

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM

# FIELD TRIP

PLANNING GUIDE



LAKE STURGEON  
*Acipenser fulvescens*

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This packet contains the tips and tricks that will help you plan a successful, fun and educational field trip to Great Lakes Aquarium. We look forward to working with your group!

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# BEFORE YOUR VISIT

## YOUR CONFIRMATION LETTER

Please check your letter to be sure that the information and dates are correct. This letter can be used as an invoice for purchase orders. Our staff use the details included to plan for your arrival. To make changes please call 218-740-3474 or send us an email at [education@glaquarium.org](mailto:education@glaquarium.org).

## FIELD TRIP PLANNING

Minnesota and Wisconsin teachers are always admitted free to the Aquarium. You are welcome to visit prior to your trip to preview exhibits, talk to our staff and borrow pre-lesson materials or kits. Visit our website for curriculum links and class descriptions.

## ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Groups are scheduled to arrive at the Aquarium at a specific time. This ensures that your students and chaperones have the time and space to settle into your visit. If you arrive prior to or after your planned arrival time, you may be asked to wait on the bus or outside.

## YOUR SCHEDULE

If you are taking a class or eating lunch during your visit, you have also been provided with a schedule that details who should be where and when. Please share this schedule with students and chaperones prior to your visit. Transition time between events has been considered in making this schedule for you. Please be sure to set a departure meeting time and place for your group.

## LUNCH

Snacks, soda and juice are available for purchase in the gift shop. There are many restaurants both fast food and sit down within walking distance. You are also welcome to bring bag lunches. Your group will receive a group locker to store coats, backpacks and lunches upon arrival. Food must be eaten in designated areas only. Indoor lunch space is limited. Please inquire about lunch space prior to your arrival. Unlimited space is available for picnics in the park surrounding the Aquarium. Please dispose of trash properly and do not feed the gulls.

## CHAPERONES

Chaperones are a vital part of your students' experience at the Aquarium. They must be 21 years of age. Please brief chaperones on expectations and responsibilities prior to your visit. (see page 7) Each student must be assigned to a teacher or chaperone in order to explore aquarium exhibits. You receive one free chaperone per ten students. Required adult to student ratios are as follows:

Grades pre-K-K	1:3
Grades 1-3	1:5
Grades 4-12	1:10

## NAMETAGS

Chaperones will be given special chaperone tags upon arrival at Great Lakes Aquarium. Students are required to have nametags that designate the school group and chaperone they are with. Templates are included on page 10 and 11.

# WHEN YOU ARRIVE

## DIRECTIONS

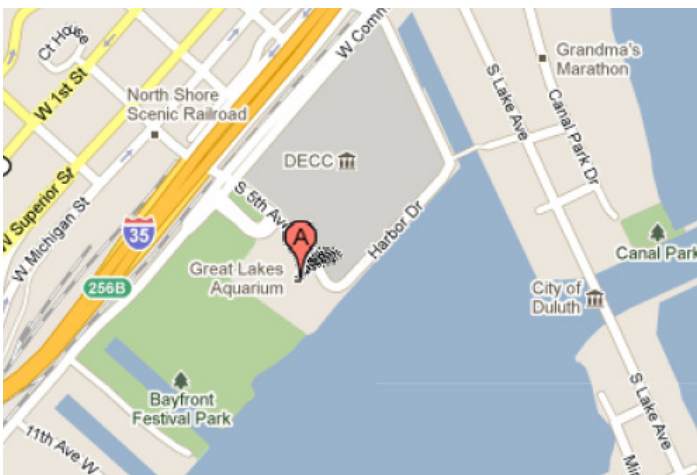
353 Harbor Drive, Duluth, MN 55802

From the South (Twin Cities area)  
From I-35 North take exit 256B (5th Avenue West). At the lights turn right on Harbor Drive. The Aquarium is 2 blocks on your right.

From the North East (North Shore area)  
Take Highway 61 to London Road (Highway 61 turns into London Road as you enter Duluth). At 26th Avenue East take I-35 South to exit 256B. Keep right to 5th Avenue West. At 5th Avenue West/Harbor Drive lights turn left. The Aquarium is 3 blocks on your right.

From the East (Wisconsin)  
Take Highway 53 North to I-35 North. Take exit 256B (5th Avenue West). At the lights turn right on Harbor Drive. The Aquarium is 2 blocks on your right.

From the North West (Iron Range cities)  
Follow signs for Highway 53 South to I-35 North. Take Northbound I-35 to exit 256B (5th Avenue West). At the light, turn right on Harbor Drive. The Aquarium is 2 blocks on your right.



## PARKING

Vehicle parking is included free of charge with your admission. Buses must park in the lower back corner of the lot.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE THE FIRST THING YOU WILL DO IS CHECK IN WITH AQUARIUM STAFF.

## UPON ARRIVAL AQUARIUM STAFF WILL:

1. Ask students and chaperones to be seated in the lobby in front of the water wall.
2. Check in with the lead teacher or group leader about:
  - Final attendance numbers (students, teachers, chaperones) and payment
  - Departure time and location
  - Gift Shop visitation
  - Chaperone groups
  - Class and program timing if applicable
3. Welcome the group with a brief orientation and review of behavior expectations (see page 6).
4. Provide a group locker, coat cans and lunch bins as needed.

## PAYMENT

Group payments are required. Individual payments will not be accepted. If students or chaperones are paying individually, the group leader must collect payments prior to arriving at the ticketing desk.

## RESTROOMS

Restrooms are located on the main level near the art gallery and on the second level past the *Freshwater Forest* exhibit.

# PLANNING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

## The Aquarium is YOUR classroom.

Many science concepts can be taught and reinforced through a visit to the Aquarium. Don't miss the opportunity to connect to Language Arts, Math and Social Studies as well. Bring your content specialists along for a one of kind class!

Contact our education department for ideas and support at [education@glaquarium.org](mailto:education@glaquarium.org). The possibilities are endless.

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## EXHIBIT EXPLORATION

We recommend allowing at least 1.5 hours to explore aquarium exhibits. An age appropriate exhibit guide worksheet is available on our website or by request. This can help guide and focus student exploration through the exhibit galleries. You may want to include your own questions, observation or discussion prompts.

Aquarium staff will provide a few pointers for exploring during your orientation. **For the enjoyment and safety of both animals and guests, students must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Please plan accordingly.**

Great Lakes Aquarium is a mostly freshwater aquarium with an emphasis on Lake Superior and the Great Lakes Basin. Other ecosystems from around the world are featured in the *Amazing Amazon*, *Global Connections* and changeable salt water gallery.

## DAILY INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Educational programs are provided to all aquarium guests throughout the day. Examples include reptile encounters, animal feedings and the Isle Royale Dive Show. Check with an Aquarium staff member to learn more about what is happening during your stay.

## PRE and POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

Your visit to the Aquarium can be a one time experience but it can also be part of a larger unit. Our staff is able and willing to offer suggestions for increasing the impact of your visit across the curriculum. Curriculum, kits and other resources are available upon request or online at [www.glaquarium.org/education](http://www.glaquarium.org/education).

Pre and post lessons ideas are available to complement each class taught at Great Lakes Aquarium. Please contact us at [education@glaquarium.org](mailto:education@glaquarium.org) for copies or support.

## TAKING THE FISH HOME

Students will have stories to share when they arrive home. To encourage conversation and continued learning, we have included an age appropriate take home piece in your confirmation packet. This document includes background information for adults, sample questions for guardians to ask children and a free adult ticket for a return visit.

# BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

It is important that everyone is on the same page about what is expected of them on the field trip.

We ask that you review and enforce the following expectations during your visit. These help ensure that both animals and guests have a good time.

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## BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

### 1. Stay with your group.

Wherever you go today in the aquarium you must be with your group AND an adult. There will be no lone rangers.

### 2. Help protect the animals.

There are two fish you may touch at the Aquarium—the freshwater stingray and the lake sturgeon. Both fish live on the 2nd floor of the aquarium. Please touch them gently with just two fingers on their back avoiding their eyes, fins and tails. These are the **ONLY** tanks you may put your hands in.

### 3. The escalator only goes up.

There are three ways to get from the main level to the 2nd level of the aquarium. You may use the escalator, elevators or stairs. The escalator only goes UP and any students that try to go down the escalator will be asked to sit with a chaperone or teacher in the lobby for the rest of their stay.

### 4. Take a fish friendly photo.

You are welcome to take pictures. Please turn off your flash as it scares the animals.

### 5. Be respectful of all visitors.

As you explore and have fun, please walk and use an inside voice. Be especially aware of children smaller than you.

## GIFT SHOP

Your group is welcome to visit the gift shop during your visit. Students will not be permitted in the gift shop without an adult. It is best if groups visit the shop earlier in their visit rather than at the very end. This will help your group depart on time. Please inform the Aquarium staff upon arrival if you do not want students to visit the gift shop.

## CONSEQUENCES

Groups that are unable to meet these expectations will be asked to leave.

## REMEMBER!

Aquarium staff throughout the building and at the ticketing booth are there to help.



# AQUARIUM EXHIBITS



Great Lakes Aquarium is a mostly freshwater aquarium. The animals and ecosystems featured are predominantly from the Great Lakes Basin. Special exhibit galleries showcase habitats and species from around the world. Visit the Amazing

Amazon to learn more about another large freshwater system or make global connections into our changeable saltwater gallery Masters of Disguise.

# FINAL CHECKLIST

## **SIX WEEKS BEFORE YOUR TRIP**

Confirm transportation.

Distribute maps, directions and parking information to bus driver and parent drivers.

If coming with other teachers, meet to solidify learning goals and activities.

## **TWO WEEKS BEFORE YOUR TRIP**

Finalize any class decisions and numbers with Aquarium staff ([education@glaquarium.org](mailto:education@glaquarium.org)).

Confirm chaperones. Provide them with chaperone handouts and an overview of learning goals or activities.

Facilitate pre-visit activities with your students.

## **ONE WEEK BEFORE YOUR TRIP**

Collect permission slips from students.

Gather paperwork and make arrangements for payment. Request purchase order from district or main office if applicable.

Prepare student nametags.

Assign students to chaperone groups.

Make copies of exhibit guides (if using them) and "take the fish home" questions.

## **THE DAY OF YOUR TRIP!**

Inform students and chaperones of group assignments.

Distribute student nametags.

Review learning/lunch plans, emergency procedures and behavior expectations.

Select a group meeting place and departure time.

Prepare a final head count of students, chaperones, teachers and bus drivers for use in payment processing.

Prepare to have a great time!

## **QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?**

Contact our education department at any time by email ([education@glaquarium.org](mailto:education@glaquarium.org)) or phone (218-740-2027). We work with groups of all sizes and compositions year round. Our goal is to help you have a great visit. Please feel free to ask us anything!

**GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM FIELD TRIP**

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**My Chaperone's name is**

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