



School in the Woods Field Notes

November 2020



Dear Parents:

With Thanksgiving approaching we would like to let you know how thankful we are to have such an incredible SITW community of naturalists and their families. This year has been especially challenging across our planet with the COVID-19 pandemic. We are so fortunate to be able to conduct in-person learning at our beloved School in the Woods. Thank you for your on-going diligence with monitoring the health of your children. To date, we have had 12 naturalists take COVID tests and all received negative results. By taking the tests, we have been able to reduce isolation times and prevent entire classes from being kept out of school. Please continue to help slow the COVID spread by monitoring your naturalist's health and being willing to get a COVID test ASAP if warranted according to the guidelines we provided. Together, we can make a difference.

It was wonderful to have so many of you and your naturalist meet virtually with our teaching team during our Parent/Naturalist/Teacher Conferences. We all would have rather met you in-person but spending that time with you was certainly rewarding. These meetings are intended to help you learn more about our school and various programming aspects and help us learn more about our naturalists. We truly appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule meet online and talk with us about your child. Please feel free to contact any of us at any time during the school year if there is anything you feel we should know to better help your child learn and be successful.

One of the special highlights for us this fall was our day-long visit to Rock Ledge Ranch, Garden of the Gods, and Bear Creek Nature Center. We were fortunate to have the ranch foreman share his knowledge of the early history of the ranch area. He helped us learn a wealth of new knowledge about Rock Ledge Ranch and its historical significance. We toured the ranch then and hiked to view a fossil in one of the limestone layers of GOG. After lunch, we headed out to Bear Creek Nature Center and Park, an El Paso County park. We had the Visitor Center to ourselves, and several wonderful guides took us on nature hikes. We had full day making discoveries!

We recently sent home "Every Kid in a Park" national park/monument passes. This incredible program allows your whole family free admittance to hundreds of parks, monuments, museums, and other national treasures for an entire year! Go online to learn about the huge number of sites you can visit for **FREE**.

We have been spending time learning the sport of archery. After learning proper archery shooting techniques

and safety guidelines, naturalists have had opportunities to practice shooting arrows in our field range. We have already seen some nice improvement in form and shooting skills. Archery is a great life-long activity that can be noncompetitive and often takes place in the realm of nature.

Language Arts

We all truly enjoyed reading My Side of the Mountain. This classic novel, by Jean Craighead George, captured the naturalists' hearts, and many identified intimately with Sam, the main character. We all share Sam's love of nature and natural processes. Our naturalists were able to view the original movie made for this story and compare and contrast various elements from the plot line and cinematography.

Now we will begin reading books about three remarkable naturalists: John Muir, Rachel Carson, and Jane Goodall. After reading these books, each student will choose their own naturalist to read about and study. If your child expresses interest, you may want to help them get to the library or go on the Internet to research more about their chosen naturalist.

Turkey Trot

What a fantastic day we had for our Ninth Annual Turkey Trot! The weather really cooperated for us. It was sunny, but just cool enough. With the help of a very few volunteers, the challenging run was enjoyed by everyone. The determination and smiles on the naturalists' faces said it all. So many of them said they had never run so far before. We are thankful for your support of this fundraiser and will let you know how much was collected as soon as we know.

Changing Weather as the Days Shorten

Colder weather has arrived, and it is important that your child come prepared for the cold and snow we frequently have in the Black Forest. **All our naturalists must have appropriate clothing such as warm jackets, gloves/mittens, and waterproof footwear to be dry and comfortable outdoors during this time of year.** And, even when it is cold, they still need to drink plenty of water. Please make sure that they have a **water bottle every day.** Thank you!

Please complete our SITW School Climate Survey. We really value your input. Click on "Logins" on our web site.