Thank you for booking the Vive le Voyageur" Winter Fun Day at FortWhyte Alive. This program is designed to get your students outside and active in the winter, with the background of learning first-hand about life as a Northwest Company hivernant (over-wintering) Voyageur in the early 1800’s. Students will have the opportunity to trade for furs with our Chief, snowshoe, toboggan, eat snow taffy and play Voyageur Games.

**Appropriate Dress for Your Field Trip**

To ensure that students get the most out of their FortWhyte experience, we ask that they be appropriately dressed for a 4-hour outdoor excursion. All of our programs include time outdoors, regardless of weather. Comfort and safety are key in making this an enjoyable and memorable experience.

**Suggestions for Outdoor Dress**

Layering of clothing is very important in maintaining body temperature and in remaining dry. Four thin garments may offer the same degree of warmth as one thick overcoat, but the four layers allow much greater flexibility. Layers can be shed or added as temperature, wind, exertion, or other variables dictate. Waterproof outer layers and insulated winter boots are also important.

Young people are very concerned about their appearances. Remind them that they will enjoy their time better if they are prepared! (Use Pre-Visit Activity Winter Wear as an entry point for talking about appropriate winter dress.)

*Please share this information with other teachers that are coming to FWA with your group.*
GOAL

To gain an understanding of voyageur life through outdoor winter activities.

OBJECTIVES

Students will complete the following outdoor activities, as well as an assigned half-hour indoor lunch break:

1. Snowshoe Hike: Explore the trails through the forests and fields.
2. Voyageur Games: a selection of games to build strength, balance and most of all, teamwork.
3. Snow Taffy: Enjoy maple taffy produced from syrup by our taffy tender over a woodstove in the Sod House.
4. Tobogganing: Zip down the Richardson Rrrun, one of the highest slides in Winnipeg.
5. Trading with the Chief: Visit our volunteer chief in the North Tipi, and trade European goods for fur tokens.

VOCABULARY

Brigade: A group of voyageurs.

Ceinture Flêché: A very long woven sash used by the voyageurs. It would be wound around the waist many times to provide support and prevent hernia.

Hivernant: “Winterer”; an experienced voyageur who was able to travel and live in the western interior throughout the winter.

Made Beaver: A beaver pelt with guard hairs removed, ready for felting. Currency of the fur trade era.

Voyageur: French term that means traveler. This name was originally given to all those involved in the fur trade, but was later used more specifically to describe the French Canadians who transported furs by canoe.

Capot: Capots were a kind of a hooded wool coat worn by French settlers and traders. They were a commonly traded item during the fur trade.
LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

All of the books listed below relate to the theme of the fur trade, are recommended for young adults, and are available through the Winnipeg Public Libraries and/or the Manitoba Education Instructional Resources Library. You may wish to make these titles available in your classroom surrounding your field trip.

Books and activities with an Aboriginal perspective are indicated with a medicine wheel.

Fiction

- The Broken Blade and Wintering by William Durbin
- Bright Paddles by Marie Alice Downie
- The Red Sash by Jean Pendziwol
- Trouble at Fort LaPointe by Kathleen Ernst
- The Voyageur's Paddle by Kathy-Jo Wargin

Non-Fiction

- Early Voyageurs: The Incredible Adventures of the Fearless Fur Traders by Marie Savage
- Wilderness Journey: Reliving the Adventures of Canada’s Voyageurs by Sally and Ian Wilson
- Hudson’s Bay Company Adventures: Tales of Canada's Fur Traders by Elle Andra-Warner
- Radisson and desGroselliers: Fur Traders of the North by Katharine Bailey
- Adventurers by Christopher Moore
- The Fur Trade in Canada by Michael Payne
- Hudson’s Bay Company and Northwest Company by Jennifer Nault
- People of the Fur Trade by Irene Ternier Gordon
- A Visit With the People of Red River—A Young Person’s Guide and Resource Book by Judy and Barry McPherson (also available for purchase through the Manitoba Historical Society)
PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

WINTER WEAR (1 lesson)

Social Studies

What should you wear or bring to the field trip that will be warm enough for a whole day outside?

Watch FortWhyte Alive’s How to Dress for Winter video online at www.fortwhyte.org/howtodressforwinter/

Materials: A trunk full of clothing including hats, mitts, gloves, long underwear, jackets, ski pants, fleece pants, boots, sneakers, t-shirts, sweatpants, jeans, wool socks, cotton socks, etc.

Procedure:

1. Split class into small teams. You may choose to have each group use all the clothing, or just focus on one body part (head, legs, torso, hands etc.).
2. Have each team brainstorm the important points of dressing for the outdoors.
3. Have one student from each team be the "dresser".
4. Assign each group a winter activity to dress for.
5. When you say start, with vocal help from teammates, the dressers will hurry and dress themselves.
6. Once a team thinks their outfit is complete, stop the activity and go through each team’s outfit.

Winter Activities:

> Sitting down ice fishing all day
> Being active (eg. cross country skiing)
> Emergency clothes for the back of your car

Helpful Winter Dressing Tips:

> Always dress in layers. Use many thin, warm layers rather than a few thick layers. It will insulate better and allow you to take off layers to avoid sweating.
> Wear a base layer such as long underwear, or other warm, thin clothing that will wick moisture away from your skin.
> Don’t wear cotton. It will get wet and cold.
> Wear a hat. While it’s a myth that most body heat escapes through the head, covering any exposed body part helps retain body heat.
> Dress for the appropriate activity level. Dressing for an active day of skiing will be different than dressing for a sedentary day of ice fishing.
> Buy or find a pair of insulated boots.
> Wear warm socks. Wool is best, although good synthetic socks are often quite good. Avoid cotton as it soaks up sweat and will make feet wet and cold. You can layer socks, but be careful that socks aren’t too tight as this will cut circulation.
> Use a good quality parka that breaks the wind. Make sure you wear warm layers.
underneath too.

> Wear mittens. Fingers and hands are very vulnerable to the cold, so keep them covered. Keeping fingers together in a mitten is warmer than wearing a glove.
> Hand warmers can be useful, but don’t use these as a substitute for dressing warmly.
> Wear more than one layer on your legs. Oddly, some people will wear five layers on their torso, and only one layer on the legs.

Keep dry with a snow-repelling outer layer. Being wet will cause chill to set in more quickly.

**SNOWSHOE SCHOOL (1-2 lessons)**

**Social Studies**

The snowshoe is a very important invention without which the trappers and explorers of the wilds of Canada could never have gotten around. At FortWhyte, students will be strapping on a plastic beaver-tail style snowshoe and exploring the winter trails. Learn more about the history and development of these fascinating snow-travel devices. Attachment #3 shows different traditional designs invented for different snow conditions. Have students decide on the best snowshoe design for the snow conditions in the schoolyard. Craft miniature snowshoes out of gathered twigs, weight, and test them in different snow conditions outside.

Could You Have Been a Voyageur? (1 Lesson)

Social Studies

Voyageur life is often romanticized, but in reality it was incredibly grueling and dangerous. Some voyageurs joined brigades in their early to mid-teens. During their first voyages they may have been the same age or just a little older than your students.

So would your students have made the cut? Would they have even wanted to sign a voyageur contract? Discuss who the voyageurs were, what their lives were like, and how they were paid for their service to trading companies. The links below provide information about the daily life of a voyageur and a template for comparing/contrasting it to the daily lives of your students.

A Typical Voyageur versus You:
http://www.linktolearning.com/7history/voyageur.htm

A Day in the Life of a Voyageur:
TRADING FOR PROFIT (1–2 lessons)

Social Studies/Math

During the program, students will have the opportunity to take on the role of voyageurs trading goods for furs with a chief (FortWhyte volunteer). In order to trade successfully, students will need to understand what the rules of trading were and how to negotiate a fair profit for themselves. European money was useless in Canada during the fur trade. Instead, beaver was the common currency (just like our dollar today). Trade goods as well as furs of all kinds had a value in “made beaver” (a beaver pelt with its guard hairs removed and ready to be processed into felt). Made Beaver tokens were produced during the fur trade era, but more often than not trading was conducted simply by exchanging goods for furs.

When voyageurs were contracted by the Northwest Company they were offered a lump sum wage (FortWhyte’s program puts students in the role of Northwest Company voyageurs). At first glance this wage appeared to be quite generous (double what they could have earned working in New France), but in reality it was not. Voyageurs had to pay several overhead costs out of their wages including food, goods for trading, and a percentage fee to their brigade leader. Sometimes after their first year of work voyageurs were actually in debt and owed money to the Northwest Company. In this circumstance a voyageur would have to continue working for the Northwest Company until his debt was paid off.

For these reasons, it was very important to Northwest Company voyageurs that they made a profit on the goods that they traded. A good trade was generally one where they roughly doubled the amount of “made beaver” they had spent purchasing an item. For instance, a voyageur might hope to get twelve “made beaver” (or the equivalent) for a blanket he had purchased for six.

When trading, voyageurs needed to maintain a trusting and respectful relationship with First Nations communities. Bad trading etiquette, such as asking an unreasonably high price for an item, could jeopardize the Northwest Company’s reputation. First Nations communities might opt to trade with the Hudson Bay Company instead. Bad trading etiquette could also jeopardize a voyageur’s relationship with his brigade leader and colleagues.

Trading for profit was an important but delicate practice for voyageurs. Students will have an opportunity to try their hand at it on their field trip to FortWhyte Alive. (Note: Historically, voyageurs did not generally trade directly with First Nations chiefs. They would be present during the trading process but would leave the negotiating to their brigade leader. To provide a more hands-on experience for students, FortWhyte’s program provides an opportunity for individual bartering on the part of the voyageurs.) In addition to reviewing the above information with students, use the activities below to further prepare them for the experience:

- Have students explore the article “A Year in the Life of a Canoe Brigade” at http://www.northwestjournal.ca/XVII2.htm. In particular, consider the final section, “Preparations for the Return Journey”, which discusses in detail the debt owed by some voyageurs to their trading company. This article is from the Northwest Journal, a
historically accurate resource about voyageur life (http://www.northwestjournal.ca/Begin.htm).

Research the kinds of trade goods and furs that were most desirable during the fur trade era. Students can compare the value of various pelts and goods in Made Beaver using FortWhyte’s Fur Value Chart and Trade Guidelines (Attachment #1). The most valuable furs were rare, difficult to trap, or in high demand in Europe. As European fashions evolved, specific furs increased and decreased in value, though the beaver remained in constant demand for felt hats. When selecting goods for trading voyageurs had to consider what would be of most value to First Nations communities. What would some of the most popular items have been? Visit http://www.canadiana.ca/hbc/stories/produits2_e.html for more information about standards of trade in the fur trade era.

Encourage students to think about how trading is a part of their own lives today. Without money, what would our currency be? If a bartering system were put in place, how would students regulate it and what would be the most and least valuable items in their lives? Why?

What would be some ways that voyageurs could show respect to First Nations when trading? Offering tobacco is a sign of respect as is listening attentively and following traditional customs for entering a tipi, smoking a pipe, or conducting business deals.

Have students create math problems based on the values in Attachment #1. For instance, if a voyageur wanted to buy four shirts to trade, what are all the combinations of furs he could ask for? What would his profit be if he sold the shirts for one and a half times what he bought them for? What would this be equivalent to in today’s currency?
POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

VOYAGEUR GAMES AND CULTURE (1-3 lessons)

Social Studies/Physical Education

Voyageurs did not have a lot of down time during their travels, but if they made camp early, were delayed by poor weather, or were wintering at a fort or outpost it was up to them to create their own entertainment. They were well known for their energetic songs, dances, and games. Voyageur games, in particular, were highly competitive and were designed to showcase individuals’ strength and skills, such as aim. Among the most popular voyageur games were hatchet throwing, wrestling, racing, and strength competitions. See Attachment #2 for FortWhyte’s list of voyageur games. Best played outdoors, these games are appropriate for summer or winter.

THE VOYAGEUR LEGACY (1-3 lessons)

Social Studies

How is the legacy of the fur trade still evident in the infrastructure of our city and province today? Have students research landmarks and events that celebrate or link to our fur trading past. Consider the following as starting points:

- Forts (including Upper and Lower Fort Garry, Fort Gibraltar, Fort Ellice, etc.)
- Festival du Voyageur
- Businesses or buildings that are named after explorers or other fur trade era figures
- The Forks
- Street names
- Historic Red River Cart tracks (Portage, Main, Pembina, St. Mary’s, St. Anne’s)
THE FUR TRADE TODAY (1-3 lessons)

Social Studies/Language Arts
Is the fur trade in Canada a thing of the past or does it still exist today? Have students research what furs are worth today and which are most in demand. What regulations are in place to ensure that furs are harvested sustainably and why is there sometimes controversy over animals being hunted or trapped for their pelts? Have your students look into the modern day fur trade from multiple perspectives and respectfully debate its pros and cons. Remember to consider Aboriginal perspectives and the legacy of traditional hunting and trapping that existed in Canada long before Europeans became invested in North American furs. Visit the Fur Council’s website at http://www.furcouncil.com/resources_school_fur.aspx for an extensive listing of fur-related resources designed for educational purposes.

BIRTH OF A NATION (1-3 lessons)

Social Studies
As European voyageurs (primarily French and Scottish) formed relationships and families with First Nations women, a new nation was born. The Métis nation in Manitoba has its origins in the history of the fur trade. Métis culture combines elements of European and First Nations culture as well as having many unique aspects of its own. What contributions did the Métis make to the fur trade and how has Métis culture continued to thrive and evolve in Manitoba? Use the links and activities below to explore Métis culture and history with your students:

> History of the Métis: http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis_origins.html
Language and Culture: http://www.learnmichif.com/culture/overview
http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis5.html
The Métis sash: http://www.mmf.mb.ca/the_sash.php
Sash craft: https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/settlement/kids/021013-1811-e.html
Métis symbols: http://www.metisnation.org/culture--heritage/symbols-and-traditions

> Try making a vegetarian version of pemmican! Because this recipe contains no meat, everyone can enjoy it, and food safety concerns about raw, dried meat are not an issue. Mix one cup Textured Vegetable Protein (available in most bulk stores) with half a handful of dried fruit (Saskatoons, blueberries, cherries, etc. are most historically appropriate). Mix in one teaspoon of vegetable bouillon powder, and ½ teaspoon vegetable oil. Add enough water to make the mixture “stick” together – then dry into small cakes on a cookie sheet in a slow oven. This mixture will keep two weeks at least, possibly longer, and is far less fatty than “real” pemmican – but is a good, lightweight, multi-food-group snack, in the spirit of traditional pemmican.

> Bring Métis culture to life in your school with a jigging performance or workshop. Contact the Asham Stompers (http://www.ashamstompers.com/) or Winnipeg’s Aboriginal School of Dance (http://aboriginalschoolofdance.com/clinics/) for more information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade Items</th>
<th>Value in Made Beavers Needed for Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Axe</td>
<td>2-3 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal File</td>
<td>2-3 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Chisel</td>
<td>2-3 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass Kettle</td>
<td>3-4 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirt</td>
<td>3-4 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunpowder (2 pounds)</td>
<td>3-4 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloves (1 pair)</td>
<td>3-4 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (4 pounds)</td>
<td>5-6 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thread (1 pound)</td>
<td>5-6 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knives (4 of them)</td>
<td>5-6 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socks (1 pair)</td>
<td>5-6 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth Fabric (2 yards)</td>
<td>5-6 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder Horn</td>
<td>5-6 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket</td>
<td>9-10 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capot</td>
<td>11-12 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musket</td>
<td>15-20 Made Beavers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fur Values Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Value in Made Beavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silver Fox</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Bear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat (10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbit (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voyageur Games

It is time to see how strong and skilled your students really are!

**Arm Wrestling:** Have the kids pair up and lie facing each other and arm wrestle.

**Leg Wrestling:** Two kids lie down on their back beside each other facing in opposite directions. They count to three, lifting their inside leg for each count. On three, they lock legs and try to flip their opponent over.

**Tug O’ War:** A traditional test of strength.

**Sled Dog Race:** This game is best played in winter. Divide the students into three groups. Each group will have a sled to pull through a designated course. Some kids will pull while the rest will ride in the sled. Make sure they switch positions halfway through the course, so every kid has a chance to ride in the sled and a chance to pull the sled.

**Tappe la Galette:** With a partner stand face to face. Position your feet so they are in line, toe to heel. Hold out one hand each like they are going to shake. One person must then try to hit the others hand to cause them to lose their balance, while the other person try’s to move their hand out of the way. This game was played to improve balancing skills needed in the canoe.

**Target Practice:** Have your group divide up into teams, lay out the targets (hula hoops) and have each member of each group throw 3 bean bags, lawn darts, or other weighted items. Have each person keep track of how many they get in. After each group member has thrown, add up the number of darts that went in. The team with the most darts wins.
**Snowshoe Designs**

A) **Bearpaw** (a.k.a. Otter, Green Mountain, Ski-doo, Squirrel)
Flat, short and wide with no tail, this snowshoe is ideal for dense forest, since there is no tail to catch on trees. The flat toe provides a strong, stable toehold for going up and down hilly terrain. In the mountains, *bearpaws* are preferred since you can push the toes into the snow to make your own "stairs".

B) **Beavertail** (a.k.a. Huron, Michigan, Algonquin, Maine, Sport)
This style was designed for wet snow conditions found in the east. It is flat except for a slight upwardly curved toe; it has a distinctive tail. The toe is curved up to allow easier walking, without catching your toe in the snow. Its width provides stability and facilitates hill climbing. The tail acts as a rudder and keeps the snowshoe in a straight line with each step. It also acts as a counterweight at the back of the snowshoe aiding the foot to pivot in the toe hole.

C) **Ojibwe** (a.k.a. Ski, Cree)
Narrower than other styles, with a toe curved noticeably upward, this snowshoe facilitates running and following dog teams across plains and other flat terrain such as open lakes. The long toe and tail make turning in dense forest difficult. Pom-poms on the snowshoes are partly decorative but they also may prevent snow blindness, by providing colour contrast with the white snow, and they also help to muffle the noisy scraping sound of cold wood.

Taken from: [http://rhdistributing.com/snow-shoes/](http://rhdistributing.com/snow-shoes/)