



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Assateague Island National Seashore

PO Box 38, 8586 Beach Rd.
Chincoteague, VA 23336
757-336-6577 (phone) 757-336-5203 (fax)
www.nps.gov/asis

Environmental Education Field Trip Guidelines

Environmental education is an important part of the mission of the National Park Service (NPS). National Parks are America's largest classrooms. Assateague Island National Seashore offers free, fun, standards-based activities and programs for all grade levels.

Things to remember:

- Bring your Confirmation Form with you the day of the program. It will serve as your group's entrance fee waiver and provides program meeting locations. Also be sure to share the Chaperone Responsibilities with all adults that will be accompanying the students.
- Your program takes place on the Virginia end of Assateague Island, *not in Maryland*. Please make a copy of the directions for the bus driver.



Missed programs may not be rescheduled. Program time will not be extended due to late arrivals. Please call if there are extenuating circumstances.

Facilities:

- Food or beverages are not available on the Virginia end of Assateague Island. A variety of eating establishments and grocery stores are located in the town of Chincoteague.
- Restrooms with flush toilets are available in the Herbert H. Bateman Educational & Administrative Center. There is a portable toilet near the Toms Cove Visitor Center. More portable toilets are available near the beach parking lots. Please allow sufficient time before your scheduled program for a restroom stop.
- There are a limited number of picnic tables available seasonally at the beach parking lots. Check with Toms Cove Visitor Center staff for locations.

Tips for a Safe and Comfortable Visit:

- Long sleeves and long pants tucked into socks help to discourage mosquito and tick bites. Insect repellent may be helpful but do not allow young children to apply repellent by themselves. Do not apply repellent directly to a child's skin. First apply it to the palms of your hands and then apply it to the child. Do not apply repellent to children's hands since they may touch their eyes and mouth. If using repellent containing DEET on children, make certain that it contains only very low concentrations of DEET. Conduct thorough tick checks after the programs.

- Activities will take place outdoors. Hats, sunscreen, rain gear and several layers of clothing and outerwear are recommended. Remember that in the spring it is usually much cooler and windier on Assateague than on the mainland.
- If it is thundering/lightning, outdoor programs will be canceled for safety. Please seek shelter in a building or vehicle, not under a tree! In some cases, alternative indoor programming may be available.
- Wear comfortable clothing that can get dirty. Many programs require students to get their feet wet and muddy. Be sure that footwear is appropriate for hiking on the trails and/or beach and that water shoes (water sandals, aquasocks, old tennis shoes, hip waders, tall boots) are snug fitting. No flip-flops or crocs please.

Aquarium Talk - For the beach portion of the program, wear footwear that is appropriate for walking on the beach.

Beach Walk - Footwear that is appropriate for walking on the beach.

Marine Explorers - Wet and muddy to the knees. Water shoes and clothing that can get wet. A dry change of clothes, including shoes, and a towel is recommended.

Salt Marsh Adventure - Feet wet and muddy. Water shoes and pants that can get wet. A dry change of shoes is recommended.

Help Protect Assateague:

Please discuss these rules and regulations with your group before your visit to the island. Help them to understand that Assateague Island is a protected area, a special place for plants and animals, and that they are visitors in someone else's home.

- Please keep to designated trails to avoid stepping on or disturbing plants and wildlife. Poison ivy and ticks call Assateague home and are best avoided by staying on trails.
- Loud noises and movement can disturb wildlife. Walk and talk quietly to increase your chances of observing a variety of animals.
- If you care, you won't share! It is illegal to feed wildlife. Their digestive systems are not equipped to handle 'people food.' Feeding encourages wildlife to congregate on roads where they may be hit and killed by vehicles. Many of Assateague's gulls have become food thieves because people have fed them. There have been cases of rabies on the island; please do not approach any wildlife.
- Leave only footprints. Litter does not belong in your National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges. It can harm wildlife and people. Please dispose of all litter in the dumpsters in the parking lots.





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Chaperone Responsibilities

Please give each chaperone a copy.

Thank you for volunteering to chaperone an educational field trip to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge/Assateague Island National Seashore. You are an important partner. Your guidance and participation will help ensure a successful learning experience.



- Students should be assigned to their chaperone in advance of the trip (a 1:5 ratio is ideal). These young people will look to you for leadership and to set boundaries.
- All visitors are required to comply with regulations. In order to protect this extraordinary resource, your help is needed. If you would like to learn more about why these rules are in place, contact your program leader or speak to them after the program.
 - Please do not feed or otherwise interact with horses, gulls or other wildlife.
 - Enjoy wildlife from a distance.
 - Please do not pick vegetation.
 - Please stay *on* trails and *off* dunes.
- Be safety conscious. To avoid poison ivy and ticks, stay on trails. Do not allow students to wander from the program area or to engage in dangerous behavior. Smoking is prohibited during the program.
- Be an active participant! Stay with your group. Set an example by joining activities. Students will follow your lead. If you are having fun and actively learning, they will too.
- Guide the learning activities. Keep students' attention focused on the program leader. Encourage respect for the program leader, the resource, and each other. Please manage behavior problems as they arise. The best learning experience allows students to compose their own answers and make individual discoveries.
- Assateague Island National Seashore staff are committed to providing a stimulating educational experience. Your visit ensures today's students will be equipped with knowledge that will help them to make responsible decisions about our natural resources in tomorrow's world.

Please accept our sincere appreciation for your time and effort to make the trip a memorable one.



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Directions

From the North: Follow Highway 13 south, through Pocomoke City, MD, into Virginia. About 4 miles into Virginia, you will approach a stoplight in Oak Hall which marks Route 175. Turn left (east) onto Route 175. Follow it about 10 miles to the town of Chincoteague. After crossing the drawbridge, stay on Maddox Blvd./Beach Rd. for about 2.5 miles which will take you directly onto Assateague Island.

From the South: Follow Highway 13 north to Oak Hall, Virginia. In Oak Hall you will approach a stoplight which marks Route 175. Turn right (east) onto Route 175. Follow it for about 10 miles to the town of Chincoteague. After crossing the drawbridge, stay on Maddox Blvd./Beach Rd. for about 2.5 miles which will take you directly onto Assateague Island.

Please allow adequate travel time! The Chincoteague bridge opens for boat traffic and could add an extra 10 minutes to your travel time.

Programs with the National Park Service take place in a variety of locations. Teachers, please stop by the Toms Cove Visitor Center (8586 Beach Rd.) to meet with the rangers presenting the programs to coordinate logistics. The Toms Cove Visitor Center is located on the right-hand side of the road just before the beach parking areas.

