

Berrien Springs Partnership Syllabus – Fall 2025

CLASS TITLE: GVNCP - Habitats and Wildlife

GRADE OR AGE LEVELS: ages 5 to 18

FORMAT: in-person

Wednesday Class:

START DATE: Sept 17, 2025 **END DATE:** Nov 5, 2025

WEEKS TOTAL: 8 weeks **DAY/TIME:** 12 Noon to 2 PM (2 hours per day)

DAY OF WEEK: Wednesday, the class is 8 Wednesdays in a row **# HOURS (REQUIRED):** 16 hours total (16 total lessons)

Sunday Class:

START DATE: Sept 21, 2025 **END DATE:** Oct 12, 2025

WEEKS TOTAL: 4 weeks **DAY/TIME:** 1 PM to 5 PM (4 hours per day)

DAY OF WEEK: Sundays, the class is 4 Sundays in a row **# HOURS (REQUIRED):** 16 hours total (16 total lessons) **LOCATION/ADDRESS: DIRECTIONS TO LOCATION :**

Fernwood Botanical Gardens, (attending class covers admission for class days)

13988 Range Line Road, Niles, MI 49120

And at Warren Dunes State Park (student to pay for MI State Park pass)

12032 Red Arrow Hwy, Sawyer, MI 49125

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 has 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

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

<https://www.facebook.com/Nature-Environmental-Advocacy-45111822807/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Class is all outdoors. Dress for weather. Class will not be indoors.

This class is both informative and fun! Come enjoy Fernwood, explore its natural habitats - it's prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. Plus, visit Warren Dunes and its lake and dunes, for 4 hours of class. Learn about nature through a variety of hands-on nature-exploration skills and 4 habitats. Bring the family and a blanket, it's a family picnic style class.

One or two parents (or adult relatives) must attend class with student(s) ages 10 and younger, per family. One or two parents (or adult relatives) may attend class with student(s) ages 11 and older, per family. The parents / adult relatives are to help guide their kid(s) along nature trails. Along nature trails, there will be designated spots for each family to take turns to stop at, to do a brief nature activity with their kid(s). Unaccompanied students ages 11 and up will be paired up with each other, along the nature trails.

Habitats and Wildlife Topics include: Southwest Michigan local habitats; Prairies; Lake and Dunes; Woodlands; and Wetlands; Nature Journal; Deep-Sensing Nature; Tracking and Awareness; Plant Identification; and Local Plants and Animals. Plus, each class day, students get to enjoy the features, plants, animals, and nature at Fernwood. During each class, students will be outdoors, studying nature.

Habitats and Wildlife – 4 Habitat Units

are Prairies; Lake and Dunes; Wetlands; and Woodlands.

SYLLABUS/OUTLINE: WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITY,

Wednesdays: 2 lessons per week (within 2 hours)

Week 1 - Wednesday - Sept 17 - Prairie Habitat, and Flowers (at Fernwood)

Week 2 - Wednesday - Sept 24 - Prairie Wildlife, and Grasses (at Fernwood)

Week 3 - Wednesday - Oct 1 - Lake Habitat, and Wildlife (at Warren Dunes)

Week 4 - Wednesday - Oct 8 – Dunes Habitat, and Wildlife (at Warren Dunes)

Week 5 - Wednesday - Oct 15 – Wetland Habitat, and Plants (at Fernwood)

Week 6 - Wednesday - Oct 22 – Types of Wetlands, and Wildlife (at Fernwood)

Week 7 - Wednesday - Oct 29 – Woodlands Habitat, and Trees (at Fernwood)

Week 8 - Wednesday - Nov 5 – Woodlands Wildlife, and Leaves (at Fernwood)

Sundays: 4 lessons per week (within 4 hours)

Week 1 - Sunday - Sept 21 – at Fernwood

Prairie Habitat, Flowers, Grasses, and Wildlife

Week 2 - Sunday - Sept 28 – at Warren Dunes

Lake Habitat and Wildlife, Dunes Habitat and Wildlife

Week 3 - Sunday - Oct 5 – at Fernwood

Wetland Habitat, Types of Wetlands, Plants, and Wildlife

Week 4 - Sunday - Oct 12 – at Fernwood

Woodlands Habitat, Wildlife, Trees, and Leaves

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.

Parents Needed to be in Class. Bring the family and a blanket, it's a family picnic style class. One or two parents (or adult relatives) must attend class with student(s) under age 11, per family. The parents / adult relatives are to help guide their kid(s) with nature activities and crafts.

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 postponed until next week, if there is severe weather.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Teacher provides some info sheets.

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

Blanket(s) large enough for whole family.

Dress for outdoor weather.

Bring a mask, optional to regularly wear, but we may use it in a nature activity.

Water Bottle, 3-ring binder, paper, pencil.

Warren Dunes State Park requires a pass, a "recreation passport" (annual park pass). If you do not already have a pass, it costs about \$18 per vehicle, for student/family to pay upon arrival at park.

Optional Materials (provided by student/family) Suggested optional stuff to bring: color pencils, pens, markers, hat,