



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





Seeds on the Go!

Group Leader Guidelines

On the hike, students will be visiting the forest, prairie, and/or wetland. Student teams will be given a brown paper bag to collect seeds from each habitat they visit.

Questions to ask as you collect seeds in each habitat:

- What types of plants are most common in this habitat?
- Can you imagine what this seed head looked like as a summer flower?
- How do you think this type of seed travels?

Carried on the wind?



Stuck on animals?



Carried/eaten by animals?



Student Reminders

- **This is not a competition**— the goal of this activity is to collect the greatest variety of seeds possible; however, since many animals depend on these seeds as a food source students should only collect a **small portion** of the seeds they find.
- **How we collect**—walk carefully through the prairie, forest, and wetland. Do not trample over plants or pull out the whole plant in order to collect a few seeds. Be respectful and help the refuge protect the habitat for wildlife. (Ask students how they can protect the habitat where they are collecting).
- **This collection is an exception**—we are collecting seeds today as part of a learning activity but usually when we hike on a National Wildlife Refuge we leave what we find to preserve the habitat and to leave everything for the wildlife (Ask students why it is important to leave what we find).

Have fun and enjoy being outside and making discoveries with your students!

