

Introduction to Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's Wetlands Discovery Program:

{Please read through this information BEFORE requesting a program for your class(es)}

As the flagship educational program for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS), the Wetlands Discovery Program is designed to teach students the value of and threats to local wetlands. SCVAS staff and volunteers first introduce students to wetland habitats, wildlife, and ecology through engaging classroom activities. They then guide them in exploring nature and applying their new knowledge during a 2-hour birdwatching field trip at local baylands.

The Wetlands Discovery Program provides teachers with curriculum and activities for an approximately 2-week science unit that encompasses vocabulary, critical thinking, writing skills, and - of course - natural and life sciences. Some activities are intended to take place in the classroom at the teacher's convenience; others are administered and provided by SCVAS staff and volunteers (see full details, below). The components of this program are also designed to support many of the Next Generation Science Standards for grades 3 through 6, featuring topics such as adaptations and energy cycles. Various reading, writing and language components of the Common Core Curriculum are also supported.

Teachers interested in participating in the Wetlands Discovery Program must be willing and able to comply with all of the program requirements.

These requirements are as follows:

- 1) Teachers must complete both pre-program and post-program classroom activities with their students. Some of these activities must be turned back into SCVAS staff at the end of the program (see details below or at www.scvas.org/WDP_Classroom).
- 2) Teachers must complete a "Teacher Evaluation Survey" at the end of the program (see www.scvas.org/WDP_Classroom)
- 3) A large, multi-use space with tables and chairs – capable of accommodating up to 70 students - must be available for the full "In-Class Activities Session" (Component Two - see below). Individual classrooms are not a viable substitute.
- 4) Teachers must book their own transportation for the Wetlands Field Trips. Some financial assistance may be available (see below), but schools are responsible for making their own arrangements.
- 5) All schools using district or other public transportation **must submit proof of General Liability Insurance, proof of Worker's Compensation Insurance, and an Additional Insured Endorsement Certificate from their insurance carriers**. These documents must be received by SCVAS at least 2 months before the scheduled field trips. Schools that do not provide this information on a timely basis will not be allowed to participate in the field trip component. Additional details will be sent upon registration confirmation.
- 6) Both new and returning teachers will be asked to **schedule a pre-program meeting with SCVAS staff** about 3 weeks prior to their scheduled program. This meeting will be used to review the program components and to confirm schedules. All participating teachers should plan on attending.

In order to serve as many schools as possible, all of SCVAS' programs are offered free of charge (though donations are greatly appreciated). In some cases, we are able to offer financial assistance for a portion of the bus transportation to the field trip site at Charleston Slough in Mountain View (see additional details below). If not, the cost of the bus transportation is the only expense for this program.

If your school is a low-income school (defined as those with free or subsidized lunches for at least 70% of their students) funding may be available through our partners with the Science by Nature Collaboration. *We encourage all schools that qualify to apply for this funding.* Details and additional information will be provided upon registration confirmation.

If your school does not qualify for the funding above, or you are not one of the schools selected for that funding, SCVAS *may* have funding available to provide transportation reimbursements for ONE bus per school **UP TO A MAXIMUM OF \$330****. Receipt of this funding is dependent on the receipt of the required pre-and-post-program evaluation materials as described below.

We do ask that any schools which are able to cover any or all of the cost of their own transportation please do so. This will allow us to reach more schools that cannot cover transportation costs.

If you have any difficulties scheduling a bus for your field trip with your school district, please let us know as soon as possible. We have several private bus companies that we or our organizational partners have worked with in the past with great success (and who offer very reasonable prices).

**** If you believe your transportation costs for one bus will be greater than \$330, please let SCVAS know as soon as possible. Additional funding MAY be available, but is not guaranteed. We may also refer you to one of the private bus companies that we work with, as mentioned above.**

How to Schedule a Wetlands Discovery Program:

After reading through this participation information provided above and the program details below, please review the Wetlands calendar (go to www.scvas.org/WDP_Classroom to find compatible dates for your school. Dates that are no longer available are indicated. Then, please use the **Online Registration Form** to schedule your program (go the website above). Please keep in mind that programs are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis as the calendar fills.

If you are unable to schedule a Wetlands Discovery Program with us, but would still like a program, please contact the SCVAS staff (programs@scvas.org or outreach@scvas.org) - we have many stand-alone options that would also be appropriate for your students.

Wetlands Discovery Program Component Details

There are four components to this program:

1) Component One – “Pre-Program” Classroom Activities

The 5 pre-program activities are designed to introduce students to general concepts, establish some "baseline" information regarding the students' existing wetlands knowledge, and prepare the students for the subsequent components. These activities are directed by the teachers' themselves, and take place in the individual classrooms at the teachers' convenience in the weeks leading up to the SCVAS-led activities. They include the following:

- **A “Pre-Program” Worksheet (aka “Pre-Test”)**. All students should take this test individually. Can be administered online (*preferred*) or via a paper worksheet. Must be returned to the SCVAS office at the completion of the program.
- **The “Wonders of Wetlands” Slideshow**. A PowerPoint presentation with an SCVAS-provided script.
- **A Wetlands Vocabulary List**. This greatly aids the students understanding of the program concepts and is *crucial* that it be reviewed before the SCVAS-led activities.
- **A set of “Common Wetlands Birds” Flashcards**. To be used as a general introduction and/or basis for student projects, depending on teacher preference.
- **A read-aloud book** (“She’s Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head”) about the founding of the Audubon Society. Helps introduce the SCVAS staff and volunteers.
- An *optional* copy of the film “Winged Migration” will also be made available for teachers’ use as desired.

The materials for these pre-program activities are given to teachers during the pre-program teacher meeting. This meeting can be scheduled before, during, or after the school day, depending on the teachers’ availabilities.

2) Component Two – “In-Class Activities Session”

This component takes place at the school on a **Tuesday morning**, is administered by SCVAS staff and volunteers (with teacher participation), and requires approximately 75 minutes for each session (60 minutes of activity stations, 15 minutes of binocular training). We can accommodate up to about 70 students per session (though smaller numbers are preferred, if at all possible), and a maximum of 3 sessions. 2 classrooms can be combined into one session to accommodate scheduling needs. The in-class activities generally start around 8:00 or 8:30AM. Students are broken up into small working groups of 3 students each, given a worksheet to complete (a master copy of the worksheet will be provided to the teachers at the pre-program meeting, and is also available as an online form if an electronic version is preferred and/or tablets are available for student’s use during the program), and directed to work at various activity stations throughout the room. While it is not required, *it is helpful if teachers are able to recruit 1-2 additional adults to help direct the students through these activities*.

There are several sets of 9 activities for students to work through with their worksheet, for a total of about 22 stations. Students are then taken outside and introduced to the use of binoculars for about 15 minutes. The binocular training can take place either immediately after each group's activity session, or all together at the end of the program, depending on the classes’ and cafeteria's schedules and the number of students participating.

Wetlands Discovery Program Component Details (cont.)

3) Component Three – “Field Trip” to Charleston Slough, Mtn View

This approximately 2-hour field trip takes place on the **Thursday or Friday morning** immediately after the in-class session; other arrangements can be made for schools where Thursday’s or Friday’s are not an option, but there should not be a large time delay between the In-class Activities Session and the Field Trip components.

Each field trip can accommodate 2 classes of students (or up to ~70 students). For 4 classes, we would need to schedule a 2nd field trip on a subsequent day. **Additional adult chaperones (teachers, parents, teacher aides, etc.) are required for each field trip** to help us control the groups and direct attention as appropriate; for a class of 35 students we would ask for at least 4-5 chaperones.

Students are bused to the field trip site and should arrive at approximately 9:30 or 9:45AM, where they are split into smaller groups of 10-12 student (established prior to boarding the bus). They will receive a morning snack (which we provide) and then will be given their binoculars with a short review for using them. Docents will then take the students on a nature walk around the slough, pointing out the local wildlife and discussing the topics covered in the in-class sessions, and should return to the bus at ~11:45AM. After collecting binoculars, and doing a brief wrap-up, students are generally back on the bus by 12:00PM*.

*If your school has an early release schedule on a field trip date, we can make arrangements for an earlier ending time. Please let us know when you register for your program or as soon as possible.

4) Component Four – “Post-Program” Activities

Teachers are asked to do the 4 “post-program” activities with their students after the field trip. These activities help us evaluate the program, make appropriate changes for the future, and help to reinforce the concepts students have learning during the 3 previous components. These activities include:

- **A post-field trip “Wetlands Website Worksheet”** to be used with the SCVAS website. Can be used as a classroom or small group activity; we do *not*, however, recommend having the students do this individually.
- **A Teacher Evaluation Form.** Available online (www.scvas.org/WDP_Classroom) or as a paper form.
- **Thank you notes** to our volunteer docents. We recommend using this as a writing assignment, but we leave that up to the teachers’ discretion.
- **A “Post-Program” Worksheet (aka “Post-Test”).** All students should take this test individually. Can be administered online (*preferred*) or via a paper worksheet.

Materials for and explanations of these post-program activities will be provided during our initial pre-program teacher meeting (see above). The return of these “post-program” activities at the completion of the program is very important for SCVAS’ future development of this program. Return of these activities to the SCVAS office is **required** for both future participation in the program as well as the reimbursement of bus transportation (see notes above).