

The Vermont Four Winds Nature Institute

We are pleased that Karen Murphy from the Four Winds Nature Institute will be presenting our training workshops again this year. Ms. Murphy grew up exploring the natural world with her father and studied biology in college. She has been an ELF volunteer for nineteen years and an ELF trainer for sixteen. She enjoys working with folks who enjoy learning about their natural world and are committed to sharing their knowledge with children.



ELF Advisory Board

An advisory board made up of teacher and parent volunteers oversees the ELF program in our school. This group shares in the responsibilities and implements the program at Sawyer School. We encourage you to join us.

Noreen Beck
Sande Collins
Tina Flaherty

Larry Isomaki
Amy McLean
Donna Mackie

Environmental Learning with Four Winds Nature Institute

ADAPTATIONS

ELF Workshops 2006-2007

Grasses and Grains.....October 25
Predator and Prey.....January 24
Plant and Animal Defenses....March 21

Back up dates for the workshops will be:
January 31 and March 28

All workshops will be held from 3:15-5:00PM in the Sawyer School Cafeteria. We will go outside for some portion of each workshop.

Recollections of ELF

I have been involved in Bolton's ELF program since the creation. 19 years ago parents, teachers, educators from Vermont and town volunteers gathered together at workshops to discover the magic of nature. We listened, learned, participated, discussed, created and had fun on mini field trips to our outdoor school environment.

In the classrooms the children were treated to adorable puppet shows that were tied in with the chosen theme. I saw the parents enjoying themselves behind the screen playing with all the puppets and their corresponding parts. I think the puppet shows were always my first graders favorite part of the presentation. They would wiggle with anticipation when a puppet would appear.

The parents would then present their material in a well-organized manner incorporating books, posters, pictures, slides and real life materials from outside. The children were able to discover for themselves through hands-on activities what is actually under a rotting log. They learned to understand the world of animals while also respecting their original habitat.

Some of the first grade favorites were animal tracks, stone walls and owl pellets. You should have seen their faces when they were gently pulling apart an owl pellet to discover what the owl had eaten for dinner. They were able to sort and classify the bones inside the pellet. Activities like this spark a young child's curiosity for life. I guess that's what ELF is all about. It is an excellent program that involves the children in an experience that they will never forget

Kathy Barry
First Grade Teacher
Florence Sawyer School

ELF 2006 - 2007

Our wonderful program has a new name! Four Winds Nature Institute has replaced the Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences as our coordinator of environmental education here in Bolton. Our instructor, Karen Murphy from FWNI continues to direct our efforts three times each year, in our parent training workshops. Four Winds Nature boasts over 45 parent volunteers in 28 classrooms at the Emerson/Florence Sawyer Schools.

In 2005-2006, we explored **Earth and Sky** which enabled us to understand the intricate connection between the living and nonliving characteristics of the world around us. With our engaging activities, the children learned how different organisms exist within the physical world by examining direction, sound waves, wind and clouds.

As we began the school year, we looked at clues that animals use to travel in search of food water, shelter or a safe place to raise their young. This workshop was entitled **Finding Your Way**. Most animals rely not just on one strategy but many sensory cues to help them find their way. We focused on learning how to use a compass and then experimenting outdoors to find hidden treasures in each direction.

In January, we explored the world of sound waves in **Sound Symphony**. We learned that sound waves, produced by vibrating objects, play important roles in the lives of animals. This important form of animal communication can signal danger, attract mates and help to locate food. The ability to produce sounds, to hear sounds, and to distinguish sounds is crucially important to survival in the animal world.

Our final topic of the year focused on **Wind and Clouds**, which bring us weather of all kinds as they swirl around the globe. When wind direction changes, a change in weather can be expected. We examined simple methods used to understand the connection between wind speed and direction and the weather. We also observed different types of clouds and understood how they are affected by wind and in turn, affect the weather.

We thank the **Bolton Conservation Trust** for its support and the **School Administration** for allowing us to continue this science program.