

# ***Project Bluestem***

The Project Bluestem lessons were developed by staff members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Iowa. They have generously allowed the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to include these prairie lessons in the *Illinois Prairies* resources trunk. Below you will find a short summary and correlation for the activities that relate directly to this trunk's theme. The complete lessons are included on a CD-ROM within the trunk.

## **Introduction**

### ***About Oak Savannas***

Students will learn about oak savannas.

### ***About Tallgrass Prairie***

Students will learn about the tallgrass prairie.

## **Elementary School Activities**

### ***As the Wheel Turns***

Students will accurately measure the distance they walk while on a trip through the prairie.

Grades: 3-5

Common Core Standards: mathematics 3.OA.1, 3.OA.8, 4.OA.2, 4.MD.2, 5.NBT.5, 5.NF.6

### ***Beaks-n-Bugs***

Students will explore how predators use their vision to find prey and describe the ways that animals use camouflage to survive.

Grade: 3

Next Generation Science Standards: science 3-LS4-2, 3-LS4-3

### ***Birds Shmirds***

Students will: understand similarities and differences between birds and mammals, amphibians or reptiles; understand that there are exceptions to many rules in nature; learn the song of a common bird; and tell what a bird eats based on the type of beak it has.

Grade: 4

Next Generation Science Standards: science 4-LS1-1

### ***Come and Live in the Beautiful Prairie***

Students will: experience the history of the prairie from the point of view of a pioneer; gain insight into the mystique and power of the prairie; enhance their literature and art skills; and develop problem-solving skills as they relate to prairie and to survival.

Grades: 4-5

Illinois Social Science Standards: SS.G.2.4., SS.G.1.5., SS.G.2.5., SS.G.3.5

***Create an Animal***

Students will become aware of the adaptations animals possess to survive in the prairie environment.

Grade: 4

Next Generation Science Standards: science 4-LS1-1

***Give Me a Home Where the Buffalo Roam and The Traditional Uses of the Buffalo***

Students will learn about the life history of the American bison and how the Plains Indians used the bison in everyday life.

Grades: 3-4

Next Generation Science Standards: science 3-LS2-1, 4-LS1-1

***Plants Have a Lot of Gall. . .***

Students will count goldenrod galls in a small area and make predictions about a larger area.

Grades: 3-5

Common Core Standards: mathematics 3.OA.1, 3.OA.8, 4.OA.2, 4.MD.2, 5.NBT.5, 5.NF.6

***Prairie Plants Change***

Students will: observe seasonal changes of prairie plants on a particular site; write a description of the prairie during each season; make predictions as to the changes of prairie plants during each season; be able to sequence the seasons according to their recorded observations; and draw conclusions as to the effect of the different seasons on prairie plants.

Grade: 2

Next Generation Science Standards: science 2-LS4-1

***Prairie Propaganda***

Students will increase their awareness level of the advertising that sells products and understand how propaganda is used.

Grades: 3-4

Common Core Standards: English language arts writing standards 3

***Prairie Smoke***

Students will: become aware of the importance of myths and legends in American Indian culture; observe characteristics of native prairie plants; and use facts and observations of plants to create stories.

Grades: 3-5

Common Core Standards: English language arts writing standards 3

Illinois Social Science Standards: SS.G.2.3., SS.G.2.4., SS.G.1.5

***Seed Olympics***

Students will build a device that is capable of launching a seed through the air.

Grade: 2

Next Generation Science Standards: science 2-LS2-2, engineering design K-2-ETS1-2, K-2-ETS1-3

## **Middle School Activities**

### ***Buffalo Hoops***

Students will understand what happened to the vast bison herds that once roamed the Great Plains.

Grades: middle school

Illinois Social Science Standards: SS.G.2.6-8.LC., SS.G.3.6-8.LC.

### ***Buffalo Hunt!***

Students will: identify the four components of habitat; describe the importance of good habitat; define some of the "limiting factors" animals face; understand why predators are important in a population; and understand that some fluctuation in animal populations is a normal part of nature.

Grades: middle school

Next Generation Science Standards: science MS-LS2-1

### ***Come and Live in the Beautiful Prairie***

Students will: experience the history of the prairie from the point of view of a pioneer; gain insight into the mystique and power of the prairie; enhance their literature and art skills; and develop problem-solving skills as they relate to prairie and to survival.

Grades: middle school

Illinois Social Science Standards: SS.G.2.6-8.LC., SS.G.2.6-8.MdC., SS.G.3.6-8.LC.

## **Supplemental Information**

### ***Appendix A: Perils of Pioneering – Prairie Fires and Plagues***

These first-hand accounts from settlers tell of the hardships of living on the prairie.

### ***Appendix B: Readings***

Students will listen to selected readings about Native American and pioneer prairie experiences.

### ***The Camel of the Prairie (prairie\_schooner file)***

Students will become familiar with covered wagons.