



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



Water Canaries

Group Leader Guidelines

Thanks for agreeing to be a group leader today! Here are some tips to facilitate the collecting, identifying and sorting of pond life to determine water quality.

Fill up the large bins about 1/2 full with water.

Make sure each student gets to use the dip net once. Students should take their net back to their teams' clear plastic tub and swish it through the water before determining that it is empty. Until pond life is back in water and swimming, it is possible for students to think that nothing is in their net.

It is OK to pick up some aquatic plants in the dip nets. Many aquatic organisms live among the plants.

Avoid scooping up a lot of mud from the bottom of the pond. Mud will cloud the water in the clear plastic tub. The cloudy water will make it difficult to find and sort the organisms.

Help students sort their "catch" using the sorting trays. Pass out the identification sheets and help students identify what they caught.

Encourage students to complete their journal pages. Do they have more species in the High Pollution Tolerance, Mid Pollution Tolerance, or Low Pollution Tolerance columns?

