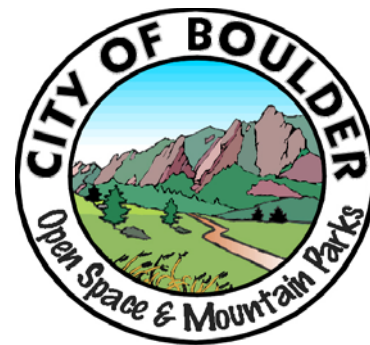


Sample Program - Wildlife and Outdoor Safety



Theme: OSPM is a special place set aside for wild animals to live and for people to enjoy, but we need to know how to keep each other safe.

Although your primary goal is to teach how to visit OSMP safely, it's also very important to encourage a sense of amazement and wonder about the value of OSMP as wildlife habitat for an amazing collection of species. You should scatter information about specific cool animals throughout the stops listed below, even if they are not species that pose a hazard).

This is a very content-rich outline. You will have to choose from it, since there is more material here than can be presented in a typical program.

Universal themes inherent in program:
life, death, connection, fear, safety, survival

Program content:

You won't have time to cover all of this, so pick the most pertinent topics and roll with those.

A. What animals live here, and how do they do it?

OSMP being home to many different kinds of wildlife. State that the purpose of these lands is to preserve a wild home for the local plants and animals, and to provide an opportunity for people to recreate in such a way that protects the place and the animals.

Have the children guess at the animals they think live here, then play "Who am I?" Select your "Who am I?" characters according to the animals you plan on talking about during the program. Include at minimum, the animals that pose safety risks: bear, mountain lion, bee, rattlesnake, dog (to highlight the need for visitors to have voice and sight control or a leashed dog, in order to protect the wildlife and the dog). Then include other animals you know well or that have interesting life histories.

B. Animal encounters

▪ Lion, Bear Props: prints and pelts

- Avoid encounters
 - make noise
 - stay in group
 - if you see one, stay far away
 - you'll know you're bothering the bear or lion if it is watching you rather than eating, sleeping etc, and you're too close
 - be aware of sign (tracks, scat), habitat
- What to do if you see bear, lion
 - Get close to others in group, make yourself look big

- Bear or lion: back off slowly, talk calmly to it, look sideways out of corner of eyes at it (staring directly is an aggressive threat) **never run**.
- For bear - don't be threatening. (Mother bear will always feel threatened if you are close to cubs.) Convince bear you are not a threat, but **don't run**. Fight back if it attacks.
- For lion, look big – hold coat out, get on parent's shoulders, back off slowly, don't go near its food. If it comes at you, yell, throw rocks, fight back if it attacks. **Never run**.
- Why not run? They will chase (its instinct), you can't outrun them, and you're acting like prey if you do run.

▪ **Rattlesnake**

Props: rattlesnake puppet and pics of rattlesnake and bull snake

- They want to avoid you, keep your distance, watch where you put hands and feet
- Buzzing, Rattling, Hissing noise – warning. Move away if you hear it. Striking distance is ½ body length – maybe 3 feet
- If bitten – keep person calm, and seated, bring help to them ASAP. Don't do anything to treat the bite except keep the person still and calm.
- About 7,000 venomous snake bites in US & Canada /year, only 15-20 deaths.
- Most of those snakebites are due to people handling or messing with the snake instead of leaving it alone.
- At least 1 in 5 bites is “dry” (no venom)
- Snakes only bite if threatened. They do not “want” to bite you.
- Prairie Rattler is only poisonous snake in Boulder County

▪ **Bee**

Prop: bee puppet

- An allergic reaction to bee sting *much more serious than allergy to pollen and pets*, causes difficulty breathing, dizziness, fainting. People can die from it.
- Persons who know they are allergic may carry medication – get them to use it and get them to medical help immediately.
- If you know you are allergic, carry your bee sting kit and tell others with you about it.
- As many as 10% of people may be allergic to bee sting
- **KEY BEHAVIOR, DON'T SWAT OR FLAIL AT INSECTS, MAKES THEM ANGRY AND AGGRESSIVE.** Don't be afraid of bees and wasps, they won't sting unless you threaten them or their nest.

▪ **Tick** (less critical for younger kids)

- Can carry Tick Fever in this area – makes you very sick for a long time
- Check for ticks after you are out in woods or fields. Spring & early summer are worst times
- Avoid bites by wearing light colored clothing (can see them), long pants and sleeves with tight cuffs or tuck loose pant legs into socks (keep them away from skin)

- **How to keep wild animals safe from people**
 - Keep your distance – **Prop: Binoculars**, can enjoy seeing animals do what they usually do, instead of seeing them react to you
 - Stay out of nest areas, feeding areas, closed areas – don't disturb the animals
Prop: closure sign or eagle egg
 - Don't feed them. Our food not good for them **Prop: Snack – pass around trail mix or cookies**. They get dependant – then they go hungry or become a nuisance and are destroyed, and can carry diseases contractible by humans at close range.
 - Pick up your trash – **Props: bear poop with foil or strangled duck, and extra trash bag (to pick up trash you find as well as your own)**

- **Dog** - keep dog, wild animals and people safe
 - Voice & sight control – don't let dogs chase animals – unsafe for dogs and wild animals **Prop: Leash and poop bag**
 - Poop piles unsightly, yucky, smells bad
 - Takes long time to biodegrade; extra nitrogen may change soil chemistry - native plants don't thrive & non-native invasive plants can take over
 -

C. Do we need to take care of the plants? Can animals survive without the plants?

- **“Ouch” plant picture**
 - a. stay on trail
 - b. be conscious where you walk and where you sit
- **Flowers**
 - Enjoy them in their natural environment– don't pick
 - What would happen if everyone picked them?
 - OSMP gets almost 5 million visits a year – there'd be none left for others to enjoy
 - Flowers make seeds – they wouldn't reseed, no more flowers
 - Flowers are food and shelter for many animals and insects
 - Its against OSMP regulations to pick flowers or to remove anything from the park
- **Poison Ivy**
 - If you touch, wash with soap and warm water ASAP. Wash clothing, dog, etc.
 - Leaves of 3, let it be. Leaves of new growth often shiny, but older leaves may not be shiny.
 - Can be plant or shrub – typically a few inches tall to 3 feet tall.
 - Likes moisture and sun – often in or by moist ravines where it gets sun
- **Berries** – same as above for flowers
 - Also, others depend on them for food – bears, birds, raccoons, coyotes, fox, and more
- **Poison hemlock** (looks like wild celery, parsley, parsnips with distinct purple spots on the stem) it is deadly poisonous.

- **Don't eat anything** growing wild unless you are with an expert who knows exactly what it is –there are poisonous mushrooms, berries, plants
- Don't eat anything growing wild in OSMP – it's against park regulations and its food for other animals

D. Getting Lost

- **Hiker (Have adult secretly hide with one of the children right before this topic. Then after you start talking, ask if everyone is there. Let kids discover someone is missing, have them describe person as though to a rescuer)**
 - Let someone know where you are planning to go and when you plan to return
 - Stay with your group, stay on trail
 - Use buddy system when with a larger group.
 - Pay attention to which way you turn at trail intersections
 - If lost:
 - **stay put**
 - stay on or next to trail (you're easier to find)
 - hug a tree or stay out in open where you can be seen
 - don't be afraid to talk to strangers
 - No one will be angry with you for getting lost! (kids have hidden from searchers because they fear consequences)
 - If someone from group is lost, before looking for them, develop plan with group to make sure no one else becomes lost while searching.
- **Whistle Prop: Whistle**
 - A whistle is much louder and takes much less energy than yelling – always carry one, use it if lost (**Have kids practice yelling “Here I am. Over Here” for a minute – ask if they could do it for an hour**)
- **Map, compass, GPS:**
 - Are useless unless you know how to use them
 - Know where you start out, keep track on map as you go along
 - Turn around sometimes as you are hiking so you see what it looks like from other direction
 - Notice landmarks, terrain. Notice how much time you've walked to judge distance
 - Realize, there are more trails on the ground than on the maps

E. Weather:

- **Lightning**
 - If thunder and lightning in area, get in safe place. Does not have to be raining for lightning to strike.
 - If hair standing up, lightning strike near you is likely to happen
 - Get down to lower ground if high on mountain, you don't want to be highest thing around.
 - **get into large stand of even sized trees**, don't stand under a lone tree or the highest tree

- get out of open areas since you are the tallest thing around in the open
- abandon any metal objects which can attract lightning to you
- Safest in car or building (not safe in caves around here, they're too shallow)
- If you can't get to safe place – spread out, squat down with hands over ears. Don't lie down, don't put hands on ground (**Have group practice squatting like this**) **Separate individuals in the group, at 40 – 50 feet between people, since lightning travels through the ground when it strikes.**
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- **Hypothermia (Rain and snow storms)**
 - Serious drop in body core temperature
 - Prevent by protecting from rain and wind and cold with wind shell or rain coat, especially important here where we typically get sudden, surprise afternoon thunder showers (if you're wet and its windy, you can get hypothermia even if not freezing temp – not uncommon with temp in 40's, even possible in 50's)
 - Signs – uncontrollable shivering, teeth chattering, confusion, clumsiness, drowsiness, irritability, heart and breathing slow down. “Stumbling, Fumbling, Mumbling and Grumbling.”
 - Quick dry clothing (not cotton, heavy jeans worst) keeps you warmer. Wet clothes (especially with wind) can pull heat out of your body.
 - Don't lie down and go to sleep if hypothermic
 - Get person to medical assistance ASAP
- **Wind**
 - Wind chill makes the effective temperature much colder – get protection from wind
- **Frostbite**
 - Nose, ears, fingers, toes most vulnerable– protect them from wind
 - If hands and feet cold, put on warm hat & more layers on chest (vest, jacket) because: Can lose 20% of body heat out your head
 - If body core is cold, body will reduce circulation to extremities to retain heat in core
 - Keep wiggling fingers and toes for good circulation in extremities

F. Be Prepared for your outdoor activity:

- **Water Bottle**
 - You can go a couple weeks without food, only +-3 days without water (depending on temp and exertion)
 - Drink when thirsty - don't over conserve water – (hikers in the Grand Canyon have died of dehydration with water in their bottles –saving it for later)
 - Don't drink water directly from streams or lakes – giardia and other microorganisms
 - Dehydration – more common at higher elevations, breathing and sweating lose moisture

- Symptoms of dehydration – head ache, dizziness, fatigue, confusion, weakness, clumsy
- **Extra clothes, layers, rain gear, hat, gloves**
 - Prevent hypothermia
- **Sunscreen, sunglasses, lip balm with sunscreen**
 - **Prop: sunscreen, pass around for those who need**
 - prevent sunburn, skin cancer, eye damage
 - even more important if snow on ground and sunny (reflects more light)
 - higher elevation, more intense sun rays
- **Food**
 - Keeps your energy up, helps you stay warm
 - Less important than all the above (can survive weeks without food)
- **Whistle** (can talk about here or later in getting lost section)
- Appropriate **Foot ware**
- **First Aid Kit DO NOT WASTE MONEY ON A SNAKEBITE KIT**
- First Aid Training

Summary: tell group they may now know more than their parents. Can ask kids to share one new thing they learned, or what they want to tell their family about the day, or what they think was most important, or what they would do differently now.

OR

Leave No Trace: Describe LNT concept – ask kids what we covered today that was part of LNT.

Conclusion: If you are prepared and aware and understand the environment, you can enjoy and have fun outdoors - it can be a very safe environment - maybe safer than activities you regularly do like crossing the street or playing softball. Now you know how to help keep the wild animals and plants safe too.