

Saint John's Outdoor University Field Trip Overview

Winter Survival Class

Objective: Students will demonstrate through an experiment the ways to keep an animal warm outside in the winter. Students will also explore outdoors for signs that animals are tolerating the winter by staying active. Human winter survival will also be discussed, including ways humans have copied nature in order to survive.

Field Activities:

Jar Animals: Students will be challenged to keep their 'jar animal' warm while outside during class using various forms of insulation and shelter. Discussion of appropriate forms of insulation for humans will follow.

Biomimicry Match: Students will discuss the ways humans have learned from animals to survive the winter and how to stay safe when outside during cold weather.

Animal Detectives: Students will go through a guided exploration of the forest, searching for the 'clues' animals leave behind that give us an idea how they survive the winter. Signs looked for include tracks, trails, scat (droppings), body parts, homes, shelter, rubbings, and food sources.

Snow Shelters: Students will explore types of shelters made from snow, for both humans and animals. Depending on weather conditions, they may also help construct a 'quin-zhee' (domed snow shelter) of their own!

Key points covered in each class:

- Biomimicry is the process of copying nature for answers to human problems.
- Humans have learned to survive the winter by studying how animals survive the winter.
- Three main ways animals survive the winter: migration, toleration, hibernation
- Examples of common signs of animals in the winter: tracks, trails, scat, body parts, homes, shelter, rubbings, and food sources
- How to explore appropriately and safely in nature during the winter

Animals active during the winter we may encounter/talk about:

- White-tailed deer
- Squirrels: red, gray, fox
- Rabbits
- Birds such as chickadees, woodpeckers, crows, sparrows,
- Owls
- Coyote
- Fox
- Beaver
- Humans!