The Michigan Wildlife Conservancy

The MWC is a non-profit organization. It has helped restore fish and wildlife populations and their habitats since 1982.
The MWC developed the *Becoming Outdoors Smart in Summer* (BOSS) guidebook in 2014 to address a state and national problem.

- Kids are growing up without a broad knowledge of the outdoors.
- Where will the next generation of conservationists come from?
You become “outdoors smart” by developing observation skills - learning how to “read” the landscape like some people read a book.

These skills are above and beyond what’s being taught in most schools.
The BOSS program eliminates most of the reasons parents cite for not involving their kids in a summer outdoor education program:

- Can’t afford it
- Family schedule
- Summers are hectic
- Want to keep family together
Becoming Outdoors Smart in Summer
The BOSS Guidebook is...

- Unique
- Family-oriented
- Schedule friendly
- Community funded
- Fun-filled education
Quick Facts About the BOSS Guidebook

- Targets kids in 2nd-6th grades
- Is free, subject to availability of local sponsorships
- No rigid schedule to follow
- Can be completed in 20-30 hours over the entire summer
- No work to turn in
- Can be accomplished close to home, little travel required
- Self-taught with help from parents, grandparents, or friends
- Can be used as a scout troop project or part of other educational programs
The BOSS Guidebook has

Ten Education Units:

- MICHIGAN TREES: Tree Surveys in Modern Forestry
- WHAT BIRDS TELL US: Song Birds as Indicators of Habitat Quality
- FROGS, SNAKES, AND MORE: Monitoring Reptiles and Amphibians
- BE AN ANIMAL TRACKER: Documenting Animal Tracks and Other Signs
- SOMETHING FISHY: Analyzing Stream Habitat for Fish
... Education Units:

- **MONARCHS ON THE MOVE: Great Migrations**
- **UNWANTED PLANTS: Understanding the Problem of Invasive Exotic Species**
- **ATTRACTING WILDLIFE: Landscape Analysis and Design for Wildlife**
- **THE BUZZ ABOUT BEES: The Importance of Pollinators to Agriculture and Wild Plants**
- **THE BIG PICTURE: Michigan Landscapes and Agriculture**
Points Are Earned For Work On Each Unit

Charting Your BOSS Points!
MWC provides continual support to BOSS guidebook users through a secure Facebook group that is closed to others. Available to share progress, ask questions, provide feedback, and chat with other BOSS students and families!

facebook.com/groups/BOSSprogram
Some more photos from the BOSS Facebook page!
Parent Comments From 2014-2016

- “We had FUN, learned a lot and had some great 1:1 quality time... Thanks for letting us be a part of this fantastic program!”
- “I just want to let you know how wonderful I think this program is! The book is fantastic and my kids are motivated by it. Thanks so much-great work!.”
- “My daughter is learning a lot...this is an awesome program...thanks for doing it.”
- “My son loves the bird unit!”
- “We still love the tree unit. We were amazed that the majority were growing near our property.”
- “This program is just what I’ve been trying to find for my kids”
How BOSS is Supported Locally...

- Volunteer Advocates
  - Encourage participation
  - Distribute information
  - Identify local sites where participants can work on the education units

- Public Libraries Post Fliers and/or distribute guidebooks

- Local Newspapers Publish Press Releases
Local Support

- Community Stakeholders Invest in Our Future!
  - Service Groups
  - Community Foundations
  - Financial Institutions
  - Businesses
  - Conservation Organizations
  - Individuals

- Local Supporters Can Ensure That Kids are BOSS in Their Communities by Offering “Scholarships.”
  - Donations provide children with discounts or even free books.

- MWC has a Program to Recognize Sponsors at Local and State Levels.
For More Information Contact:

- Pat Rusz, Director of Wildlife Programs
  Email: prusz@MiWildlife.org

Michigan Wildlife Conservancy
6330 Drumheller Rd./P.O. Box 393
Bath, MI  48808
Phone: 517-641-7677
www.MiWildlife.org

Bengel Wildlife Center: Home of the Conservancy