# Table of Contents

**LOCATIONS & INFO**
- PROGRAM INFORMATION 2
- NC ESSENTIAL STANDARDS 3
- FIELD TRIP LOCATIONS 4
- CONTACT US 5
- TEACHER PLANNING 6

**PROGRAM OPTIONS**
- ANIMAL ADAPTATIONS 7
- BUG BASICS 7
- CREEPY CRAWLY 8
- F.B.I. INVESTIGATION 8
- FANTASTIC FLOWERS 9
- I SPEAK FOR THE TREES 9
- MAGNIFICENT MAMMALS 10
- ROCKIN' ROCKS 10
- SCALY & SLIMY 11
- SCALE TALES & SLIMY TIMES 11
- SENSORY SAFARI 12
- STREAM STUDY 12
- SURPRISING SOIL 13
- TREMENDOUS TREES 13
- WONDROUS WEATHER 14
- WOODLAND WILDLIFE 14
- WORLD OF WATER 15
- CUSTOM PROGRAMS 16
The Curriculum

Each of our Kindergarten through 5th grade Nature Center Experiences is carefully crafted to align with the North Carolina Essential Standards, making our programs a fun and unique supplement to traditional classroom instruction.

Additionally, our preschool programs are inspired by the Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers.

We take pride in our programs. Our team of educators routinely evaluate our curriculum to ensure we are providing the best education programs in Mecklenburg County and the surrounding areas.

In order to help us identify opportunities for growth or allow us to celebrate our strengths, you'll receive a survey at the end of your program. Please consider taking a moment to ensure we can continue to offer the best programming available by providing us with your feedback.

Picnic Under a Pavilion

Come to learn, stay for a picnic! Just let us know you'd like to stay for lunch and we can reserve an outdoor pavilion, porch, or indoor space for your group to eat.

In case of inclement weather, we are only able to make indoor arrangements at Quest, Reedy Creek, and Stevens Creek Nature Centers. McDowell Nature Center is limited to accommodating large groups indoors based on occupancy restrictions.

Group Preparedness

Prior to your Nature Center Experience, you will receive an email that outlines expectations for student and teacher/chaperone behavior, as well as activities you can do with your class before you visit.

Please know that while we are here to assist in the learning process, ultimately teachers and chaperones have a relationship with students that our educators do not. Student behavior is the responsibility of the teacher/chaperone at all times during your visit.

Additionally, please ensure all teachers, chaperones, and students are dressed appropriately for the weather and wearing closed-toe shoes. Programs include indoor and outdoor activities that occur rain or shine. Nature center staff will make modifications for extreme weather if needed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Adaptations</td>
<td>K.L.1.1; K.L.1.2; 1.L.1.1; 1.L.1.2; 1.L.2.2; 2.L.2.2; 4.L.1.1; 4.L.1.2; 4.L.1.4; 5.L.2.1; 5.L.2.2; 5.L.2.3</td>
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<td>Creepy Crawly</td>
<td>K.L.1.2; 1.L.1.1; 1.L.1.2; 1.L.2.2; 2.L.1.1; 2.L.1.2</td>
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<td>F.B.I. Investigation</td>
<td>4.L.1.1; 4.L.1.2; 4.L.1.3; 5.L.1.2; 5.L.1.3</td>
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<td>Fantastic Flowers</td>
<td>K.L.1.2; 1.L.1.1; 1.L.1.2; 1.L.2.1; 3.L.2.1; 3.L.2.2; 3.L.2.3</td>
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<td>Rockin’ Rocks</td>
<td>4.P.2.1; 4.P.2.2; 4.P.2.3</td>
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<td>Scaly &amp; Slimy</td>
<td>K.L.1.1; K.L.1.2; 1.L.1.1; 1.L.1.2; 1.L.2.2; 2.L.1.1; 2.L.1.2; 2.L.2.1; 4.L.1.1; 4.L.1.2</td>
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<td>Stream Study</td>
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<td>Surprising Soil</td>
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<td>Tremendous Trees</td>
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<td>Wondrous Weather</td>
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<td>Woodland Wildlife</td>
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<td>World of Water</td>
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The following align with National Guidelines for Excellence in Early Childhood Education for preschoolers:
- Bug Basics
- I Speak for the Trees
- Magnificent Mammals
- Scaly Tales & Slimy Times
- Sensory Safari
Field Trip Locations

- Quest at Latta Nature Preserve
- Reedy Creek Nature Center & Preserve
- Eastway Regional Recreation Center
- Stevens Creek Nature Center & Preserve
- McDowell Nature Center & Preserve
Cancellation, Rescheduling, & No-Show
Every effort will be made to reschedule a program if needed. However, we cannot guarantee further availability once your booking is confirmed.

Program Fees
CMS Schools: $40.00 (per group / per hour of program time)
Non-CMS Schools: $50.00 (per group / per hour of program time)
In-School Visits: Additional $15 travel fee for programming for each day of travel.
Customized Programming: Additional fee of $25 for a customized program.

Program Payment Options
Payment in full is due prior to your group's visit, unless other arrangements are made. An invoice will be sent to the email address provided within the week of program confirmation. If after one week you have not received an invoice in your email or filtered folders, please call the respective nature center and we can resend it. Payments may be made by Visa, Mastercard, cash, or check. For further payment instructions, please refer to the confirmation invoice.

Contact Us
Book your program today!

MCDOWELL NATURE CENTER
15222 York Rd. Charlotte, NC 28278
980-314-1558
CATHERINE.ROBERTSON@MECKNC.GOV

QUEST @ LATTA NATURE PRESERVE
6345 Sample Rd. Huntersville, NC 28078
980-314-7878
SHELBY.HARRISON@MECKNC.GOV

REEDY CREEK NATURE CENTER
2900 Rocky River Rd. Charlotte, NC 28215
980-314-1119
TRACY.OWENS@MECKNC.GOV

STEVENS CREEK NATURE CENTER
15700 Thompson Rd. Mint Hill, NC 28227
980-314-1209
CORINNE.RIZZO@MECKNC.GOV

EASTWAY REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER
423 Eastway Dr. Charlotte, NC 28215
980-314-1465
ALDEN.PICARD@MECKNC.GOV
Scheduling Your Field Trip
Please have this information available when you call to schedule.

- Grade level
- Number of students and classes
- 2-3 date options
- Arrival and departure times
- Program Selections (programs are 1-2 hours in length)
- Lunch plans and pavilion request

Virtual Programs

Call the center nearest to you for more information on virtual program options.
Animal Adaptations

From teeth to tails and hibernation to migration, observe the attributes of a variety of native wildlife to discover how adaptations allow them to not just survive but thrive.

Bug Basics

Get to know the creatures that call the forest floor home! Peek under rocks, roll logs, and collect specimens to uncover the important role bugs play in our ecosystem.
All creatures play a role in our ecosystem, even the creepiest and crawliest ones! Discover the world of invertebrates from egg to adult and uncover the value of a worm as we search the forest floor for nature’s less celebrated species.

In this program, F.B.I. can only stand for one thing: Fungus, Bacteria, and Invertebrates. Students will investigate a “crime scene” to determine the culprits in the case of decomposition. All evidence collected will be analyzed in the most effective way possible – up close and hands on.
Peel away the petals to uncover the inside scoop on flowering plants during a flower dissection and investigate the way flowers bring more than just color into our world.

Compare and contrast leaf shapes, investigate the textures of tree bark, and get a grip on how trees grow so that you can speak for the trees, too!
Study pelt and skull specimens up close to reveal the secret lives of North Carolina’s elusive mammal population. Take to the trail in search of tracks and traces of where these furry forest dwellers have been!

When it comes to geology, the answers aren’t always crystal clear. Compare properties of rocks and and discover the geologic processes that create metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary rocks here in the Carolina Piedmont.
At first glance, the difference between reptiles and amphibians can seem insignificant. However, characteristics and habitat needs can differ dramatically. Get a close look at adaptations that set these animals apart, and search high and low for a close encounter of a scaly (or slimy!) kind.

Discover the characteristics that set reptiles and amphibians apart, then take to the trail in search of a close encounter of the scaly and slimy kind!
Sensory Safari

Taste a tree, smell a bug, look for critters, listen for wildlife, and get your hands dirty, on an exploration through woods that will engage all five senses!

Stream Study

Slosh along a stream bank, net a crayfish, and observe the quality of our waterways by studying the indicator species of aquatic ecosystems.
Surprising Soil

Soil can tell the story of a place’s past, while nourishing the lives of plants and animals in the present. Dig into soil types, till through its components, and unearth some of the creatures that reside there.

Tremendous Trees

Examine the systems that help trees grow and investigate the anatomy of a tree in this hands-on program that shines light on how tremendous trees can really be!
**Woodland Wildlife**

Go beyond terrific turkeys, slithering snakes, and fantastic foxes for a glimpse into the world of the Piedmont’s most elusive woodland animals. Compare diets and consider adaptations while studying skins and skulls. Head outside to explore how these creatures connect with their habitat.

**Wondrous Weather**

It is easy to classify the weather as it is happening, but how do meteorologists predict what will happen with the weather tomorrow or next week? Use meteorological tools to measure weather conditions, decode weather data, and determine how weather plays a role in our daily lives.
Our planet is covered in water, yet only 1% of that water is available for human consumption. Dive deep into the role water plays in our lives and the ways it nourishes the greater ecosystem.
Don't See What You're Looking For?

Environmental Education goes beyond science standards, and so do we.

Let us customize your experience!

Call your nature center representative to collaborate.