

3. Best tree award. Barkley

4. Best animal award. salamander

5. Best smell award. Close by the stream

6. Favorite place award. Same

7. Smartest thing we did for nature. Save our water bottles and recycle our trash.

8. *A poem about Barkley.*

*Barkley might be an oak
But to me he is more like a Christmas tree.
First he makes a home for wildlife,
And then he gives us wood gifts, and
A home for me and my wife.*

The Teacher's Perspective

Administrative Field Trip Report

Return to principal within 2 days of trip.

55 students, 3 teachers, 1 student teacher and 11 parents participated in the National Forest Field Trip on 10-3-00. The primary purpose of the field trip was to reinforce the renewable natural resource unit in science, and to reinforce civics with thoughtful and responsible environmental actions. Pertinent SOL's were: 4.5, 4.8 . Special needs students did well with 1 to 1 parent/staff ratio. Beesting Allergy meds were carried, but none were needed. Regular medicine was administered on schedule at lunch by the designated person. Students wore long pants, socks and closed toe shoes. A tick check was performed on the bus on the way back to school (2 ticks were found).

The guides were well-prepared and enthusiastic. They greeted us on the bus, and started the day off with positive energy and initial directions. My contact was: _____, and we planned by e-mail, with a last minute phone call to be sure of the details. Each guide had a printed schedule, and a walkie talkie. Each group carried a first aid kit.

The natural resource activities were well-matched to our curriculum. We received a reinforcing game to play the next day, and it worked very well to integrate the students' daily journal writing into the field trip. Parents were welcomed on this trip, and activities involved them with the children in positive ways. We had our usual pre-trip huddle for 5 minutes before departing, and assigned groups in advance. We also handed out our suggestions for positive chaperones list. The bus drivers were wonderful; they also participated in the trip.

The schedule worked out very well, with no sense of rushing or excess waiting around. We met or exceeded all our goals on this field trip, which was enjoyed by all the students. Although the weather was perfect for this trip, there were temporary tarp shelters set up for each small group in case there had been rain.

The nominal fee was paid with our classroom field trip fund. Thank you for granting permission for this excellent opportunity. We will most likely wish to return next year.

The on-site coordinator's perspective

SCHOOL FIELD TRIP

Date: 10-3-00

Arrival Time: 10:00 Departure Time: 1:30

School: 4th grade Lee Jackson Elementary

Main contact: Mrs. Philpot kphilpot@va.k12.state.us (H) 540-234-9336

55 students (2 special needs) 15 adults (3 are teachers)

Guides Needed: 6 On-site: 9:00

Fee: \$55.00, paid in cash 10/3/01

Theme: Value of Forests/Clean Water

Use Forest Bingo on hike

6 stations Adopt A Tree (they are bringing their journals & pencils), Tree Tag, Mapping, Water World, Tree Gifts, Microhike.

Note: add on an adult Bingo to keep adults involved. (The kids love to help with this extra competition).

Post-Trip Notes: Groups had been pre-assigned, and the name tags were great. These teachers had made large re-usable nametag buttons which they use for multiple occasions over the year. Adults with the group also wore nametags, and knew which group they were with. Adults were assigned to special needs kids, 2 beesting allergies, 2 asthma, meds brought with designated person, who also handled the first aid kit.

Students were well-prepared. Everyone had long pants and shoes. There were very few soft drinks or lunchables. They brought along their journals, as planned, and each had a pencil fastened to it.

We set up tarps and groundcloths, but the weather was beautiful. Each guide had a waterproof rain story to read in case they were stuck under the shelter for awhile.

We send home a copy of Forest in a Space Capsule with each classroom teacher as a followup activity.

GREAT GROUP to work with. Priority next year!
(Thank you notes attached.)

**GOOD LUCK PLANNING YOUR NEXT FIELD TRIP FOR
ENTHUSED STUDENTS, HAPPY ADMINISTRATORS AND
PARENTS, AND GREAT THANK YOU NOTES!**