

American Outdoor Schools



ELECTIVES

Each morning from approximately 11:15 A.M. - 12:15 P.M. elective "classes" are offered to the students. These activities are intended to be fun, yet educational. The students will choose the elective "class" they wish to participate in (until it is full) based on the cabin clean-up scores. In order to achieve a smaller class size and more individual attention for each student, counselors may be asked to lead two or more elective "classes" during the course of the week. Following is a list of possible options. If you have an additional area of expertise and/or interest that would be appropriate to share with the students, please feel free to offer it as an elective "class".

Sign-up for leading electives will be done during the daily counselor meeting held immediately after breakfast.

▪ **Adventure Hikes**

This covers a wide range of elective activities of which the primary ingredient is hiking.

- **Reptile Hunting-** Searching for lizards, snakes, and turtles. "Hot" hunting ground tips can be obtained from the American Outdoor Schools staff. Popular with girls as well as with boys.
 - **Distance Hikes-** The objective is to hike as far as possible in a few minutes less than 1/2 the time allowed for electives. (The return trip will take longer than outgoing due to fatigue).
 - **Scavenger Hikes-** These hikes revolve around searching for a specific natural item and focus on building the students observational powers and skill. i.e.. -Mushroom hunts (Finding Fantastic Funky Fungus)
 - -Feather hunts (Foraging for Phenomenal Flying Feathers)
 - -Rock hunts (Grubbing for Geological Goodies)
 - -In search of the world's largest pine cone
 - -Etc.
 - **Bird watching-** In search of our fine feathered friends. This is an introductory level class-activity in the art of birding.
- **Exploration activities** These activities center on exploring a particular area or skill related to the out-of-doors.
- **Creek or Pond Explorations-** This is an exploratory activity that centers on the camp's riparian area(s). Searching for what lives there, both plant and animal. Nets, collection cups, field guides and suggestions may be obtained from the American Outdoor Schools (AOS) staff.
 - **Nature Photography-** An introductory class/activity into the basics of nature photography; framing, composition, texture, point of focus, etc. Lots of fun for camera buffs and those who simply enjoy the outdoors.

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- **Animal Tracks** ("Who was there?")- Basic tracking skills, print identification, and track casting if conditions allows. Casting materials not provided.
- **Animal Handling**- This activity involves handling and learning about the different animals that AOS brings to camp: primarily reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Adequate knowledge of animals a prerequisite.
- **Nature Games** This may include a wide variety of games of both team and individual types, such as Meet a Tree, Predator-Prey, Invent-a-Game, Bat and Moth, etc.
- **Natural Arts and Crafts** This is an artistic approach to expressing the beauty of nature. The possibilities are as limitless as your imagination: poetry, Haiku, nature collages, rock people, weaving, stick animals, painting, creative writing, nature mobiles, macramé, etc.

Materials are not provided by AOS. If you would like to do a special project with your school, such as T-shirt designs or murals to take back to school, please plan to bring your own equipment.

ELECTIVE TIPS:

- The student's enthusiasm will mimic your own. Be *ENTHUSIASTIC* !
- Don't feel you have to be an expert. That's what field guides are for! Learn with the students.
- Encourage creativity in all the students. They have *great* ideas!
- Get everyone involved, no idle hands means fewer discipline problems and a positive experience for everyone.
- Control the students with encouragement and a positive attitude. Never use sarcasm to discipline or reprove a student. You may remove activity time if necessary but be sure to follow through with it.
- Have problem students stay close to you for better control. It also makes it easier to involve them if they are close to you.
- Isolating repeat offenders and disrupters is best if all else fails.

The American Outdoor Schools staff will be happy to help by answering any questions, providing suggestions, or giving feedback on your ideas. Have fun!