

Field Experiences

A KEY COMPONENT OF THE TAHOMA SUSTAINABILITY CURRICULUM
BRINGING LEARNING TO LIFE

Field experiences engage students in a way no other learning activity can duplicate. The Tahoma School District has prioritized key field experiences for all students to deepen, extend, and bring to life concepts being studied in the classroom.

To maximize the impact of these experiences we have identified anchor field experience components:

- A virtual field trip previews the field experience and helps establish expectations and learning goals.
- Field journals provide scaffolding and focus observations and questions. The journal supports students in making meaning of the experience and promotes student reflection.
- Interaction with professionals in the field provides multiple stakeholder perspectives and promotes understanding of real world work and careers in a variety of contexts.

Grade 3 – Landsburg Diversion Dam

The construction of the Landsburg Diversion Dam on Cedar River in 1901 created a migration barrier preventing fish passage into previously occupied habitat. At the time of its construction, little attention was given to the effects on aquatic resources. Reestablishing fish passage in Seattle’s Municipal Watershed is viewed as a key component of salmon recovery efforts in the Lake Washington Basin. The construction of the Landsburg fish passage was completed in 2003.

Students:

- Observe how fish navigate the ladders and the engineering design features that help preserve our salmon resources
- Appreciate the amazing reproduction journey salmon take by acting out the salmon cycle



Students make observations

Grade 4 – Shadow Lake Bog

Shadow Lake Bog lies within the Tahoma School District boundaries and is a 5,000 year old glacial remnant. The bog and the surrounding 92 acres under protection provide unique and valuable wetlands and over seven different diverse habitat types in various stages of growth and renewal. Shadow Lake bog is one of the very few preserved, pristine peat bogs remaining in King County. Increasing urban development in South King County has led to increasing local pressure on the infrastructure and environment.

Students:

- View a bog and identify features of its unique ecosystem
- Practice recording scientific observations on the boardwalk tour and at the amphibian pond
- Connect this unique ecosystem with the surrounding area and understand competing stakeholder interests



A boardwalk helps protect this fragile environment

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Grade 7 – Lake Wilderness Arboretum

The Lake Wilderness Arboretum's mission is to preserve, protect, and display Northwest ecosystems as well as cultivated landscapes. The arboretum includes urban forest, cultivated gardens and lake shore habitat. The ongoing maintenance and improvements to forested areas, trails, and gardens provides a setting where visitors enjoy and study both natural and cultivated settings in South King County. With the rapid loss of open space in the Seattle area, the Arboretum trail system and gardens provide a unique opportunity for student learning and service to our local community.

Students:

- Assess the health of an urban forest plot
- Make connections between the health of a forest and preserving water quality
- Replicate the work of scientists in data collection and, analysis followed by making recommendations to the Arboretum Board of Directors on actions that will maintain the health of the urban forest ecosystem
- Engage in forest restoration through removal of invasive species.



Students prepare for data collection

Understanding the science of natural resources helps students take responsible and effective action as citizens to improve our environment and society. Likewise, our common community interest in sustaining our resources gives us purpose for conducting scientific investigations. The health of our forests, waters, and community depend on one another, they are interdependent.

Grade 9 – Puget Sound

Students travel to the downtown Seattle waterfront. While there they visit the Seattle Aquarium and ride on a Washington State Ferry across part of Puget Sound. While there they engage in a rich experience to explore the complex issues relating to the health of the Sound. Students document their learning in journals and photographs as they:

- Reflect on the natural beauty of Puget Sound
- Explore the animals that live in Puget Sound
- Learn about Puget Sound's economic, cultural/historical, and geographical/environmental issues from live stakeholders



The Washington Ferry system provides a cost effective way to get students out on the Puget Sound



On the Ferry, students listen to stakeholder presentations helping them understand the complexities of the system.

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Grade 12 – Human Environment

Sustainability learning across the many grade levels culminates in a cross-age Choices for Tomorrow project where our high school seniors identify a sustainability issue and create and teach a lesson to our grade 4 students in the Tahoma School District. Lessons must focus on the importance of interdependence and sustainability within the context of a real issue. Students work as a member of a team, designing a product that encourages students to make a positive difference in our environment. Students select a project and determine the medium they will use to convey their message. The medium may include the arts, technology, and/or speaking/writing. All projects must be age appropriate and students are encouraged to express their creativity.



Students build background knowledge through lessons in the classroom



This group focused on issues of storm water pollution and drain markers



Markers make visible that water captured here drains directly into a stream

Anchor Thinking Skills for all Field Experiences

- Finding Evidence
- Point of View
- Comparing/Contrasting
- Cause and Effect
- Problem Solving

Anchor Habits of Mind for all Field Experiences

- Responding with Wonderment and Awe
- Gathering Data Through the Senses
- Thinking Interdependently
- Metacognition
- Responsible Risk Taking
- Applying Past Knowledge
- Thinking Flexibly

