



January 2012

Dear First Grade Teacher,

Time to make a Splash! Your field excursion to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is coming up - get ready for the adventure! This year there are some changes to the previsit. Your previsit may now be conducted at your leisure with a video available on Safari Montage.

Attached are teacher instructions, a letter to parents, and a letter to chaperones. Only bring **three chaperones**. Before offering anyone the chaperone "job," make sure they have read the letter and understand the expectations.

Before your excursion:

- Verify field excursion date with Assistant Principal
- Go to the ELC's website for prep activity. [www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org) (under "For Teachers")
- Watch previsit video
- Go over vocabulary (p 2)
- Go over ELC Rules (p 3) and What to Wear (p 3)
- Discuss lunch and how to pack a minimal waste lunch (p 4)
- Send letter home to parents (p 5) and to chaperones (p 6)

Day of excursion:

- Have everyone wear sturdy nametags
- Organize lunches for each class into **separate** laundry baskets, boxes or coolers
- **FULL DAY OPTION: Arrive at the ELC at 9:30 am and leave at 1:15 pm.**
- **HALF DAY OPTION: varies for each school.**

Feel free to call or email me if you have any questions. Thank you for helping provide a safe and fun learning opportunity. We appreciate your support☺.

Sincerely,  
Heather Stapleton  
Education Director  
**(772) 589-5050 or [Heather@DiscoverELC.org](mailto:Heather@DiscoverELC.org)**

**[www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org)**



## Environmental Learning Center Field Excursion Teacher Instructions – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

*One day's exposure to mountains is better than a cartload of books.* – John Muir, 1872

The Environmental Learning Center (ELC) field excursion is a high point in the school year for first grade students. At the ELC, they learn about nature by exploring the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. Experiences focus on the main themes emphasized in the ELC's curriculum for first grade, ***Splash 1: Homes and Habitats***.

### The Goal of the Field Excursion

To provide a positive, outdoor experience that will promote awareness of the environment and inspire interest in learning about the world around us. Hands-on learning is heavily emphasized. We hope that the excursion will leave a lasting impression of good environmental ethics and stewardship.

### Preparing Students for their Adventure!

Before your field excursion, watch the ELC Field Excursion video. Indian River County Schools will find this video available on Safari Montage. Non county schools must arrange to check out this video from us. This will help prepare you and your students for the field excursion.

During the video, you and your students will learn about your field excursion. After the video, please lead the "Make Your Own Estuary" (making a mangrove estuary) with your class [Note: this document used by permission of the St. Johns River Water Management District]. You will find this activity (instructions and student worksheet) on our website at [www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org) (click on "For Teachers").

### Chaperones

We realize that the ELC field excursion is a popular one for parents, **but each class is limited to three chaperones** (in addition to the teacher). **If you have any special needs students, including wheelchairs or physical limitations, please call Heather Stapleton at 589-5050 prior to your excursion.** And please encourage all parents to visit the ELC later with their children as their guides! There is no admission fee.

Chaperones should serve as role models during the field excursion, maintain discipline, and help the students and Naturalist as needed. **They may not bring any children not enrolled in the class.** On page 6 is a letter to prospective chaperones that outlines their responsibilities. Please read the letter yourself, and make a copy to give to each person interested in the "job."

### Field Excursion Activities

During the field excursion, your students will:

- ✓ explore the ELC's Native Plant Garden
- ✓ discover the mangrove forest
- ✓ learn about animals and habitats
- ✓ examine animals found in the ocean and lagoon
- ✓ learn what fresh water critters inhabit our pond
- ✓ learn about conservation and stewardship
- ✓ get to know our wonderful Indian River Lagoon

## ELC Rules

Good student behavior is as important on the field excursion as it is in your classroom. Please review with your students the ELC Rules:

- ✓ Have fun.
- ✓ Be respectful.
- ✓ Listen and follow directions.
- ✓ Keep shoes on. Always!
- ✓ Watch for fire ants and splinters!
- ✓ Have fun☺

Make sure parents know what the field excursion will involve. Send home a copy of the parent letter found at the end of these instructions. Encourage your students to eat breakfast on the morning of the field excursion so they have plenty of energy for the day's adventure.

## What to Wear

During the field excursion, all activities take place outside. **Students, teachers, and chaperones must wear closed-toe and closed-heel shoes, and clothing that can get wet and dirty. Water shoes, CROCs and sandals are not acceptable.** For safety reasons anyone not wearing appropriate footwear may not be allowed to participate in all activities. Shoes must be kept on at all times. Dress appropriately for the weather – we will come inside during lightning storms, but may stay out in light rain. Make sure children wear sweaters or jackets when cold or rainy weather is expected.

Please have everyone wear sturdy name tags. This allows the Naturalist to interact on a personal level. Be prepared to divide the children into groups or buddy pairs when needed.

Water and restroom breaks will be provided during the excursion. No one should have food or drinks with them while walking around the ELC. Should a child need to use the restroom outside of scheduled breaks, an adult must accompany him/her.

Teachers are responsible for administering first aid, tending to any child who has allergic reactions, and handling any special medical conditions. Make sure that the Naturalist and chaperones are aware of any such conditions. A first aid kit will be available.

**Lunch**  
(for full day option only)

Please combine your class's lunches in large containers (coolers, boxes, clothes baskets) for transport and organization. **Please make sure you and your chaperones can carry these.** Lunches for each class must be packed separately. Children should not carry their own lunches. Lunch is between 10:40 am and 11:30 am.

ELC emphasizes conservation and stewardship, including the Triple R Philosophy: **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.** We will discuss the problem of our ever-expanding landfills. After lunch, we will sort our trash, separating recyclables (plastic containers marked # 1 - # 7, glass, cans, paper bags) and compost (fruit and vegetables) from the garbage.

Challenge your students to bring lunches that produce minimal waste. Note that aluminum cans and foil can be recycled, but foil snack and beverage bags (for example, Capri Sun) cannot. Here are some other suggestions:

- ✓ Put drinks and foods in reusable containers that can be taken home and reused.
- ✓ Bring naturally packaged foods (hard-boiled eggs, bananas, or apples).
- ✓ Ziploc bags and plastic utensils can not be recycled. Bring a lunch box that you can take home and reuse.

We emphasize that 1) leftover food could have been **Reduced** by remaining at home, 2) sturdy containers can be washed and **Reused**, and 3) certain materials can be **Recycled**.

**After the Field Excursion**

Take advantage of student enthusiasm after the excursion by doing follow-up activities to reinforce what your students learned during the excursion.

You may also have students create story maps to show the sequence of activities they did on their field excursion. The maps can be illustrated with pictures and included in student nature journals.

Another idea is to have students collectively create a single thank you card for the Naturalist and Naturalist Assistant. Save paper by making a single card rather than sending letters from each student. Students can be assigned different tasks: making drawings, lettering the card, and pasting on art. The card could even be shaped like a fish! There is lots of room for imagination.



January 2012

Dear Parent,

The field excursion to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a high point in the school year for first grade students. They learn about nature by exploring the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. Hands-on learning is emphasized, and activities take place outside. The goal is to provide a positive, outdoor experience that promotes awareness and inspires interest in the environment.

Your child's adventure will be on \_\_\_\_\_.

- Your child should eat a good breakfast so s/he has plenty of energy.
- Your child must wear closed-toe and closed heel shoes, and clothing that can get wet and dirty. **Water shoes, sandals and CROCs are not acceptable.**
- Dress your child appropriately for the weather, especially on cold and rainy days. We come inside during storms, but stay out in light rain.
- Apply sunscreen and bug repellent to your child before the excursion.
- Make sure the teacher is aware of any allergic reactions or special medical conditions that your child may have.

We emphasize conservation and stewardship of our natural resources. This includes the Triple R philosophy that encourages all to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. We discuss that 1) leftover food could have been **Reduced** by remaining at home, 2) sturdy plastic containers can be washed and **Reused**, and 3) certain materials can be **Recycled**. Please help by sending your child with a lunch that produces minimal waste. You can do this by:

- 1) putting food and drinks in plastic containers that can be washed and reused;
- 2) including foods that are packaged naturally such as hard-boiled eggs, bananas or apples; and
- 3) not giving your child prepackaged meals (**which have a lot of packaging**).

Thank you for your help in this wonderful learning adventure!

Sincerely,

Heather Stapleton  
Education Director

**[www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org)**



January 2012

Dear Prospective Chaperone,

The field excursion to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a high point in the school year for first grade students. They learn about nature by exploring the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. Hands-on learning is emphasized, and activities take place outside. The goal of the field excursion is to provide a positive, outdoor experience that promotes awareness and inspires interest in learning about the world around us. The excursion will also leave a lasting impression of good environmental ethics and stewardship.

**Chaperones play a vital role during ELC field excursions. Your role is to promote a safe, successful learning experience and to help where needed. The responsibilities:**

- Serve as a role model. Your full attention is expected. Be enthusiastic!
- Supervise all children at all times. Should a child need to use the restroom outside of scheduled breaks, an adult must accompany him/her.
- Participate in all activities and help children and Naturalist as needed.
- Serve as disciplinarian and help children follow rules:
  - Have fun
  - Be respectful.
  - Listen and follow directions
  - Keep your shoes on. Always!
  - Watch for fire ants and splinters
  - Have fun☺
- Keep students together, and close enough to hear the Naturalist.
- Put cell phone on vibrate or turn off.
- Refrain from smoking.
- Help take lunches off of bus upon arrival at the ELC.
- Do not bring children **not enrolled in the class**.

Should you decide to accept this important "job," please notify your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Heather Stapleton  
Education Director

**[www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org)**

# Indian River Lagoon Plants and Animals

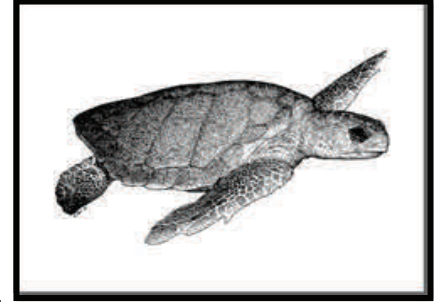
The Indian River Lagoon provides suitable habitat for the following organisms.

Match each picture to its description and fill in its food source.

## A. Red Mangrove

**Food:** \_\_\_\_\_

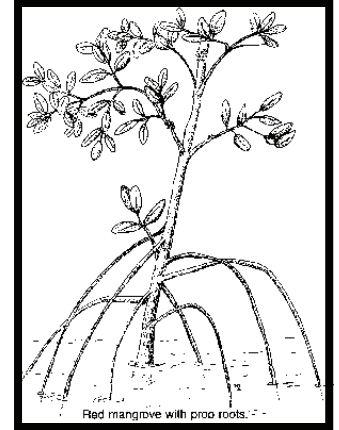
This plant has drop and prop roots that are great shelter for many marine animals.



## B. Pelican

**Food:** \_\_\_\_\_

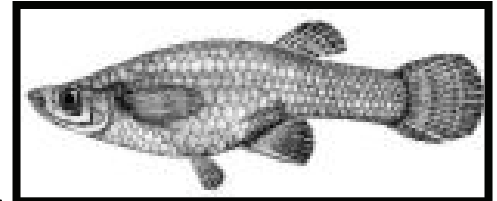
Air pockets beneath the skin protect this animal when it dives into the water for its favorite food.



## C. Dolphin

**Food:** \_\_\_\_\_

This mammal is found in coastal and ocean waters throughout most of the world.



## D. Sea Turtle

**Food:** \_\_\_\_\_

This endangered reptile spends its time in the lagoon and/ or ocean.



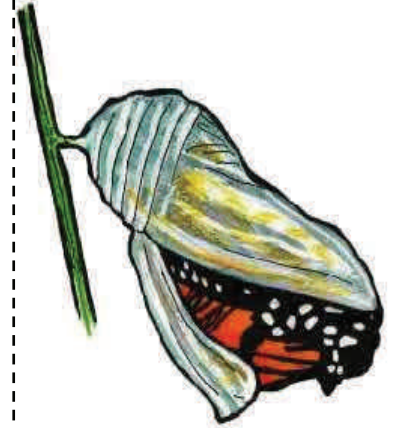
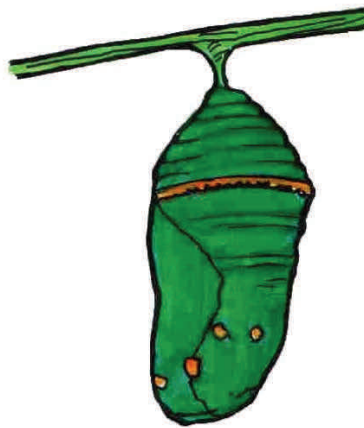
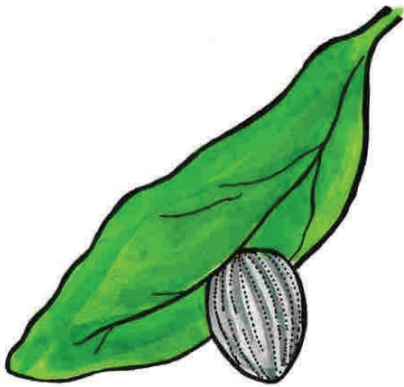
## E. Mosquitofish

**Food:** \_\_\_\_\_

This little animal with gills can be found in both fresh and brackish water.



# Life Cycle of a Butterfly



chrysalis or pupa

egg

adult emerging

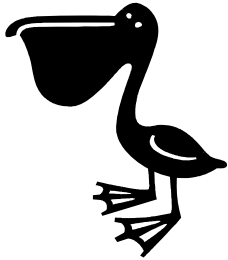
adult

caterpillar or larva

**Cut out and match the life cycle words with the pictures. Then arrange pictures in order.**

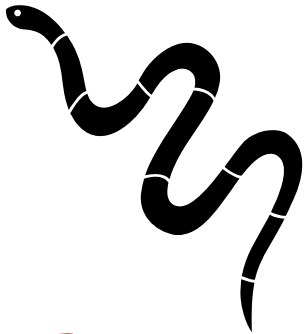


# MANGROVE SING-ALONG



**Pelicans live in mangrove trees, e-i-e-i-o.  
They build their nests among the leaves, e-i-e-i-o.  
With a *flap-flap* here and a *flap-flap* there,  
Here a *flap*, there a *flap*, everywhere a *flap-flap*.  
Pelicans live in mangrove trees, e-i-e-i-o.**

*Pelican: flap arms up and down*



**Rat snakes prowl the branches high, e-i-e-i-o.  
They gulp down eggs and birds they spy, e-i-e-i-o.  
With a *gulp-gulp* here and a *gulp-gulp* there,  
Here a *gulp*, there a *gulp*, everywhere a *gulp-gulp*.  
Rat snakes prowl the branches high, e-i-e-i-o.**

*Rat snake: hold arms at sides and wiggle*



**Crabs crawl in the mangrove trees, e-i-e-i-o.  
They snip off lots of mangrove leaves, e-i-e-i-o.  
With a *pinch-pinch* here, and a *pinch-pinch* there,  
Here a *pinch*, there a *pinch*, everywhere a *pinch-  
pinch*.**

**Crabs crawl in the mangrove trees, e-i-e-i-o.**

*Crab: move thumbs and index fingers back and forth like a pincer*



**Oysters cling to the roots below, e-i-e-i-o.  
They filter out their food you know, e-i-e-i-o.  
With a *slurp-slurp* here, and a *slurp-slurp* there,  
Here a *slurp*, there a *slurp*, everywhere a *slurp-  
slurp*.**

**Oysters cling to the roots below, e-i-e-i-o.**

*Oyster: keep heels of hands together as rest of hand opens and shuts.*

**\*\*\*\*Please sing once before coming out on your ELC field trip.**

**Thank you 😊\*\*\*\***