



# Mackenzie Center

Poynette, WI



Day Field Trip

GROUP PLANNING GUIDE

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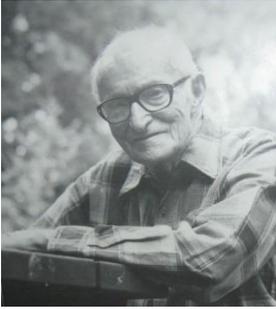
## **WELCOME!**

Welcome to the MacKenzie Center's education program! Whether this is your first trip to the Center or one of many, the experience is rewarding. This booklet represents the accumulation of ideas, suggestions, and policies that will help you plan a successful trip. Please review this guide and its contents and contact us if you have any questions.

The MacKenzie Center's goal is to provide high quality outdoor skills and environmental education to:

- Teach individuals environmental literacy in order to protect and enhance our natural resources; our air, land and water, fish and forests, and the ecosystems that sustain all life.
- Help individuals gain the skills needed to enjoy a full range of outdoor opportunities.
- Provide diverse groups of individuals' access to outdoor opportunities for work and leisure.
- Enhance these opportunities for future generations.

## HISTORY



The property is 619 acres with 280+ acres we know as the MacKenzie Center was named in memory of Harley MacKenzie (pictured to the left) in 1971 and has a long history, beginning in the 1930's. Harley MacKenzie, the property's name sake, purchased this land under authority as Director of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, known today as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. At that time in history the full property was all part of the State Fur and Game Farm, which raised fur-bearing animals for their pelts and game birds, including the Ring-Neck Pheasant, for hunting.

In the 1960's as the conservation movement grew, the property developed two functions. One half remained the State Game Farm focused on raising Ring-Neck Pheasants and the other half was dedicated to conservation education. At that time, exhibits, trails and education programs were created.

The wildlife habitat area came to be as a result of individuals bringing sick and injured animals to the game farm in the 1930's and 1940's; and were once housed along the road between the Administration building and the Conservation Museum and was moved to the current location in the late 1980's. Once in captivity the animals and birds became an attraction for visitors. Wildlife should be left in the wild. The animals at the MacKenzie Center are non-releasable and will not survive on their own. They provide an opportunity to teach visitors about native Wisconsin animals and birds. The wildlife area continues to provide a home for animals that are injured, orphaned, surrendered or born in captivity and have little chance of survival if released into the wild; MacKenzie is their home for life.

From 2006 to 2013 the MacKenzie Center was jointly managed as a partnership between the DNR, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and Friends of MacKenzie. The DNR is grateful to have worked with the Wildlife Federation and Friends to maintain and operate the center over that time span.

Beginning in 2014, the DNR assumed full operation of the MacKenzie Center and continues to offer environmental education programs while developing MacKenzie as an innovative outdoor skills center. The Wisconsin DNR owns and operates the MacKenzie Center and is responsible for the programs, facility upkeep and maintenance. A variety of partnerships have been established of internal DNR groups, community members, individuals, and organizations that help make the MacKenzie Center a success.

Most significantly the Friends of the MacKenzie Center, a local group of volunteers, provide funding support, leadership and volunteers for a variety of maintenance, educational and community programs.

## FACILITIES

The MacKenzie Center is located near rural Poynette, WI in Columbia County, just 25 miles north of Madison, WI. The property has a variety of features that visitors enjoy year round.

- wildlife area that is home to live native Wisconsin wildlife including bison, deer, lynx, wolves, and many raptors including a bald eagle
- arboretum that includes more than 100 species of trees
- nature trails that wind through forests and prairies
- nature study pond
- prairies in various stages of restoration
- climbable fire tower with a 40' observation platform
- picnic area with pavilion and restrooms
- early pioneer log cabin that is home to early logging artifacts
- antique sawmill display with a 250 year old White Pine log
- maple syrup demonstration and display area
- conservation exhibit with a variety of displays on conservation issues
- exhibit of a pair of (now extinct) passenger pigeons

The property also includes a spacious lodge building with a commercial kitchen, workshop and classroom. In addition to the lodge, there are dormitories that can sleep 80 people. The combination of the lodge and dorms are available to schools and other organizations for day or overnight programs focused on environmental education or outdoor skills.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

The property is open to the public every day of the year from dawn to dusk for hiking, climbing the fire-tower and getting outdoors. The only exceptions to being on property after dark are if you are registered as an overnight lodge group.

For the Public - The wildlife habitat area and exhibits are open:

<b>May-October (open Holidays)</b>	<b>November – April (closed Holidays)</b>
Open Daily	Open Monday - Friday only
10am - 4pm	10am - 4pm

**For registered groups; the site is available at 8am**

## DIRECTIONS

The MacKenzie Center is located just 25 miles north of Madison, WI on County Road CS & Q. The Center is about 30 minutes from the east side of Madison, 30 minutes from Baraboo, WI or 15 minutes from Portage, WI.



To the Center: From Highway I90/94 take exit #115 (County Road CS/Poynette/Lake Wisconsin exit). McDonald's, BP gas and Subway are just off this exit. Follow County Highway CS east, and continue east through the village of Poynette. Follow the signs for the MacKenzie Center across business Hwy 51 and continue another two miles east. The main entrance to the Center will be on your right.

GPS Coordinates = N43 24.277, W089 21.798

*The MacKenzie Center is over 280 acres with multiple buildings. Please confirm the location of your arrival with the staff member helping to coordinate your visit so that you arrive at the correct location.*

To the Badger Den Conference Room: Upon entering the MacKenzie Center property, make your first right into the "U" shaped parking lot. The cream colored building to your left is the Badger Den.

## CONTACT US

MacKenzie Center  
W7303 County Hwy CS & Q  
Poynette, WI 53955-9690

Phone: 608-635-8105  
Fax: 608-635-2743  
Email: [dnrmackenziecenter@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrmackenziecenter@wisconsin.gov)  
Web: [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search 'MacKenzie'



## RESERVATIONS



Reservations can be made at any time. However, the reservation is not confirmed until the reservation form and deposit are received in the MacKenzie Center office. Keep in mind that the demand for our facility is increasing; deposits need to be made within three weeks of the date in which you call to make the reservation or the reservation will be released. Deposits "hold" your spot on the reservation calendar and will be deducted from your balance due after your departure.

## **FEES**

*Please inquire with the MacKenzie staff for a current fee schedule as program fees are set each fiscal year and are subject to change.*

Groups are invoiced the balance of their fees after their scheduled trip, payable upon receipt. All program fees are the responsibility of the visiting group. Many groups obtain funds from their local parent association, fundraisers, school district, and/or charges to participants. Many combinations of sources are possible.

Scholarships from the Friends of the MacKenzie Center are also available at the discretion of their Board of Directors. Please check the MacKenzie Center web site for an application or ask a staff member.

If you need to cancel your reservation for any reason, please call the MacKenzie Center office at 608-635-8105. If a cancellation occurs, reservation fees will be applied to a future field trip date; or forfeited.

## **PROGRAM PLANNING**

MacKenzie's goal is to provide program offerings in environmental education and outdoor skills. We encourage you to use your trip the Center to introduce or reinforce concepts that are taught in the classroom.

Good planning is the biggest contributing factor to the success of your trip. Several weeks prior to your scheduled program at MacKenzie a planning session with are held with the Center's education team. If this is a group or leader's first visit, we suggest that group leaders visit us on-site for your planning session. During this time we will help you develop your schedule and lessons, give tours as needed and make you comfortable with your upcoming trip.



Group leaders should discuss their ideas prior to the planning session. Consideration should be given to group leader's area of expertise, the Center's class offerings, and group's goals and objectives. In addition, consideration of the number of group participants and chaperones will be important information to share with Center staff when developing your trip's schedule.

A MacKenzie educator will be available to lead classes for your group during your scheduled visit based on where our expertise is needed the most.

## PLANNING CHECKLIST

When planning your trip, keep in mind that the MacKenzie staff is available to help with preparation. It may be helpful to form a planning committee to assist with organizing. The following checklist is a guide to aid in your planning. There may be other things you want to include in you preparations.

1. Reserving and Getting Set Up
  - a. Reserve your program date(s).
  - b. Arrange for transportation to and from MacKenzie.
  - c. Set up planning session with MacKenzie staff.
  - d. Recruit chaperones for an adult to youth ratio of 1:10
2. Schedules and Lessons
  - a. Establish goals and objective for your program.
  - b. Review and select classes from the list of class offerings.
  - c. Finalize your group's schedule determining length and number of activities, and leader assignments. Remember to include activities selected during your planning session.
  - d. Ask MacKenzie Center staff for copies of lesson plans if not already received.
  - e. Plan alternative activities for inclement weather.
    - i. MacKenzie staff will provide "rainy day" activities for those agenda items that Center staff is leading and scheduled to teach.
3. Group Assignments
  - a. Break students into small groups for instructional activities.
4. School Information Sheet
  - a. Obtain MacKenzie Center waiver forms for each participant.
  - b. Obtain health histories, health forms, and medical release forms that your specific school or district may need.
    - i. The Center does not need copies
  - c. Be aware of any student with major health problems, allergies, etc.
  - d. Inform MacKenzie staff if any students need accommodations for special needs.
  - e. Recruit or assign an individual to be in charge of dispensing medication and taking care of first aid if necessary.
    - i. At minimum, this individual should be certified in First Aid and CPR.

## CLASS OFFERINGS

*Please inquire with the MacKenzie staff or visit our web site for a current class offering list.*

Teaching tools and seasonal items (i.e. pond equipment) are available to support class offerings; some exceptions apply, please inquire with a MacKenzie Staff member.

We suggest breaking large groups into small groups and rotate through activities. Smaller groups ensure a good learning environment for all students.

## **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

Check In: Upon arrival, a MacKenzie Center staff member will greet you, show you where your lessons are located, and orientate you as needed. We will also confirm your schedule and review your departure time, and help you get settled. Group arrival can occur any time after 8am, departure times can vary.

## **STAFF AND TEACHING**

Our staff is here to help make your trip enjoyable and meaningful. We are available to help you plan and prepare for your visit. Educators will require additional fees, please inquire with staff about current fee schedule. Requests for educators should be made early and are based on staff availability.

## **EQUIPMENT**

The MacKenzie Center has a variety of equipment for use in teaching or recreation. Please inquire if you have specific needs (i.e. pond equipment, compasses).

## **CENTER RULES:**

RESPECT is the primary rule! Respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment.

1. Respect the MacKenzie Center environment and property:
  - a. Stay on the trails.
  - b. Pick up trash and encourage others not to litter.
  - c. Please respect all the critters around the property; this is their home. This includes the animals in the Wildlife Area.
  - d. Take care of the buildings and property...No graffiti!
2. Respect Others:
  - a. Listen when others are talking.
  - b. Encourage others, no put-downs.
  - c. Stay out of buildings without adult permission.
  - d. Keep out of other people's possessions.
3. Respect Yourself:
  - a. Dress appropriately for activities.
  - b. Be on time.
  - c. Clean up after yourself.
  - d. Stay with your group and chaperones.

In addition:

1. All groups must provide their own transportation to and from the Center.
2. There must be at least one adult on site for every 10 students
3. An adult member of the group must accompany youth for first aid needs. No ill or injured student will be left unattended with the MacKenzie Center staff.
4. School or group staff must be with their group at all times.
5. Collecting plants or animals is prohibited unless permission is obtained from the MacKenzie staff.

6. Smoking is prohibited in all MacKenzie Center buildings (WI State Statute 101.123). Individuals are responsible for extinguishing cigarettes to avoid a fire hazard. Extinguished cigarettes must be placed in an outdoor trash receptacle.
7. No illegal activities allowed at any time.
8. Permission must be obtained by MacKenzie Staff to have animals on property. Please inquire with staff if your program requires animals to be present during your visit.
9. Areas that are off limits include:
  - a. Private residence on property
  - b. Private property that borders the Center
  - c. Main lodge; except during emergency situations
  - d. Office areas when staff are not present
  - e. Wildlife area and museums before 8am or after 4pm.
  - f. State Game Farm property

#### **TEACHER AND CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Follow all MacKenzie Center rules
2. Teachers and chaperones will be responsible for teaching some of the group's lessons during the trip.
  - a. We encourage teachers to add supplementary information to lessons in order to connect the Center to the Classroom.
3. Chaperones need to understand their responsibilities to ensure a safe and meaningful time for all participants. Chaperones are responsible for:
  - a. Supervision of children
  - b. Discipline and helping to enforce MacKenzie Center rules
  - c. Following the rules themselves and leading by example
  - d. Appropriate cell phones use
    - i. Please do not use cell phones during class time
  - e. Helping children have a safe, educational and fun time
  - f. Reporting any medical, behavioral or camp problems or needs to the group leader
  - g. Helping students clean up in a timely manner.

#### **MEALS**

Groups are encouraged to bring picnic lunches, water bottles, and snacks as deemed necessary by group leaders. The MacKenzie Center does not provide food service of any kind. Drinking water is available year round inside the Administration Building near the restrooms for filling water bottles as needed.

## **PICNIC AREA**

The picnic area is enjoyed by large groups during meal times. If you would like use of the picnic area/shelter; please inquire with a staff member to reserve that location. The picnic area has many picnic tables, indoor restrooms and a shelter. Please note that the picnic area is about ½ mile from the wildlife exhibit area. To save time, you may want to use your bus service to shuttle your group to this area. \*\*The picnic area is only available for use May through October.

## **DRINKING WATER**

Drinking water is available year round in the Administration building. From May through October it is also available in the picnic area and from drinking fountains in the wildlife and maple areas.

## **RESTROOMS**

Restrooms with flush toilets are located year round at the Administration Building. Seasonally May through October flush toilets are available at the picnic area and portable bathrooms are available near the log cabin and in the wildlife area.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Security: All MacKenzie staff, including volunteers, are required to wear a photo ID whenever students are present. Please feel free to ask the name of anyone that you do not recognize. Never put yourself in danger by approaching a vehicle or person that makes you uncomfortable.

Inclement Weather: Since our Center is primarily an outdoor classroom, we will, even in undesirable weather, attempt to carry on outside programming as scheduled unless:

1. The group leader decides otherwise
2. The wind chill factor is dangerously low
3. There is lightning
4. Participants have been outside too long and are uncomfortable

Groups are responsible for having “rainy day” activities to use in the event of adverse weather.

Emergency and Disaster Plan: All buildings are equipped with fire extinguishers, fire alarms and properly marked exits. Formal emergency plans are posted in each building; please review and follow in case of an emergency.

1. FIRE:
  - a. Visitors should acquaint themselves with the location of the fire extinguishers, fire alarms, exits and exit lights. Tampering with any of this equipment is forbidden and subject to a fine.
  - b. Procedures to follow in the event of a fire should be discussed with your group.
  - c. In the event of a fire, **call 9-911**, get outside and notify MacKenzie staff.



2. TORNADO:

- a. During a tornado warning, People in the field should take shelter in a low-lying area where there is minimal danger of falling trees. Bathroom buildings away from windows also provide shelter.
- b. The adults or group leader should be the last one to take shelter and should count all students or group participants.



3. INJURY:

- a. For any medical emergencies, contact 9-911.
  - i. BE CERTAIN TO TELL THEM YOUR LOCATION ON THE MACKENZIE CENTER PROPERTY. I.e. Wildlife Area, etc.
- b. Report all injuries to the group leader AND MacKenzie Center staff
- c. If hospitalization is required, the group will need to provide transportation to the hospital and a group leader must accompany minors.
- d. No medication or medical attention will be administered by MacKenzie Center staff.
- e. An incident report should be completed as soon as possible; contact Center staff for this form.

4. MISSING PERSON:

- a. Gather the group into a central location.
- b. Contact a MacKenzie Center staff member.
- c. Question leaders and participants about the missing person's last known whereabouts and potential locations.
- d. An adult should remain in the area where the person was last seen.
- e. Search vehicles and buildings in the immediate area.
- f. **Call 911**
- g. Call DNR Hotline to contact local DNR Warden to assist 1-800-847-9367.

**FEEDBACK:** The MacKenzie Center staff is always looking for ways to improve and keep the program offerings updated to meet the needs of our groups. Please share your comments with the staff via email or by completing the electronic user survey sent to the group leaders. Your feedback is appreciated.

**RETURN VISITS:** Reservations can be made by calling or emailing our office. Please inquire about available dates as soon as possible (even before your departure) as the reservation calendar fills quickly.