



ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

November 30th, 2023

ILLINOIS WATERWAY VISITOR CENTER
950 NORTH 27TH ROAD
OTTAWA, ILLINOIS 61350
Sarah.A.Fisher@usace.army.mil
815-667-4054

Dear Fourth or Fifth Grade Teacher:

I'm writing to give you and your school the opportunity to participate in two very exciting programs...a free raptor program and the national Every Kid Outdoors program.

We would like to invite you and your fourth and fifth grade classes to attend a free educational program titled "Raptor Awareness." This program is presented by the Illinois Raptor Center (IRC). With the help of some non-releasable winged ambassadors, the IRC staff and volunteers will teach students about various birds of prey. Topics that will be addressed during the program will include habitat needs, bird identification, adaptations, and the importance of preservation. Students will see these magnificent birds up-close.

The 60-minute program will start at 10:00 A.M. in the back gym at the Illinois Valley YMCA at 300 Walnut Street in Peru on Friday, 26 January 2024. Students will be seated on the floor of the gym. **Since students will be seated in close proximity with other students, we recommend that your students and teachers are given the option of wearing face masks during the presentation.**

If you like to register your fourth and/or fifth grade classes for this program, please RSVP with the number of students that are expected to attend. For registrations, questions or cancellations, I can be reached through e-mail at Sarah.A.Fisher@usace.army.mil or phone 815-667-4054. The registration deadline is Friday January 19th. Once again, we are very pleased to be able to offer you this free program! This activity takes place the Friday of Bald Eagle Watch Weekend, a family-friendly event.

The second free opportunity is open to any fourth grader and his/her family. Our federal public lands and waters belong to all Americans and are waiting for exploration. In this spirit, the Every Kid Outdoors program (previously called Every Kid in a Park) was started in 2015 to give free passes for fourth graders and their families to gain access to national parks and federal lands throughout the country from 1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024. Educators, coaches, scout leaders, parents and youth counselors can print off free vouchers for their fourth-grade students at <https://everykidoutdoors.gov>, or I can issue durable plastic passes for your students.

If your school can attend the Raptor Awareness program and would also like me to bring your fourth graders passes, let me know by Friday January 19th how many students will be attending and email me a class roster. Depending on pass supply and prior notice, I can issue and bring enough free Every Kid Outdoors passes for your fourth grade students to get free entry into national parks and federal land.

Are you interested in other free programs for your students? Our park rangers can present programs at our site or your school on a variety of topics. All our programming supports Next Generation Science Standards, and is a great way to supplement in-classroom learning. Contact me to learn more.

Hope to see you in January. Thank you and have a happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Sarah Fisher

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Park Ranger, US Army Corps of Engineers