



2026-2027

Missouri Department of Conservation - Discover Nature Schools
TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATION
Nature Unleashed

GRANT PARTIES AND PURPOSE: This Loan Agreement is between the Missouri Department of Conservation (“Department”) and _____ (name of school) (“Recipient”). The purpose of the grant is to reimburse bus transportation costs for the Discover Nature Schools field experience(s).

GRANT PERIOD: The period of this grant is July 1, 2026 to May 31, 2027. The grant period begins on the date of the approval letter. Costs incurred prior to the grant period are ineligible for reimbursement.

REQUIREMENTS: Any travel must be to provide hands-on outdoor learning experiences directly related to *Discover Nature Schools* (DNS) curriculum to give students the opportunity to explore lessons in an outdoor setting. **Eligible** field experiences:

- Must occur at an outdoor area with natural features.
- Must provide students with opportunities to explore and investigate using student guides and applicable science tools as set forth in the *Field Experience Guidance* section of the Teacher Guide (*Nature Unleashed* pages 270-271)
- During the field experience, *DNS* lessons should be teacher or chaperone-led. This allows the teacher the opportunity to gain experience in teaching lessons outdoors and connect prior learning from the school yard.
- Examples of destinations include: MDC Conservation area or MDC Nature Center, state park, city or county park, national forest, fish hatchery, or other area as agreed upon by their local conservation educator.

REIMBURSEMENT: Reimbursement is for actual transportation costs only and cannot include admission fees, food, fees for area shelters, or lodging. Trips must be within 100 miles of school (one way) and within the state of Missouri. More than one trip may be included up to \$3500 for reimbursement: however, maximum reimbursement will not exceed a total of \$7 per student per year.

Upon the conclusion of school year field experiences and by June 15 of each year, the Discover Nature School agrees to submit the Annual Report and Evaluation containing the location of the field experience(s) that occurred during the grant period. The Department will provide the Annual Report and Evaluation form via email by April 15. If the Annual Report and Evaluation is not submitted by the lead teacher from the Discover Nature School, then the Department may terminate this Agreement at its discretion. To receive reimbursement, the Discover Nature School must provide paid receipts for actual costs from a bus vendor or, if using school-owned buses, costs on school letterhead with administrator signature by no later than September 1, 2027.

Send all receipts to: DNS Grant Administrator PO Box 180 Jefferson City, MO 65102

LEGAL COMPLIANCE, INDEMNITY SAFETY & HOLD HARMLESS:

The Discover Nature School hereby agrees to comply with all laws and regulations applicable to it, and to take all reasonable and lawfully required steps to ensure the safety of the public during the performance of this cooperative agreement and the provision of all public programs and activities furthered by it, and the Discover Nature School agrees to indemnify and hold harmless MDC, and its agents and employees, from any claim or suit arising out of, or in connections with this cooperative agreement and the provision of all public programs and activities furthered by it.

APPROPRIATION: Funds for this program must be appropriated for each fiscal year. The DNS and MDC’s obligations hereunder shall not be binding upon MDC for any period in which funds have not been appropriated. The recipient agrees to provide detailed receipts for actual costs clearly showing proof of payment for approved travel expenditures within 30 days after the *DNS field experience*.



MDC CONSERVATION AREA VISITS: Proper procedures must be followed to ensure the health of native ecosystems. Wildlife may only be captured using methods as directed and released unharmed at the point of capture following brief inspections. No wildlife may be removed from the area visited. If any plants will be collected, contact Malissa.Briggler@mdc.mo.gov to obtain a Letter of Authorization for Plant Collecting. When doing water studies, cleaning protocols are essential to avoid transfer of organisms or pathogens between water bodies and ensure aquatic ecosystems remain healthy. Access these procedures from the MDC Teachers Portal at education.mdc.mo.gov.

FIELD EXPERIENCES: The following are the anticipated field experiences. Information regarding the actual field experiences will be included in the final report as described above. Destinations may be added with approval of the MDC Conservation Educator contact. Unapproved designations are not eligible for reimbursement.