

Whitefish Pilot

Field trip guides aimed at assisting with outdoor learning

08 April 2020



The folks behind the Whitefish Trail have created independent field trip activities for children and their families to use on any trail or even in their own backyard.

Whitefish Legacy Partners has released two field trip guides, one for students in grades kindergarten through second grade and another for those in grades three through five. During spring, typically bus loads of students visit the Whitefish Trail for field trips. Schools this year are closed, however, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Legacy Partners came up with the creative way to keep youngsters engaged in outdoor learning, and provide a way to curb cabin fever while folks are being asked to stay at home.

Margosia Jadcowski, Program Director for Legacy Partners, said Legacy Partners usually puts on field trips on the Whitefish Trail for all kindergarten, third-grade, sixth-grade and ninth-grade students in the Whitefish School District. Each trip has a different focus and by partnering with local nonprofits and government agencies, include activities exploring watersheds, forestry and ecology.

“Given school closures and COVID-19 public health and safety guidelines we’re unsure whether we will be able to do field trips on the Whitefish Trail this year, but we still wanted to facilitate an opportunity for kids to get out on the trail and explore,” Jadcowski said. “Our main goal with the independent field trips was to provide parents and caretakers with a resource that would make it easier for them to get out and enjoy nature on the trail or even in their backyard.”

The field trip activities for kindergarten through second-grade students, help them to practice spelling, writing, math, critical thinking and use their imagination while exploring through hands-on interactive lessons, games and activities.

Activities include an ABC scavenger hunt that asks youngsters to search the outdoors for things in nature that start with each letter of the alphabet while hiking through the forest. Another lesson asks students to think about their time exploring outside and write a poem about what they observed.

The field trip activities for the third- through fifth-grade students, gives them practice with science, math and language.

Activities include a tree hunt, where participants are asked to observe trees from afar and up close and then find different trees, like one with a crooked trunk, one that is tall and one that is short, or one with rough bark and one with smooth bark.

Another has students estimate the size of the tree’s diameter, radius and circumference using parts of the body or measuring tape.

Jadcowski said the independent field trips are designed to be simple and not require many materials or preparation.

“They’re designed to get families out, observing the forest around them and using their creativity,” she said, and while they’re different than the regular field trip activities, “they all serve the same goal of getting kids out in nature,

deepening their understanding of it, and allowing them to build a relationship with our local conservation lands.”

Legacy Partners is working on new forms for its other education programs, like Facebook live streams and they hope to add independent field trips for older students.

“We understand the challenges that many of our neighbors and families are facing trying to balance working from home with childcare, adjusting to school and work at home, and staying connected to community,” Jadkowski said. “Right now we’re focused on how we can provide programs and resources that will help with some of those challenges.”

Legacy Partners reminds folks that social distancing of remaining 6-feet apart from others should be maintained even while recreating outdoors.

Source: <https://whitefishpilot.com/news/2020/apr/08/field-trip-guides-aimed-at-assisting-with-9/>