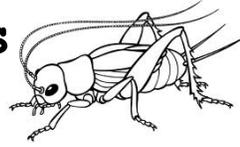


# School in the Woods Field Notes

October 2019



## Dear Parents:

We have had a fantastic month of September. We are looking forward to our first full month of fall – October! Our Overnight was a very special time. We had absolutely super weather for spending the night out under the stars. There was absolutely no rain in the forecast, so we didn't even set up tarps. Woohoo! Our naturalists were able to prepare their own special sleeping area out on the grassy ponderosa pine forest floor, toast marshmallows around a campfire, sing special songs, learn some astronomy, and participate the next morning in our memorable School in the Woods ceremony. They all were so proud of themselves and looked wonderful in their new sweatshirts. Thank you all for contributing to the success of our naturalists' important Overnight experience.

Our Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge field trip was amazing! We saw many animals and a large variety of plants. Have your naturalist describe what they saw at this incredible urban wildlife refuge.

We have all been learning about various ecosystems and how different plants and animals have adapted to survive where they live. An important part of our studies was our field excursion through multiple ecosystems to the top of Pikes Peak. We had an amazing time visiting riparian areas, grasslands, montane shrub lands, montane forests, subalpine forests and the alpine tundra. We drove all the way to the top where we enjoyed donuts and hot chocolate and took in the incredible view of Colorado Springs and the eastern plains. Our lunchtime was spent in the glorious subalpine area around Glen Cove. We identified many plants and saw animals, including Rocky Mountain big-horned sheep above 13,000 feet! Make sure to talk with your child about all they learned.

Our naturalists have also been learning how all living systems on our planet include green plants (which capture the sun's energy by photosynthesis), herbivores, carnivores, scavengers, and decomposers. Ask them to explain these ideas to you.

## Sharing Through Writing

Encourage your naturalists to write about their school experiences and their feelings at home. They may want to keep a journal or write notes and letters. This helps you to be aware of your child's progress in writing, and also gives your naturalist an opportunity to share her/his experiences with you. We have found that it is very valuable for parents to be part of the unique experiences we are able to provide at School in the Woods, and one way is through writing pieces. We will continue to emphasize the importance of written and verbal communication that is meaningful, utilizes correct conventions, and reflects writer involvement and pride.

## Math

Our naturalists have been receiving the benefits of increased opportunities for greater individual differentiation

within their smaller groups. They are working to solidify computation strategies for whole numbers using all operations. We are all working diligently to help the naturalists learn their multiplication skills and strategies better. What is most important now, is for them to learn their multiplication facts and have them mastered as soon as possible. We are seeing that those who don't know their facts well, struggle more in learning the various multiplication strategies and word problems. We are unable to spend much time practicing at school. Most of the practice and memorization of these facts needs to be done at home, in the car, or other areas where practice can occur. Organized flash cards work well! We appreciate your support and encouragement with their endeavor to learn their facts.

## Important Dates

Thursday, **October 3**, is a Teacher Work Day, and Friday, **October 4** is a Professional Development Day. There will be no school for elementary students either day. We'll miss our naturalists! Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on **October 16-17**. We ask that our naturalists attend these meetings, so they can reflect on what has gone well for them, and on areas where they consider improvement necessary. This personal contact between all of us is extremely valuable in helping know your child better and providing for a successful school year. A SignUp Genius will be coming out at the end of next week. Our 8th annual Turkey Trot fundraiser is **Oct. 25**. Our fall party is 1:00-2:30 on **Oct. 31**. More details will be provided.

## Other Details

Our next field trip, October 9 is to Florissant Fossil Beds. This is an amazing national monument! "Beneath a grassy mountain valley in central Colorado lies one of the richest and most diverse fossil deposits in the world. Petrified redwood stumps up to 14 feet wide and thousands of detailed fossils of insects and plants reveal the story of a very different, prehistoric Colorado." (From [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)) A bonus of this trip is that our naturalists will be able to earn their Junior Ranger badges. Given that this is another longer trip, **we will start and end at the D20 EAC**. We plan to meet at 8:00 and return at 5:00.

**Turkey Trot** – We are including information and a pledge envelope in your naturalist's Friday Folder. **This is our most important fund-raiser of the year.** This year we hope to raise funds to enhance our new building with fixtures such as fans, projectors, classroom sinks, outdoor spigots to name a few. This is not a door to door collection, but rather collecting pledges and/or donations from friends and family. Thanks for your support with this worth-while fund-raising activity. Our school will benefit greatly, and our naturalists will share smiles and laughter as they run and walk through our beautiful forest for an hour.