

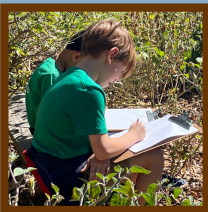
Fall 2025-
Spring 2026



Educator's Guide

Explore, experiment, and connect with 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 detailed field trip descriptions and information on TN state science standard alignment, please email us at shelbybottoms@nashville.gov

Explore and Connect Trips

2 hours*

Grades K-12

These standard-aligned explorations challenge students to practice grade-appropriate scientific skills as they engage with the park. In addition to these academic goals, Explore and Connect trips also aim to build student comfort and confidence in an outdoor setting.

Choose your desired theme as well as the correct trip for your grade level or target science skills. All activities align with the Tennessee Academic Standards for Science; please contact the Nature Center for more detailed descriptions of activities and standards covered.

Themes

(Please note seasonality)

Forest

Meadow (Fall)

Pollinators

(Aug-Sept, April-May)

Birds

Wetlands (Spring)

Our target science skills for each grade range are based on the Tennessee Science and Engineering Practices science standards.

K

Naturalist Senses:

Explore, make observations with all senses, and record findings

6-8

Data Discoveries:

Collect, evaluate, and analyze data to draw conclusions

1-2

Wetland Wonders:

Practice inquiry, make connections, and compare park habitats

9-12

Outdoor Investigations:

Investigate questions to construct explanations and design solutions

3-5

Muddy Water Mysteries:

Use observation and discussion to construct explanations

Need to target a specific academic standard or science practice? Our trips are made to be flexible--let us know!


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 data, investigate questions, and draw conclusions. These labs can be scaled for middle school, high school, or college classes.

Fall	Spring	Year-round
Meadow Succession Collect species diversity data in a changing landscape and observe ecological succession	Water Quality Learn about the park's water systems and collect several types of water quality data	Forest Composition Investigate forest age and composition and compare with historical data to examine human impact
Pollinator Survey Investigate pollinator habitat and preference while participating in ongoing data collection		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

Can be done as add-on or independently
1-3 hours depending on project

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's and the park's needs. Some past examples include:

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



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 from 10 am-12 pm**, dependent on availability. Afternoon trips are available on a 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.
- Field trip scheduling usually opens in **late July for fall** and **December for spring**; please contact the Nature Center for exact details.
- Educators may schedule one field trip per semester for their class.
- Maximum group size is **75 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**.
- Most Nature Center trips are aimed at grades K-12. Interested in scheduling a Pre-K or College visit? Contact the Nature Center to discuss options.

Interested in our opportunities for homeschool groups and educators? Please see our Homeschool Guide, available on our website or by email request.



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, at <https://rebrand.ly/SBNCtripreq>, or at the QR code at right and return it to us by email.



Shelby Bottoms Nature Center
1900 Davidson St.
Nashville, TN 37206

Phone: (615) 862-8539
Email: shelbybottoms@nashville.gov
Website: sbnc.nashville.gov