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FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
of Cook County, Illinois

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

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Joseph N. Nevius, GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

October 2002

Final Report
Wildlife Preservation Fund Grant #02-042W
Backpack Explorers Program

1. Introduction (materials, methods, results, discussion, summary):

This Wildlife Preservation Fund grant was used to develop a new permanent educational program called **Backpack Explorers**. Five backpacks were equipped with binoculars, hand-held tape recorders, magnifying lenses, hand lenses, animal tracks, leaf specimens, field guides and field cards. The backpack, along with a lesson plan, provides teachers with the equipment, materials and information they need to conduct field studies with their students while visiting the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center.

The Backpack Explorers curriculum is designed for elementary grades and focuses on our region's natural resources and the threats to its biodiversity. The purpose is to help teachers lead engaging activities that teach heir students about our native wildlife and habitats and help build an awareness of the importance of biological diversity. The selection of lesson plans includes: Trees and Leaves, Insects, Mammals, Birds, and Biodiversity. The curriculum is also designed to help teachers meet the Illinois State Goals and Standards for Science (#12).

In addition, this program can be incorporated into the Mighty Acorns curriculum for those students involved in stewardship activities.

This program is made available, free of charge, to all teachers and their students that visit the Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center.

To date the backpacks were used by the following:
Willow Springs School - 3rd graders (60 students)
Clay - 3rd graders (50students)
Minooka - 3rd graders (90 students)
Burr Ridge Park District Pre-school (30students)

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The backpacks were also used during a Teacher Training Workshop for 6th- 8th Grade Science Teachers (15 teachers).

Printed on Recycled Paper

2. ***Enclosed:***
   a. An outline of the *"Trees and Leaves"* lesson plan
   b. Photocopies of receipts
   c. Slides of program

3. ***Expenditures:***

Materials costs:	**$997.95**
Backpacks:	$87.00
Binoculars:	$240.41
Magnifying Glasses:	$37.92
Compact Magnifier:	$5.52
Pocket Magnifier:	$74.10
First Field Guides:	$142.80
Peterson Guides –Tracks:	$72.00
Replitracks:	$60.00
Repliscat:	$35.00
Tape Recorders (hand held)	$149.50
Cassettes Tapes:	$6.99
Insect Models:	$24.75
Early Elementary Story Books	$38.73
Shipping and Handling:	$23.23
In house costs:	**$ 734.85**
Replication of tracks:	
Silicon:	$25.00
Lumber:	$10.00
Lamination of Field Cards:	$150.00
Stationary:	$200.00
Volunteer Hours:	$300.00
Peterson Birding By Ear:	$30.00
Storage Boxes:	$19.85
Total expenditures:	1,732.80

4. ***Reimbursement request:*** $997.00

Submitted by: Cathy Geraghty, Director of Grant Development, 708.771.1097

Tree and Leaves

A. Brief Orientation of Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center and Forest Preserve District

B. Description of day's activities - PLANT LIFE IN THE FOREST PRESERVES
1. Why are we here?
2. What are we going to do?
3. How are we going to do it?
4. When will we do these activities/finish up?

C. Break into two groups (by class)

D. Group A

1. Exploration Nature Walk

A. Forest- Forest Layers
I. Moss/lichen /fungi (hand lens activity)
II. Shrubs and under story
III. Trees - (Get to know a tree activity)

B. Wetland
I. Trees/Shrubs

II. Aquatic plants (net dipping activity)

C. Prairie *** Mighty Acorns Activity

I. Flowers (plant anatomy)
II. Grasses (Illinois History)

D. Plant Life History and Seeds

I. Dispersal
1. Dispersal Game (relay)/ Maple Seed Mix Up
111. Seed I.D.
IV. Seed collection
A. Restoration

Group B

1. Plant Life Investigations

A. Flowers, grasses and trees (plant taxonomy)
B. Food Factories
1. photosynthesis
2. wildlife
3. people

C. Trees - Simple Keys - Walk
1. Coniferous - evergreen
a. single needles
b. bundled
c. branching

2. Deciduous -broad leaf
1. Opposite
2. Alternate
3. Simple
4. Compound
5. Lobed
6. Toothed

3. Leaf Rubbing Activity

D. Tree Identification Activity
1. Key to solve tree mysteries

E. Group B

1. Flowers, grasses and trees (plant taxonomy)

A. Food Factories

1. photosynthesis
2. wildlife
3. People

2. Trees and their leaves

A. Trees - Simple Keys - Walk

1. Coniferous - evergreen

a. single needles
b. bundled
c. branching

2. Deciduous -broad leaf

a. Opposite
b. Alternate
c. Simple
d. Compound
e. Lobed
f. Toothed

B. Leaf Rubbing Activity

C. Tree Mysteries - Tree Identification Activity

F. Break

G. Group Rotation

H. Wrap Up Activity

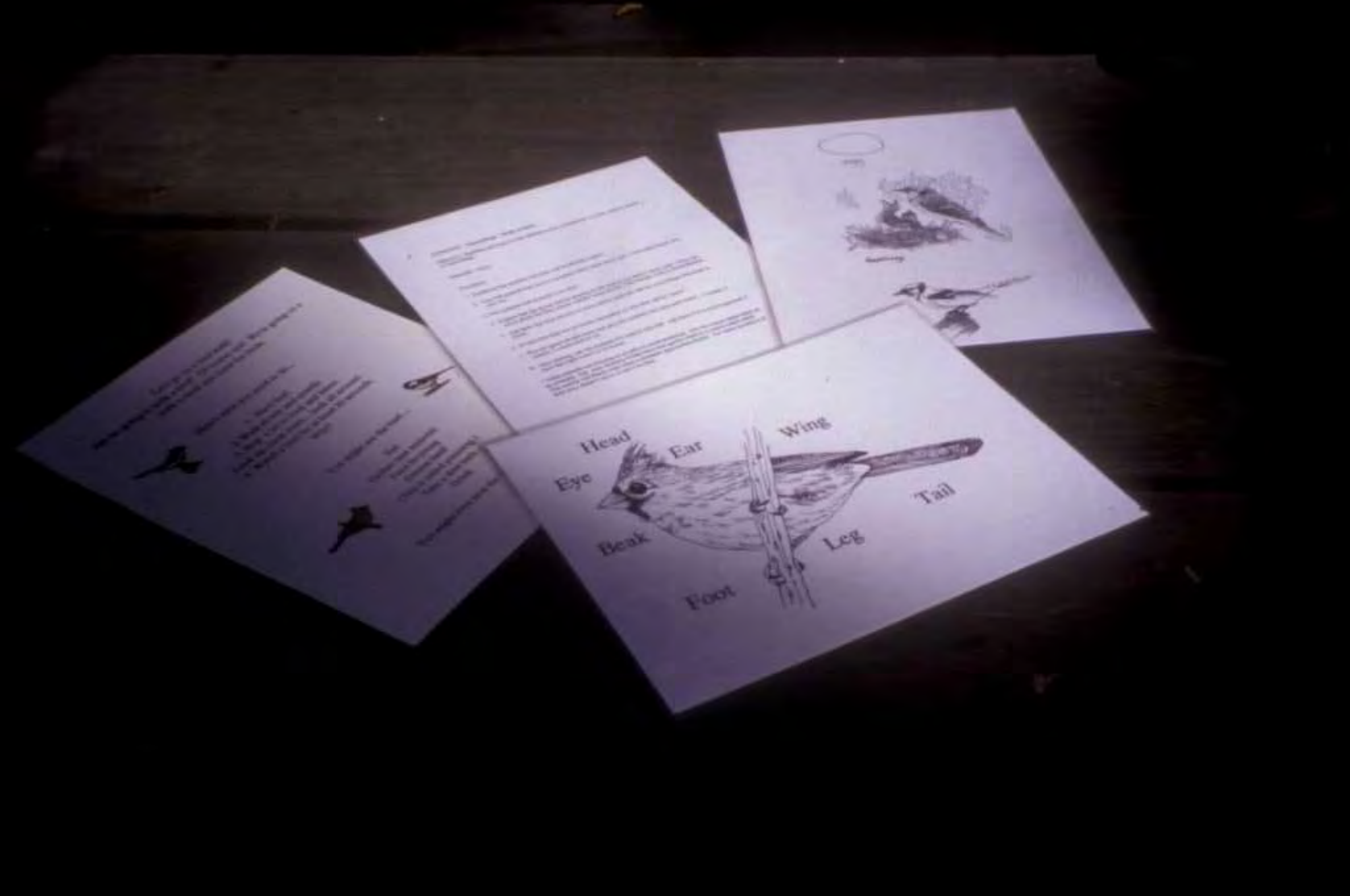
1. Leaf Relay - activity for entire class

Birds

REPLITRACK SAMPLER 294

Animal Tracks
Wildflowers
Reptiles and Amphibians
Mammals
Insects
Trees

Warm Spring Days
Lawn Mower
Hungry Deer
Water
Drought
Poor Soil
Maple Seed
Sunlight
Good Soil
Warm Spring Days


Head
Ear
Wing
Eye
Tail
Beak
Leg
Foot