

Ferry Beach Ecology School

Spring Trip 2009

April 28th – May 1st

NEWSLETTER # 1

For over 25 years the sixth grade students at the Ipswich Middle School have spent one week exploring science through natural surroundings. In the past we have gone to such places as Thompson Island in Boston Harbor, Sandwich and Charlton Massachusetts and Freedom, New Hampshire. For the past three years the Ipswich Middle School has spent a week learning about ecology at the Ferry Beach Ecology School located in Saco, Maine. At Ferry Beach the students have a great opportunity to explore various ecosystems that relate to their middle school science curriculum.

Below I have provided information about the trip. On the last page you'll find the **Interest and Payment Survey**. Please take a moment to fill out this survey and have your child return it to me no later than **Friday November 21, 2008**.

What is Ferry Beach Ecology School all about?

Ferry Beach Ecology School is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to providing ecological education to 3rd-8th grade classes. The curriculum at Ferry Beach focuses on hands-on lessons where the outdoors is used as the classroom. Students have the opportunity to explore a variety of ecosystems including beach and dunes, forests, rocky tide pools and salt marshes. Each lesson relates to the Massachusetts State Frameworks. These lessons are available online at www.fbes.org

How much does it cost to attend Ferry Beach Ecology School?

It will cost each student **\$265** to attend Ferry Beach. This covers the cost of all meals, activities, sleeping arrangements and transportation. The students do not need any spending money while attending Ferry Beach. Students will have the opportunity to purchase a Ferry Beach Ecology School t-shirt and/or field guide for approximately \$20. I will be taking orders for these items when we return from the trip.

How do I pay for the trip?

Attached to this newsletter is the Interest/Payment Survey form. Please choose a payment option and **return the form to Mr. Murphy by FRIDAY November 21, 2008**. There are 3 payment options:

Option 1: a one time payment due NO LATER than March 13, 2009

Option 2: a two payment option where the first payment is due no later than December 12, 2008 and the second/final payment is due no later than March 13, 2009

Option 3: a *four month payment plan* where payments are due on or before the 13th of each month starting in December, and ending in March.

What do I do if I am unable to afford the trip but am interested?

Please contact Cheryl Forster 356-3535 ext. 160 to discuss the option of a scholarship.

What if I choose not to send my child to Ferry Beach?

The students who do not attend the Ferry Beach Ecology School trip will take daily field trips with middle school faculty not attending the trip. Students may travel to such places as the Boston Duck Tour, Museum of Science or the Peabody Essex Museum. The total cost of the field trips will be approximately \$50 per student. Many more details regarding the field trips will be available in February.

What does a typical daily schedule look like?

Typical Daily Schedule

(Group in charge of supervision indicated in parentheses)

7:00 am	Students wake up (IMS Teachers)
8:00-9:00	Breakfast (All)
9:00-9:30	Rec. Time (All)
9:30-11:30	Morning Lesson (FBES staff)
11:30-12:30	Free Time (IMS Teachers)
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch (All)
1:30-2:00	Rec. Time (IMS Teachers)
2:00-4:00	Afternoon Lesson (FBES staff)
4:00-5:30	Free Time (IMS Teachers)
5:30-6:30	Dinner (All)
6:30-7:00	Rec. Time (IMS Teachers)
7:00-8:30	Evening Lesson (FBES staff)
8:30-9:00	Back to Dorms: Lights out at 9:00. Stories, songs, etc. (FBES staff)
9:00 pm	IMS Teachers in charge of supervision for the night.

How many adults attend the trip and who is in charge of the students when they arrive?

Many of the sixth grade teachers and a few other faculty members attend the Ferry Beach Ecology School trip as Ipswich chaperones. Also, Cheryl Forster will be joining us for one day as well. The staff at Ferry Beach consists of approximately 15 adults. All of the adults have experience working with children and experience working in the outdoor setting at Ferry Beach. These “naturalists” (a.k.a. teachers) have earned a variety of college degrees in Outdoor Recreation Leadership and Management, Science in Society, Environmental Science, Biology and Psychology. Please go to www.fbes.org and click on the link to *FBES Staff* for more detailed information about each staff member. The student to Ipswich staff ratio is expected to be 10:1. This is also true for the Ferry Beach staff during the daily lessons, 10 students per 1 naturalist.

What should I pack for the trip?

A detailed supply list will be sent home in March, or you can check it out on line at www.fbes.org

Is there a nurse on site?

Ferry Beach has a registered nurse who lives on-site and who is on-call 24 hours a day. The nurse is responsible for dispensing medication and for any other medical needs during the week. You will be asked to fill out detailed health forms for your child. These forms will be reviewed by Deb Watson our school nurse then be sent to Ferry Beach a week before we arrive. The nurse at Ferry Beach will call ahead of time if she has any questions she would like to address before we arrive.

Where is the nearest hospital?

The nearest hospital is Southern Maine Medical Center and it is located 5 miles from Ferry Beach.

What type of transportation is used?

The day of the trip you will be asked to drop off your student and all of his/her gear to school. The gear will be loaded on a 24 foot rental truck and the students will take yellow school buses up to Ferry Beach. We will return Friday in the same manner and you are asked to pickup your student on the day we return.

Where will the students sleep?

Ferry beach has three main buildings that will house the students. The buildings are set up with several rooms on each floor. Depending on the building and the floor, the students will be in a room with 3-4 people. The Ipswich Staff will be responsible for the students at nighttime. The Ipswich Staff rooms will be located at the end of each hall.

Can they choose their roommates?

In February students will be asked to fill out a roommate survey form. They will have the opportunity to choose up to five other students with whom they would like to share a room. I will do my very best to match at least one request.

Can the students call home?

Students will not be allowed to call home. Also, they may not bring a cell phone. Although this may be difficult for some students, if each student were able to call home they would miss out on many of the lessons and fun activities that are planned. If we, as the Ipswich Staff or the Ferry Beach Staff have a concern, we will be sure to contact you. We do realize that some students have not been away from home for an extended period of time: not to worry, we will take good care of them!

Can I send my student mail?

DEFINITELY! We will be sending home the address in which you can send them mail in a future newsletter. No e-mail or faxes, please!

I hope that this newsletter was helpful. Please contact Mr. Murphy if you have any further questions. Be looking for the next newsletter in January.

Sincerely,

Kevin Murphy
356-3535 x 121, kmurphy@ipswichschools.org