



Field Trip Guide

Litter Obliterators

Please take some time to review this guide as you plan your Forest Preserve litter cleanup. The steps are intended to highlight preparation steps and important talking points, but please add your own material to personalize the experience for your group.

Materials

- Safety information: *Be Safe Procedures; Bag it, Drag it, or Flag it?*
- Poison Ivy ID*
- Permit
- Handout- *Be Prepared to Get Outside, Get Active, and Give Back*
- Map of site and driving directions
- Bags (2 bags per five students)
- Gloves (1 pair per student)
- Handout - *Preserve Scavenger Hunt*
- Pens or pencils
- Hand sanitizer
- First-aid kit
- Prizes for Litter Cleanup & Scavenger Hunt winners (if applicable)

If you need additional gloves or trash bags, contact Volunteer Resources (cassie.hatzfeld@cookcountyiil.gov) at least two weeks before your cleanup.

Procedure

Before your Field Trip

1. **Schedule** your field trip with Volunteer Resources (cassie.hatzfeld@cookcountyiil.gov) two weeks in advance.
2. **Visit** the site before your trip if you have time. (For your safety, always use the buddy system when visiting the Preserves.)
3. **Copy and distribute** *Be Prepared to Get Outside, Get Active, and Give Back* to participants
4. **Copy** the *Preserve Scavenger Hunt* (1 per 5 students)
5. **Encourage** your students to visit the Forest Preserve website (fpdcc.com) and learn about the history and mission of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC). They can check out the Teen Service-Learning Blog (FPDCCteens.blogspot.com) to see what other student volunteers are doing in the Preserves

The Day of your Field Trip - Gather all of your supplies

Introduction to the Preserves

1. **Locate** your starting point (typically a grove) at the site.
2. **Coordinate** a pick up time with the bus driver and exchange cell phone numbers.
3. **Know** your location in case of an emergency and communicate it to all chaperones. Cross-streets or an address will help authorities find your group quickly.
4. **Gather** participants in a circle, and have them stand shoulder-to-shoulder. Ask for their attention and praise the listeners until you get everyone's attention.
5. When everyone is listening, **welcome** them to the site and remind them that they are there to complete a service activity, Litter Obliterators, and to get outside and enjoy nature.
6. **Set a few rules** for having a safe and enjoyable day. (Ex. Stay with the group and listen when the leaders are giving instructions, turn off all electronics, etc.)

Getting Started – Suggested Group Discussion

1. Ask - Who in the group has visited the Preserves before? What did you do here?
2. **The Forest Preserves are 68,000 acres of nature and make up about 11% of the land in Cook County.**

3. **One of the goals of the Forest Preserve District is to maintain a healthy habitat for people and wildlife.** The Forest Preserves are home to thousands of plants and animals, including rare and endangered species.

Explain the Activity

1. Today we are going to participate in Litter Obliterators and help keep this Preserve healthy and safe. Litter cleanups are one of the best ways young people can care for nature.
2. Ask - Why is it important to care for the land and clean up litter? Why should we care?
3. **The ultimate goal of Litter Obliterators is litter prevention.**
4. **By cleaning up the Preserves, you are changing behavior.** Through your actions, you are sending a positive message to other Preserve users. By showing them that you care about nature, you are encouraging them to also care for the site. In addition, it is proven that people are less likely to litter in a place that is clean.
5. **Give a safety overview** using ideas from *Be Safe Procedures*, *Let Us Know*, and *Bag it, Flag it, or Drag it?*. Remind participants to wear their gloves at all times and if they don't know what an item is, don't touch it. Students should report anything out of the ordinary to adults immediately including: dogs off leash and shelters constructed in the woods.
6. **Discuss animal encounters.** Don't approach any animals. Never touch or pick up an animal. Observe from a safe distance and enjoy!
7. **Discuss poison ivy.** Show the pictures from the *Poison Ivy ID sheet* and remind students to avoid any plants that have three leaves. "Leaves of three, let it be."
8. **Ask - Where will you find the most litter?** Instruct students to focus on areas around parking lots, pavilions or shelters, along the edges of groves, waterways, and on trails. Groups should stay on trails when possible.
9. **Remind students to look for "little litter."** Ex. Cigarette butts, bottle caps, pieces of plastic can be very harmful to wildlife. Litter may be hard to find, but with some practice, you will start to see the little things.
10. When a group has filled a bag, tie it tightly and place it next to a metal FPDCC garbage can. Designate a space for students to get more bags or gloves if needed.

Preserve Scavenger Hunt- As you are cleaning and helping the Preserves, take the chance to explore and enjoy nature. Work together with your team to complete the Scavenger Hunt.

1. **Rules of the game**
 - a. **Explore** the Preserve and find items that fit the descriptions on the Scavenger Hunt.
 - b. **Read** the clue and **find a natural item** that fits the description.
 - c. **Write** your answer on the line next to the clue. If you do not know the name of the item, describe it.
 - d. **Be creative** and only use each answer one time.
 - e. Reminder – making things up is cheating! You must see, hear, or smell the answers you write.

Final instructions

1. **Set boundaries**, a time limit, and a meeting spot.
2. **Organize** groups into teams of five and establish a leader in each group.
3. **Invite leaders** from each group to pick up 5 pairs of gloves, 1 or 2 bag(s), a Scavenger Hunt, and a pen for their team. Keep extra gloves and bags at the meeting place – groups can come back to get extra supplies.
4. To encourage teamwork and hard work, prizes for most litter collected and/or best scavenger hunt can be given.

Reflection- Gather the group in a circle and discuss the results of the activities. Here are some sample questions:

1. What was the coolest, weirdest, or most interesting thing you saw?
2. Did your group find something that you did not expect to discover?
3. Was the litter cleanup what you expected?
4. Was there anything you didn't expect?
5. What type of litter was most prevalent? Why?
6. How did your actions affect the community? Wildlife? Individual participants?
7. How can we take what we learned from the experience and continue to affect change?
8. If you had to describe your Forest Preserve experience in one word, what would it be?
9. What would you post on Facebook about your experience today?
10. If you were going to text your best friend about your experience today, what would you say?

Litter Obliterators: *Service-Learning Project*

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS – IL State Learning Standards

State goal	Description
Science	
12.B.4a	Compare physical, ecological, and behavioral factors that influence interactions and interdependence of organisms.
12.B.5a	Analyze and explain biodiversity issues and the causes and effects of extinction.
13.A.4a	Estimate and suggest ways to reduce the degree of risk involved in science activities.
Social Science: Social Systems	
18.B.4	Analyze various forms of institutions (e.g. educational, military, charitable, and governmental).
Social Science: Geography	
17.A.5	Demonstrate how maps, other geographic instruments and technologies are used to solve spatial problems (e.g. land use, ecological concerns). Describe the impact of human migrations and increased urbanization on ecosystems.
17.C.5b	
14.C.4	Describe the meaning of participatory citizenship (e.g. volunteerism, voting) at all levels of government and society in the United States.
Mathematics	
7.C.4b	Interpret scale drawings and models using maps and blue prints.
Social Emotional Learning Standards	
1B.5b	Evaluate how developing interests and filling useful roles support school and life success.
1C.4b	Apply strategies to overcome obstacles to goal achievement.
2A.4a	Analyze similarities and differences between one's own and other's perspectives.
2A.4b	Use conversation skills to understand others' feelings and perspectives.
2B.5b	Evaluate how advocacy for the rights of others contributions to the common good.
3A.4b	Evaluate how social norms and the expectations of authority influence personal decisions and actions.
3B.5b	Evaluate how responsible decision making affects interpersonal and group relationships.
3C.5a	Work cooperatively with others to plan, implement, and evaluate a project to meet an identified school need.
3C.4b	Plan, implement, and evaluate one's participation in a group effort to contribute to one's local community.