

Curriculum Overview

The Goal:

* A W A R E N E S S * K N O W L E D G E * A C T I O N *

Our goal in educating students about the environment is to foster an *appreciation* of the natural world, at the same time giving them *knowledge* of basic life systems, in order to promote *action*, however small, on behalf of the earth.

CA State Science Content Standards and Framework:

Our curriculum is matched very closely to the current California State Content Standards and Science Framework and covers many parts of the Life, Earth, Physical Science and Investigation and Experimentation sections of the Science Standards. By attending the Field School and working through the pre- and post- curriculum, your students will have very thoroughly covered many sections of the Science Content Standards. In addition, students may also have covered other parts of the standards based on your students' grade level, preparation and any requested special focus.

Ecological Concepts:

* ENERGY * CYCLES * ADAPTATIONS * COMMUNITIES *
* DIVERSITY * CHANGE * INTERDEPENDENCE *

Seven concepts form the basis of the academic program. These concepts give students a framework for looking at the natural world and function as organizing principles for the Science Standards' individual teaching requirements.. Each concept refers to one set of processes at work in nature. As students make observations in the field, the concepts act as tools to use and to build upon in order to understand and analyze their discoveries .The California State Science Framework stresses the use of "themes" - or "big ideas" for integrating the classroom science curriculum. The Field School concepts are well suited to this purpose.

"Concepts without facts are empty. Facts without concepts are meaningless."

The curriculum of the Field School is developed around the seven basic concepts. During field studies, each Teacher-Naturalist develops her or his own lesson plans based on the concepts. As a community, the students are exposed to the concepts through theme meetings (see sample schedule), daily whole group events featuring a virtual song and dance routine highlighting a particular concept. The same concepts are reinforced through banners around the site, and the Student Journals. You will note that the post-trip lessons are conceived and arranged according to the same structure. At the beginning of each set of lessons is a plate summarizing each theme and its meaning in the context of the Field School.

—