Thank you for your interest in Starved Rock State Park. The following Starved Rock Sapling seasonal program is to help engage children and families in nature; at home, in their neighborhood, or at Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks.

Each packet will be posted to the Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Park Facebook page every October, January, April, and July. Packets can also be downloaded from the IDNR website at www2.illinois.gov/dnr/parks/pages/StarvedRock.aspx under the Interpretive tab.

Packets will include the following:

**DISCOVER:**
fun facts and information about the natural world.

**CONNECT:**
nature activities, storybook suggestions, games, and crafts.

**EXPLORE:**
ideas for getting outdoors and exploring the natural world in your backyard, neighborhood, or community parks.

Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks
www2.illinois.gov/dnr

By Lisa Sons, Natural Resource Coordinator
Insect Anatomy

Insects have 3 main body parts: head, thorax (back), and abdomen (stomach). Insects have 6 legs, antennae, mouth parts for chewing or drinking, compound eyes, and some have stingers!

Try this fun song with motions at home with family and friends!

Grab a pair of kaleidoscope glasses at your local store and view the world through the compound eyes of an insect!

Head, Thorax, Abdomen

(To the tune of “Head, Shoulder, Knees & Toes”)

Head, tho-rax, ab-do-men

Head, tho-rax, ab-do-men, ab-do-men

Head, tho-rax, ab-do-men, ab-do-men

Head, tho-rax, ab-do-men, ab-do-men

Head, tho-rax, ab-do-men, ab-do-men

Head, tho-rax, ab-do-men, ab-do-men

As you sing, point to the following body parts:

Head, thorax (point to chest), abdomen

Legs, wings (point over shoulders), antennae

Head, then sweeping motion down big eyes (hold hands as if looking to small size), small size (hold out thumb and point small size), feelers (wiggle pointer fingers)
Insect Behavior

We use our noses to smell, but what do insects use? Do they even have noses?

Insects like the Ant use their antennae to smell! That’s right those funny looking things growing off the top of their heads help them pick up smells left by other ants on the ground and even food.

Colonies are large social groups of ants. Ant hills are the above ground openings to the many chambers and passageways of the larger colony below ground.

Head outside and observe ants in action!

Materials:
- Magnifying lense
- Paper plate divided into four sections with a marker.
- Ant food: fruit, bread, cheese, or grass.

Observations:
1. Which food do you think the ants will like the most? Which do you think they will like the least?
2. Head outside in search of ants! Look along sidewalk cracks, trees, or for ant hills above ground.
3. Place the plate of food next to the ants that you have found.
4. Wait and observe. Watch how the ants move and behave.
5. Did their behavior or movement change once they found the food? How?
6. Count how many ants came to each type of food on your plate.
7. Which type of food had the most ants? Was your original guess correct?
What is Metamorphosis?

Insects have 4 different stages of growth and the entire cycle from egg to adult insect is called **Metamorphosis**.

- **1.** Curl up like an egg.
- **2.** Crawl like a caterpillar.
- **3.** Be as still as a chrysalis.
- **4.** Spread your wings like a butterfly.

**Butterfly Life Cycle**

- **Eggs**
- **Caterpillar (larva)**
- **Chrysalis (pupa)**
- **Butterfly**
**Butterfly Snack Bags**

**Materials Needed:**
- Spring-type clothespin
- Paint or paint markers
- Wiggle Eyes
- Short Chenille Stick
- Glue or glue dots
- Sandwich bag

**Snack:**
- Trail Mix
- Crackers
- Granola
- Grapes
- Pretzels
- Cereal

**Snack Options:**
- Trail Mix
- Grapes
- Crackers
- Pretzels
- Granola
- Cereal

**What to do:**
1. Paint the Clothespin.
2. Glue on wiggle eyes to make the butterflies body.
3. Fold a short Chenille stick in half to make the antennae.
4. Glue to the antennae to the clothespin.
5. Fill the sandwich bag halfway with snacks.
6. Twist the bag in the Middle.
7. Clip the clothespin in the middle.

**Nature Reads!**

- *Evelyn the Adventurous Entomologist*, by Christine Evans
- *The Life and Times of the Ant*, by Charles Micucci

**Websites for Young Naturalists!**

- https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/topic/insects
- https://www.bugfacts.net/
- https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/education/Pages/EduInsectsSpiders.aspx
EXPLORE

NATURE HIKE

- Explore your backyard, neighborhood, community parks, or Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks with a fun scavenger hunt this fall. Don’t forget to “LEAVE NO TRACE” by leaving only footprints and taking only memories when visiting a park.
EXPLORE YOUR STATE PARKS!

Visit [www2.illinois.gov/dnr](http://www2.illinois.gov/dnr) to view state parks by region under the Parks and Recreation tab. What state parks are close to your home? Help your family plan a visit by exploring the parks webpage. What does your local state park have to offer; hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping, fishing, skiing, or boating? Read over the trail maps, trail suggestions, rules and regulations (stay on marked trails), and head out to explore. Here are some recommended trails for families at Starved Rock State Park. Happy Hikers=Happy Trails!

**St. Louis Canyon**

- Moderate trail
- 3 mile roundtrip from the lodge or visitor center
- Several long staircase of 50 steps in most cases
- Sites to see: Aurora Overhang, Canyon, and St. Louis Canyon
- Guided trail options: St. Louis parking lot off of Route 178 at the St. Louis parking lot just south of the park’s west entrance and hike into St. Louis Canyon.

Great trek for families with little ones if you park off of route 178 at the St. Louis parking lot just south of the park’s west entrance and hike into St. Louis Canyon.

**Starved Rock and French Canyon**

- Easy to moderate trail
- 4 miles roundtrip from the lodge or visitor center
- Large staircase of 400 steps up to the Starved Rock and French Canyon
- Stairs and steps from French Canyon to lodge parking lot
- Great view and easy hike to the canyon entrance.

The most convenient hike at the park starting from the main parking lot by the river and visitor center leading to the park’s namesake Starved Rock and French Canyon. French Canyon is not recommended for children under age 5 or anyone in winter when the ground is snow and ice covered.

**Illinois, Ottawa, and Kaskaskia Canyons**

- Easy to moderate trail
- 3 mile roundtrip from the Lodge to the canyons
- Sites to see: Illinois Canyon, Ottawa Canyon, and Kaskaskia Canyon
- Natural trails of rock, sand, dirt, and tree roots
- Several creek crossings in spring

The eastern canyons of Illinois, Ottawa, and Kaskaskia are great for families due to their length and proximity to parking lots. Just one mile roundtrip hikes into the canyons. Be aware the trails are not paved and you will have a few small creek crossings in spring and early summer.