



Merry Lea

*Environmental Learning Center
of Goshen College*

Nature's Recyclers

3rd - 5th

Program Description

We know about paper, plastic and glass, but how does nature recycle? Through interactive exploration, students visit forests, prairies and wetlands to learn that everything in the natural world is eventually broken down into its basic parts. Get face-to-face with some wriggly recyclers and discover why decomposition is such an important process in nature.

Program Objectives

Students will:

- Discover how everything in nature is recycled and broken down
- Learn how all living things are made of elements that are eventually returned to the soil

Program Outline

1. Hike

Students head out on our trails to get a close-up view of the recycling process happening in nature. They participate in age-appropriate scavenger hunts, games and other hands-on activities.

2. Vernal Pond Exploration

While on the hike, students stop at one of our vernal ponds to search for macroinvertebrates and amphibians living in the water.

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

- Worm Castings: Students see our active worm composting bin and discuss how humans can use worms to compost food scraps.
- Games

Vocabulary

- Recycling
- Decomposer
- Fungi
- Conservation
- Bacteria

Quick Facts

Season	Fall: September - November Spring: April - May
Grades	3rd - 5th
Program Length	4 hours
Maximum # of Students	80 Students

Standards Correlations

3.LS.2 Plan and conduct an investigation to determine the basic needs of plants to grow, develop and reproduce.

4.ESS.4 Develop solutions that could be implemented to reduce the impact of humans on the natural environment and the natural environment on humans.

5.LS.2 Observe and classify common Indiana organisms as producers, consumers, decomposers, or predator and prey based on their relationships and interactions with other organisms in their ecosystem.

See Standards Correlations for Nature's Recyclers for more academic connections.