



LAGOON DAYS PROGRAM

Inspiring Generations of Environmental Stewards

For over 30 years the Environmental Learning Center has been offering our community environmental experiences! Our 3rd and 4th grade field trips for the Indian River County School District have allowed thousands of IRC residents to have a hands-on experience with the Indian River Lagoon.

This is one of our favorite times of the year— elementary school excursions! We muck about all over campus learning about the the beautiful Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. Our beautiful lagoon is finally receiving much needed attention, and it's likely you and your students have more questions than ever. We are ready with answers, including what everyone can do to help! We look forward to having fun and learning with you.

Goals

- To teach students about the natural world through hands-on learning adventures in the outdoors.
- To demonstrate the importance of interconnections in the environment.
- To cultivate an appreciation for the Indian River Lagoon, one of North America's most diverse estuaries.
- To develop a sense of stewardship for the earth's resources and learn how individual actions directly affect the environment.
- To provide authentic experiences that will help students comprehend and extend classroom instruction.

Standards Addressed

- Big Idea 1 SC.4.N.1 The Practice of Science
- Big Idea 17 SC.4.L17 Interdependence

Key Information

- 9:30 am **Arrival**
1:00 pm **Departure**
- Closed-toe, closed-heel shoes that lace required. Shoes WILL get WET
- Pack a waste-free lunch if possible
- Sturdy or *very* sticky name tags suggested
- 3 chaperones MAX per class
- Please review ELC vocabulary prior to visit check DiscoverELC.org Lagoon Days page for list



Before Your Excursion

- Verify field excursion dates and times with transportation
 - 9:30 am arrival
 - 1:00 pm departure
- Review excursion preparation activity on DiscoverELC.org
- Review Vocabulary Labels on DiscoverELC.org
- Review *ELC's Rules* (pg 3)
- Review *What to Wear*, discuss with students (pg 4)
- Discuss how to pack a sustainable lunch (pg 4, 5)
- Send students home with parent and chaperone letters (pg 7, 8)

Day Of Excursion

- Make student name tags - we suggest laminated necklace-style to weather wind and wet conditions
- Organize student lunches; each class should have separate coolers, baskets, boxes, etc.
- Get students EXCITED for a day of adventure and exploration!

During Excursion

- Explore the mangrove forest and their unique adaptations
- Observe the food web in action
- Collect and observe organisms living in the Indian River Lagoon
- Make observations and practice critical thinking
- Record and evaluate data
- Get to know the ELC and the Indian River Lagoon

For questions, please email SaraP@DiscoverELC.org or call (772) 589-5050 ext. 111

We must teach our children to smell the earth, to taste the rain, to touch the wind, to see things grow, to hear the sun rise and night fall - to care.

JOHN CLEAL





ELC Rules

- Have FUN!
- Be a helpful teammate
- Make respectful choices, especially for animals and plants at the ELC.
- Listen and follow directions
- Keep your shoes on ALWAYS!
- Be aware of fire ants and splinters!
- Have FUN!

Nature is not a
place to visit. It is
home.

GARY SNYDER





What to Wear

- Closed-toe, closed-heel shoes that lace are required. ALL students, teachers, chaperones should follow this rule. Anyone NOT wearing appropriate footwear may not be allowed to participate in all activities.
- Clothes that can get wet and dirty - sometimes exploration and learning is messy!
- Expect to get wet up to your waist as we catch animals in the Indian River Lagoon.
- Laminated nametags are highly recommended. Addressing students by names helps to create a successful team. We ask you to help by creating nametags that stand up to weather and water.

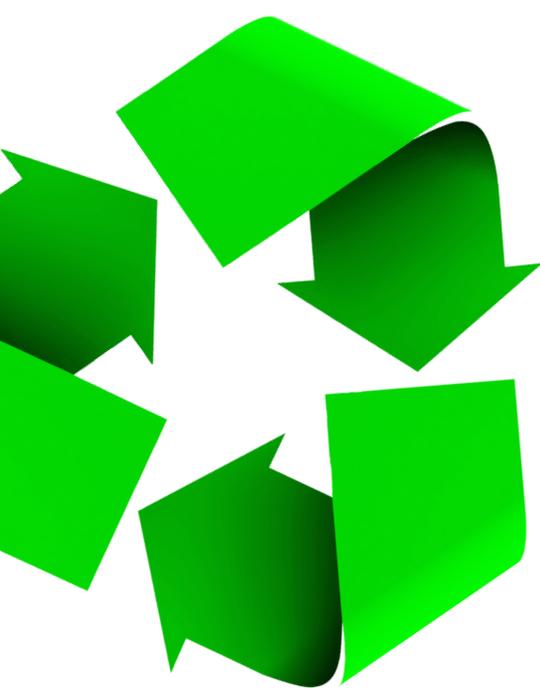
Lunch

- A thirty minute lunch is scheduled between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm.
- Each class should compile student lunches in containers that are easy to transport. Students should not carry their own lunches.
- Remember the 5 R's to pack a sustainable lunch:
 - Refuse: single-use plastics + pre-packed convenience items
 - Reduce: leave unwanted food at home, pack only what you can eat
 - Reuse: sturdy containers, cutlery
 - Repurpose: ziplock or shopping bags
 - Recycle: aluminum, plastics, glass

When one tugs at a
single thing in
nature, he finds it
attached to the rest
of the world.

JOHN MUIR



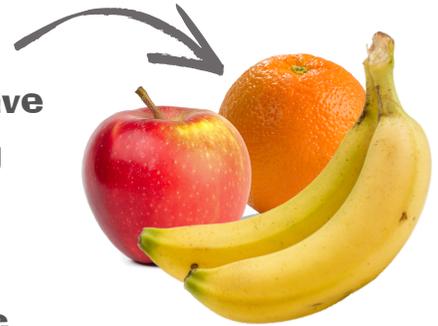


HOW CAN YOU PACK AN EARTH-FRIENDLY LUNCH?

Try to Use All 5 R's When Packing Your Lunch!

Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle!

Refuse plastic by choosing foods that have their own packaging



Refuse a plastic baggie and use a beeswax wrap for your sandwich



Repurpose a plastic bag to hold your lunch gear and **Recycle** when you're done



Reduce plastic waste by switching to a reusable drink bottle

You can even add your favorite stickers to make it fun!



Reuse a fork from home and ditch the plastic utensils



Reduce waste by packing your own lunch in a reusable container





After Your Excursion

- Visit ELC's website for a list of activities to extend your student's experience.
- Have students create a story map to illustrate their excursion experience. Add vocabulary and pictures which can be included in a nature journal.
- Review your experience and vocabulary by having your class create thank you notes or cards for the ELC Educators and Volunteers.
- Have each student research their favorite animal to learn more about its habitat preference, diet, and life history.
- Ask the class to create a performance of the life cycle of a mangrove, from propagule to full grown tree. Where has their propagule traveled? How did it choose a place to live? What animals did it see on its journey?
- Create a mangrove propagation station in your classroom and allow students to care for the plant as it grows. ELC has plenty of mangrove propagules! While your here, ask your ELC Educator for their help collecting fallen propagules.
- Allow students to create an experiment in class using the mangroves you collected on campus. Do they grow faster in fresh, brackish, or salt water? How does light affect their growth, what about air temperature? Track, record, and analyze growth rates. Have students report their findings in a school newspaper, morning announcements, or even at a school assembly!
- Offer students an opportunity to write a letter to their favorite animal in our aquarium!
- Need more ideas? Feel free to email our education team Education@discoverelc.org

Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives.

THOMAS BERRY





Dear Parent/Guardian,

Field trips to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) are a high point in the school year for fourth grade students. Your child will join our ELC Educators on an exploration of our mangrove-island campus. Students will 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 about the Indian River Lagoon and inspires your child to be an environmental steward. Your child's adventure will be on _____.

Exploration and learning outside can get a little messy and require lots of energy. To make sure your child is ready for their day of adventure please:

- Dress your child in closed-toe, closed-heel shoes that lace. We recommend old tennis shoes. Students will get wet and dirty, which is part of the fun! A quick wash after your trip will easily clean your child's shoes.
- Dress according to the weather, especially on cold or rainy days. We will stay outside during the rain and will move inside only for safety.
- Apply sunscreen and bug repellent at home on the day of your excursion.
- Help your child pack a waste-free lunch if possible.

Suggestions for reducing waste:

- Bring food in a reusable container that can be washed and reused.
- Pack naturally packaged foods like bananas, apples, and oranges.
- Use silicon or waxed food wraps instead of ziplock bags.
- Pack utensils you can wash and reuse instead of plastic utensils.
- Pack drinks in re-purposed plastic bottles with screw-on lids - these can be reused.

Thank you for your help in this wonderful learning adventure! We encourage you to come back to the ELC with your child and allow them to be your nature guide! There are lots of great opportunities for you and your family to connect in nature! Head to Discoverelc.org to learn more.

Sincerely,
The ELC Education Team





Dear Prospective Chaperone,

Field trips to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) are a high point in the school year for fourth grade students. Students will join our ELC Educators on an exploration of our mangrove-island campus. They will 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 about the Indian River Lagoon and inspires students to be an environmental steward.

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:

- Be enthusiastic for all activities!
- Serve as a role model. We need your participation and assistance throughout the trip.
- Supervise children at all times, including bathroom and lunch breaks.
- Participate in all activities, including wading into the lagoon to catch aquatic species. You will get wet and dirty - but that's the most fun anyway!
- Dress appropriately including closed-toe, closed-heel shoes that lace and can get wet.
- Keep class together.
- Help teachers and ELC representatives by unloading and transporting lunches.
- Keep cellphone distractions at bay - silence or turn off phone.
- Only bring students enrolled in class, no siblings or other family members allowed.
- Ensure the ELC campus remains smoke-free, no cigarettes or vaping allowed.
- Serve as an authority for behavior and respect, and help children follow rules:
 - Have FUN!
 - Be a helpful teammate.
 - Make respectful choices, especially for animals and plants at the ELC.
 - Listen and follow directions.
 - Keep your shoes on ALWAYS!
 - Be aware of fire ants and splinters!
 - Have FUN!

Should you decide to accept this important position, please notify your child's teacher. Thank you for your help in this wonderful learning adventure! We encourage you to come back to the ELC with your child and allow them to be your nature guide! There are lots of great opportunities for you and your family to connect in nature! Head to Discoverelc.org to learn more.

Sincerely,

The ELC Education Team



The Environmental Learning Center is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) founded in 1988 by a group of environmentally conscious pioneers from the Pelican Island Audubon Society who lived in our community and cherished the nature that thrives in the Indian River Lagoon. Through the support of our community, donors, members, board, staff, and volunteers, we are able to build our educational nature learning and stewardship programs and bring nature to all, including those with limited means and access to nature.

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.

