



2020 Lagoon Days

Teacher Guidebook

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Lagoon Days Are Coming Up!

Each year the 4th grade students of Indian River County School District, plus a few students from non-county schools, come to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) for an exciting day of outdoor exploration of the Indian River Lagoon. This engaging and fun adventure is called Lagoon Days.

Excursion dates for this year are March 2nd through May 8th, 2020 from 9:45am – 1:00pm.

We've found that it's helpful to reference our webpage to review Indian River Lagoon related vocabulary, check out activities or experiments that might prove useful to prepare your students, and to find a quick reference of excursion dates. Check out [DiscoverELC.org](https://www.discoverelc.org) and navigate to our Lagoon Days page or click the link found [here](#).

Please confirm your dates and student numbers with the school schedule on p10. Call ELC Education Director, Sara Piotter (at 589-5050 x111) right away if these numbers have changed.

The theme for Lagoon Days is **interconnections**. During the field trips, students will explore three stations, learning about a different component of the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem at each. Activities take place outside and are designed to illustrate the interconnectedness of organisms within an ecosystem. Just like the pieces in a jigsaw puzzle! Students also learn how their actions directly affect the environment. Our program builds on what students learned at the ELC with ***Splash1: Homes and Habitats***, and ***Splash3: the Web of Life and Natural Cycles***. Hands-on learning outdoors is the best way to understand what's going on in the natural world!

ELC staff and dedicated volunteers from the community will be leading the students in discovery at each station. In fact, over 130 job slots must be filled in order for Lagoon Days to run each year! Through their involvement in the program, volunteers not only teach the interconnections of plant and animal communities, but also demonstrate that great things are accomplished through the interaction of individuals in the human community.

This ***Teacher Guidebook*** is written to help you make the most of your students' Lagoon Days adventure. You play a critical role in this learning opportunity, and we appreciate all your time and energy investment!

The Education Staff includes Environmental Educators: Sarah Christopherson, Amy Shea, Jennifer Satterly, Heather Kramer, Nicole Lemmo Saini, and Education & Outreach Director, Sara Piotter. Please call us if you have any questions.



Lagoon Days Goals

- To teach students about the natural world and local history through experiential learning, building our 3-grade program SPLASH 3.
- To demonstrate the importance of interconnections in the environment – emphasize how everything fits together and interacts like the pieces of a puzzle.
- To cultivate an appreciation for the Indian River Lagoon, one of North America’s most diverse estuaries.
- To develop a sense of stewardship for natural resources and to comprehend how individual actions directly affect Planet Earth.

Interconnections

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

- John Muir

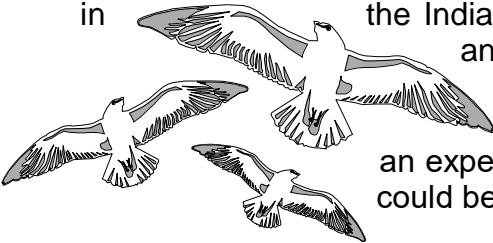
The theme for Lagoon Days is **interconnections**. During your field excursion, students will explore three stations, learning about a different component of the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem at each. Activities take place outside and are designed to illustrate the interconnectedness of organisms within an ecosystem. Just like the pieces in a jigsaw puzzle! Students also learn how their actions directly affect the environment.

The 2020 Lagoon Days Teacher Guide provides general information about the program and curriculum taught at each of the three stations during Lagoon Days. It is written and produced by Sara Plotter (Education & Outreach Director), Sarah Christopherson (current Environmental Educator), Sarah Rhodes-Ondi (former Environmental Educator), Melody Ray-Culp (former Education Coordinator), Heather Stapleton (former Education Director), Rosemary Badger (former Naturalist), Rich Wilson (former Naturalist), Katrina Morrell (former Naturalist), and Vanessa Spero-Swingle (former Naturalist).

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.

A Little History

Lagoon Days has its roots in an excursion developed by Lawrence Wineland, the game warden at Pelican Island Wildlife Refuge from 1964 to 1981. He recognized the role that environmental education plays in promoting respect for the world around us. Mr. Wineland approached Principal Judd Suttle, of Clemann School in Sebastian, to propose a venture that would get children interested in the Indian River Lagoon. The program began with a boat trip to Pelican Island and continued each spring for several years. It earned the strong support of local teachers and principals. In an article from the Press Journal (September 30, 1977), Mr. Wineland said that, although the program is an expensive one to operate, “we feel it’s one of the very best ways that money could be spent.”

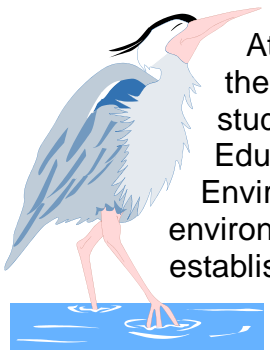


Unfortunately, funding problems did occur, prompting Principal Elementary School, to step in with new ideas in 1978. With citizens and several organizations including the Freshwater Commission, Pelican Island Audubon Society, Florida Medical Laboratory, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, and Coast Guard Auxiliary, Mr. Howard kept the momentum going. The boat trips to Pelican Island evolved into an expanded program called River Days, which got the children into the water seining for marine life, peering through microscopes, learning how to fish and how to canoe, and observing local birds and other wildlife. Mr. Howard writes, “The community was unbelievably supportive,” and describes how 160, 5th grade students from Osceola walked over to the canal-side home of Joan and Allen Edwards, where a boat “armada” carried them to spoil islands that had been carefully selected as outdoor classrooms.



Eventually all 5th grade students in Indian River County got involved – the south county students had their adventure at Riverside Park, and north county students had theirs at the Wabasso Causeway. In 1992, the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) opened its doors, and River Days became an integral part of its environmental education efforts.

River Days became known as Lagoon Days.

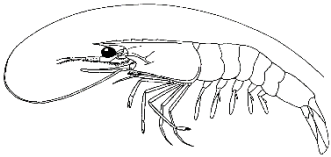


At the request of the school board, the ELC began hosting 4th grade students. During the transition year, both grades participated so that no one missed out. More than 1200 students experience Lagoon Days each year! In 1997, the Florida Department of Education conferred upon the ELC Lagoon Days program the Sharing Success in Environmental Education Award. Lagoon Days has had a powerful impact on the environmental awareness of Indian River County school children since its early roots were established nearly 50 years ago. We think Mr. Wineland would be proud to see how his idea has grown and evolved.

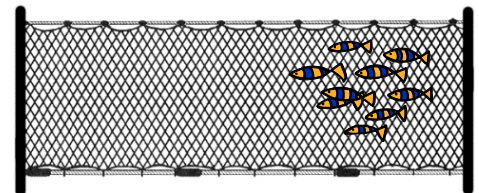
Lagoon Days Stations Outline

All Lagoon Days activities take place outside. Student groups rotate in the following order: Benthic Ecology, Seining, and Water Quality Lab. Stations are described below in **alphabetical** order (not necessarily the order that you will be rotating through).

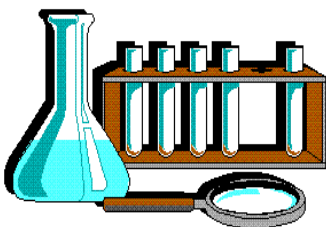
Benthic Ecology Students explore the lagoon bottom (benthos), by wading into the lagoon, collecting benthic core samples, sieving them, and using magnifying equipment to examine the organisms they uncover. Razor-sharp oyster shells are abundant at this station, and attention to safety is especially important. No one is permitted to be in water above the waist. Students must use gloves (supplied) to pick up anything they wish to examine. **TO ENSURE SAFETY, ALL TEACHERS & CHAPERONES ARE NEEDED IN THE WATER WITH THE STUDENTS.** A teacher or a chaperone is needed to see that everybody gets a fresh water rinse and uses hand sanitizer when leaving this station.



Seining Students learn how to use a seine net, a tool that scientists employ to collect marine specimens. They will also identify what they collect and learn about the interconnections between the organisms and seagrasses. *No swimming is permitted – no one is allowed to be in water above the waist. The wooden platform we work from can be slippery. No jumping or climbing on the structure is allowed.* **TO ENSURE SAFETY, ALL TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES ARE NEEDED IN THE WATER WITH THE STUDENTS.** A teacher or a chaperone is needed to see that everybody gets a fresh water rinse and uses hand sanitizer when leaving this station.



Water Quality Lab Students learn how to collect water samples, perform basic water quality tests, and analyze results to assess water quality of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and our Freshwater Pond. Students will practice skills used by real-life scientist and will leave with a better understanding of the role habitat quality has on lagoon health and biodiversity. As water quality issues have plagued our Lagoon, and water worldwide, this station is quite relevant and it's also very critical to understanding how habitat quality impacts the specimens observed at the Benthic Ecology and Seining stations. Not only is the Water Quality Lab a great conversation starter, it could even lead to ideas for science fair projects!





Daily Schedule

**Buses arrive at ELC between 9:30am – 9:45am,
and depart ELC at 1:00pm**

Late arrival may result in students having to miss one station.

Lagoon Day's stations are roughly 45 minutes long. Students have 5 minutes to travel between stations. The daily schedule is as follows:

9:15	Volunteers meet	11:00-11:45	Station 2
9:30-9:45	School buses arrive at ELC	11:50-12:30	Station 3
10:00-10:05	Welcome and Introduction	12:35-12:55	Lunch & Wrap-up
10:10-10:55	Station 1	1:00	School buses depart ELC

After Station 3, all groups will gather in the shade at the picnic area under the Discovery Station for lunch. You might consider providing the students with a snack prior to arrival at the ELC.

Please do not allow anyone to wander around during lunch, students must promptly leave ELC at 1:00pm

Preparation for your ELC Excursion

We've found that it's helpful to reference our webpage to review Indian River Lagoon related vocabulary, check out activities or experiments that might prove useful to prepare your students, and to find a quick reference of excursion dates. Check out DiscoverELC.org and navigate to our Lagoon Days page or click the link found [here](#).

The day before, remind your students to drink lots of water, review what to expect, how to dress, and also encourage your students to eat a good breakfast. We won't eat lunch until 12:35pm and it is an energy intensive day.

We encourage you to generate enthusiasm and excitement among your students about their upcoming adventure. Discuss the interconnections theme, explaining that all parts of the lagoon are inter-related. Interlocking puzzle pieces symbolize how all the components in our environment fit together. Each piece of a puzzle must be present in order for the whole to function as a complete unit. It will prove useful to read the station outline (p.4) to explain each station and go over all the **Guidelines for Student Behavior**, **What to Wear**, and **Lunch** listed below. We recommend that you send a copy of the enclosed **Letter to Parents** (p.14) home with each of your students so parents know what to expect and can help prepare their children for the adventure.



Chaperones

Chaperones play a vital role during your trip. Enclosed in this **Teacher Guidebook** is a letter that you may choose to give your prospective chaperones (p.12-13). Please read it carefully so you know exactly what chaperones are expected to do. Before you recruit anyone for the chaperone “job,” please make sure they have read this letter, know exactly what is expected of them, and agree to carry out the assigned responsibilities. Please remember, **closed-toe, lace-up shoes are the only acceptable footwear for an ELC Lagoon Days adventure**. Upon arrival at the ELC, **no one should be surprised to learn that they will get wet and dirty during the day**.

There will be an ELC instructor and volunteer at each station. **There should be at least two adult chaperones and the teacher for each group of students.**

Grouping Students

Please look at the table on p.11 to confirm the number of classes you have and which station to assign to each group. This station will be the first station of the day for that class. Total number includes every student coming on the excursion from your school. **Please notify ELC Director of Education & Outreach, Sara Piotter right away if these numbers have changed (772-589-5050 x 111)** – all ELC planning is based on these numbers.

Before you come to the ELC, assign one of these station names to each group of students (refer to the Quick Reference Table of Dates). Make sure all students and chaperones know the name of their starting station. As soon as they get off the bus, everyone should sit in the picnic table area that bears the name of their first station. An ELC staff member will be available to help you to the correct area.

Each of the teachers from your school should be the leader of one of the groups.

Upon Arrival at the ELC

Prompt arrival will help get the day off to a smooth start. **If buses arrive much later than 9:45am, your students may have to miss one station. This is definitely not an ideal situation but may be required if buses arrive late.**

When your bus arrives at the ELC, please have everyone stay seated until an ELC instructor gives you directions.

There will be a sign for each of the three stations under the Discovery Station. Students and chaperones will be instructed to line up behind the sign of their assigned starting station.



Guidelines for Students

- **Safety is our highest priority.** Listen carefully to all instructions given at each station and follow them. Rough housing will not be tolerated. FUN is encouraged, as is behavior that's expected from students at school.
- As participants leave each water station (benthic & seining), everyone should rinse with fresh water and use hand sanitizer. Anyone with large cuts will not be allowed in the water (benthic and seining).
- Hone your observation skills - look, listen, and even smell what's going on in the surrounding environment! You will be learning in nature's classroom.
- Treat the ELC, its instructors, and its equipment, as well as those around you with respect.
- We will be outside all day. Wear a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Drinking water will be available at each station. Please stress the importance of staying hydrated to your students.
- Keep your shoes on and laces tied at all times. **Tennis shoes are preferred**, but **sturdy CLOSED TOE, CLOSED HEEL watershoes** (such as dive booties, or "rugged watershoes") are permissible. **CROCS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. BEWARE**, the Indian River Lagoon has been known to suck flimsy shoes right off your foot! Don't let this happen to you or your students!
- Stay with your group. Students who need to use the bathroom during a non-scheduled break must go with an adult.
- Live specimens are fragile, and you will be taught to handle them gently and respectfully when allowed.
- To get to and from some stations, you must cross Live Oak Drive. The group should cross the street together, led by an adult. When walking along Live Oak Drive from Benthic to Seining, walk on the grass, not on the road.
- Avoid carrying anything around with you – items tend to get left behind in the excitement of discovery at each station. Since water is available, you will not need a water bottle.

Weather

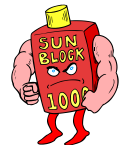
Activities may be cancelled due to severe weather, but will continue if there is only rain. **Please proceed with your scheduled transportation plans unless you hear otherwise from ELC staff.** Tell your students to bring a jacket if cool or cloudy weather is predicted.

What to Wear

1) EVERYONE (students, teachers, and chaperones) will get wet and dirty, so EVERYONE must wear clothing and shoes that can get wet and dirty! Please make sure the chaperones know this, too.



- 2) **Wear closed-toe, closed-heel shoes with laces.** Flimsy water shoes, sandals, and other non-lacing shoes are not acceptable – they get sucked into the mud at some stations and do not protect feet from razor sharp oysters. Although tennis shoes are preferred, dive booties and “rugged” water shoes, which will not get sucked off in the mud, are permissible. **CROCS are not acceptable.** Shoes must be kept on at all times. **Those not wearing appropriate footwear will not be allowed to participate in all activities, no exceptions.**
- 3) Dress appropriately for the weather. We encourage hats or visors and sunglasses. It is unlikely that we will cancel any activities simply due to rain. Tell students to bring a jacket if cold or cloudy weather is predicted, but do not allow students to bring extra clothes and shoes to change into. Everyone’s clothes will get wet at the Seining and Benthic Stations.
- 4) Apply sunscreen and bug repellent before arrival. If you’re extra sensitive to the sun, please reapply during your lunch break.



Lunch

Label each lunch with the owner's name. You may want to pack lunches for each class in separate coolers or boxes. Chaperones will be asked to unload the lunches and carry them into the Caterers' Kitchen.



At the ELC, we emphasize conservation and stewardship of our natural resources. This includes the 5 R Philosophy: **Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle**. After lunch, everyone is expected to sort their trash, separating out the recyclables (plastic containers marked #1 - #7, glass, cans, paper bags) and compost (fruit and vegetables) from the garbage. Sorting containers will be provided. Note that aluminum cans can be recycled, but foil beverage bags from certain drinks (for example, Capri Sun) cannot. **Adults are asked to help supervise the sorting.**

***Challenge your students to bring lunches that produce minimal waste. Discourage them from bringing "Lunchable"-type meals, which are mostly packaging that must be thrown away.

Here are some suggestions for reducing waste:



Put drinks in plastic bottles with screw-on lids that can be recycled or taken home, washed and reused.



Buy large bags of chips, cookies, etc. for sharing. This prevents disposal of individual serving containers, and the bags in which the food comes can be used as garbage bags.



Bring foods that are packaged naturally -- hard-boiled eggs, bananas, oranges, or apples. This "natural wrapper" can be composted.



Bring a reusable napkin (or a bandana) and reusable utensils.



Bring food in reusable or recyclable containers.

We emphasize that 1) we can **Refuse** to use single-use plastics like straws or pre-packed items focused on convenience, 2) leftover food could have been **Reduced** by remaining at home, 3) sturdy containers can be rinsed and **Reused**, 4) certain materials can be **Repurposed** (plastic forks, spoons, bags) and, 5) after we make sustainable choices, we **Recycle** acceptable plastics, aluminum, and glass. The EPA has a great educational poster that can be used as a teaching and reference tool, found [here](#).

During lunch, no one is allowed to wander around the ELC. **At 12:55, everyone should be waiting in groups, ready to board the bus.**



Miscellaneous Notes for Teachers

- Good student behavior is as important on your Lagoon Days excursion as it is in your classroom. Please review with your students all rules for behavior and safety. Students who are misbehaving will be asked to sit out.
- All buildings at ELC, except bathrooms, are closed to all Lagoon Days participants, including teachers and chaperones. This includes the Entry Pavilion, Discovery Station, all classrooms and the gift shop.
- Should a child need to use the bathroom during the excursion, an adult must accompany him/her. An adult must be in the bathroom any time students are there.
- Make sure that you and your chaperones are aware of any student who is allergic to insects, plants, or who has any special medical considerations. If a medical problem arises, inform an ELC instructor;

Recent Changes

Due to the needs of the school district, the limitations of transportation, and a few other factors, **we have significantly shortened the day**. The only way to do this is to take out two station. I know this will make many of you sad...it makes US sad too! Looking for the silver-lining, all 4th grade students will still have a super fun experience at ELC while learning about the IRL and strengthening their sense of place and stewardship role.

The three stations will be: Benthic Ecology, Seining, and Water Quality Lab. These three stations were chosen as they most closely align with current Florida curriculum standards.

Due to transportation schedules, students will arrive between 9:45-10:00am and leave no later than 1:00pm. Each station is roughly 45 minutes long. Students have 5 minutes to travel between stations.

After Your Trip

Please fill out the online Survey Monkey survey using the link we'll send to your email. We care about what you think of the program, and welcome your suggestions as to how it could be improved.

During the week after your excursion, try to do at least two activities from **Follow-Up Activities** (p. 14). This is a very important part of solidifying the concepts taught during the trip. Let us know which activities you did and how they went! We love your feedback!

School	Total # of Students/ classes	Excursion Date + Number of Classes (x)	Station Assignments <i>(These station names must be assigned to your groups BEFORE arriving; please list on students' name tags)</i>
Beachland	78/4	Tues, 3/10 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Thurs, 3/12 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
Citrus	111/6	Mon, 4/20 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
		Tues, 4/21 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
Dodgertown	52/3	Fri, 3/06 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
Fellsmere	115/4	Wed, 4/15 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Thurs, 4/16 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
Glendale	110/5	Mon, 3/16 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Tues, 3/17 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
Indian River Academy	71/4	Thurs, 3/19 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Fri, 3/20 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
Liberty Magnet	89/4	Mon, 3/30 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Tues, 3/31 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
Osceola Magnet	88/4	Mon, 4/13 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Tues, 4/14 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
Pelican Island	59/3	Thurs, 4/09 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
Rosewood Magnet	88/4	Mon, 3/02 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Tues, 3/03 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
Sebastian	83/3	Fri, 3/13 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
Treasure Coast	100/7	Wed, 4/01 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
		Thurs, 4/02 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
		Fri, 4/03 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining
Vero Beach	90/5	Mon, 4/27 (3)	Benthic Ecology, Seining, Water Quality Lab
		Tues, 4/28 (2)	Benthic Ecology, Seining



February 2020

Dear Prospective Chaperone,

The Lagoon Days program at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a high point in the school year for those who participate. Participants will explore the fascinating Indian River Lagoon ecosystem at five different educational stations. All stations are outside, and all activities emphasize the Lagoon Days theme, **Interconnections**.

The goal of the excursion is to provide a positive, outdoor experience that will promote an understanding of the environment and inspire interest in learning about the world around us.

Chaperones play a vital role during Lagoon Days. As a chaperone, your main role is to promote a safe, successful learning experience. Before you accept the “job,” carefully consider the responsibilities listed below. As a chaperone, you must agree to do the following:

- **Participate fully in all activities, including those that require getting into the water.** Your help is needed and expected at every station. **You will get wet and dirty.** Dress accordingly and wear closed toe, closed heel shoes with laces. Hat or visor and sunglasses are suggested.
- When students are leaving the water stations (benthic and seining), we ask that a teacher or a chaperone be in charge of seeing that everybody gets a fresh water rinse and uses hand sanitizer.
- Serve as a role model. Listen and observe quietly, provide guidance to children as needed. Be enthusiastic about the activities and nurture enthusiasm in the students.
- Supervise children at all times. Keep them together and make periodic head counts. Should a child need to use the bathroom, an adult must accompany the student.
- Serve as disciplinarian when necessary and help children abide by the rules.
- Help take lunches off the bus upon arrival at the ELC and carry them where directed. During lunch, keep children under the Discovery Station and help support students separate recyclables, compost, and trash.
- Do not bring children not enrolled in the 4th grade at the school you are accompanying.

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.



To give you an idea about what to expect during Lagoon Days, here are station descriptions. All Lagoon Days activities take place outside.

Lagoon Days Stations Outline

All Lagoon Days activities take place outside. Student groups rotate in the following order: Benthic Ecology, Seining, and Water Quality Lab. Stations are described below in **alphabetical** order (not necessarily the order that you will be rotating through).

Benthic Ecology Students explore the lagoon bottom (benthos), by wading into the lagoon, collecting benthic core samples, sieving them, and using magnifying equipment to examine the organisms they uncover. Razor-sharp oyster shells are abundant at this station, and attention to safety is especially important. No one is permitted to be in water above the waist. Students must use gloves (supplied) to pick up anything they wish to examine. **TO ENSURE SAFETY, ALL TEACHERS & CHAPERONES ARE NEEDED IN THE WATER WITH THE STUDENTS.** A teacher or a chaperone is needed to see that everybody gets a fresh water rinse and uses hand sanitizer when leaving this station.

Seining Students learn how to use a seine net, a tool that scientists employ to collect marine specimens. They will also identify what they collect and learn about the interconnections between the organisms and seagrasses. *No swimming is permitted – no one is allowed to be in water above the waist. The wooden platform we work from can be slippery. No jumping or climbing on the structure is allowed.* **TO ENSURE SAFETY, ALL TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES ARE NEEDED IN THE WATER WITH THE STUDENTS.** A teacher or a chaperone is needed to see that everybody gets a fresh water rinse and uses hand sanitizer when leaving this station.

Water Quality Lab Students learn how to collect water samples, perform basic water quality tests, and analyze results to assess water quality of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and our Freshwater Pond. Students will practice skills used by real-life scientist and will leave with a better understanding of the role habitat quality has on lagoon health and biodiversity. As water quality issues have plagued our Lagoon, and water worldwide, this station is quite relevant and it's also very critical to understanding how habitat quality impacts the specimens observed at the Benthic Ecology and Seining stations. Not only is the Water Quality Lab a great conversation starter, it could even lead to ideas for science fair projects!

Should you decide to accept this important chaperone "job," we look forward to seeing you at the ELC ☺. Your help is greatly appreciated! And if you decide not to come to the ELC as a chaperone, you are warmly encouraged to visit any time we're open.

Sincerely,
The ELC Education Team

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.



February 2020

Dear Parent,

The Lagoon Days program at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a high point in the school year for those that participate. At the ELC, they will explore the fascinating Indian River Lagoon ecosystem at three different stations around the campus. All stations are outside, and all activities emphasize the Lagoon Days theme, **Interconnections**.

The goal of the excursion is to provide a positive, outdoor experience that will promote an understanding of the environment and inspire interest in learning about the world around us. Your child will study bottom-dwelling animals at the Benthic Ecology Station, collect animals that live in seagrass at the Seining Station, and discover how to assess water quality in the Indian River Lagoon in a Water Quality Laboratory.

Your child will be taking part in this exciting learning adventure on _____. Children will be wading in the Indian River Lagoon, and **EVERYONE will get wet and dirty**. Children with cuts will not be allowed to get in the water at the benthic and seining stations. Your child must wear clothing that can get wet and dirty and closed-toe, closed heel shoes with laces. **Flimsy water shoes, sandals, Crocs, and other non-lacing shoes are not acceptable – they get sucked into the mud at some stations and do not protect feet.** Encourage your child to wear a hat or a visor and sunglasses. Make sure your child brings a jacket if cold or cloudy weather is predicted. Activities will not be cancelled due to light rain. Have your child eat a good breakfast on the morning of the excursion as we'll all need plenty of energy for the day's adventure. Lunch is at 12:35pm.

At the ELC we emphasize conservation and stewardship of our natural resources, including the **5 R Philosophy: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle**. You can help bring this message home by sending your child with a lunch that produces minimal waste. You can do this by:

- putting food and drinks in plastic containers that can be taken home, washed, and reused
- including foods that are packaged naturally (hard-boiled eggs, bananas, oranges, or apples)
- using a bandana or a cloth napkin instead of a paper napkin

The EPA has a great educational poster that can be used as a teaching and reference tool, found [here](#).

Make sure the teacher is aware of any allergic reactions to insects or plants or any special medical considerations your child may have. Please apply sunscreen & bug spray before the trip. If your child is sensitive, you may want to send extra sunscreen to reapply at lunch.

Thank you for your help in this wonderful learning adventure. We encourage you to visit the ELC after this exciting field excursion, next time letting your child be your personal nature guide ☺.

Sincerely,
The ELC Education Team

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.



Follow-Up Activities

Students leave Lagoon Days full of enthusiasm about their experience and ready to do whatever they can to protect the environment. You can turn excitement into action by doing some of the activities described below, or by coming up with unique activities of your own to do!

Water Wonders

During Lagoon Days, use a small jar (or empty film canister) to collect a fresh and/or salt water sample. Bring the samples back to school and use microscopes to observe the tiny creatures that live in them.

Campus Cleanup

Form a campus cleanup brigade, perhaps during recess. Make an inventory of the kind of debris found and discuss what could be done to prevent littering. Remind students that pollution on their campus can ultimately wind up harming the lagoon because all ditches and canals around their school eventually drain into it. All Canals Lead to Lagoon!

Poster Contest

Have students draw a picture or write a story that expresses their feelings about the environment. One possible theme is “How I Would Help the Lagoon.”

Spread the Word

Send a letter home that encourages parents to talk to their children about Lagoon Days and to make a return trip with the whole family.

Be Creative

Dream up your own activity or let students come up with ideas. **Let us know what works!** We love to hear from you!