



Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority



Potomac Overlook Regional Park

We can work with teachers to plan and tailor programs according to individual needs, interests and age groups. Although teachers can call anytime to reserve programs, 1-2 months advance notice is usually required. All programs meet various Standards of Learning. Where specifically keyed to programs, SOLs are shown in bold face.

Plants and Animals: These local natural history programs include an indoor talk, an outdoor activity, and an opportunity to explore the Nature Center. Some are weather permitting.

- * Animals in winter - talk, study items and live animals.
- * Birds of Prey - slide show and live birds of prey.
- * Birds in Virginia - slide show, movie and/or bird hike.
- * Mammals of Virginia - slide show, talk, study skins and hike.
- * Snakes of Virginia - slide show and live snakes.
- * Insects - introduction to insects and their ecology. Includes hike and insect collection during warm months.
- * Tree Identification - hike to learn about local trees.
- * Wildflower Identification - slide show and hike (seasonal).

Ecology:

- * Geology - emphasizes the significance of the Fall Line on local geology. Describe the physical properties of different rock types found in the area. Examine weather formations, erosion, and valuable rocks such as minerals and ores found in Virginia. Explore the rock cycle, plate tectonics, the interior of earth, earth history and fossil evidence. Slide show, talk with various specimens and hike. K.4; 1.1; 2.7; 3.3; 4.8; 5.7; (Earth Science) ES.6, ES.8, ES.10.
- * The Chesapeake Bay - ecology, problems and solutions. Slide show, talk and hike to Potomac River.
- * Soils - slide show, talk, hike and soil sampling.

Human Beings and Nature

- * The world in 70 acres – Potomac Overlook’s Holistic Nature Trail - In just over an hour, operate a solar electric panel, handle a 2000-year-old Indian artifact, taste a rock (salt that is!), engage in creative writing, do tree rubbings and come away with an understanding of how these topics are all seamlessly connected with each other! North Arlington comes alive on this 1/2 mile walk with entertaining, hands-on activities, tidbits of history lost in the shuffle of modern life, and a puzzle that kids solve as they go. Outdoor explorations/components. Allow at least 2 hours or more. (For 4th grade and up; We will work with teachers to incorporate SOL’s).
- * The Gaia Theory - examines how our planet functions like a living organism. The ancient Greek myth (from which the name “Gaia” comes) is compared and contrasted with the modern scientific theory and the implications of both to everyday life are discussed. Indoor and outdoor explorations /components. Allow at least 2 hours or more.
- * Potomac Overlook Heritage Program - explores the interrelationships between human and natural history in the vicinity of Potomac Overlook Regional Park. Program starts indoors with timelines and introduction to the Fall Line and then continues outside with a ½-mile hike.
- * Indians of Arlington - begins indoors with a slide show about local Indian History, a story and show-and-tell items. Outdoor components include dugout canoe making demonstration, spear-throwing demonstration, and a hike through the woods to study ways that Indians used plants and animals, understood the seasons, etc. Program includes some discussion about how changes in climate of the area and then European contact changed Indian culture. K.1; K.2, 2.2, 2.3; K.4; K.5; K.7, 1.4, 1.6, 2.4, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6; (Skills) VS.1; VS.2; US1.3; WH1.2; WG.2; VUS.2
- * Circles of Life Program - begins indoor with a demonstration and discussion on cycles familiar to us, and the role of the sun in fueling all cycles on earth. Explain many cultures, both past and present, have understood the earth’s reliance on the sun and have incorporated this into symbols, flags, etc. Explore the outdoor compost sites and hike to the Indian circle garden where students participate in a life cycle by giving compost-rich water to a tree. K.6, K.8, K.9, K.10; 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8; 2.4, 2.5, 2.8; 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11; 4.5, 4.8; 6.5, (Life Science) LS.4, LS.9
- * Energy Program - provides an overview of the history, types and problems of energy use by humans and explores the possibilities for renewable energy sources. Hands-on activities and demonstrations of working solar energy and energy efficiency applications are featured along with a slide show.

Miscellaneous

- * Seasonal Programs (winter, spring, summer or fall) - slide show or talk, study objects and hike.
- * Senses Program - explores nature through our 5 senses. Indoor component includes hands-on presentation incorporating visual, auditory and tactile props such as skulls, furs, puppets and live animals. Discuss the differences between reptiles and mammals. Outdoor hike includes “crunch ‘n sniff” where students smell plants that have edible properties, listen for unusual sounds, act like a tree, and visit the live Birds of Prey cage to discuss hunting adaptations.
- * Movie/Video Based Programs - movies on ecology, sustainable development, natural history topics and more. Call for more information.