



PEEC Class Descriptions

Most programs run 1.5 hrs, but there are some exceptions. Optimum learning group size is 15 students to 1 PEEC instructor.

Science Based Studies

Astronomy – Students study the stars, the moon, and the planets in the night sky during this indoor/outdoor class. Topics of interest may also include constellations, the Milky Way, and the moon phases.

Beaver Study – An exploration into the world of beaver adaptations and life-styles. Students learn the importance of beaver presence in wetland habitats and the effects of human interaction on beaver activity. Field studies allow students the opportunity to observe signs of beavers.

EcoZone – Explore and discover this unique “hands-on” room that is filled with different life-sized animal habitats (including a bat cave, a beaver lodge, and an eagle’s nest), sustainable living ideas, and interesting animal displays. What was once the indoor pool in PEEC’s Main Building has been totally transformed! The EcoZone is perfect for any age, any time of year.

Entomology – Join us to study the most populous and diverse grouping of animals on our planet. We’ll cover topics like unique adaptations of flight, why they might give us the creepy crawlies, and how we classify insects to help us understand them better.

Forest Ecology – PEEC’s campus provides an ideal outdoor classroom for students to observe different forest communities. Students will learn about common trees in this region, the structure of forests, concepts of forest succession, and forest dynamics.

Geology – Students will learn about the geologic history and processes that have shaped this region. Students will also learn about plate tectonics and the formation of fossils. Emphasis will be placed on understanding glacial processes and the landscapes glaciers leave behind them.

Herpetology – Students will have the opportunity to explore the diverse species, behaviors, and ecological roles of reptiles and amphibians. By studying these animals up close, students can gain a deeper appreciation for the delicate creatures that call our woods home.

Mammal Study – Mammals are one of the most well-recognized parts of the animal kingdom. Students will learn how mammals are classified, adaptations that help mammals survive, and how humans can co-exist. This class offers hands on opportunities with mammal pelts, and skulls, as well as opportunities to see signs of mammals in the wild.

Night Hike – Students will take a walk in the darkness and learn through activities about night vision, human and nocturnal animals’ nighttime adaptations and will experience the woods at night without flashlights.

Nocturnal Study – This program invites students to discover the mysteries of the nighttime world. Through this class, students will learn about nocturnal animals, their unique adaptations, and how they navigate the darkness. Exploring the creatures that stalk, and survive these low-light conditions opens a whole new world of curiosity.

Ornithology – An introductory class on what special characteristics birds have, what we can learn about birds based on their characteristics, and why birds can fly. Students will observe common birds at our feeders or outside on a trail.



Photo Credit:
Andy Zimmermann



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Pond Ecology – This hands-on class focuses on a pond as a unique habitat and the creatures adapted to living in a lentic water system. Students will learn how pond creatures can be used as biotic indicators in determining water quality. This lesson can be extended to include water testing kits.

Predator & Prey – This multi-group game challenges students to think on their feet in a fast-paced survival simulation. We'll cover population changes and the impacts of bioaccumulation in ecosystems. (Minimum combined group size 20 people.)

Sensory Awareness – Various activities will help students understand the importance of using the senses they typically do not rely on, as well as building confidence and trust.

Stream Ecology – This lesson focuses on the ecological study of a PEEC stream, its organisms, life cycle, food webs, stream flow, riparian ecology, and water quality

Stream Study – Become an aquatic biologist for the day. Students will study our pristine Spackman's Creek through a physical assessment, chemical testing and a biological survey of water quality indicator species.

Sustainability – This class asks “What is sustainability and what does it mean to us as humans?” We'll also ask how we identify renewable vs . nonrenewable resources in relation to sustaining our species .

Watershed Study – Students will gain an understanding of the concept of a watershed through hands-on activities . Focus is on how the characteristics and activities within a watershed affect stream life and water quality, as well as the importance of watersheds and on the importance of watersheds in environmental issues and land management . Discussion will include consideration of the watershed where you live .

Wildlife Study – Students will learn to identify wildlife and the adaptations that help them survive . There will be hands on learning experiences with live critters as well as interactions with persevered pelts and skulls . Students will also study how different animals will change to their environments, and how they co-exist .

Winter Ecology – Students learn about the adaptations that plants and animals have developed in order to stay alive in winter . An exploration into topics such as hibernation, dormancy, and migration allows students the chance to understand the happens to the natural world in the winter. Other topics may include winter tree identification and snow studies. Offered what November - March .

Interpretive Hikes

Interpretive Hikes – The PEEC campus contains 6 hiking trails ranging in length and difficulty. All trails have corresponding interpretive brochures . Hikes can be led by your staff or a PEEC instructor .

- **Fossil Trail** – The 1.03 mile Fossil Trail provides a geological journey with a look into a fossil bed containing ancient marine life forms. *Difficulty Level: Moderate*
- **Flashlight Hike** – Take an evening hike to explore the changes of habitats in the dark. Please bring your own flashlights. *Difficulty Level: Easy*
- **Ridgeline Trail** – The longest trail at PEEC is the 3.63 mile Ridgeline Trail, which provides hikers with views of many different habitats. Expect 3-3.5 hrs to complete the trail. *Difficulty Level: Moderate*
- **Scenic Gorge** – Explore the 1.5 mile Scenic Gorge trail for a tour of a beautiful hemlock ravine. *Difficulty Level: Easy*
- **Tumbling Waters** – The most scenic trail is the 3.01 mile Tumbling Waters trail which follows various terrains and leads hikers to a gorgeous waterfall. Expect 3-3.5 hrs to complete the trail. *Difficulty Level: Moderate*
- **Two Ponds** – Students can become familiar with the aquatic aspects of PEEC along the 1.4 mile Two Ponds trail. *Difficulty Level: Easy*



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- **Trail for Everyone** – The wheelchair and stroller-friendly, 0.3 mile Trail for Everyone (Violet Trail) meanders around PEEC’s lower campus with easy access to both pavilions and the outdoor fireplace. Benches along the trail provide spots to rest and reflect. *Difficulty Level: Easy*

Outdoor Skills

Canoeing – An introduction to canoeing basics (equipment, safety, and paddling techniques) followed by a paddling outing on one of PEEC’s ponds . Available May through October, weather permitting. A certified lifeguard will be out on the water for any emergency situations .

Intro to Camping – The focus of this session is on how to plan and prepare for spending time outdoors, such as factors to consider if you plan to do a day hike or an overnight trip. Topics/activities may include Leave No Trace Principles, fire building, knot tying, setting up a tarp shelter, and how to prepare a campsite.

Orienteering – Students are taught how to use a map and compass to find orienteering markers on one of PEEC’s 2 orienteering courses. This is an empowering lesson for anyone who wants to spend time hiking or traveling outdoors. Students increase confidence within themselves and their group.



Creative Problem Solving

Group Initiatives - To extend your team building experience, or for younger students, group initiatives are available . Group initiatives are team building challenges that focus more on planning, problem solving, and creative thinking, than on physical ability .

New Games – Students will run, laugh, roll, and expend energy with active games . This session provides students with a fun way to work on group cooperation, coordination, and concentration! This can be done as one large group (for example, upon arrival at PEEC) or in smaller learning groups .

Town Meeting – Students simulate a meeting of community members with different interests in an environmental resource and try to convince the ‘panel’ that their interest in the resource is its best use . Develops individual opinions, personal values, and an understanding of how resource decisions can be made . Inform the Schedule Coordinator of an environmental issue that concerns your school, students, or community .

Challenge Courses

Confidence Course – Our low rope elements are personal challenge and trust based. They build self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment within students as their peers keep them safe through proper spotting .

Team Building – A series of challenges which promote communication, cooperation and decision making within a group . Students need to work together in order to accomplish the task with minimal help from teachers or staff .

Additional activities you may do on your own:

Schedule free time with our Schedule Coordinator to give yourself and the students a break . Feel free to visit our volleyball court, basketball court, gaga pit, or our open field. Students must remain supervised by adult chaperones during this time .