



Hancock Park District

Educational Programs

2024-2025 School Year

Hancock Park District (HPD) programs immerse students in nature and history through hands-on and experiential activities that are closely aligned with Ohio Academic Content Standards. Our professional staff is dedicated to promoting a better understanding and appreciation of the local culture, history, flora, and fauna.

Please schedule by contacting Michelle Rumschlag, Naturalist, weekdays between 8 AM and 4:30 PM, at 419-425-7275 or mrumschlag@hancockparks.com.

Please have the following information ready before you call or email:

_____ Name of school	_____ Grade/Age of students
_____ Contact person's name	_____ Contact person's phone number
_____ Contact person's email address	_____ Number of classes and students
_____ Preferred program title/topic	_____ First and second choice of dates
_____ Special needs	

HPD Educational Programs

Programs are held rain or shine. The Hancock Park District will not cancel a program unless there is a safety concern, such as thunderstorms, tornado watches, or high wind warnings. However, in the event of just rain, the program will be conducted as planned.

Each program is designed with multiple, 30-minute stations. You may select programs that best fit your curriculum and choose as many stations as time allows.

Most park programs can be held at the following park locations: Aeraland Recreation Area, Litzenberg Memorial Woods, Oakwoods Nature Preserve and Riverbend Recreation Area. We can also travel to your school site and bring our programs to you.

One adult for every 10 children is recommended. *Due to space limitations, we ask that chaperones do not bring other aged siblings.*

- **Hancock County groups** are free, unless otherwise noted.
- **Out-of-county groups** are charged \$2 *per student*. If there are less than 25 participants, a minimum program fee of \$50 will be charged. If there is a charge for Hancock County students, the out-of-county student rate will be prorated. Participation by teachers and chaperones is free.

PAYMENT METHOD: If there is a charge for the program, you will be invoiced after the program based on the number of students who attended. Please do not send payment prior to the program.

While the programs below fit into Science and Social Studies state standards, we can develop standalone programs on a variety of nature topics including Owls, Plants, Mammals, Birds, etc.

History Programs @ Litzenberg

Due to the nature of the programs, the following can only be held at Litzenberg Memorial Woods.

Grade 1 - Back in the Day

Find out how pioneers lived in Hancock County 177 years ago. Take a tour of the 1847 McKinnis House, meet a pioneer, and see how life was different than yours. You'll also get a chance to tour the wagon shed and workshop and play pioneer games.

Grade 2 - Jobs of Yesteryear

Meet pioneers with jobs you might be familiar with today but see how they varied in the 1840s. A teacher, housewife, and workman will tell you about their trades and will ask you to help them, too.

Grade 3 - Communities

Get your bartering shoes on as we go to the market to trade our extra goods. See what the McKinnis family will be getting around to take to the store. We'll also look at maps from now and then to see how the community has changed over time.

Grade 4

History Comes Alive

Program Time: 10 AM - 1:45 PM

Step back in time to experience pioneer life and participate in hands-on activities. See the importance of folk music in local culture and the functionality of pioneer clothing and help spin wool. Assist a hard-working farmwife with butter churning and clothes washing and discover the hardships of traveling to Hancock County. Investigate the many uses of Ohio plants on a nature hike, get hands-on with tools, and visit the workshop. This program is provided in cooperation with the University of Findlay's College of Education.

Program Fee: \$2 per student

Program Offered: Few openings for this year's program; Monday, September 23 & Tuesday, September 24

Maple Sugarin' Days – revamped!

Program time: 10 AM - 12:45 PM

Step into nature and history as you explore the history and production of one of North America's sweetest products. All stations will now take place around the main area of the park. Learn what animals use sap as a food source and the adaptations they have to eat it, a step-by-step approach to modern production, highlighting them with beads and you make your own keychain and tour the 1847 McKinnis House with a visit from a costumed interpreter. We also cover sap science and maple sugaring in American Indian culture and see a busy pioneer processing the maple sap. Kids will be able to sample real maple syrup and sugar. Options for each student to make their own key chain at an additional price.

Program Fee: \$1 per student

Program Offered: March 3-7, 2025

Grade 5 - Native American Life - revamped

Learn about local Native American tribes in Northwest Ohio. Take nature hike to learn about plants and the uses they would have had to native people and participate in games and activities to see if you have what it takes to be a great hunter.

What Freedom Means to Me - Grades 4-6

Experience what immigration to the United States of America was like through the eyes of an immigrant. Dive into an Irish immigrant's family basket and see what precious few possessions were brought over, become an immigrant yourself, and face peril, starvation, and death as you role play your journey to America. See how life would've been if you didn't speak the parent language and try to complete an activity without speaking.

Nature Programs in our Parks

Kindergarten

Animal Adaptations - new

Focus will be on the touch and hearing senses as we put them to the test to guess what's hiding in containers. Highlight structural adaptations and the body parts that help animals most. Children will be able to get hands-on with examples of these.

Living vs Non-living - new

We'll learn about the parts of a plant and how they grow, play a baby to mom matching game involving animals kids know and some they don't and animals living in different ecosystems and how seasonal changes affect them.

What's the Weather – revamped

Explore what's going on outside with the weather and look at the seasons with hands-on activities with hands-on experiments and observations including collecting weather data and looking at the clouds.

Puppet Show: On the Fly

Preschool classes can also attend

1 hour

A story of fall migration will be told from the view of the migrating birds themselves and those that stay behind. We will do some singing afterwards and make a craft too!

Offered at Oakwoods Nature Preserve

February 5-9, 2025

Grade 1

Amazing Animal Senses

Discover how animals use sight, sound, taste, touch, smell and their tongues through hands-on activities and experiments.

Examining Ecosystems - new

We break down the aspects of an ecosystem, including food chains and the flow of energy, habitat components and play a game that drives these ideas home, and a nature hike.

Insect Investigations

Learn what makes an insect an insect while we turn you into one. Explore how different kinds of insect mouthparts help these bugs eat their food. Use sweep nets and go on an insect hunt to discover the great variety of insects that live in Ohio.

Sun, Energy & Weather (was Water, Water Everywhere) – revamped

Water will be on our minds as we take a closer look at the different properties of water and see how fresh water and salt water differ, including finding out how much of each is on Earth. We'll visit a body of water to investigate further, learn about temperature and heating from the Sun, and do some solar cooking.

Grade 2

Nature's Recyclers

Through a story, you'll discover how the world's best recyclers complete the circle of life. Learn about decomposers and scavengers as you search for them on a nature hike and then get dirty with some of the best composters, worms!

Up in the Air

Explore the air around us and in our atmosphere and conduct experiments to see what's really going on in the sky. Topic points include the water cycle, wind, clouds, evaporation, and condensation.

Grade 3

Earth's Resources

Get your hands dirty as you compare three soils from Hancock County. Students will become geologists and perform experiments on rocks and minerals. Play a popcorn activity to learn about renewable resources and learn how reducing and reusing materials is the way to go.

Life Cycles

Explore the ways animals live. Dive into the process of metamorphosis related to amphibians and insects. Learn about a bird and mammal that don't follow normal parenting practices. The life cycle of plants will be covered, too.

Grade 4

Earth's Living History

See how animals survive in their ever-changing environment through hands-on activities. Discover how the landscape in Ohio looked at various times throughout the past and compare fossils and animals living today.

Landforms

Find out how much water we have on Earth and what's available to us, see what glaciers all were about, and participate in hands-on activities to see what erosion and weathering do to the landscape.

Grade 5

Nature Comes Alive a la cart!

Let us be our source for review before your state testing. Schedule a time that works with your testing dates and pick what stations work best for you.

1. Explore the transfer of energy through ecosystems and food chains, while playing games.
2. Search for producers, consumers, and decomposers on a naturalist-led hike.
3. Learn about light with hands-on activities with prisms and mirrors.
4. Study plants and how they tie into our survival.
5. Head inside our portable planetarium to look at stars and other celestial bodies.

Grade 6

Rocks & Minerals

Take an in-depth look at the characteristics, formation, and everyday uses of minerals and igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks. Soil sampling will be available.

Habitats

Grades 2-3

1 - 1½ hours

Students will immerse themselves in nature while hiking and investigating local animal homes. Students will become familiar with basic animal needs, including water, food, living space, and shelter through games and activities. Second grade will also focus on animals affecting their environment.

Adapting for Survival

Grades 3 & 4

Explore how animals use their structural adaptations to survive, obtain food, and escape from predators. Learn about plant adaptations, predators & prey, camouflage, body coverings, defenses, and instinct through activities, games, and a nature hike.

Portable Planetarium

Planetarium programs take place inside the Discover Center at Oakwoods Nature Preserve or at your school.

A room at least 20' W x 20'L x 12'H is required with a clean floor. A gymnasium works best. The room will be needed 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the program for setup and takedown. An adult must be present with students in the planetarium.

The Solar System

Grade 5

Length: 1 hour

Join us in our portable planetarium to explore our solar system including the sun and other celestial bodies that orbit the sun. Learn about the unique characteristics of planets.

The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars

Grade K

Length: 30 minutes - 1 hour

Join us in our portable planetarium to explore the sun, the moon, and the stars. Discover how the moon changes shape and appears at night or during the day. See how the sun changes position during the day and observe some of the stars you see at night.

At Your School

Back in Time

Grade 2

1 hour

Learn what animals used to live in Ohio, but don't anymore. A mammal heavy focus, talk is broken down by epochs contained within the Cenozoic Era. Are there relatives that still exist today? A hands-on investigation of fossils will also take place.

Discovery Stories

Grades Preschool & Kindergarten

30 minutes

Through stories, songs, and hands-on activities, students will explore nature and science. Can be held at either your school or Oakwoods Nature Preserve.

Nov. – Porcupines Dec. – Life in a Beaver Pond Jan. – Bird Feet are Neat Mar. – Forest Animals

Nature Hike

All ages

30 minutes - 1 hour

We'll also help you investigate nature in your own backyard. The hike can be general in nature, or you may choose from the following topics: Food Chains, Habitats, Insects, Plants, or Seasons.

Pioneer Pen Pal

Take your class back in time through a historic letter exchange. Each month as a class, you will write one letter to an early Hancock County resident from 1847. The resident will respond with a period correct letter answering your questions and discussing their life. After your letter exchange, you have the option of meeting with your pen pal either at your school or the McKinnis House.