### Cycle Two Russian River Valley Field Study: Coast, Forest, Town Sustainable Systems

Most of you have visited Westminster Woods every year since the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, boarding a bus at Eagle Peak and disembarking in the quiet of the redwood forest. But what do you know of this place? As 7<sup>th</sup> graders, you are now ready to break out of camp and explore the history and natural wonders surrounding your outdoor classroom, through the lens of sustainable systems. Opportunity will abound for deep connection to nature, the surrounding communities and each other through solo reflection time and group activities. You will dine as a community in a restaurant that has been nourishing people for over 140 years. You may hug a redwood tree that has been nourishing the earth for nearly 800.

You will investigate and provide service to the Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Redwood State Park and the towns of Occidental and Camp Meeker while observing the interconnectedness between the natural and manmade world and your place in it. You will document this experience through writing, sketch and photography in a journal, created during the week.

# **Guiding Questions**

- 1. What do you already know about Westminster Woods, Occidental, CA, Point Reyes National Seashore, Redwood Forest?
- 2. What do humans do to exploit the land? How has the land been shaped by the logging industry?
- 3. How have communities been shaped by the logging industry?
- 4. What type of infrastructure was put in place to support or dismantle the logging industry? Who prospered, suffered or was displaced?
- 5. In what ways have you noticed the concept of interconnectedness of living systems in our EPMS community?
- 6. How do you observe interconnectedness at play among non-human species in the redwood grove.
- 7. Explore the concept of preservation. Why do we set aside natural places? How are we responsible for restoring the environment?
- 8. What role do you play in living systems?
- 9. What role do you play in human-constructed systems?
- 10. What can you learn about yourself by spending time in nature?
- 11. What can you learn about yourself by exploring new communities?

# **Course Objectives**

- Learn to follow, complete and document steps for long term project
- Label map of area with all destinations and calculate travel distance
- Use classroom, library, internet resources to conduct research
- Observe processes, patterns and cycles
- Ask questions and conduct investigations
- Analyze, interpret and communicate findings
- Record observations via sketch or photography
- Coordinate and conduct interview
- Coordinate and arrange town tour
- Prepare for and participate in three seminars
- Prepare for and budget fine dining experience
- Continue work on leadership, character and community development
- Retell history of Westminster Woods and create a timeline
- Self-reflect
- Group evaluate
- Create daily sketch/photographic image and write journal entry based on prompt of the day or guiding question.
- Give back to the earth through community service
- Develop deeper connection to the cosmos

#### **Parent Communications**

September 8, 2014

Dear Families:

Your student has visited Westminster woods every year since the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, boarding the bus at Eagle Peak and disembarking in the quiet of the redwood forest. But what do they really know of this place that is near and dear to their hearts? As 7<sup>th</sup> graders, they are now ready to delve more deeply into the history of Westminster Woods and the natural wonders and communities outside of camp. Our five day field study will serve the needs of your emerging adolescent by giving them time for: quiet self-reflection, exploration of both the natural and man-made world, investigation of the social constructs in their peer group and larger community, contribution to society through community service, and creative self-expression.

The outdoors will become our classroom for the week, where experienced Westminster Woods naturalists will lead students on studies of inquiry and observation at the Pt. Reyes National Seashore and Redwood State Park. Students will also explore and research the history of the surrounding communities of Occidental and Camp Meeker, developing an understanding of the interconnectedness between the natural and manmade world and their place in it. Time at camp will emphasize community and character building components, led by teachers and Westminster Woods facilitators.

This year, our trip to the woods will take place November 3-7. It will be exciting for the students to experience their outdoor classroom under the canopy of a different season. As always, we can't provide these experiences without the dedication of the Eagle Peak adult community. We will need 4-5 chaperones that will also serve as drivers. If you are interested in travelling on this field study with the Adolescent Program, please contact me as soon as possible. There will be a Westminster Woods parent information night on October 14, but if you have any question before then, please let me know.

Kind Regards,

Annie Rodriguez arodriguezepms@gmail.com

#### **GUIDELINES FOR CHAPERONES AND DRIVERS**

Our school welcomes parent involvement for driving and chaperoning on field trips and other off-site events. We appreciate your taking the time to support your child's school and its activities. The following are guidelines that we ask our drivers and chaperones to follow:

#### **General Instructions**

Please bring a cell phone with you on the trip for safety reasons. In case of illness or emergency, please notify the school immediately. Call: 925-946-0994.

Volunteers are acting as role models for our students. Please lead by example by demonstrating maturity in actions, attitudes, and dress. The teacher or administrator will be in charge of each field trip and will direct the volunteers as to what is expected of them.

Only those parents who have signed up in advance as drivers or chaperones may attend.

Only the children enrolled in the class or activity may attend. Under no circumstances may guests or siblings attend a field trip unless the trip is announced as a special family event and other siblings are specifically invited. Please do not make arrangements for someone else to meet you at the field trip or event site. The first responsibility of each volunteer is to the students being supervised.

Chaperones are responsible for the behavior of those students assigned to them. In private vehicles, the driver is responsible for children's behavior. In school rented vehicles, the teacher or administrator is responsible, with help from volunteers. If you are experiencing difficulties, please report the problem immediately to the teacher or other supervising adult. Do not allow rowdiness, disrespect, inappropriate voices, etc. Do not allow dangerous or potentially dangerous behavior on the trip.

Chaperones should always remain with the students for whom they are responsible. Keep your assigned group of students nearby. Resist socializing with other adults.

Know exactly how many students are in your group. Keep a roll if necessary. Be sure all are present before moving from one place to another.

Students are to return with the same person and vehicle that transported them. Exceptions to this can be made only by the teacher or school administration. Exceptions are generally reserved for emergency situations only.

Drivers and chaperones should refrain from purchasing special treats for the children they are supervising unless all the children from the class can benefit equally.

If you have questions about any aspect of the field trip, expectations of drivers/chaperones, or expectations for student behavior, please ask for assistance from the teacher or administrator.

Smoking and the use of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

As representatives of our school, all chaperones and volunteers are expected to follow school policies.

#### **Additional Instructions for Driver Chaperones**

The teacher is to make all vehicle assignments for students. You will be provided with a list of names of the children being transported in your vehicle.

Please arrive at school at least ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes before departure time or as requested by the supervising teacher.

Copies of the Emergency Medical Release forms for all students will be with the teacher or a responsible adult.

Seat belts must be worn at all times. Only one (1) child is permitted per working seatbelt.

Children may not be transported in the backs of pickup trucks or other types of trucks.

Please be sure that you understand the route to be taken. A map and directions will be provided by the teacher. Please follow the assigned route to and from the field trip.

It is expected that you will obey all the traffic laws including maintaining acceptable speed limits.

Please call the school right away if you experience car trouble or become lost.

If someone has been hurt or is ill, and the teacher is not readily available, please call the school for instructions.

Children must enter and leave the vehicle from curbside unless the vehicle is in a protected parking area or driveway.

Children must not be left unattended in a vehicle.

Students should not eat or drink in your car without your permission. They have been instructed to use quiet voices when talking and to keep their hands/feet to themselves. If any student does not cooperate, please inform the teacher.

Eagle Peak Montessori School 800 Hutchinson Road Walnut Creek, CA 94598 (925) 946-0994

Thank you for being a chaperone or driver. We truly appreciate your help!

#### Cycle Schedule of Curriculum & Practical Assignments (Assignments are entered on a regular calendar)

- Week 2 Seminar Guidelines
- Week 2 Annotating
- Week 2 Active listening SLANT
- Week 2 Guided seminar practice
- Week 3 Cycle of inquiry (Review)
- Week 3 Recording observations: keeping a science notebook
- Week 3 Seminar: I Am a Child of the Soil
- Week 4 Introduce Life Cycle of a Tree Grow Kits
- Week 4 Conducting research/how to use resources (Review)
- Week 4 Research strategies (Review)
- Week 5 Form Storm Norm Perform
- Week 5 How to schedule a field study: formal letter writing and telephone etiquette
- Week 5 Research & Schedule Field Study Interviews
- Week 5 Conducting Spontaneous Interviews role play
- Week 5 Continue Life Cycle of a Tree study
- Week 6 Photography: intuitive approach to technical considerations
- Week 6 Photography: image making in nature
- Week 6 Photography: portraiture
- Week 6 Continue Life Cycle of a Tree study
- Week 6 Seminar: The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature
- Week 7 Sketching with perspective
- Week 7 Dining Etiquette & Social Grace
- Week 7 Budgeting for meals
- Week 7 Packing lists and trip preparation
- Week 7 Continue Life Cycle of a Tree study

### Cycle Schedule of Curriculum & Practical Assignments

- Week 8 Continue research, planning, prep and practice
- Week 8 Continue Life Cycle of a Tree study
- Week 8 Seminar: The Wild Trees
- Week 9 Continue research, planning, prep and practice
- Week 9 Continue Life Cycle of a Tree study
- Week 9 Create checklist for tree seedling care (student directed)
- Week 9 Find and teach tree-sitters to care for seedlings (student directed)

#### **Readings:**

Excerpts from, The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature, David Haskell (chapter/passage not yet selected)
Excerpts from, The Wild Trees, Richard Preston (chapter/passage not yet selected)
Excerpts from, Miss Manners Basic Training: Eating, Judith Manners (chapter/passage not yet selected)

#### Seminar

Seminar: Poem, I Am a Child of the Soil, Rebecca Altberg

#### **Guided Questions:**

How does the author use *place* to retell history? What story is being told? Why do you think the author wrote this poem?

Seminar: Excerpt from, *The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature,* David Haskell (chapter/passage not yet selected)

Seminar: Excerpts from, *The Wild Trees,* Richard Preston (chapter/passage not yet selected)

#### I AM A CHILD OF THE SOIL

Firmly I stand on the sun-baked prairie... my roots seeking the life-giving force of the water-laced Ogalalla coursing within its veins.

I am a child of the soil Head high, I stand at mid-continent...astride its undulating contours in alignment with the rivers Republican, Platte and Niobrara. I look to the West...beyond the Rockies, the Tetons and the Sierra and see my beginning and my future. To the East...beyond the Missouri and Mississippi; the blue haze of the Allegheny; the Appalachians, and the Adirondacks... I see my past. Spreading wide my arms, I reach both hands to embrace the shores of the Atlantic and the Pacific... gathering my past, present and future to my breast as a mother does her child.

I am a child of the soil It has nourished, nurtured and sheltered me as it did my forebears who arrived to till, toil and plant... carrying seeds and dreams in tattered valises. With little more than their hands they built homes with the fabric of grass and earth... and sparsely furnished them from battered suitcases filled with hope, determination and what little they could order from the Catalog.

I am a child of the soil Its tangled thatch remained undisturbed 'til the bite of plows and the bit of untold numbers of shaggy quarter horse ...whose bones and rusted blade still dot scattered ruins as mute testament to failure or consolidation... turned back centuries of thick, unyielding grassland into the hungry, yawing mouth of the black earth. They transformed the land so it could wear a tamer crown of winter wheat, corn, sorghum and rye.

Old grasslands, though trampled and sparse, survive still... Waiting to reclaim what was theirs in the isolated gullies and fence rows of surrounding and intertwining acres of cultivation and pride. You can see them still... beaten into wallowed hollows of submission by ancient bison; by later grazing of livestock, erosion or drought... yet raising their heads to bloom in a profusion of cowboy's delight, poppy, sweet pea and scarlet mallow after the mantle of Winter is lifted and the promise of Spring greens the cold, dormant prairie to whisper of past glory... The immense grassland ocean of the Great Plains wilderness... stretching to the horizon in mighty waves before the massed migration as it cowered or seduced... those passing through to seek the promise of Western gold or those who stayed to plant seeds of gold and reap riches more solid than metal. I am a child of this soil.

> I am a child of the soil and someday I will return to it... Not as dry dust, but as rich, prairie loam.

> > Rebecca Behnke Altberg

December, 1993

## Budget

Budget Russian River Valley Field Study Eagle Peak Montessori November 2–6, 2014

16 students4 chaperone/drivers2 teachers

#### Line Items

Westminster Woods Meals/Lodging/Curriculum

(Includes EE trips to Transportation Dinner – Union Hote			n & Rea les tax	
16 students X \$366 Transportation 22 dinners		= = =	\$5856 \$0 \$440	
	Total	=	\$6296	<b>b</b>
Parent contribution Student contribution	า		= =	\$5856 \$320
School contribution	Total	<b>=</b> =	<b>\$120</b> <b>\$120</b>	
Balance		=	\$0	

\$366/student (covers cost of chaperones

\$0 (private car donated by parents) \$20/person (student spending money)

#### Daily Leadership Role Self-Evaluation

- 1. What ways did I show leadership today? List at least 3 different ways. (Look at your list of different leadership roles. Name your (3) roles and describe, using details, what you did in each role.) (Leadership role document needs to be created)
- 2. What new or not-often used leadership role did I try today?
- 3. How did I feel about trying the new role? What went well? What could have been better?
- 4. What did I learn or reinforce that I can use in the future for each role?
- 5. How did I fail today? (minimum of one) List at least 2 ideas to do things differently next time.
- 6. Was I independent or dependent in my roles today? If you got help, list who helped and in what ways(s).
- 7. How was I successful today?
- 8. Did I participate positively or negatively to the group/learning environment today? What went well, what could have gone better with my participation?

## Leadership Rubric

Based on my Leadership Role Self Evaluation, what grade would I give myself for my leadership today? Circle a number on the scale below for each category. Add up the total at the bottom of the page.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE throughout all activities Stretch yourself to experience new things and work with different people 3 4 5 6 7 8 0 1 2 9 10 emerging developing mastered introduced **COOPERATION & PARTICIPATION** Involve yourself, ask questions, volunteer to help out when things need to be done 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 emerging developing introduced mastered SHOW SAFETY in all actions 12345678910emergingdevelopingmastere 0 introduced mastered FOLLOW ALL DIRECTIONS and time schedules 1234567emergingdeveloping 10 8 introduced mastered CONSIDERATION for others is shown 
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8

 emerging
 developing
 1 9 10 introduced mastered SUPPORT Encourage others to do their best 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 emerging developing introduced mastered Day\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ Total\_\_\_\_

## **Opening Ceremony**

The opening ceremony will take place in the Boxcar Meeting room after arrival, move-in and Westminster orientation.

Prior to student arrival, the community-meeting circle will be set with the candle and bell from our Eagle Peak classroom at the center. A young redwood tree, about a foot tall, will also be placed at the center of the circle, along with a water mister and watering vessel. Lights will be off, with room lit only with natural sunlight.

The children will be asked in advance to enter the room quietly. The lighting of the candle and ringing of the bell will indicate need for complete silence. (Chaperones and Westminster staff will not be included in the opening ceremony, but will be debriefed at chaperone information night and planning sessions so that they are aware and supportive of our intention and process.)

The teacher will read the first stanza of Walt Whitman's, *Song of the Redwood Tree:* 

A California Song, A prophecy and indirection, a thought impalpable to breathe as air, A chorus of dryads, fading, departing, or hamadryads departing, A murmuring, fateful, giant voice, out of the earth and sky, Voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood forest dense.

- Walt Whitman, Song of the Redwood Tree

The students' attention will then be directed to the young redwood tree at the center of the circle.

At the center of our circle a young redwood tree joins us. Take a moment to observe this sapling. Through your study of the tree life-cycle, you know that this young one is vulnerable, but has the potential to grow upwards of 200 ft. and live for centuries. Together we will provide shelter and nurturing for Sequoia sempervirens. Now, close your eyes and reflect on how you too are vulnerable like this young redwood. After 1-2 minutes of quiet reflection,

We will begin our service to this tree by providing water. One at a time, please water or mist this sapling, and take your place back at the circle.

After the last student has taken a turn, sound the bell and blow out the candle.

## Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony will take place back at the Eagle Peak Montessori campus. Students will be instructed in advance to proceed directly to the outside area adjacent to the adolescent building upon arrival back at campus.

Prior to leaving campus at the beginning of the week, the teacher will ensure that all items needed to plant the redwood sapling are ready for the student's arrival. The community-meeting circle will again be set, with the bell, the candle and the tree at the center. Students may help with the setup. Students and teachers will take their place at the circle. The lighting of the candle and sounding of the bell signify the need for silence.

The teacher will read the last stanza of Walt Whitman's, Song of the Redwood Tree:

Fresh come, to a new world indeed, yet long prepared, I see the genius of the modern, child of the real and ideal, Clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America, heir of the past so grand, To build a better future.

- Walt Whitman, Song of the Redwood Tree

The students' attention will be directed toward the redwood grove behind the elementary classrooms.

There is an established redwood grove behind the upper elementary classrooms that you have enjoyed learning in for the last few years. Today we will expand the grove to include this young redwood that you have sheltered for the last week. Young Sequoia sempervirens joins this community of trees, just as you are beginning to more independently explore the larger community outside of our classroom. Reflecting on what you have learned and experienced this week about the interconnected of ecosystems and communities, as well as the human impact upon the natural world, reflect for a moment on how you will contribute to the survival of this vulnerable young redwood. After 1-2 minutes of quiet reflection,

Keeping in mind your intention, we will plant this tree together, in silence (or speaking as little as possible.)

Students and teachers plant the tree and return to the circle.

Please take a turn watering or misting this delicate organism, which we are charged with stewarding for this brief moment in the timeline of its long life. How can you help to build a better future?

After the last student has taken a turn, sound the bell and blow out the candle.

## **Community Service**

The community service component of this field study will be fulfilled during the Pt. Reyes National Seashore and Redwoods State Parks environmental educations programs, facilitated by the Westminster staff.

We will also ask Westminster Woods in advance if there are any projects they would like the students to work on to provide services back to this place that is near and dear to their hearts.

Another option is to see if there are any needs in the towns of Occidental or Camp Meeker.

Students can research these options in the weeks leading up to the field study.

(More community service details will be provided once I have a chance to speak with the staff at Westminster.)

## **Community Building**

The Westminster staff will provide specific programs Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening that focus on community connections and character building. Our students have worked with the staff extensively in the past and have an already established relationship of trust and respect. On Wednesday night, staff will lead students (in the absence of teachers and chaperones) through an exercise called "New Eyes". Participants choose to blindfold themselves and the facilitator asks a series of questions that are answered by non-blindfolded students tapping their blindfolded peers on the shoulder. The students have already participated in this powerful exercise on a previous visit to Westminster and though teachers did not observe the experience, the kids offered statements afterward like, "Wow! That was the most amazing thing I've ever been a part of." The exercise will be adapted to meet the developmental needs of the adolescent by asking different questions than were asked of them as 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

Additionally, group initiatives with a focus on leadership and problem solving will kick off the environmental education component each day. Finally, a Community Rap Session for students, teachers, chaperones and naturalists will be held Thursday evening when we return from dinner. This will be an opportunity for the community to come together and reflect on their experiences, share their highs and lows and offer appreciations.

There will not be a lot of down time on this trip, but students and chaperones will be encouraged to play games of *Buzz*, Sticks or a quiet game of their choosing should then need arise to pass time, particularly on our Thursday town field study

# To-Do List

- Review plan with Michelle Hammons, school principal
- Call Westminster Woods to discuss reservation, curriculum and community service. I did receive an email response late last week, indicating the camp director is out until early August, but there is another staff member who can answer questions after 7/30.
- Document connection to prescribed CA state standards, common core and NGSS.
- Order Wild Trees
- Order tree starter kits
- Develop curriculum related to marine ecology
- Create student leadership role document. (See Gamble Montessori)
- Select excerpts from The Forest Unseen
- Select excerpts from Wild Trees
- Call The Union Hotel to make arrangements for large group and confirm pricing.
- Travel to Occidental and Camp Meeker to conduct research and gain familiarity prior to beginning of school.

#### Notes:

# Schedule of the Day

	9:00 Cabin time/Bed Prep 9:30 Lights out and Quiet Hours	9:00 Cabin time/Bed Prep 9:30 Lights out and Quiet Hours	9:00 Cabin time/Bed Prep 9:30 Lights out and Quiet Hours	
	Rap Session self-evaluation	building	building	9:30 Lights out and Quiet Hours
cars/dismissal	Community Meeting & All Community	leadership, character, community	leadership, character, community	9:00 Cabin time/Bed Prep
3:30 Collect belongings from	7:30-9:00 Evening Program	7:30-9:00 Evening Program	7:30-9:00 Evening Program	Burbing
3:00-3:30 Closing Ceremony	(allow for flexibility)	self-evaluation	self-evaluation	leadership, character, community
	5:45-7:15 Dinner - The Union Hotel	time; discussion of guided questions;	time; discussion of guided questions;	7:30-9:00 Evening Program
3:00 Arrive EPMS		Student/Teacher Meeting - journal	Student/Teacher Meeting - journal	
1:30 Depart Westminster Woods	4:30-5:30 Prep for night of fine dining (attend to personal needs)	6:30-7:30 Classroom	6:30-7:30 Classroom	time; discussion of guided questions; self-evaluation
		5:30-6:15 Dinner	5:30-6:15 Dinner	Student/Teacher Meeting – journal
12:30-1:15 Lunch	4:00-4:30 Recreation Time	5:15 KP Duty	5:15 KP Duty	6:30-7:30 Classroom
	1:30 Town Study continued	4:00-5:00 Recreation Time	4:00-5:00 Recreation Time	
12:15 KP Duty				5:30-6:15 Dinner
	1:15 Solo Time	1:30-4:00 EE Program	1:30-4:00 EE Program	5:15 KP Duty
11:45-12:15 Closing Ceremony		1:15 Solo Time	1:15 Solo Time	4:00-5:00 Recreation Time
	back at camp? (Details)			1:30-4:00 EE Program - Trail Hike
Self Evaluation	12:30-1:15 Lunch in the field or	12:30-1:15 Lunch in the field	12:30-1:15 Lunch in the field	
Write Appreciations				the week
Finish Journals	out details)	Monument	National Seashore, Shell Beach	1:15 Solo Time - set intention for
Student/Teacher Meeting	Meeker/Occidental (need to flesh	Forest Ecology – Redwood National	Science & Tidepooling - Pt. Reyes	
9:45-12:15 Classroom	9:45-12:30 Town Study - Camp	9:45-12:30 EE Program - Redwood	9:45-12:30 EE Program - Marine	from home)
	6	c		12:30-1:15 Lunch (bring bag lunch
in meeting rooms	in meeting rooms	in meeting rooms	in meeting rooms	12:00 Opening Ceremony
9:30 Whistle blows, students mee	9:30 Whistle blows, students meet	9:30 Whistle blows, students meet	9:30 Whistle blows, students meet	11:15 Orientation/move in
cabin/move out	order/prep for day	order/prep for day	order/prep for day	free time on field
9:15 Cabin time - pack/clean	9:15 Cabin time - restore	9:15 Cabin time - restore	9:15 Cabin time - restore	10:30 Arrival WW Woods/Supervised
8:30-9:15 Breakfast	8:30-9:15 Breakfast	8:30-9:15 Breakfast	8:30-9:15 Breakfast	9:00 Depart EPMS
8:15 KP	8:15 KP	8:15 KP	8:15 KP	
7:00 Wake up	7:00 Wake up	7:00 Wake up	7:00 Wake up	8:15 Arrive EPMS/load vehicles
Day 5 – November 7	Day 4 – November 6	Day 3 – November 5	Day 2 – November 4	Day 1 – November 3

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