Buddy Bison Trip Planning

Field trips are the cornerstone of our Buddy Bison school program and require significant planning and attention to detail. But never fear, National Park Trust (NPT) is here to help! This manual will outline each phase and help you prepare for the best possible experience. Don't forget to stay connected with the NPT after your trip is over!

Pre-Trip

● NPT will help with the following pre-trip preparations:
  o Identify what class will take the trip, confirm grade level and group size
  o Park selection and organization of activities at the park for the day of the trip
  o Confirmation of the trip details with both the school and the park
  o Bus payment– Please note: NPT will fund the buses but will not make the reservation.
    • We can either pay the company directly or reimburse the school
    • If paying directly, send the invoice to NPT at least two weeks before the trip.
● Print, sign, and return the NPT student waivers and any other forms if applicable (school form, park waiver, etc)
● Review the trip sheet supplied by NPT. This sheet will contain...
  o Instructions for the bus driver
  o Trip timing and logistics
  o What to bring and expected student behavior
● Send NPT T-shirt and plush Buddy Bison request forms at least a month in advance, if applicable
● DAY BEFORE TRIP
  o Make sure you have all the waivers collected
  o Print a copy of the trip sheet for all teachers and the bus driver
  o Remind students and staff to wear their Buddy Bison t-shirts
  o Remember to bring lunch and water
  o Remind students to wear clothing and shoes appropriate for tomorrow's activity

The Trip

● Arrive early to the location to give kids time to use the bathroom, get water
● Bring important contact information (Park rangers, bus driver, visitor center...)
● Greet rangers and go over the day
● Introduce students to park staff and get them excited for the day's activities
● Encourage other teachers and chaperones to help out with timing and student engagement.
● Take LOTS of photos! Ask other adults to help too.
● Ask students for their thoughts during the trip, get quotes.
● Encourage students to journal and keep track of their experience - this will make the next step easier!
Post-Trip Checklist
In the days immediately following your trip:
● Check in with the NPT staff about your experience
● Send any remaining invoices to NPT
● Send NPT a few thank-yous and photos from students that we can pass along to our sponsors. (This important step helps us secure funding in the future to take your class out again)
   ○ Thank-yous can include student drawings, stories, handwritten letters, video recordings, reflections, etc.
● Send a quote either from yourself or another teacher with a few sentences describing the experience and the impact it had on your students
● Send NPT photos and videos from your trip