



It began with a dream . . .

THIRTY YEARS AGO, actress and environmentalist Carmen Mathews had a dream for the land she loved. She wanted New Pond Farm's 102 acres of pastures, streams and woodlands to become an environmental education center, and she was determined to do her part.

Her dream of sharing the land began with a small summer camp for inner-city children. But she saw the property as an ideal classroom where people of all ages could connect to the land. In 1984, Carmen and the founding Board of Directors opened a year-round environmental learning center. Ten years later, an old turkey coop was replaced with a small classroom-kitchen-bunkhouse building. And just before Carmen died in 1995, she conveyed a conservation easement to the Redding Land Trust, ensuring the Farm's preservation as open space, never to be developed.



*"The most precious gift you can give a child is a deep connection to the land."
—Ann Taylor, Executive Director*

Now, a well-designed 7,000 square-foot center provides an ideal learning and working environment for visitors, about two-thirds of whom are impressionable students on field trips. New Pond Farm's talented staff engages them in hands-on experiences in farming, ecology, life in the woods, archeology, Native American heritage, and much more. The programs provide lessons for life and inspire them to become stewards of the land.



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New Pond Farm

Give your students a new appreciation of the environment, Native American heritage, farm life, the arts and much more



LESSONS FOR LIFE

HELPING CHILDREN GROW THROUGH HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.....connecting students with the land that enriches and sustains us all



Fall Farm & Fiber

On farms across the land, fall and winter were wonderful times to turn sheep's fleece into yarn for knitting and weaving. Our flock of Romney sheep will be featured guests in this program. Your students will meet our sheep and lambs, feel their insulating fleece, and then take previously shorn fleece through the steps required to make it usable fiber. They will wash the fleece, hand-card (comb) it, and hand-spin it into yarn with a partner.

During this process, students will learn how it keeps sheep warm in winter and cool in summer. As they work with the fleece, they will feel its natural, water-resistant lanolin and understand how it provides a natural raincoat for the sheep.

Students will also see how spinning can be done with a drop spindle or on a spinning wheel. They will be invited to either watch or participate in weaving, using our floor loom.

After meeting the sheep, your students will take a tour of our working farm. We will visit the calves, bring a dairy cow into the barn for a closer look and visit the chicken yard and coop. Your students will gain an understanding of the role each of these animals plays on a farm. It will be an experience they long remember!

Offered: Late September-November
Science Framework Content Standards:
K.2, 1.2, 2.4, 4.2



Eastern Woodland Indians

This popular program provides a look into an important Native American culture that inhabited the eastern woodlands for centuries. Classes will hike to our encampment, comprised of a thatched longhouse, barked wigwam and activity areas. Students will learn about the daily activities of the Connecticut Indians, including the important roles played by all family members, home life, cooking and the use of ceramics. We will point out plants that were gathered for food, medicine and tools. We will also try our best to "stalk" quietly, like skilled Indian hunters. We will also discuss how women crafted clothing from animal skins, and the importance of the seeds, nuts and berries gathered by children through spring, summer and fall.

A visit to our Native American museum, full of artifacts and beautifully made reproductions representing a variety of tribes, will provide hands-on experience. Carefully passed artifacts may include spear points, arrowheads, anchor stones, hammer stones, scrapers, bark containers and hafted hammers.

We will also share traditional foods comprised of freshly made corn bread and farm-fresh maple syrup, roasted seeds, dried berries and popcorn.

Offered: October-December, April-June
Science Framework Content Standards:
K.4, 1.2, 2.4, 3.4
K-12 CT Social Studies Content Standards: 2, 3, 4



Maple Sugaring

New Pond Farm's maple syruping program is an ideal way to counter late-winter blues. Students will be a part of the reawakening of the woodlands as the sap begins to rise in the sugar maples. By participating in the tapping, collecting and boiling down of the maple sap in our evaporator, they will learn valuable lessons in tree identification and the life cycles of deciduous trees.

They will also learn the origins of this American tradition. As we venture farther into the woodland, we will come upon a recreated Native American encampment and sugar bush. Here your students will learn the importance of maple sugaring to the Eastern Woodland Indians, and how they were able to collect and boil down sap without the benefit of an evaporator or metal tools. Every participant will be given a slice of the farm's freshly-baked corn bread with our maple syrup drizzled on top.

The final stop will be our sugar shed with its modern evaporator and sugaring equipment. Students will learn how the process of making sap into syrup is completed here at New Pond Farm. They will sample maple cream and candy, delicacies made by sugar houses across New England.

Offered: Mid-February through Mid-March
Science Framework Content Standards:
K.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.4
K-12 CT Social Studies Content Standards: 1, 2, 3



Spring Farm & Honey Bees

One of our most popular offerings is our spring farm program. In this fast-paced world, it is increasingly important for children to understand the importance of food production and how it is tied to farms. Far too often, when we ask our students where food comes from, they reply, "The grocery store!"

When children arrive, they will become farmers and help care for the animals. They will brush a cow and learn how she produces milk. New arrivals in the barnyard may include newly hatched chicks, young piglets, lambs and more. As they explore the area, they will learn about the fascinating adaptations of the animals, as well as their importance to farmers.

Our honeybees are a wonderful part of the program. Through photos, props and an indoor observation hive, the children will learn the vital role these insects play on the farm in pollinating our trees, shrubs, flowers and, of course, making delicious honey. Everyone will taste New Pond Farm's own honey and make a beeswax candle to bring home.

Offered: Late April-June
Science Framework Content Standards:
K.2, 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 3.2, 4.2



Habitat Hunt

This exciting hands-on program gives students a chance to explore and compare woodland, pasture and stream habitats. Young explorers will learn how each habitat functions as a community, and how plants and animals rely on each other for survival. They will learn about food chains and natural recycling. In the woodlands, we'll overturn rotting logs and discover the community of insects, arachnids and other arthropods that make their homes there. Perhaps we will find woodpecker holes or signs left behind by resident mammals like flying squirrels, foxes and chipmunks.

Next, we will visit the stream's edge to discover the range of plants and animals living in areas that are hidden from the swift currents. With luck, we'll catch and observe water pennies, hellgrammites, mayflies, crayfish and two-lined salamanders.

In the pasture, we will discover many wonderful plants and work our way up the food chain. We will work as a team to lift "bug boards" and catch the insects before they get away. We will discuss the species adapted to live in this open environment. Also, we will discover signs left by small mammals and perhaps even see vultures or hawks flying overhead.

Offered: Late April-June
Science Framework Content Standards:
K.2, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2, 4.2



Freshwater Exploration

New Pond Farm is fortunate to have a stream, pond and marsh. Each of these habitats is unique, and teems with aquatic plants and animals.

Using fine-net strainers, students will catch a variety of life forms, ranging from dragonfly and damselfly nymphs, water boatmen, larval salamanders and tadpoles in the marsh, to crayfish, hellgrammites, water pennies and minnows in the stream.

As our buckets begin to fill with an assortment of creeping, crawling and swimming creatures, students will learn about the adaptations and survival strategies that enable the plants and animals to live in their respective habitats.

Our explorations may take us through muddy areas, so we suggest the children wear old shoes or rubber boots.

Offered: May-June
Science Framework Content Standards:
K.2, 1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2



To schedule a program or for more information, please call 938-2117.