

Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Resources for Teachers and Students at the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center

Center Foyer

Educational experiences abound at the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center (Center), 2630 Fanta Reed Road, La Crosse, Wisconsin. The main foyer is open to the public Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and students and teachers can tour the Center during those times.



Educational displays and other learning activities are available for visitors:

- Invasive species (e.g., sea lampreys, round gobies, zebra mussels, Asian carp [silver and bighead])
- Migratory songbirds
- Native freshwater mussels
- Radiotelemetry methods used to track fish and wildlife for research

During a tour, students may also touch a lake sturgeon in a research laboratory and feed rainbow trout in the outdoor raceways.

Learning Lab

The Learning Lab is a renovated research laboratory serving as an up-close learning environment. The indoor Learning Lab offers many displays including live fish, amphibians, reptiles, and fish preserved at all life stages,



125 years of science for America



Outdoor Classroom

The Outdoor Classroom is a handicap-accessible 600-ft. limestone screenings trail in the floodplain forest and over a backwater slough to an observation platform on Center grounds. Students from Longfellow Middle School's School-on-the-River program helped build the interactive educational displays mounted on the walkway of this learning site.



All ages of students—from elementary school through college—can study a floodplain forest and river backwater habitat by viewing educational posters and displays of nearby animals and plants, or by collecting water, plant, or sediment samples to study. Tree species are labeled, and a display box on each labeled tree includes detailed information.

Restored Native Prairie Tours

Prairies historically covered large areas of the Upper Mississippi River floodplain. Agricultural development and fire suppression, however, have greatly reduced prairies in the Midwest. The Center was built on a relic sand prairie, and in 1997, approximately seven acres of Center grounds were restored and seeded as a natural prairie.



Schools can bring students on tours of the restored prairie, where a prairie naturalist will demonstrate the ecological value of prairie habitat and assist in the identification of prairie plants. Our prairie tours now feature an information kiosk and interpretive trail.



Additional Resources

Visit our Web site: <http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/> for more resources for teachers and students. The Center Web site is a rich source on Center research programs, reports, and publications. The “Teachers and Students” section includes links to other Web sites about the Mississippi River and environmental education, a summary of educational opportunities at the Center, and interactive programs on radiotracked paddlefish and loons.

For more information, contact—

Randy Hines
USGS Upper Midwest Environmental
Sciences Center
2106 Fanta Reed Road
La Crosse, WI 54603
608.781.6398
rkhines@usgs.gov