

Mission Springs Outdoor Education - Classes & Activities

Naturalist 101 <i>(required class)</i>	Get Growing
Introductory class utilizing team-building activities to introduce students to Mission Springs, their Naturalist, and hiking group. Student expectations are also discussed.	Students will learn about organic gardening, importance of composting, plant development, and the work it takes to grow and care for plants through our own organic garden.
Climbing Tower	Down to Earth
Students will have the opportunity to climb a 40-foot rock wall. Naturalists will instruct students in climbing safety, techniques, and our 'challenge by choice' methodology.	Students will learn basic principals of geology and the changes that occur to the earth over time. Concepts discussed include soil formation, impacts of erosion, plate tectonics, & rock cycle.
Branching Out	Engineering
Students will explore the 3 various ecosystems located at Mission Springs and develop observation skills for all 5 senses, while learn about varying characteristics for each ecosystem located on camp.	Students discuss the relationship between the scientific method & engineering design process as they define problems, construct models, carry out tests & assess human impacts while building shelters.
Aquatic Life	Team Trust
Students will conduct several tests to determine the water quality of the local Mission Springs stream. Explore concepts such as water conservation, watersheds, aquatic life, etc.	This class helps to build and strengthen relationships between peers, chaperones, and teachers. Students will learn to work as a team as they are challenged by various group games and initiatives.
Go Green!	Orienteering
Students will learn about environmental stewardship through interactive investigations of energy, renewable, and non-renewable resources, recycling, and solar energy.	Students will learn basic orienteering skills - how to use a map and compass, outdoor navigation & survival techniques. Compass skills are then practiced on one of our orienteering courses.
Wild Kingdom	Earth's Systems
Students will explore and develop observational skills while learning about animals' roles. Touch on topics like predator-prey relationships, food chains, & interconnectedness with their habitat.	Students will learn about the geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere, and how they interact. Will also discuss weather patterns, water, and human impact on Earth's systems.

Field Trip opportunities	Evening Activities
Santa Cruz Wharf	Campfire Program <i>(required evening activity)</i>
Students will collect and observe plankton, learn about marine mammals, observe sea lions, and dissect squid at the Santa Cruz Wharf. Parking fees for cars are collected at kiosks on the way out.	Campfire consists of skits performed by the naturalists, nature related songs, & a speaker.
	Night Hike <i>(required evening activity)</i>
	Students will be guided through the trails at night listening to the night's sounds, learning about nocturnal creatures, and exploring the night sky.
Natural Bridges State Beach	Barn Dance
Teachers can choose three of six mini lessons including; mole crabs, wetland ecology, kelp identification, Monarch Butterfly walk (Oct-Feb), Beach game, and Sand shark identification/anatomy.	Fun, Naturalist led line, square, and free dances that will teach students about the history of barn dance.
	Student Skit Night
	Students have the opportunity to create and perform their very own skits on stage.