



The Jacob's Well Natural Area School Program

Jacob's Well has been a revered site to many for over 12,000 years, and home to a rich and diverse ecosystem. It is really not a well at all, but an artesian spring that can surge up at thousands of gallons per minute out of one of the longest underwater caves in Texas. It is the start of the beautiful Cypress Creek that flows through Wimberley, sustaining Wimberley's Blue Hole, the Blanco River, and finally replenishing the Aransas Bay estuaries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Jacob's Well has served both native and settler communities who not only gained nourishment, but a place that held a sense of the sacred. Today, increased groundwater demands directly threaten Jacob's Well, and the need for conservation education is very real - both for the long-term sustainability of the spring and for all species dependent on it. Jacob's Well has stopped flowing for the first time in history during this decade, primarily due to overpumping. Educating students may be the single most effective tool we have to save this spring and the creeks that emerge from it.

Our school program begins on site with activities that address where our water comes from, how water interacts with habitat, and how to conserve it. This is followed by a tour to the spring, and along the way students will hear stories about the floods along the creek, scuba divers, and how the grasses were so tall in the past, that deer had to stand up to be seen. We will share how we are carefully retuning a mobile home park to a truly natural area.

Not only is teaching conservation important, but time spent outdoors is extremely valuable as it can reestablish a sense of connection with the natural world. Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, has documented that children become happier, healthier and smarter through more contact with nature. The Texas Legislature has advocated for the well being of children through the creation of a formal state plan called *Texas Children in Nature*, to enable children to spend more time out-of-doors and to better understand our natural resources.

This is the Jacob's Well Experience:

An investigative journey that calls to students to explore the special world of an ancient artesian spring, with challenges that capture their imagination and create a bond that will empower them to become fruitful caretakers of the earth.

We place a premium on:

Connecting emotionally to the natural world, which inspires stewardship and offers relief from the underlying angst of a culture disconnected from their biological roots. The relationship with the natural world is deepened by a scientific understanding of complex ecosystems, where all biotic and abiotic resources are powerfully intertwined. To manage this relationship, we equip the students with ways of interacting successfully with their environment - sustainably and with awareness, which empowers them to become fruitful caretakers of the earth.

We work to:

Reveal how beautiful exciting and full of promise the natural world is, not by filling their bucket, but lighting their fire.

We use these core strategies:

Inquiry-based education, where room is made for students to direct the investigation to allow for moments of personal discovery. Classroom and field science, hiking the site, models, demonstrations, narratives, art, and games are all approaches we use to create a positive experience. We strive to meet teacher-defined priorities, and take into account ethnic and cultural factors. We also see ourselves as a partner, sharing this journey by engaging in a two-way dialogue-the community teaches us as well.



Jacob's Well Field Trip Information

☐ Registration

Advance Registration is required for all school programs.
To register, please go to our website and select
Program is NOT confirmed until you receive a confirmation notice.

☐ Days

School Programs run on Wednesdays except during holidays.
There is a calendar on our website under the "Education/Registration" tab.

☐ Times

The educational program runs from 9am – 12:00pm, with the option of lunch and games from 12pm – 1pm.

☐ Numbers of Participants

Limit of 60 students per visit
We require 1 adult for every 10 students, although more are welcome.

☐ Cost per Participant

\$5 Adults and Students, with a minimum fee of \$60
We adjust our costs for Title 1 schools.

☐ Payment

Payment is due on the day of arrival. This allows us to adjust the count to include unplanned absences or additions.
We accept cash and checks made payable to the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association.

☐ Cancellation

A \$60 fee will be assessed if cancellations occur with less than 2 weeks notice.

☐ Arrival Time

Please make plans to get here at 8:45 am as the site is difficult to find.
If you are late, the program may have to be shortened.

☐ Lunch and Water

Picnic tables are available.
We do have a way to refill water bottles, but please bring them full.

☐ Facilities

We have bathrooms and a small building on 88 acres of land.

☐ Preparation

Please wear sturdy shoes, appropriate clothing, and bring a water bottle.

☐ Inclement Weather

Heavy rain, thunder and lightening, and temperatures below 35 degrees can cancel a tour.
Please contact your Jacob's Well coordinator if it is rainy, and then do a celebratory dance.

☐ Directions

Please visit www.jacobswellspring.org under the "Visit" tab for a map and directions