

Invertebrate Lab Host Instructions

Thanks so much for coming to the Invertebrate Lab today!

Following the school schedule for fish school, you will have half of the students for half of the time, and then exchange with Fish School next door for the other half. Usually this is about 10 minutes for 10 people – 12 times in a day, but just think of it as pleasant stop-in visits, and be flexible. No two visits are exactly alike.

Welcome the whole group over the railing, and invite your half in to the invertebrate lab. Let them gather around the sluice for a minute, and point out any interesting invertebrates, by gently lifting a rock and exclaiming over the big hellgrammite or lots of mayflies. Tell them all these bugs and crustaceans live in the South River, but it's hard to see them there, so we just brought them up for a visit to get to know them better. You might make a point of saying that most of them are the babies of insects they already know in the air, and that it's like a whole ecosystem or city under the rocks in the stream.

Invite students to use the basters or brushes to bring individual invertebrates into the petrie dishes, but not to stress them too much, and to return them to the aerated tank after they have had a chance to look at them. Whenever someone finds (identifies on the pink sheet, or just recognizes) a mayfly or stonefly, let them ring the bell to celebrate good water quality. There will likely be much squealing and excitement, and that's a good thing.

Each student may take a paper as they leave, to check off all the critters they saw and identified.

At about the 10 minute mark, tell the students to put their critters back in the water, and go next door to get to know some South River fish. Help make a pleasant exchange of kids with Fish School, and repeat.

After 3 rotations (which is 6 small groups of visitors) in the invertebrate lab, it is lunch time. Lunch is provided by the school for you at the picnic shelter at the bottom of the hill. And then we have the other half of the students in similar rotations. The day is over at 2, and you can collapse and go home!

Many thanks for coming today, for making the invertebrate lab pleasant and meaningful. These students are more likely to care about the river because of you!