



Board Meeting Date: 3/13/23

Title: Community Education Environmental Justice and Nature Immersion Camp Summer 2023

Type: Information

Presenters: Cheryl Gunness, Community Involvement Programs Coordinator; and Jody De St. Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning

Description:

Purpose of the Experience

The purpose of the Environmental Justice and Nature Immersion Camp is to provide students who receive free and reduced priced lunch and youth of color an opportunity to connect with and learn more about nature and the Minnesota landscape through experiential activities that focus on environmental justice, climate change and equity, access, and inclusion in outdoor spaces. At this point in the planning process the planning team is considering summer 2023 a pilot. The team is committed to feedback and reflection to ensure sustainability going forward if it is determined a fit to do so.

Goals of the Experience

- Connect students to culture via place
- Increase access for BIPOC and other marginalized groups to nature and outdoor places; increase their connection to and feelings of safety in nature
- Engage students in environmental justice and climate change topics and issues of equity, access, and inclusion in nature and outdoor spaces
- Learning about kayaking, canoeing, making fires, starting fires, cooking on a fire, bison on the prairie, plant, bird and animal identification and knowledge
- Provide reflection opportunities through poetry, music and art
- Re-engage students with excitement about education, purpose and meaning
- Break down barriers and challenges to visiting an overnight camp
- Introduce students to potential career paths in outdoor education, environmental justice and stewardship, and youth leadership
 - [Cedar Creek](#) offers job opportunities (30-50 students per summer) during burning, plant collection, etc
 - Ana Munro offers PSEO classes on environmental justice to Edina students at North Hennepin Community College

Pre-Travel Requirements:

This camp is designed for students entering grades 8-10 in school year 2023-24 who qualify for Free/Reduced Price Lunch. Our goal is that at least 50% of participants are BIPOC students.

To apply, students will complete an [application](#) that contains several short answer questions. Approximately 20-30 students will be selected to attend the camp based on their application answers. Families will have the opportunity to attend an information family night. Students who receive a spot will be notified, and will be asked to attend a pre-camp orientation to help prepare for the experience.

Collaborators:

- Ana Munro/ Global and Cultural studies program at North Hennepin Community College. Ana teaches classes at North Hennepin Community College. She has led similar classes and camp experiences in the past.
 - [“Harmony in the Trees” video](#)
- Dr. Kara Baldwin, Education and Community Engagement Coordinator for Cedar Creek. Kara brings a diversity and wealth of experience to the position - classroom teaching, informal education and naturalist work, education research, curriculum design, and even podcasting!
- Ryan Barth, Baker Outdoor Learning Center Supervisor at Baker Park Reserve.

Number of Participants Involved:

We have set a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 30 students for the program.

Ratio of Participants to Chaperones:

Students will be supervised in cabins at a 5 students to 1 staff ratio. Additional staff will be present during the daytime as well.

Destination:

The primary destination will be Baker Park Reserve in Maple Plain, Minnesota where students will stay Sunday - Thursday. On Thursday, students will visit Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in East Bethel, MN and will return to Edina in the late afternoon.

Schedule of Experience:

| DATE | DESCRIPTION | LOCATION |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Date TBD (March) | Family Information Night | Edina Community Center |

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| Date TBD (May) | Staff/Chaperone Training and Orientation | Virtual or Edina Community Center |
| DATE TBD (May) | Participant Orientation | Edina Community Center and/or Edina Park (collaborate with Edina Parks and Rec Department) |
| Sunday, June 4 | Camp Day 1. Arrive at Baker Park any time after 2:00pm. | Baker Park Reserve |
| Monday, June 5 | Camp Day 2 | Baker Park Reserve |
| Tuesday, June 6 | Camp Day 3 | Baker Park Reserve |
| Wednesday, June 7 | Camp Day 4 | Baker Park Reserve |
| Thursday, June 8 | Camp Day 5. Leave at 9:00am after breakfast and spend the rest of the day at Cedar Creek. | Cedar Creek |
| Date TBD | Family showcase/celebration | Edina Community Center and/or Edina Park (collaborate with Edina Parks and Rec Department) |

Daily Programming:

Daily programming will be a mix of programming provided by Baker Park and Cedar Creek, as well as additional community resources brought in by Edina Community Education and our partners.

We are still in the process of detailed daily planning but here is an outline of potential activity choices:

- Ryan Barth and team at Baker Park Reserve choose two-three programs per day from the [Baker Outdoor Learning Center Options](#)
- Kara Baldwin and team at [Cedar Creek](#) will provide ecology and social justice programming based on Bison on the prairie, and one other theme related to fire, plants, climate change, or the ecology of Cedar Creek.
- Dahlia from Youth Frontiers
- Presentations from EPS Cultural Liaisons and Uli Rodriguez on Cultural Competency

- Indigenous and African community mentors and elders
- Purpose Learning - training led by CE team trained at Purpose Summit
- Daily yoga/meditation

Modes of Transportation:

- A bus (contracted company) will be provided for transportation from the Edina Community Center to Baker Park reserve on Sunday, June 4.
- A bus (either district or contracted company) will provide transportation from Baker Park to Cedar Creek and back to Edina on June 8

Student Safety/Chaperone Responsibilities

- Background checks for chaperones
- Basic gear such as hiking shoes, sleeping bags, backpacks, head torches, water bottles will be available to students who do not have access to this gear thanks to a grant. Students will be asked to bring their own basic bedding.
- Baker Park has an overnight camp manager with a cell phone and 24 hour support if needed.

Lodging and Meal Arrangements

[Baker Park Reserve](#) has 8 log cabins with 8 beds each (4 bunk beds). With a maximum of 30 students participating, this means that we have plenty of flexibility in dividing students by gender identity (including gender-fluid students) in cabins with at least one chaperone. We are planning a minimum of one overnight chaperone per 5 students, with additional adult supervision during the daily activities.

Food for days one through four of camp will be provided by Baker Park Reserve. Baker Park is committed to living out their mission in the food they serve. To the extent possible, their food is local, much sourced from Gale Woods Farm. They emphasize whole foods in the meals they serve to students. They never serve pork and never serve nuts.

On day five, after breakfast at Baker Park Reserve, we will head to Cedar Creek and will provide culturally sensitive and dietarily appropriate bag lunches for students.

Method of Financing/Estimated Cost Per Student

This camp will be free of charge for participating students. We are asking for a \$25 deposit from families to secure a spot for a student, refundable after the student completes the trip.

We are able to offer this experience free of charge thanks to a variety of funding streams:

1. Baker Park Reserve is offering the 4 nights of lodging plus meals at an 80% reduced rate of approximately \$77.00 per students when students qualify for Free/Reduced Price lunch to fulfill their commitment to equity and inclusion in outdoor spaces

2. Ana Munro's grant will also supplement costs of the trip including providing gear (sleeping bags, hiking boots) for students.
3. Edina Community Ed will contribute additional funding as part of its youth development programming

Family Communication Plan

- Waivers
- Family info night
- Family celebration night

Budget

[Link to working budget](#)