

# Students learn by observing nature

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The Niobrara Valley Outdoor Education Partnership is a group of enthusiastic and dedicated outdoor education professionals and volunteers who work together to bring outdoor and environmental learning opportunities to the communities in the Niobrara River Valley.

The group's vision is to preserve the Niobrara Valley's extraordinary natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.

Their mission is to promote local education leading to the understanding, enjoyment and sustainable utilization of outdoor resources.

Partners include the Niobrara Council, which spearheads the group, the Nebraska Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Middle and Lower Niobrara Natural Resource Districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension (4-H), The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, area teachers, as well as other nature enthusiasts and interested citizens.

Recent projects included the annual Fall Nature Fest at Fort Niobrara, after school nature clubs for elementary students in Valentine and Springview, and Outdoor Family Fun Day at Smith Falls.

Upcoming projects in 2015 include International Migratory Bird Month Hikes, Niobrara Council Summer Camps, Nature Fest, Springview School Resource Day, 4-H Skill Day and others.

All events are free and open to the public or to specific age groups, depending on the activity.

Many of the projects take place outside of school hours but, the the partnership also offers programs to enrich daily teaching experiences for classroom teachers.



## Outdoor learning

CHILDREN LEARN about the parts of a tree with Jen Corman of the Nebraska Forest Service during last fall's "After School Nature Club" in Valentine. The After School Nature Club is in Springview this spring.