

Participating in Spaces & Species

- This program is designed for 3rd–5th grade students; 3rd grade participation recommended for spring.
- The maximum group size is 32 students in order to accommodate small group activities and limitations of the laboratory.
- Field trips are offered during the fall and spring on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- The number of *Spaces & Species* field trips offered each season is contingent upon volunteer Outdoor Education Leader availability.
- There is no charge for a field trip.
- Four adult chaperones are required per class.
- Schools are responsible for providing transportation to the Preserve for a field trip. A reimbursement assistance fund has been established to offset transportation costs for qualifying (Title 1 or low income) schools.
- Reservations for field trips occur in spring and fall. For more information, call 650-691-1200 or visit www.openspace.org/ss.



Daniels C. Nature Center, Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Volunteer Opportunities

Are you interested in working in a beautiful natural setting, and sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm with others? The Nature Center offers two different ways to get involved as a volunteer with the District. All necessary training is provided to be successful in these two programs. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Outdoor Education Leaders

Working in a team of four, Outdoor Education Leader (OEL) volunteers facilitate and guide students on *Spaces & Species* field trips. Small group activities allow OELs to engage students in hands-on discovery and nature inquiry in a fun and educational manner. To participate as an OEL, you are asked to volunteer two weekdays per month from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. during the spring and fall.

Nature Center Hosts

As a Nature Center Host (NCH), you staff the David C. Daniels Nature Center, greeting visitors, orienting them to the District and preserves, sharing natural history information, and providing pond study or wildlife viewing activities. To participate as an NCH, you are asked to volunteer one to two weekend days per month from approximately 12:00 noon until 5:00 p.m. (11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. late October through mid-November). The Nature Center is generally open April through mid-November.

If you are interested in these programs, contact the Docent Program Manager at 650-691-1200 or by email at docent@openspace.org.



Interpretive Signage at Alpine Pond, Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Created in 1972, the District is an independent special district that has preserved over 62,000 acres of public land and manages 26 open space preserves. The District's boundary extends from San Carlos to Los Gatos and to the Pacific Ocean from south of Pacifica to the Santa Cruz County line.

The District's purpose is to create a regional green-belt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment.

In Case of Emergency

If you experience an emergency on District lands (fire, accident, or other immediate threat to life or property), call **911** or contact the District's 24-hour emergency dispatch number for District rangers at **650-968-4411**. This phone number is for emergency use only.

Green Tip

Save paper! Did you know this brochure is available online at www.openspace.org/activities/downloads/ss_dnc_brochure.pdf and can be downloaded and saved to your mobile device? Please do your part by returning or recycling maps when you're through.

For More Information

Visit www.openspace.org, or call 650-691-1200.



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Revised and reprinted 11-2013

David C. Daniels Nature Center

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve



Spaces & Species: Exploring Natural Communities

An Environmental Science
Education Program For Grades 3-5



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

David C. Daniels Nature Center

The David C. Daniels Nature Center facility is one of a kind – the only one the District has built and operates to date. Conceptualized as early as 1985, built in 1995, and opened to the public in 1996, the Daniels Nature Center was funded in part by the Peninsula Open Space Trust in partnership with the David and Judy Daniels family in memory of their son David C. Daniels.

The 600-square-foot building is mighty in attributes even if small in size. The focus of the Daniels Nature Center is to interpret the local environment (both flora and fauna) of Skyline Ridge Preserve, with an emphasis on Alpine Pond.

Pond strata mobiles hang from the ceiling to imaginatively depict the plants and animals that live at different depths in a pond.

There is a **large-scale natural communities exhibit** with a hands-on element that allows visitors to create a pond food web, and discover that four natural communities (often thought of as habitats) – grassland, mixed evergreen forest, chaparral, and pond – surround the area just outside the Daniels Nature Center.

Other features include a **Skulls and Skins** display, where children especially like to compare different animals and make observations. The Daniels Nature Center is also home to a live, captive-bred gopher snake.

Multimedia Nature Tours

The District offers self-guided, nature tours, similar to audio tours found in museums. District staff and docents guide you down the trail with audio narrative and encourage you to see things you might otherwise miss on your hike. Listening devices with multiple languages (English; Spanish; Chinese) are available for check-out from the Daniels Nature Center. Two audio tours are available – a short family-focused version around Alpine Pond, and a longer hike (approximately 2 miles) that takes you through four different natural communities or habitat types. The nature tours are also available for downloading or viewing from the District's Web site. For more information, visit the Web site: www.openspace.org/naturetours.



Daniels C. Nature Center, Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Hours of Operation:

Weekends, generally from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m., April through mid-October (11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. late October through mid-November).

The Daniels Nature Center is open to the public free of charge and staffed by volunteer Nature Center Hosts.

Additional information about Skyline Ridge Preserve and Alpine Pond is also available to visitors when the Nature Center is closed. Interpretive signs on the exterior wall of the Nature Center and adjacent to the building provide information on the Preserve's history, local wildlife, and an overview of the pond and its inhabitants.

A 0.5-mile trail loops around Alpine Pond, providing visitors with an opportunity to enjoy a short, easy-access hike.

How to Get There:

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve is just a 35-minute drive from Palo Alto, and features scenic Alpine Pond and the Daniels Nature Center.

For convenient access to the Daniels Nature Center and Alpine Pond, park in the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve parking lot, located on the northwest corner of the Page Mill Road/Alpine Road and Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) intersection (across Skyline Boulevard on the right). Walk through the tunnel under Alpine Road to reach the Daniels Nature Center.

Spaces & Species: Exploring Natural Communities

Spaces & Species is an innovative environmental science education field trip program offered at Skyline Ridge Preserve, and the Daniels Nature Center. In this unique setting, children have the opportunity to focus on the connections between themselves and their natural world, and begin to understand the importance and benefit of open space in their community.

Spaces: natural environments that provide homes for wildlife and places of special significance to people.

Species: all the different forms of life – mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, plants, insects, bacteria, and micro-organisms that inhabit the Earth.

The Main Theme

Appreciation of and caring for the environment is the underlying theme of *Spaces & Species*. Key concepts support this theme through hands-on learning experiences. The concepts are:

- All living organisms must have a habitat.
- All living organisms are interdependent with each other and with the physical environment.
- Living creatures have adaptations that help them survive in their habitat.
- Each organism fills a specific niche in the environment.
- Nature is constantly changing.
- People can choose to act responsibly toward all living things and the environment.

Program Design

The *Spaces & Species* program offers:

- Small groups;
- An outdoor setting;
- Individual attention from specially trained Outdoor Education Leaders (volunteers);
- Program content aligned with California curriculum standards;
- Sensory activities and experiential learning;
- Interactive lessons at the Nature Center's laboratory station;
- Pre- and post-field trip activities.

Out in the Field

The 4- to 5-hour field trip has three main components during which students explore, discover, and learn. Each school group is divided into smaller groups that rotate through the following activities:

Habitat Hike

Students investigate mixed evergreen forest, grassland, and chaparral communities to learn about ecological diversity, adaptation, and the interrelationships between plants, animals, and humans. After observing and identifying the essential elements of a habitat, students will be able to compare these "natural neighborhoods" with their own neighborhoods.

Pond Prowl

While adventuring around the shore of Alpine Pond, students will explore for signs of wildlife. The children will learn about pond succession, the importance of wetlands, and the special characteristics of pond communities.



Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Aquatic Laboratory

At the lab station, students will investigate the macro-invertebrate life of Alpine Pond. The Outdoor Education Leaders will collect pond organisms for the children to study. Using microscopes, students will identify aquatic insects, crustaceans, mollusks, a variety of plants, and more.