

Berrien Springs Partnership Syllabus – Spring 2026

CLASS TITLE: GVNCP - Backyard Art Zoom

GRADE OR AGE LEVELS: ages 5 and up

FORMAT: online

START DATE: Jan 22, 2026 **END DATE:** March 12, 2026

WEEKS TOTAL: 8 weeks

DAY OF WEEK: Thursday, 8 weeks in a row

DAY/TIME: 3 to 5 PM (2 hours per day)

HOURS (REQUIRED): 16 hours total

LOCATION/ADDRESS: DIRECTIONS TO LOCATION :

At your home on Zoom software

MAIN INSTRUCTOR: Zoe Elrick

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Phone: 269-612-8172

Email: galienvalley@gmail.com

Website: www.z-hub.org/galienvalleyncp.html

Please email the instructor to let her know that you signed up for her class.

INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS: Zoe Elrick

Zoe Elrick is an award-winning artist with a background in education, culture, science, art, history, as well as landscape architecture and ecology. In 2011, she started the Galien Valley Nature and Culture Program (GV-NCP), in Three Oaks, Michigan. Also, she is a registered landscape architect in Michigan and has worked for Pizzo and Associates, an ecological restoration firm of prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. Her landscape architecture degree is from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Plus, she has taken nature classes in New Jersey at the Tracker School of nature awareness, wilderness living, and wilderness survival.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: (websites):

www.z-hub.org/galienvalleyncp.html

www.z-hub.org/nature.html

www.z-hub.org/culture.html

<https://www.facebook.com/GalienValleyNCP/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Class is mostly indoors, but students will visit their outdoor backyard too.

This class is both informative and fun! Explore your own backyard. Draw nature and things in your backyard. Start or expand your Nature Journal. Drawing the things of nature helps people to learn about nature. This is a drawing class, a nature class, and a show-n-tell class. On Zoom, talk with classmates about your art, art journal, and nature in your backyard. In January to February, students will make art related to the winter season, and in March, the spring season. In class, we'll draw things such as sticks, leaves, snowy features, tracks, animals, native spring wildflowers, the backyard landscape, backyard map, etc. Each day of class, there will be a few different drawing activities, indoors, as well as one or two nature-exploration activities, outdoors, in your backyard. There will be a lot of free-hand sketching, as well as some tracing too.

Recommended: during class, at least for the first few days of class, parents should assist students with Zoom and the class, for students who are under age 12.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Teacher provides web page with sheets for student to print out at home.

(Required) Required to bring to class (provided by student/family):

- 1. Smart phone, iPad, and or computer (laptop or desktop) with Zoom software. (Most people find the smart phone the most handy to bring and use outdoors.)**
- 2. Printer to print out sheets of nature activities. Every week, print 3 new sheets, before the class period starts on Thursday.**
- 3. Digital camera or smart phone to take outdoor photos. Be able to email about 4 photos to instructor, each week. Photos are not necessarily taken every day of class, but it's good to be prepared.**
- 4. Dress for outdoor weather in your backyard.**
- 5. clipboard**
- 6. 3-ring binder for nature journal**
- 7. hole puncher**
- 8. unlined paper 8.5 x 11" (printer paper)**
- 9. tracing paper 8.5 x 11" (25 sheets)**
- 10. pencils**
- 11. colored pencils**
- 12. crayons**
- 13. optional: an assortment of soft and hard artist pencils (e.g. 2H, 2B, 4B) - just a 4 pencil set or a set with more pencils. Or just the 2B and 4B pencil. Optional: especially the 2B and 4B pencils can be used in class.**

SYLLABUS/OUTLINE: WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITY, 2 lessons per week (within 2 hours)

Week 1 - Jan 22	Intro, and Winter Sketches
Week 2 - Jan 29	Michigan Animals, and Native and Exotic
Week 3 - Feb 5	Michigan Trees, and Evergreen Trees
Week 4 - Feb 12	Elevation and Plans, and Map Your Yard
Week 5 - Feb 19	Sticks are Fun, and Yard Design
Week 6 - Feb 26	Spring Animals, Native to Michigan
Week 7 - Mar 5	Spring Wildflowers, Native to Michigan
Week 8 - Mar 12	Review, and Organize Art Journal

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND APPROXIMATE TARGET DATES:

Each day of class, a student will draw / sketch and write in his Nature Journal.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT - what will be used to evaluate student progress and/or end of semester pass/fail status? All classes abide by the following:

1. Student agrees to attend at least 80% of class sessions/lessons offered. Attendance is kept online and tracked by Partnership staff. Failure to meet 80% or be on track to meet 80% may result in program discontinuation.
2. The Partnership Student Assessment or Performance Form is filled out by the teacher and turned into Partnership staff. The link to this form is found on the web page for this class. Failing marks for lack of participation, behavior issues, etc., may result in program discontinuation.

Student Assessment: Students to: 1. Be prepared / bring materials. 2. Listen to teacher. 3. Ask questions, if don't understand. 4. Be on time to class. 5. Do class activities. 6. Do activities to the best of ability of age. 7. Respects classmates. 8. Be open to suggestions. 9. Stay on task of class activities. 10. Brings required materials (see list below).

CLASS POLICIES: ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR, WEATHER, ETC.

Attendance: Students need to attend 80% of class hours.

Behavior: Students are expected to be on time, bring required materials (see list below), listen to teacher, follow directions, participate in class activities, and respect classmates.

Weather: Class will be run, no matter the weather.

(Bring) Bring Required Materials:

See above, Course Materials.