



shelby bottoms
nature center

Educator's Guide

Fall 2023-
Spring 2024

Explore, experiment, and connect to nature.

Situated in a urban wetland nature preserve, Shelby Bottoms Nature Center welcomes students to engage with the natural world and build a lifelong love of science, exploration and learning.



- All field trips are free of charge
- 950 acre nature preserve and park
- Experiential and culturally relevant learning based on TN Academic Standards

Our Mission

To provide quality environmental education and responsible recreation.

To help protect, preserve, restore, and manage the Park ecosystem and all natural resources.

To raise awareness, foster respect, and share enthusiasm for the natural environment.

Field Trip Offerings

For more complete field trip descriptions and details on alignment with TN state science standards, please email us at shelbybottoms@nashville.gov



Explore and Connect Trips *2 hours**

These standard-aligned explorations challenge students to practice grade-appropriate scientific skills as they engage with and learn about the park.

To select your field trip, find the correct age range and target **Science Practices** below, then select your desired theme. Your trip will focus on the specified scientific skills while investigating your requested topic.

Trip Offerings

**K: Naturalist Senses trip is shorter at 1.5 hours*

K Naturalist Senses

Students explore, make observations with all senses, and record their findings.

1-2 Wetland Wonders

Students practice inquiry, make connections, and compare park habitats.

3-5 Muddy Water Mysteries

Students use observations and discussions to construct explanations.

6-8 Data Discoveries

Students collect, evaluate, and analyze data to draw and discuss conclusions.

9-12 Outdoor Investigators

Students create and investigate questions to construct explanations and design solutions

Themes

(Please note seasonality)

Forest

Meadow Life (Fall)

Pollinators

Birds

Wetlands (Spring)

(Aug-Sept, April-May)

All field trips were developed in alignment with the Tennessee Academic Standards for Science and are designed to provide educational experiences where students engage in science practices and apply crosscutting concepts to build on their understanding of science ideas.

Living Laboratory Trips *2 hours*

Grades 6-12+

Integrate Shelby Bottoms into your learning unit with data-driven field trips. Students will use real field science methods to collect scientific data, investigate questions about the park, and draw conclusions. High school groups will also discuss career paths.

Fall

Meadow Succession

Collect species diversity data in a changing landscape and observe ecological succession.

Spring

Water Quality

Learn about the park's water systems and collect several types of water quality data.

Year-round

Forest Composition

Investigate forest age and composition and compare with historical data to examine human impact.



Bird Census

Learn about bird research methods and participate in ongoing data collection.

**good for cold weather; research can be continued in classroom*

Add-on: Service Learning

In service learning, students address community needs while building knowledge and critical thinking through reflection.

We will find an opportunity that fits both your group and the park's needs. Some past examples include:

- Invasive plant removal
- Litter cleanup
- Planting
- Trail maintenance

+1 hour or more to any field trip experience, or stand-alone



Which trip to schedule?

Please consider your students' experience and comfort in an outdoor setting when selecting a trip. If this is a new experience for your grades 6-12 students, we recommend an **Explore and Connect** trip over a **Living Laboratory Trip**. Consider bringing your students in the fall for an introduction to outdoor science, and then again in the spring for a more data-driven experience.

Registration

SBNC offers field trips **Tuesday-Friday between 9 am-12 pm**, dependent on staff availability. Afternoon trips are available on case-by-case basis.

Before continuing to schedule your trip, please ensure that your group and request fits with our field trip guidelines:

- All field trips are free of charge.
- Reservations are preferred by **August for the fall and January for the spring**; later reservations are accepted but not guaranteed.
- Educators may schedule one field trip per semester for their class.
- Maximum group size is **50 students**. Larger groups may be able to split up over multiple days at Nature Center staff discretion. Groups must have **1 adult chaperone per every 10 students**.

Additional guidelines for homeschool and non-school educational groups:

- Groups must have a minimum of 10 students and span no more than two grades.
- Younger siblings should not accompany students during the program. Call for information on alternative activities.



Ready to register?

To request a field trip, fill out the **SBNC Field Trip Request Form** available in the "Related Links" section of our website or at the QR code at right and return it to us by email.



Questions? Contact the Nature Center by phone or email.



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