



Ecological
education and
environmental
adventure for
children and
young people

**A GUIDE TO WILD
THINGS ACTIVITIES**





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About Wild Things

Wild Things Ecological Education Collective provides high quality, tailored, learning experiences in the natural environment for 5 to 21 year olds.

Established IN 1997 as a not for profit social co-operative, we work each year with around 1,000 young people from groups such as schools, play schemes, youth groups, youth inclusion and crime prevention projects, young people who have been excluded from school, young carers and lifeskills groups.

Our main aims are to:

- Help young people build a relationship with the natural world and develop an understanding of basic ecological processes,
- Provide young people with positive experiences in the natural world that they may not otherwise have access to,
- Encourage hands on participation in activities which will improve our local, and wider, environment.

We believe that social issues are at the heart of the challenge of caring for our environment. We provide activities which are designed to develop confidence, self-esteem, communication, co-operation, and organisational skills to enable children and young people rise to this challenge.



Who Are Wild Things?

We have a very experienced team, with four full time members and a committed pool of volunteer workers.

Kath Andrew

A member of Wild Things for 13 years. Kath was previously a co-ordinator for various city play schemes and after-school clubs. Kath has a BTEC in Advanced Forest School Leadership, holds a BA (Hons) in Applied Social Science and is a qualified first aider.



Nick Robson

A member of Wild Things for 15 years. BSc (Hons) in Countryside Management. Nick has undertaken Programme Leadership Training & Programme Design Training with The Institute for Earth Education, and is also a qualified youth worker. Nick has a BTEC in Advanced Forest School Leadership and is a qualified first aider.



Kate Milman

A member of Wild Things for 15 years. BA (Hons) in English Literature. Kate has undertaken Programme Leadership Training with the Institute for Earth Education, and is also a qualified youth worker. Kate has a BTEC in Advanced Forest School Leadership, and is a qualified first aider.



Rosie Barker

The newest member of Wild Things, Rosie is a level 3 Forest School practitioner. She runs street play sessions in Nottingham and is a qualified outdoor first aider.



Wild Things works with a variety of volunteers and sessional workers.

Wild Things has a comprehensive Child Protection Policy (available on request) and all members undergo full disclosure police checks.

Teddy Bears Picnic

A packed one day programme for school years 1 and 2.

The children explore the natural world and learn the 'needs of life' for 'Teddy Bears' and all other living things.



Introduction

This programme of earth education activities was designed at the Bishops Wood Environmental Education Centre, Worcester. It is now being provided at centres all over the country. In Nottinghamshire it is provided by Wild Things.

Complete with follow up activities this programme is based on the principles and practice of earth education.

Teddy Bears Picnic is designed to:

- Nurture respect for the natural world through first hand contact
- Provide some understandings of how living things obtain their needs of life from the environment and what those needs are
- Encourage young children to make a positive contribution to caring for their environment at a level appropriate to their age

A one day Teddy Bears Picnic programme costs £250.

Curriculum links for this programme are available on request.

“An excellent day - very well focused and organised. Brilliant, fun teaching ideas. We were very impressed.”

(Maun Infants School)

Overview

The children are invited by Edward the Woodland Teddy Bear to bring their teddies along to a special day where they will learn to be Teddy Bear Guardians and discover the meaning of the secret word SWAF.

1. Arrival. The children are introduced to the day by an illustrated story. Their Teddy Bears venture off to explore for themselves, taking the lunches with them!

2. Earthwalk. A series of sensory play activities linked by teddy bear themes designed to explore and discover the things that teddy bears need in the woods.

3. Teddy Bear Tag. With the aid of the initial story, costumes and props this game shows the meaning of the secret word SWAF, (shelter, water, air and food), the needs of life for all living things.

4. Musical Trees. This exciting game illustrates that the needs of life are not available in unlimited supply and demonstrates the importance of trees to other living things. The children play the role of trees and bears. When the woodcutter comes the bears come to realise that they have to protect the trees that supply their needs of life.

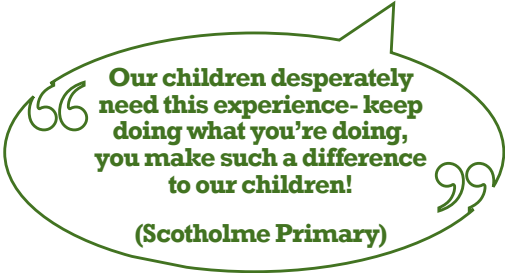
5. Lost Teddy Bear Hunt. All the teddy bears and packed lunches have disappeared. Luckily they have left a trail of signs in the shape of paw prints which the children can follow. Each sign is attached to something in the woodland that provided the bears with one of the things that they needed to live.

6. The Picnic. The group joins their teddies in a clearing for a traditional woodland picnic.

7. The Story. Children and teddies gather round to listen to a tale from India called 'The People Who Hugged The Trees'. This reinforces the Musical Trees game and illustrates the importance of trees to human communities.

8. Castaway Teddy. Each group is asked to create a desert island containing all the things teddies and all other living things need to survive. They have flags to mark shelter, water, air and food and must construct a shelter for their teddies. They tour each other's islands and share their special features such as miniature gardens and play parks for their bears.

9. Departure. The children receive certificates to declare them qualified Teddy Bear Guardians.



Our children desperately need this experience- keep doing what you're doing, you make such a difference to our children!

(Scotholme Primary)

10. Follow Up. The group can take an activity pack containing activities to do at school and at home in the following months building on the themes of the day.

Earth Dwellers

A two-day programme for school years 5 and 6.

A letter has been found from the 'Earth Dweller' teaching the secrets of life on earth, but over time these secrets have been lost.

Can you rediscover them and pass them on once again?



Introduction

Using drama and adventure, this hands-on programme brings learning about ecology to life, nurturing children's desire to explore, discover and create change.

Earth Dwellers is designed to:

- Nurture respect for the natural world through first hand contact
- Teach the concepts of energy flow through the environment, the cycling of all matter, the interdependency of all living things, and the change in an environment over time
- Encourage participants to examine how we can all play an important role in acting more responsibly in our environment
- Act as a powerful 'spring board' experience to encourage further learning and action back in the class room, club or at home

COST

A two day Earth Dwellers programme costs £400.

Curriculum links for this programme are available on request.

I am totally astounded at the fantastic way you deliver complex concepts in such an accessible way... your course is ideally suited for kinesthetic learners and naturalist intelligence. For many of the children it was a chance to shine and use their innate ability.

(Lees Park Juniors)

Overview

The children are sent a faded manuscript from an Earth Dweller of the past. It is a message to people of the future, passing on 'secrets' so that people can live in harmony with nature. Some of the words are so faded that the message cannot be understood. The children are invited to take part in an adventure to solve the mystery.

1. Arrival. The scene is set in the woods as the children are told that over the last few hundred years people have forgotten these secrets of life and we are all facing an ecological crisis. The challenge is to rediscover the lost secrets of the Earth Dweller.

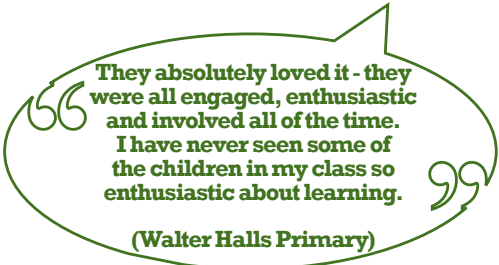
2. Munch Line Monitors. The group learns how all munch lines (food chains) start at the sun. They load special munch trays with evidence and learn how energy decreases as it moves through the food chain. After looking at some examples of what can happen when poison enters the food chain, the participants become qualified munch line monitors.

3. Earth Walks. Throughout the two day adventure the children take part in a series of sensory activities. This includes a woodland cocktail party, becoming park rangers of their own micro-country park and acting out a sensory nature play.

4. The Great Spec-tackle. The group learns about the three basic kinds of specks (molecules): air, water and soil, which make up everything and are used over and over again. They are led to Speck Trail Junction where, with guide books, they follow the paths of some specks whose journeys take them to some very unexpected places!

5. Connection Inspection. The group is met by the Connector Inspector who explains that everything is connected in the web of life. The participants

become different plants and animals and, according to their needs, connect themselves into the web, creating the habitat of a lake. When the Connector Inspector decides to put some weed killer on his garden they discover that just one small thing can have huge consequences!



They absolutely loved it - they were all engaged, enthusiastic and involved all of the time. I have never seen some of the children in my class so enthusiastic about learning.

(Walter Halls Primary)

6. Time Capsules. The group move on to discover nine hidden time capsules which contain evidence from the past. The Earth Dweller has left a map and the hunt begins. Once found, they open the capsules and place their contents along a time line. The group is taken on a visual journey through time, looking at the rapid changes human activity has caused and its destructive impact on the ecology of our planet.

7. Solving the mystery: All the secrets in the Earth Dweller's letter have now been solved and we look at how the group can use the knowledge that they have gained to support positive environmental change. The day ends with the opening of a sealed pouch, left by the Earth Dweller, containing a gift for each of the newly qualified Earth Dwellers.

Home Sweet Home

A one day programme for school year groups 4, 5, & 6.



Introduction

The woodland job centre is open. The 'Night Running Population Controller' (the Fox) and his friends have their job descriptions and with their housing applications have to find a home. Will it be the field or the wood? What will happen if one of these habitats vanishes?

Home Sweet Home is designed to:

- Nurture respect for the natural world through first hand contact
- Promote understandings of different habitats and the needs of species that live there
- Explore the impact that human activity and natural change can have on a habitat and its species
- Encourage children to make a positive contribution to caring for their environment at a level appropriate to their age

COST

A one day Home Sweet Home programme costs £250.

Curriculum links for this programme are available on request.

“It helps to make science real, a day like this goes a long way. Being in the Park brings to life the things they learn in the classroom - it gives them a real life experience to link their work to.”

(Mellers Primary)

Overview

The Home Sweet Home programme provides a different and exciting experience that brings to life the topic of habitats with drama and sensory activities. The programme provides a perfect accompaniment for other activities which explore habitats. This programme of activities was designed by the Institute of Earth Education.

The children are invited to the Home Sweet Home Job Centre, which has vacancies for plants and animals to live and work in one of two communities, the field and the wood. Positions include Long Nosed Nut Borer and the Munchable Jumping Energy Muncher.

1. Arrival. The children arrive at the Job Centre in the woods where they find a board listing job openings in the area. Everyone chooses a different job description which explains what their plant or animal does and what its needs are.

2. The Grand Tour. The group is then taken on a tour of the two communities so that they can find a home. The special features of each habitat are pointed out and each participant checks whether they can find all four of their needs of life, (energy, air, water and shelter), in that place before making it their home.

3. Post Boxes. Having settled in to their community it is time to meet the postman. Each habitat has a post box with letters addressed to the plants and creatures which dwell there. Their mail tells each participant some fun facts about their plant, insect or animal.

4. Community Court. While the group has been opening its mail a problem has arisen. The woodland is to be felled for development and so the woodland dwellers all need to find a new home. A community court is set up with the field residents serving on the jury.

The woodland residents take it in turn to try to convince the jury that they can meet all their needs of life in the field instead, with varying success!

5. Earth Walk. The Earth Walk is a series of sensory activities designed to take a closer look at some of the woodlands smaller residents and explore the woodland habitat from different perspectives. The children are invited to their own woodland cocktail party, become Park Rangers of micro-country parks and walk upside down in the trees!

We all thoroughly enjoyed the experiences. As a teacher of 30 plus years experience I was enchanted as were my children and other staff by the whole experience and venue provided.

(Lees Park Juniors)

6. Departure. The children each receive a Home Sweet Home Ideas Book with further ideas for ways in which they can explore, and help to protect and improve, habitats near to where they live and study.

The Wild Wood Adventure

A one day programme for school year groups 4, 5, & 6.



Introduction

Oaken, the woodland-lore keeper, needs help to find the lost keys to his chest. He asks the tribes of children to set out on a search. Will they be able to solve the tasks ahead and complete the quest?

This one-day wild-play adventure and team challenge was designed by Wild Things to:

- Nurture respect for, and enjoyment of, the natural world through fast-paced, exhilarating experiences in the natural environment
- Encourage children to work as a team and to build co-operative skills through solving challenges
- Provide adventurous play opportunities such as cooking on a fire, building dens and attempting low rope challenges in a supervised setting
- Nurture self-esteem and confidence by overcoming challenges and through opportunities to learn new skills and try new experiences
- Spark the imagination by entering a fantasy story in a natural, adventurous setting

COST

A one day Wild Wood Adventure costs £350.

Curriculum links for this programme are available on request.

It was one of the best trips I've taken children on in 19 years of teaching.

(Mellers Primary)

Overview

1. Meeting Oaken. The children arrive in the wood where they meet Oaken, the woodland lore keeper. He needs help to find the lost keys to his chest, keys that were kept by two tribes who used to live in the woods. Armed with ancient maps, the children set off in two groups to find the tribes' former settlements and to start their quest.

2. Recreating the Settlements. At the old settlement sites the children work together to re-build the shelters that have all but vanished. They make a totem flag for the tribe that they will join for the day and use face paints and materials to decorate themselves.

With this done they return to Oaken's camp where he is waiting to perform a 'visioning' ceremony which may help them on their quest. When strange characters loom out of the smoke of his cauldron the children have their first clues as to where they may find the keys, but they will need to use their maps and remember Oaken's words of advice!

3. Crossing the Fire Swamp. Smoke drifting from the woods leads them from a path to the remains of an under-earth shelter, the camp of an Elder of the woods. She believes she can help them on their quest, but only if they can help her undo the mischief caused by another wood dweller, Random Jack. To do this they must cross the fire swamp.

The children are going to have to look out for each other as they find ways across, be it by walkways, rope swings, scramble nets or stepping stones.

4. Lunch. After the first stage of the quest is completed it's time to re-fuel!

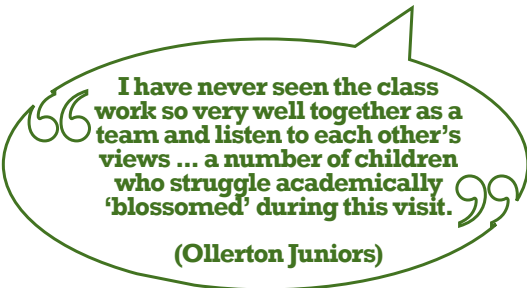
5. Games with Random Jack. Ready to set out again, the maps and clues lead the children to a clearing where they find a bell which summons Random Jack. Jack might agree to help them, but only on his terms! Will they risk rolling his 'Dice of Chance' to play one of his games?

If so, they are going to need to put their heads together to find a way to complete the impossible water challenge and to walk the tight-rope circle of trust.

6. Opening the Chest. Re-united, the two tribes will hopefully have between them what they need to open Oaken's chest.

7. Closing Fire. Oaken invites both tribes to join him at a small celebrational fire before it's time to leave. They will learn to cook their dough sticks on the fire, and of course eat them!

Everyone will make woodland clay 'totem' before the two tribes go off to prepare their own rhythmic woodland performance for the final celebration.



I have never seen the class work so very well together as a team and listen to each other's views ... a number of children who struggle academically 'blossomed' during this visit.

(Ollerton Juniors)

Forest School

A woodland based programme for children and young people. It is suitable for school years 4 and above, play and youth groups.



Introduction

Forest School is an innovative programme based on the idea of running a regular outdoor 'classroom'. Groups come for a programme of weekly two-hour sessions, (programme length is tailored to the groups needs).

Forest School is designed to:

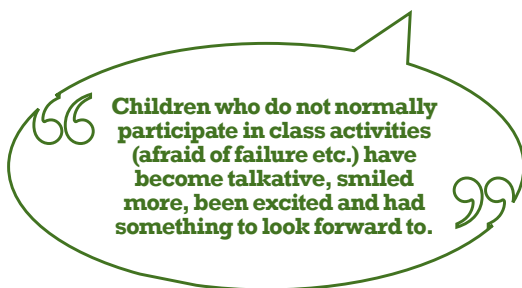
- Build and develop group work and co-operation skills
- Increase learners' confidence, initiative and independence
- Provide a supportive learning environment to suit individual's needs and learning styles
- Increase practical and planning skills
- Increase individual appreciation and understanding of the natural world

Wild Things has been providing Forest School for 10 years.

COST

A two hour Forest School session costs £150.

Curriculum links for this programme are available on request.



What Takes Place At Forest School?

Forest School is a unique way to build independence, confidence and self-esteem in children and young people as they explore and experience the natural world for themselves.

Research into Forest School has identified the marked positive effects on children's personal, social and emotional development and on their language and communication skills.

Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and natural curiosity, offering them opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

Some of the challenges that the learners may face will include:

Setting up camp: Over the course of the programme the group will be based at their own camp in the woods. One of their first challenges is to set up this camp. They will need to work together to plan, design and build a group shelter.

Learning to safely and responsibly use hand tools: The learners will be introduced over the sessions to the safe use of tools with the emphasis placed on responsibility for themselves and each other. Tools include bow saws, bill hooks, loppers and mallets.

Learning basic woodland craft skills: This includes coppicing, constructing brash fencing, making wooden mallets, and learning the appropriate lashings and knots they will need.

Learning to safely build and cook on a camp fire: Participants will get the chance to try their hand at cooking. Will it be popcorn, dough twists, chestnuts or nettle soup?

Exploring what else lives on the site:

Participants will take a closer look at the other inhabitants in the wood and explore how we can protect and increase their habitats.

Conservation and woodland management:

Learners will take part in simple woodland management tasks to help increase and maintain the biodiversity on and around the site.

Group work and planning: All sessions will focus on group work, co-operation and problem solving. Each session will start and finish with time in the camp fire circle where there will be the opportunity for the group to plan and evaluate together.

Forest School programmes enable children and young people to enjoy extended access to the natural world in a safe and supportive learning environment, whilst providing a unique and highly memorable learning experience.

“They show measurable improvement in social skills and form new friendships more easily. Parents have talked to teachers about the value of Wild Things.”

They mention that children are excited and eager to get to school on Forest School days.”

(Ollerton Juniors)

Team Building Activity Days



The Wild Things team building days use the natural world as an ideal, nurturing environment for encouraging children and young people to work together.

These days offer a series of short term games and other age-appropriate challenges. The activities can be used as a fun way for a group to start working together, or can be used as a vehicle to develop and analyse group interaction.

The Aims Of The Sessions

The activities help to build confidence and self-esteem, strengthen communication and co-operation and develop group based decision making skills.

Although the activities utilise elements of competition to create challenges the overall focus is on co-operation, participation and non-hierarchical organisation.

Learning Through Game Play

Our collection of diverse team building games combines mental and physical activity. Your group may find themselves tackling a giant spiders web, swinging across a laser beam, travelling through space with limited life support systems or retrieving treasure before all their water runs out!

Team Building Activity Day - Year 6.

This day combines team game challenges with an Earth Walk, campfire cooking and environmental art.

1. The Earth Walk: The day starts with a two hour sensory experience that is designed to immerse children in this stimulating, relaxing and productive learning environment.

The children may find themselves being invited to their own woodland cocktail party, becoming Park Rangers of their own micro-country parks, attending a woodland concert, or walking upside down in the trees.

2. Team Games Session: The group are faced with a series of team game challenges in the woods that result in a lot of laughter as well as learning!

3. Cooking And Environmental Art: The group celebrate around a campfire where they try their hand at cooking popcorn and sweet dough. The day ends with a chance to make clay creatures, decorated with their natural finds, to remind them of the day.

"The children realised that the tasks were more manageable when they worked together, there was lots of team building and encouragement of each other- a really positive experience... co-operation was far better than normal."

(Radford Primary)

COST

A one day Junior Team Building Activity day costs:

£250

Team Building Activity Day - 12 Year Olds To Adult.

1. Team Games Session: The day starts with a series of active team challenges in the woods.

2. Terminator Gene Wide Game: The group will need all the team-building skills that they developed in the morning session for this fast paced and exhilarating game. It combines a mix of orienteering, communication and hectic action!

Split into two teams participants hunt for the scattered parts of a genetic formula designed to control the world's food chain. Using the maps and clues available, each team must find three parts of the formula. But they need all six pieces to complete the task and save the day!

COST:

A one day Senior Team Building Activity day costs:

£150

"They were so happy with the day, the activities and the environment. They were totally engaged by the Wild Thing's team and truly motivated by their total enthusiasm."

(Ollerton Lifeskills)

Residentials

An experience for year 5's up to adults



Wild Things offer a range of residential packages to suit the needs of your group. This ranges from Forest School survival residentials to Earth Education focused adventures.

Residentials can be run at Bestwood Country Park near Nottingham or in Derbyshire. Please contact Wild Things for more information.

“I’ve never slept in the forest
before - it was awesome!
I’ll never forget it!”

(CYF Project - Nottingham)





CONTACT DETAILS

Please contact us if you require any further information about Wild Things and the programmes we provide.

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VENUES:

Wild Things currently deliver our programmes at Bestwood Country Park near Nottingham and are also developing sites in Derbyshire.

Wild Things works in partnership with many organisations to develop new activities and use new venues.

We are interested in ideas and opportunities to further develop ecological education and Forest School in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Wild Things Ecological Education Collective Ltd. Company No. 3677411
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