



## Tips and Tricks for Group Leaders at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

- **Do** remind your students what it means to be a naturalist – being observant, quiet, curious, etc. This is a great way to get everyone focused and back on track!
- **Do** stay in front of the group. That way, everyone will have the same chance to see wildlife and share their discoveries.
- **Do** stop and sit down from time to time with your students. It's important to have quiet time in your group and work on your journal pages.
- **Do** ask questions to keep students engaged. (Ex. what do you see? What do you hear? Who might have made this hole? etc.) Even if you know the answer, allow them to make discoveries, even if they're "wrong."
- **Do** foster participation from all of your students.
  - If someone is reluctant, give them a "job" to do, or ask specific questions.
  - If one student is answering everything, encourage them to give others a chance.
  - If students are distracted or unfocused, bring them back into the task by asking a direct question, or encouraging them to explore a specific object.
- **Do** let the students figure out how to use the equipment - this is part of their learning process!
- **Do** encourage students to fill out their journal pages completely. Remember, they do *not* have to be perfect. (For example, you do not have to spell words for them...they can sound them out).
- **Don't** feel like you have to know all the answers. "I don't know" is acceptable, but "I don't know, but let's sketch it or make some notes and see if we can find out together when we get back" is even better! We encourage you to come back with unanswered questions!
- **Don't** be afraid to jump right in and explore, journal, and share discoveries with your group of students – everyone will enjoy themselves more if you're involved, and you can lead by example!

*"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in."*

*- Rachel Carson*





# Snowshoe Challenge

## Group Leader Guidelines

On today's field trip, students will be participating in a set of physical challenges on snowshoes! The following tips will help make the experience fun for both you and your group.

- \* **This IS a team competition!** Please encourage students to cheer for their team and make the best time they can.
- \* **Help students select a name for their team.** We love team names that relate to refuge winter wildlife. (ex. the Bad Bobcats or the Mighty Moose)
- \* **Your refuge leader is the event facilitator.** You may be asked to time an event or record the results. Thanks for your help.

### Refuge Snowshoe Etiquette

- **Pick Up Your Feet**— Snowshoe hiking is definitely a workout! When students start to get tired and drag their feet, it is an even **bigger** workout. If students are getting tired, it's okay to slow down. Focus on the little discoveries right "under their feet".
- **Students Up, Snow Down**—While it can be great fun to fall into the snow, eat the snow, and throw snowballs, this behavior is better suited for the playground. Snow covered students quickly become wet and cold. Remind students to leave the snow on the ground and try their best to stay on their feet!
- **Icy Snow is Slippery**—The crampons (or claws) on the bottom of our modern style snowshoes provide good traction most of the time. When the snow is especially icy or well packed, remind students to use the "side step" going up and down hills.

