

GOIN' ON A & CRAB HUNT WE'RE GONNA CATCH A BIG ONE!



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RIVER
CENTER
Explore | Experience | Connect

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RIVER CENTER

The River Center is a program of the Loxahatchee River District. The Loxahatchee River District, an award-winning wastewater treatment facility established in 1971 to protect the Loxahatchee River from pollutants, is the leading authority on the Loxahatchee River. Its physical plant can treat up to 11 million gallons of wastewater from northern Palm Beach and southern Martin Counties each day, preventing those pollutants from entering our watershed. This special district also provides both scientific and educational programs for the Loxahatchee River and serves as an advisory agency for the many diverse efforts under way.



PREVISIT INFORMATION

We are delighted that you have chosen to bring your campers to the Loxahatchee River District's River Center for an educational field trip experience. The River Center staff would like for your visit to be as fun and educational as possible. The goal of this field experience is to instill the campers with an understanding and appreciation of the Loxahatchee River watershed through its unique plant and animal habitats as well as a new perspective on water resources and conservation. To make this an enjoyable field trip for teachers, campers, and our program presenters, please follow these guidelines.

PLEASE READ

Please contact the River Center if you will be *more than 15 minutes late* or for any questions, concerns, or changes at 561-743-7123 ext. 4200 or Education@LRECD.org.

SCHEDULE

**10 A.M. - 11:30 A.M. OR
1 P.M. - 3 P.M.**

You may wish to provide a snack before or during the bus ride to the River Center. Groups are welcome to use the small pavilions in the park and visit the playground after their program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A GOOD TRIP

- Campers should wear name tags with their first name.
- Chaperones: 1:6 ratio for younger groups (ages 5-9) or 1:10 ratio for older groups (ages 10+).

EXPECTATIONS

- Camp Directors and chaperones will be responsible for discipline of the children. ***All adults will be active participants in the activities with the children.***
- Campers are expected to be good listeners, respectful to our program presenters, listen carefully and follow directions.
- There are live animals on site and in aquaria, so please do not tap or bang on the aquariums or exhibits in order to avoid stressing the animals.
- Campers should practice classroom behaviors including keeping their hands to themselves, not talking out of turn, and watching for attention clues.
- To minimize distractions for campers, ***please remind all chaperones and teachers to switch cell phones to silent.***

ADDRESS AND DIRECTIONS

Address: 805 U.S. Highway 1 Jupiter, FL 33477

Directions:

- I-95: Exit 87A (Jupiter Exit) East Indiantown Road (Turnpike: Exit 116 Indiantown Road)
- Indiantown Road: Travel EAST until you reach U.S. Highway 1
- Turn Left (NORTH) onto U.S. Highway 1
- Travel NORTH through one stoplight, turn right (EAST) at the flashing light into Burt Reynolds Park.
- The River Center is the light blue building located by the fire station.



WHAT TO BRING

Certain portions of your program may take place outdoors. Please have your campers dressed appropriately for Florida weather.

- Closed toe shoes
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Refillable water bottle
- **Face coverings are required for every individual while on River Center property**

BACKGROUND

Inspired by the popular children's book *Going on a Bear Hunt*, campers explore outside as a group visiting different habitats around the River Center and Burt Reynolds Park. They will follow and find clues leading them to live crabs.

EXPLORE

VISIT TO THE RIVER CENTER

1. Welcome, introduction to the River Center, overview of today's field trip, and safety/rules talk
2. Divide the campers into 2 groups to rotate through 3 different activities
 - a. Lovin' the Loxahatchee River Tour – focusing on fish species, anatomy, adaptations, and habitats
 - b. Goin' on a Crab Hunt Activity
 - c. Water resources discussion – Where our water comes from, how we use water, where it goes once it is down the drain, water conservation
3. Touch Tank Demonstration

EXPERIENCE

GOIN' ON A CRAB HUNT

Campers have fun singing along while walking through the park and learning about some of the plants and wildlife as they journey to find their big crabs! Once they are at the water's edge, campers can try to capture the small fiddler crabs and mangrove crabs that live there.

CONNECT

POST VISIT ACTIVITY - SELECT AN ACTIVITY

HABITATS

- Do some research on Florida coral reefs, limestone rock reefs, seagrass, and mangrove habitats. Once the students have completed their research have them choose a habitat and create a piece of art, slide show, puppet show, movie, poem, or other art of their choice to represent their chosen habitat.
- Once the habitats are complete have the students explain why they chose that habitat.
- Choose an animal that they saw at the River Center. They can use Playdough, Legos, construction paper, or other design materials to create that animal.
- Give them a time limit and have them share their art.

SENSES

- Before you begin, discuss with your students that they will use their senses to perceive the environment and become aware that the way humans perceive the environment differs from the way other organisms perceive it.
- Review the five senses with your students. Ask students to give examples of how the information we perceive using our senses helps us survive in the world (smelling smoke warns us of fire, hearing thunder warns us of lightning, etc.)
- Select an area in the house, yard, or park and ask them to use their senses to make as many observations as they can about the site. Allow 2-3 minutes of silence to complete this observation activity. They should share their observations with others in the group.

REFLECTION

- Choose an animal that you have seen in the River Center to be your “organism.”
- What would it be like to be your “organism”?
- How does it move, find food and water, avoid danger, etc.?
- Encourage students to get down in their roles...act out their role and view the environment from the perspective of their organism.
- Ask individual students to describe what the environment was like from their organism’s perspective and have other students try to guess what their organism was.
- Conduct a group discussion comparing and contrasting the perspectives different organisms can have in the same environment. Be sure to stress the fact that different people (or organisms) might have different perceptions of an environment based on their own observations, but there is no right and wrong.

RIVER CENTER EXHIBITS

Connecting the tour and the activity



WILD AND SCENIC

The Loxahatchee River is a unique and important habitat to our area! It was the first, out of two, rivers in the state of Florida to be designated as Wild & Scenic because of its natural importance; that means no human can alter the natural area, it is designated for wildlife. The water in the river is freshwater, and it flows in one direction- down the river towards the coast! There are many creatures that call this river home including the American Alligator, various turtle species, fish, River Otters, frogs, and birds to name a few- plus the saltwater pioneers that travel into freshwater such as Manatees, Crabs, and certain fish! Humans live around the river as well; there are loads of houses built right alongside forks of the river that are not designated as Wild & Scenic. This can pose threats to the river and its wildlife- Lawn chemicals can runoff into the river during rainstorms, heavy winds can blow trash into the river, wastewater can seep from homes into the river and with more boating activity gasoline and oil can leak into the river. All these pollutants have negative impacts on wildlife including deformed shell production in species like crabs. The Loxahatchee River District was created to minimize these negative impacts by recycling wastewater and conducting water quality research on the river. At the River Center we educate and encourage healthy interactions between people and nature to promote alternative solutions to the various pollution problems.



TOUCH TANK & SEAGRASS

Crabs live on the sea floor, where they find their food! They eat seagrasses, algae, detritus, and meat of other organisms. Sandy sea bottoms are necessary for proper seagrass growth, and without seagrass growth there would be no food for the crabs- not to mention they also use seagrasses and sandy bottoms to hide from predators. Crabs, like all creatures, are dependent on healthy habitats for survival. For that reason, we want to protect seagrass habitats by not polluting waterways and not stepping on seagrass beds while playing at the beach.

LOXAHATCHEE RIVER DISTRICT

FOCUS AREA CONNECTIONS



STORMWATER

As stormwater enters the River system it brings other potentially harmful contaminants to the crab's habitat. Stormwater can contain chemical pollutants, solid pollution, and bacteria which will disrupt the balance of water quality that crabs depend on. Stormwater in the form of runoff will also erode beaches and shorelines where crabs burrow and live, further limiting their chance for survival. By responsibly managing stormwater the LRD limits this risk to crabs and other marine life.



SOLID WASTE

Any solid wastes in the ocean can be eaten by wildlife causing health issues and potential fatalities. Solid wastes can also block aquatic plants, such as mangrove propagules and seagrasses, from growing which further affects aquatic habitats. The LRD limits the amount of solid waste entering aquatic ecosystem by removing solid pollutants through filtering and recycling wastewater and assisting in stormwater management before it re-enters the ecosystem.



WASTEWATER

The LRD not only recycles and treats wastewater but conducts water research for the betterment of the local environment and community. By recycling wastewater, the surrounding ecosystems are cleaner and healthier. The LRD also works towards preventing future water issues to limit the amount of water being removed from our aquifers and education to the public about responsible water usage.

POST FIELD TRIP LESSON

Thank you for participating in a field trip at the River Center. We hope your campers enjoyed their experience learning about the Loxahatchee River ecosystems as well as the different hands-on activities and animal encounters.

We are always looking for feedback and ways to improve our programs at the River Center. Please take a couple of minutes to complete the River Center's field trip survey. We would really appreciate it!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RCcamp>

Attended a Virtual Field Trip? Use this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/rcvirtual>

Please refer to the "Connect" section as a post-lesson activity. This is for you to utilize back at camp or to send home with campers as a continuation of your experience at the River Center. They are an educational, fun, and creative way to gain more knowledge.

We appreciate your support and interest in the River Center and our programs. Please contact us with any questions or concerns. We look forward to seeing you and your campers at the River Center in the future!

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