

Berrien Springs Partnership Syllabus – Spring 2026

CLASS TITLE: GVNCP – Michigan Nature

GRADE OR AGE LEVELS: ages 5 to 18

FORMAT: in-person

START DATE: January 20, 2026 **END DATE:** May 12, 2026

WEEKS TOTAL: 8 weeks **DAY/TIME:** 2 PM to 4 PM (2 hours per day)

DAY OF WEEK: Tuesdays, (note: no classes in March)

Dates: Jan 20, Jan 27, Feb 3, April 14, April 21, April 28, May 5, and May 12

HOURS (REQUIRED): 16 hours total (16 total lessons)

LOCATION/ADDRESS: DIRECTIONS TO LOCATION :

Dewey Cannon Park

Behind 14 Maple Street, Three Oaks, MI 49128

And at Watkins Park

599 W Locust Street, Three Oaks, MI 49128

And at Harbert Community Park

13411 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, MI 49115

MAIN INSTRUCTOR: Zoe Elrick

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Phone: 269-612-8172

Email: galienvalley@gmail.com

Website: www.z-hub.org/galienvalleynpc.html

Please email the instructor to let her know that you signed up for her class.

INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS: Zoe Elrick

Zoe Elrick has a background in education, culture, science, art, history, as well as landscape architecture and ecology. In 2011, she started the Galien Valley Nature and Culture Program (GV-NCP), in Three Oaks, Michigan. Also, she is a registered landscape architect in Michigan and has worked for Pizzo and Associates, an ecological restoration firm of prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. Her landscape architecture degree is from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Plus, she has taken nature classes in New Jersey at the Tracker School of nature awareness, wilderness living, and wilderness survival.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Class is all outdoors. Dress for weather. Class will not be indoors.

This class is both informative and fun! Come enjoy the Three Oaks area, explore its parks, native plants, and wildlife, and play nature games. Learn about nature through a variety of hands-on nature-exploration skills, nature journaling, games, mapping, and nature crafts. Bring the family and a blanket, it's a family picnic style class.

One or two parents (or adult relatives) must attend class with student(s) ages 10 and younger, per family. One or two parents (or adult relatives) may attend class with student(s) ages 11 and older, per family. A parent is to help guide his / her kid(s) along nature trails to do nature activities. Also, a parent may be needed to help his / her kid(s) make nature crafts or play nature games. Unaccompanied students ages 11 and up may be paired up with each other to help each other.

Michigan Nature Topics include: Michigan nature, Native Plants, Native Animals, Woods and Water; Nature Journal; Deep-Sensing Nature; Tracking and Awareness; Mapping; and Nature Crafts. During each class, students will be outdoors, playing nature games and studying nature.

SYLLABUS/OUTLINE: WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2 lessons per week (within 2 hours)

Week 1 - Tuesday – Jan 20 – Intro, and Michigan Nature (at Dewey Cannon Park)

Week 2 - Tuesday – Jan 27 – Trees, and Squirrels (at Watkins Park)

Week 3 - Tuesday – Feb 3 – Woody Shrubs, and Birds (at Harbert Community Park)

Week 4 - Tuesday – April 14 – Marsh, and Wetlands (at Watkins Park)

Week 5 - Tuesday – April 21 – Water, and Ponds (at Harbert Community Park)

Week 6 - Tuesday – April 28 – Native Plants, and Trees (at Harbert Community Park)

Week 7 - Tuesday – May 5 – Woods, and Wildlife (at Watkins Park)

Week 8 - Tuesday – May 12 – Review, and Organize Journal (at Dewey Cannon Park)

COURSE MATERIALS:

Teacher provides some info sheets.

(Required) Required to bring to class (provided by student/family):

Dress for outdoor weather.

Water Bottle, 3-ring binder, paper, pencil.

Optional Materials (provided by student/family) Suggested optional stuff to bring: color pencils, pens, crayons, hat, **snacks**, camera.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: (websites):

www.z-hub.org/galienvalleyncp.html

www.z-hub.org/nature.html

<https://www.facebook.com/GalienValleyNCP/>

<https://zoemonthlyblog.blogspot.com/>

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND APPROXIMATE TARGET DATES:

Each day of class, a student will draw / sketch and write in his Nature Journal.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT - what will be used to evaluate student progress and/or end of semester pass/fail status? All classes abide by the following:

1. Student agrees to attend at least 80% of class sessions/lessons offered. Attendance is kept online and tracked by Partnership staff. Failure to meet 80% or be on track to meet 80% may result in program discontinuation.
2. The Partnership Student Assessment or Performance Form is filled out by the teacher and turned into Partnership staff. The link to this form is found on the web page for this class. Failing marks for lack of participation, behavior issues, etc., may result in program discontinuation.

Student Assessment: Students to: 1. Be prepared / bring materials. 2. Listen to teacher. 3. Ask questions, if don't understand. 4. Be on time to class. 5. Do class activities. 6. Do activities to the best of ability of age. 7. Respects classmates. 8. Be open to suggestions. 9. Stay on task of class activities. 10. Brings required materials (see list below).

CLASS POLICIES: ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR, WEATHER, ETC.

Attendance: Students need to attend 80% of class hours.

Parents Needed to be in Class. Bring the family and a blanket, it's a family picnic style class. One or two parents (or adult relatives) must attend class with student(s) under age 11, per family. The parents / adult relatives are to help guide their kid(s) with nature activities and crafts.

Behavior: Students are expected to be on time, bring required materials (see list below), listen to teacher, follow directions, participate in class activities, and respect classmates.

Weather: Class will be postponed until next week, if there is severe weather.

(Bring) Bring Required Materials:

Dress for outdoor weather.

Water Bottle, 3-ring binder, paper, pencil.

Students should come to class with a story of the week, briefly talk about something the student saw or experienced outdoors, in nature or a backyard.