



**Merry Lea**

*Environmental Learning Center  
of Goshen College*

# Biodiversity

## 6th - 8th

### Program Description

Students discover the diversity of life at Merry Lea firsthand by exploring multiple ecosystems on our trails. In each habitat, students identify native organisms and discuss the interconnections of mammals, insects, plants, humans and more. Assess the importance of biodiversity by flipping logs, interpreting abiotic features, and meeting the flora and fauna of Merry Lea.

### Program Outline

#### 1. Habitat Hike

Students spend a large portion of the day hiking and exploring the different ecosystems at Merry Lea including prairie, meadow, wetland, forest and lake. They participate in several activities including:

- **Habitat Study:** Students spend several minutes observing and comparing different ecosystems while filling out an ecosystem study sheet.
- **Forest Floor Diversity:** Students observe and explain how invasive species impact the diversity found on a forest floor.
- **Field Guide Exercise:** Students have an opportunity to practice using a variety of field guides to identify different plant and animal species.

#### 2. Afternoon Options Include:

- Games
- Insect Search

### Program Objectives

Students will:

- Explain the concept of biodiversity including its importance
- Define the terms producer, consumer, decomposer, prey, predator, herbivore, carnivore and omnivore
- Create a small food web using organisms at Merry Lea

### Vocabulary

- |             |            |              |
|-------------|------------|--------------|
| • Herbivore | • Prey     | • Consumer   |
| • Carnivore | • Predator | • Decomposer |
| • Omnivore  | • Producer |              |

### Quick Facts

**Season** Fall: September - November  
Spring: April - May  
Summer: June

**Grades** 6th - 8th

**Program Length** 4 hours

**Maximum # of Students** 80 Students

### Standards Correlation

#### 6th Grade

**6.LS.3** Describe specific relationships and symbiotic relationships between organisms.

**6.LS.4** Investigate and use data to explain how changes in biotic and abiotic components in a given habitat can be beneficial or detrimental to native plants and animals.

**6.LS.5** Research invasive species and discuss their impact on ecosystems.

#### 8th Grade

**8.ESS.3** Research how human consumption of finite natural resources and human activities have had an impact on the environment.

**8.LS.5** Explain how factors affecting natural selection increase or decrease a species' ability to survive and reproduce.

**8.LS.9** Examine traits of individuals within a species that may give them an advantage or disadvantage to survive and reproduce...