



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# SNAP! Students, Nature And Photography Program

## About Us

The Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (LGLFWCO) opened in August 1991 and is collocated with the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in Basom, NY.

## Contact Us

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### Why SNAP?

Recent studies show that an increasing number of children prefer to spend time indoors immersed in a virtual reality of television and video games rather than explore the natural reality outside their front doors. Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, chronicles this trend. This separation from the experience of nature can result in a host of physical and mental issues, ranging from childhood obesity to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Through SNAP! children are introduced to nature and the outdoors using cameras and technology, something today's youth have inevitably grown up with as part of their daily lives. This provides children across western New York with a range of opportunities to form the lasting habit of spending time outdoors. The children develop their own sense of accomplishment in their exploration of nature and the challenges of creating great pictures.

### How It Works

Each event is designed to meet student needs based on age and ability. Our staff and volunteers work with small groups of students at an outdoor site. Students learn how to use digital cameras and techniques for successful nature photography. They also get lessons in ecology which encourages questions and exploration in this outdoor-educational setting.



Third grade students exploring a trail during a SNAP! program.

At the end of the program, the students select their favorite photo and write a brief statement about it, describing the inspirational meaning the image has for them. Students also receive a framed copy of their photograph to take home and/or exhibit at their school.

### Community Impact

Studies have demonstrated that "nature smart" children perform better on standardized tests and become more resourceful and better problem solvers as a result of the hands-on learning that our natural environment demands of us. The exploration of natural habitat outside our homes, schools and shopping malls increases physical fitness and makes for happier, well adjusted kids.

This program teaches children the joy of experiencing nature firsthand and the art of photography. SNAP! helps promote environmental stewardship and creates the next generation of local conservationists dedicated to protecting and enhancing our ecosystems.



Examples of student photographs taken during a SNAP! program.