

Ecosystem Studies, grades 3–5

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Students will participate in active investigations while exploring the plants and animals of the Arboretum’s ecosystems.
- Students will collect data and make comparisons of plant and animal lifecycles and interactions.
- Students will identify ecosystem resources and services necessary for survival.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Length: 1.5–2 hours

Grade level: 3–5

Season: All

Student to naturalist ratio: 15:1

Option 1: An overview of all the ecosystems: forest, prairie, wetland, garden. Includes short investigations.

Option 2: Choose one or two of these ecosystems to focus on: forest, prairie, wetland, or garden. Includes a longer, more in-depth investigation.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Hike to chosen ecosystems.
- Use tools to make observations of plants and animals in their ecosystems (hand lenses, binoculars, nets, insect containers).
- Collect, observe, and release insects, spiders, and microorganisms from the forest floor, pond, prairie, or garden ecosystems, when possible.
- Design models to explain life cycles, food webs, plant and animal structures, and plant and animal functions.
- Plant and animal identification to evaluate the ecosystem diversity.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

[Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability](#)

ELS.EX2.B.i

ELS.EX3.B.i

[Wisconsin Standards for Science](#)

SCI.LS2.D.3

SCI.LS1.B.3

SCI.LS1.A.4

SCI.LS2.A.5

[Next Generation Science Standards](#)

3-LS2-1

4-LS1-1

5-LS2-1