



SCHOOL & ORGANIZATION FIELD TRIP HANDBOOK

The John T. Huston – Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center

**Teacher & Coordinator's
Information Packet**

THE JOHN T. HUSTON – DR. JOHN D. BRUMBAUGH NATURE CENTER

School & Organization Field Trip Handbook

Revised January 2025

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About the Nature Center

The John T. Huston - Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center provides and supports opportunities for enjoying and learning about our natural and cultural heritage. The three principal audiences served by our mission include:

- **Mount Union students:** to support and enhance the education of all students attending the University of Mount Union, emphasizing the general areas of ecology and environmental science
- **School and Youth Groups:** to provide a resource in environmental education for public, private and parochial schools and other organized youth groups, including field trips and teacher/leader enhancement programs
- **Community:** to promote an interest and awareness of environmental and ecological topics among the public

History

The Brumbaugh Center for Environmental Science was established thanks to a gift from Dr. John D. Brumbaugh. Dr. Brumbaugh donated the 109 acres that had been his grandfather's farm to Mount Union College in December of 1986. The farm, located in Washington Township, Stark County, Ohio included old growth and second growth forest and a large bank barn. Dr. Brumbaugh also established a generous endowment to provide for the development of the area as a nature preserve and educational facility. The property was named The John T. Huston - Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center, in honor of both Dr. Brumbaugh and his grandfather, John Huston. It was Dr. Brumbaugh's wish that the area be used as a nature preserve for the education and enjoyment of all people and the area be developed in such a way as to lead visitors into an exploration of the outside environment.

Today the Nature Center provides support for numerous classes at the University of Mount Union, welcomes thousands of school students to environmental education programs, creates opportunities for hundreds of people to give of themselves as volunteers and offers a place for reflection and nature study for any who choose to visit.

Outdoor Discovery Hikes

The discovery approach, which is the basis for all school and organizational field trips at the Nature Center, depends upon a small leader to student ratio (1 to 12) and is sensitive to the learners' knowledge as well as their experiences and "finds" along the trails. Leaders are essentially facilitators. While each leader will plan various activities along the trail to complement and enhance the theme, his or her flexibility in dealing with and adapting to the various finds and sightings of the children is a key ingredient to our approach.

Objectives of a Discovery Hike

- ✓ Expose students to their natural environment
- ✓ Investigate local wildlife, habitat, forest ecology, weather, cultural history, their inter-relatedness, and our place in the scheme of things
- ✓ Provide a sensory experience to explore the outdoors
- ✓ **HAVE FUN!**

Discovery Hike Format

Discovery hikes generally begin and end in the parking lot where the Nature Center's staff and volunteer trail guides will meet your group as you make your way off the bus. Each field group of students will have a Nature Center trail guide who will introduce himself or herself and lead the field group for the duration of the discovery hike. Discovery hikes are 60-90 minutes long. The duration of the hike for your school/organization's group will be determined when the visit is initially scheduled.

Each school/organization's hike will follow a planned lesson or theme (if specified), however, the exact experience each field group receives depends on the trail(s) and locations where trail guides lead their group. All efforts are given to provide a similar experience across all field groups within a given school/organization's group of students, but there is no way to guarantee each student will see the same exact bird, flower, butterfly, frog, etc.

Trail Rules and Precautions

1. Follow behind the trail guide
2. No harming of plants & animals
3. Stay on the trail at all times
4. Don't touch, pick, collect, or eat anything unless the leader says it's safe
5. Beware of poison ivy and thorny plants
6. Lookout for roots, rocks, etc. on the trails

Cancellation Policy

We recognize that you may wish to cancel your visit for a variety of reasons, but we encourage early decisions to not affect other schools/organizations looking to reserve a date in our busy calendar. Please call the Nature Center as soon as a cancellation becomes necessary.

Weather Policy

Discovery hikes are held rain or shine with the exceptions of heavy rain, strong winds, and/or thunderstorms. Student and chaperones should bring rain gear to remain comfortable in light or casual rain showers. The school/organization's personnel determine weather-related cancellations. The Nature Center staff can offer guidance in making the decision but will not make the final determination unless weather or site conditions are obviously dangerous or otherwise unsuitable for facilitating a discovery hike.

Dividing Your Students into Field Groups

The Nature Center can accommodate school/organization groups up to 50 students. The visiting school/organization must provide 1 or 2 adult chaperones for every 12 students. Large groups must divide their group into smaller field groups for discovery hikes to stay within the maximum ratio of 12 students for every 1 Nature Center trail guide. Please organize and divide your group prior to arrival to the Nature Center to maximize the time spent enjoying the discovery hike.

Bus Arrival/Parking

Buses will unload in the parking lot on Daniel St. Parking is available for buses and chaperones in the main parking lot. Upon arrival, the Nature Center trail guides will meet the arriving group in the parking lot at or a few minutes before the specified arrival time. Please break into field groups after disembarking from the bus. Field groups will meet back at the parking lot at the conclusion of the discovery hike unless other arrangements are made to meet elsewhere.

Preparing for Your Visit

Being properly prepared enhances the students' comfort, enjoyment, and learning potential during a visit to the Nature Center. It is very important that students and chaperones are prepared physically and mentally to learn in the outdoors. The seasonal and daily weather conditions are an important component that connects the students to their natural surroundings in nearly all discovery hikes facilitated at the Nature Center.

What Should Students and Chaperones Wear?

Footwear Students and chaperones will be walking along trails of various surface-types including concrete, boardwalk, crushed gravel, grass, and dirt paths. Comfortable hiking footwear like sneakers or hiking boots is essential. There will be mud seasonally and in certain locations! Do not wear flip-flops, open-toed sandals or heels.

Clothing Students and chaperones should dress in weather-appropriate and comfortable clothing. A light-colored cotton t-shirt and loose cotton pants or shorts are ok in summer. Long pants, jackets, hats, and gloves are necessary in fall through spring depending on daily weather conditions. Bring rain gear if there is a chance of rain.

Eating Lunch at the Nature Center

Groups may request to include time for a sack lunch as part of their scheduled visit. Space for lunch is available in and around the Nature Center's pavilion located adjacent to the Visitors Center. Group coordinators and chaperones are responsible for organizing and facilitating the lunch period. See below for the regulations related to eating lunch at the Nature Center. Lunch is a unique educational opportunity to learn and teach about the environment by reducing, reusing, and recycling.

Pack in/Pack out All groups must take any trash generated from their lunches off site (i.e. back to school, church, YMCA, etc.) for disposal. The Nature Center does not have a dumpster or trash service provider. All groups must supply their own trash bags for trash collection. The Nature Center will provide a receptacle for your trash bag(s) as well as recycling and composting receptacles (more on recycling and composting below).

Waste-free Lunch We recommend students pack a waste-free lunch by including reusable and recyclable containers to hold food and drinks. These containers also allow the convenience to transport "leftovers" back home to be eaten later. Choose lunch foods that have compostable leftovers (apple cores, banana peels, orange rinds, etc.).

Avoid pre-packaged foods, juice boxes/pouches, ziploc bags, plastic straws, and other single-use, non-recyclable items for a truly waste-free lunch. All of your effort is rewarded with less trash to take off site! For more information about packing a waste-free lunch, visit <https://www.epa.gov/students/pack-waste-free-lunch>

Recycling and Composting Recycling and composting really cuts down on the volume of trash going back on the bus and assists staff with managing the waste stream at the Nature Center. Compostable food scraps are composted at the Nature Center, and the resulting material is used to amend the soil in our vegetable garden. Clean, properly recycled items can be held on site until staff are available to haul them to the University's physical plant for proper disposal. See below for a examples of recyclable and compostable items.

Recyclable Materials

- ✓ Paper – bags, unused napkins, cardboard boxes
- ✓ Plastic – hard plastic containers marked 1 through 7 (look on the bottom)
- ✓ Metal – cans, aluminum foil, aluminum trays
- ✓ Glass – all colors

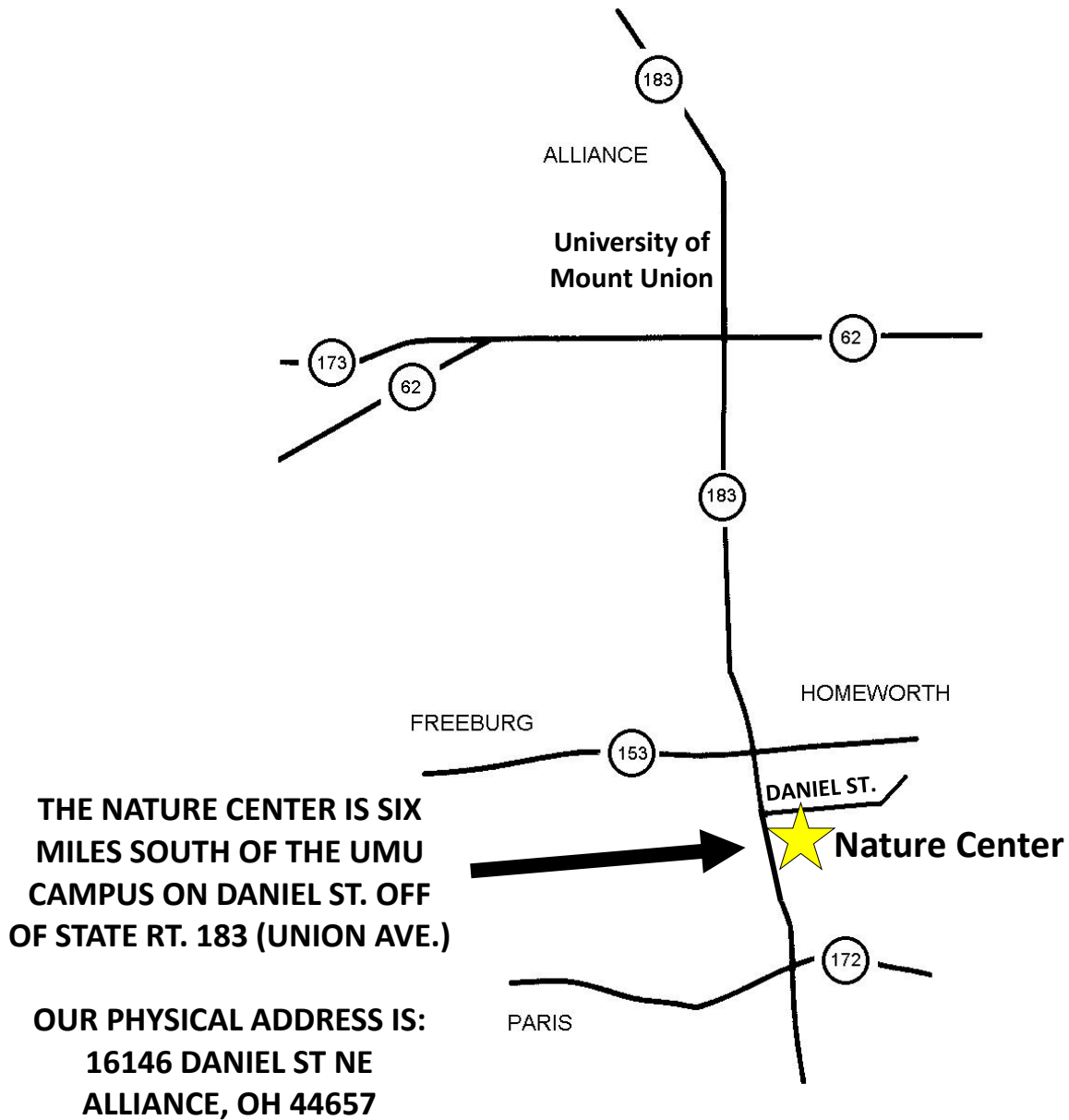
Compostable Materials

- ✓ Fruits – in whole or in part, including cores, peels, and rinds
- ✓ Vegetables – must not be covered in dips, sauces, or other condiments

NO: meat, dairy, or bread

Helpful Documents

Directions to the Nature Center



Field Group Roster

This form can be used for planning purposes to organize field groups prior to arrival.

School & Field Group Name:

Date & Time of Field Trip:

Teacher(s)/Chaperone(s) Assigned:

Student Names:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	

Allergies, Medical Conditions, or Special Needs for this group:

Trail Map



Note:

Most discovery hikes take place on the west side of the trail system nearest the Visitors Center, barnyard, and pond. Depending on the age, mobility level, and time appropriated for the hike, trails further to the east may be used at the discretion of the field group’s Nature Center trail guide.

Feedback Form

Thank you for bringing your students to the Nature Center. If you would like to provide feedback about your experience, please fill out the form below and return it to:

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center, 1972 Clark Ave., Alliance, OH 44601

Program Date:

School/Organization:

Your name:

Role (circle one): Teacher Parent Other

Contact information (phone or email):

Did the experience meet your expectations? Yes No Explain below:

Were the students engaged in the experience? Yes No Explain below:

Did the experience enhance/reinforce the concepts taught in the classroom?

Yes No Don't know Explain:

Did your trail guide respond well to your students' interests or questions?

Yes No Explain:

Are you interested in returning to the Nature Center for another field trip?

Yes No Explain:

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions that you would like to share?

Thank you!