

GOALS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

REASONS FOR COMING ON A FIELD TRIP

- To learn about the wildlife habitats, plants, and animals of the West Eugene Wetlands.
- To understand the West Eugene Wetlands partners' resource management objectives, how these objectives are being accomplished and how others can help the West Eugene Wetlands.
- To develop an appreciation for the natural environment and become aware of actions that can be taken to protect that environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: is a process aimed at developing individuals who are aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated challenges; fosters individuals to have the knowledge, attitudes, motivation, commitments, and skills to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current issues and to create harmonious patterns of behavior.

THE GOALS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

AWARENESS: To help individuals and groups experience the total environment and acquire an awareness, sensitivity, and connection to each other and the natural world.

KNOWLEDGE: To help individuals and groups gain a variety of experiences in and acquire an understanding of basic ecological concepts of the environment and their relationship to them.

ATTITUDES: To help individuals enjoy the natural world and acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and the motivation for actively participating in environmental enhancement, conservation, and protection.

SKILLS: To help individuals acquire the critical-thinking and decision-making skills needed for identifying, analyzing, and solving environmental challenges.

ACTION: To help individuals develop a sense of responsibility and to be actively involved, working toward prevention and resolution of environmental issues and challenges.

BASIC ECOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

Discuss the ecological concepts with youth before your visit to the wetland. A basic understanding of these concepts will enhance the group's understanding of what they see and do on the field trip.

Everything has a home

During your field trip, you will be walking in, around and through several animals' living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms. We call these homes habitats. Ecology (from the Greek "oikos" which means house) is the study of the common home of all life—the earth.

Everything is becoming something else

All plants and animals undergo evolutionary changes and adaptations. When things die, they are broken down, decomposed, recycled, and used by other living things.

Every living thing eats and is eaten by something else

Three categories of life forms are in the basic food cycle: producers, consumers, and decomposers.

Everything depends on something else

Interaction and interdependence occur among living and non-living things and their environment. A change in any strand of the food cycle of life affects the entire web. Nothing exists in isolation.

There are basic necessities for life: food, water, shelter, and space

These necessities are found in the sun (Light), the atmosphere (Air), the hydrosphere (Water) and the earth's crust (Soil). These are the LAWS of the ecosystem.

Diversity is essential for life

Many similarities and differences occur among living and non-living things. This variation is essential for maintaining a healthy community and ensuring that plants and animals survive and reproduce in spite of changing situations.

Humans are capable of changing the balance of nature

We are rational, thinking beings who have changed and continue to alter the environment of the earth in many profound ways. As such, we have a responsibility to all living things and to respect their needs.