



Merry Lea

Environmental Learning Center  
of Goshen College

# Winter Nature

## 3rd - 5th

### Program Description

Enjoy the wonders of winter! Students explore how people, plants and animals cope with winter by using their senses in the wintry woods and meadows. Outdoors they search for signs of life and survival strategies used by native plants and animals. Indoors they warm up while engaging in fun and educational winter-themed activities.

### Program Objectives

Students will:

- Explore how characteristics of living organisms and their environments affect their survival.
- Discover there is great diversity among plants and animals and how their roles within food chains and webs.

### Program Outline

1. Students begin the day with several indoor activities:

- Puppet Show: This show illustrates different survival strategies used by various animals
- Practice tracking: Students have the opportunity to walk like various animals.
- Making plaster tracks: Students make individual tracks of common Indiana winter animals and take them home.

2. Hike

Students head out on our trails to get a close-up view of what plants and animals are doing this time of year. They participate in age-appropriate scavenger hunts, games and other hands-on activities.

3. The afternoon is filled with a variety of age-appropriate activities.

Options include:

- Games
- Stories with hot chocolate (school must provide hot chocolate supplies)
- An introduction to Merry Lea's Ambassador Animal

### Vocabulary

- Food chains
- Adaptation
- Hibernate
- Food webs
- Migrate
- Track

### Quick Facts

Season Winter: January

Grades 3rd - 5th

Program Length 4 hours

Maximum # of Students 40 Students

### Standards Correlation

**LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience:** When the environment changes in ways that affect a place's physical characteristics, temperature, or availability of resources, some organisms survive and reproduce, others move to new locations, yet others move into the transformed environment, and some die. (secondary to 3-LS4-4)

**LS2.D: Social Interactions and Group Behavior:** Being part of a group helps animals obtain food, defend themselves, and cope with changes. Groups may serve different functions and vary dramatically in size (Note: Moved from K-2). (3-LS2-1)

**LS4.C: Adaptation:** For any particular environment, some kinds of organisms survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all. (3-LS4-3)

**LS4.D: Biodiversity and Humans:** Populations live in a variety of habitats, and change in those habitats affects the organisms living there. (3-LS4-4)

**ESS2.D: Weather and Climate:** Climate describes a range of an area's typical weather conditions and the extent to which those conditions vary over years. (3-ESS2-2)

**ESS1.B: Earth and the Solar System:** The orbits of Earth around the sun and of the moon around Earth, together with the rotation of Earth about an axis between its North and South poles, cause observable patterns. These include day and night; daily changes in the length and direction of shadows; and different positions of the sun, moon, and stars at different times of the day, month, and year. (5-ESS1-2)

**LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms:** Food provides animals with the materials they need for body repair and growth and the energy they need to maintain body warmth and for motion. (secondary to 5-PS3-1)

**ETS1.A: Defining and Delimiting an Engineering Problem:** A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering. Such problems may have many acceptable solutions. (K-2-ETS1-1) (secondary to K-PS2-2)

**LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems:** The food of almost any kind of animal can be traced back to plants. Organisms are related in food webs in which some animals eat plants for food and other animals eat the animals that eat plants... Newly introduced species can damage the balance of an ecosystem. (5-LS2-1) \*For full description, looks at the standards correlation document.