

Explore West River: Tips and Preparation

Checklist:

- Water bottle:** Even on a cool day, it's important to stay hydrated!
- Sun protection:** Sunscreen, a hat, and/or some sunglasses can all be important to make sure you're comfortable during your time outside, and also afterwards
- Bug protection:** Bug spray and long sleeves/pants can help keep off mosquitoes and even ticks. Make sure to check for ticks when you get home, too, just in case!
- The right clothes:** Make sure to check the weather, and bring an extra layer or a raincoat as needed! Also make sure that the shoes you're wearing are good shoes for walking in a natural environment; sneakers might be a better choice than flip-flops!
- Reference materials:** Do you have your **Nature Checklist**? What about your **Numbered Nature Walk** guide? Whether you use the materials provided by West River or your own resources, make sure you have them ready ahead of time, so that it doesn't take too much effort to record your observations, or identify poison ivy!

Extra tips:

- Poison ivy prevention:** Remember the rhymes: "Leaves of three, let it be" and "Hairy vine, no friend of mine." When in doubt, don't touch any plants that aren't growing on the path!
- Tick prevention:** Staying on the path can help a little when it comes to ticks; most important is for everyone to do thorough tick checks afterwards!
- COVID safety:** Although the sign-up process helps keep families separate from one another, make sure to carry masks and hand sanitizer, in case something happens where you need to be within 6 feet of someone from a different household.
- Marsh Trail specific preparation:** The Marsh Trail is a cool, unique place on campus, but that means it has a few unique safety considerations! If the grass is damp, some of the boardwalk areas of the trail may also be wet, and therefore slippery. Walk carefully! And though staying on the path can help prevent ticks, always do a thorough tick check after walking the Marsh Trail, including checking ankles for seed ticks, which are very small.

For more information and tips about staying safe and having fun outdoors, check out the *How-to: Camping Skills* video series on West River's YouTube channel (click below):

