



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AMERICAN PRAIRIE FIELD SCHOOL OFFERING OUTDOOR EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS

Free programs connect kids to Montana's prairie ecosystem

The American Prairie Field School is pleased to announce the launch of its third year of educational programming aimed at getting kids outside and into nature. The Field School uses the Central Montana prairie as a living laboratory to inspire the next generation of scientists, conservationists, and stewards of the land and our planet.

The Field School comprises no-cost education programs for grades K through 12, with residential or day programs available depending on grade. The STEM curriculum, developed in partnership with the [Montana Outdoor Science School \(MOSS\)](#), connects students with experts and research scientists from Smithsonian Institute and American Prairie. Subjects vary and include natural and human history, astronomy, plant biology, wildlife ecology, and geology. All programs align with NGSS Next Generation Science Standards.

While the residential program is full for this year, there is still room available for students to attend the Field School's day programming at the American Prairie National Discovery Center at 302 W. Main in Lewistown, Montana this spring.

"So far during this school year we have reached over 100 students in day programming at the National Discovery Center and through classroom visits to local schools," said Dusty Rixford, Field School Education Coordinator at American Prairie. "Seeing the kids get excited about the prairie ecosystem, and learning why it's so important to this region is the best part."

This day-long field trip is free of charge for grades K-12 and Montana public schools are eligible for reimbursement for travel costs. During the 2021-2022 school year the Field School hosted 280 students in 480 program-days of education programming.

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Students learn about a variety of topics, such as keystone species, birds of the prairie, skulls and furs, camera traps and tracks, plants and ethnobotany, and traditional native games. Registered groups are paired with an American Prairie expert to guide the visit, and a transportation stipend is available for schools to cover travel costs including gas and lodging. Programs are scheduled during National Discovery Center business hours, unless special arrangements are made. Registration is requested a minimum of 30 days in advance of visit.

This year, four Montana middle schools will take part in the Field School's residential program. This multi-day program gives Montana middle school students (grades 5 through 8) the opportunity to spend three days and two nights in the field under Montana's big prairie skies. Using [Antelope Creek Campground](#) near Zortman, Montana, as a backdrop for learning, students are exposed to the full diversity of ecological, cultural, and historical elements unique to the Northern Great Plains. Each class has a maximum of 20 students, and meals, lodging, and a busing stipend are provided for participating schools. Groups have a 5:1 instructor-to-student ratio and students stay in climate-controlled cabins. While this year's roster for overnight programming is full, please use the contact info below to be added to the waitlist or receive information on the 2023/2024 school year.

For more information and to register, contact Education Coordinator Dusty Rixford: dusty@americanprairie.org.

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About American Prairie

American Prairie's vision is to create a vast and collaboratively-managed prairie destination that serves as a fully functioning ecosystem for wildlife, and offers visitors permanent access to the landscape that shaped our nation's character. Already open to the public for recreation including camping and hunting, American Prairie offers visitors an opportunity to connect with nature on a truly grand scale. Learn more at americanprairie.org.