

# 2024 Summer Report Warner Park Nature Center



FRIENDS  
OF WARNER PARKS



WARNER  
PARK  
NATURE  
CENTER



# 2024 Summer Report Public Programs & Visitors



## Explore with a Naturalist

Most Saturdays from 10am-12pm in June and July, seasonal naturalists and staff led drop-in style family programs focused on discovery, observation and connection with nature.

**Topics Included:**  
Trees & Leaves  
Farewell Cicadas  
True Blue  
Ethnobotany  
Aerial Insectivores  
Scat Attack



Photo (above): Participants carefully remove macro-invertebrates from a rock during the River Secrets program

Staff also engaged visitors in the organic garden and pollinator beds, at Nature Play and the new accessible StoryWalk Trail, during Bird Banding sessions and through other daily impromptu programming

**25** public programs with **519** participants

**4,500** visitors engaged through impromptu programs and facility use

**9233 total** visitors during Nature Center open hours

Photo (above): A beautiful fairy house built during the Summer Solstice Fairies program

Photo (right): Chopping tomatoes for salsa during the Eating from the Summer Garden program



## Weekday Programs

A wide range of morning and evening programs were offered throughout the summer for families, adults, amateur naturalists, gardeners, poets and musicians!

### Highlights:

A “No Hike” Bird Hike  
The Summer Garden  
Evening Cave Tour  
Summer Solstice Fairies  
Renew Yoga  
Summer Bird Hike  
A Midsummer’s Night of Poetry and Mead

Plan Your Fall Garden  
Eating from the Garden  
Summer Sound Party  
River Secrets  
Old Time Jam  
Caterpillar Crawl

# 2024 Summer Report Nature Discovery Program



The Nature Discovery Program continued through the summer and included field trips to Warner Parks, and outreach experiences at the Community Centers.

Youth caught crayfish and water pennies, went birding using binoculars, used field nets to catch insects, kayaked in the little Harpeth River and much more!

### Highlights

We hosted ten youth from Bellevue Community Center for a caving adventure at Vaughn's Gap Cave. Youth climbed and crawled through the cave passages, discovered cave salamanders, spiders and other wildlife and spent a few minutes experiencing true darkness in the cave!



A total of **316 community center youth** participated in the Nature Discovery Program this summer!

**7 full day PEN Pal camps, 9am-4pm**

**196 PEN Pals participants**

**1 cave expedition to Warner Park**

**5 Nature Detective programs**

**110 Nature Detective youth encounters**

**21 community centers served**

Photo (above): Kayaking is always a favorite activity at PEN Pals!

Photo (right): Discovering insects in the field during morning rotations at PEN Pals



## PEN Pals Day Camp

People Exploring Nature (PEN) Pals Day Camp brings Community Centers to Warner Park Nature Center for a full day of outside fun, where youth explore the diverse habitats that make up Warner Parks - the meadow, pond, garden, forest and river! They also spend crucial time in unstructured outdoor play in Nature Play and take a long hike in the woods.

*"I normally don't like carrots, but this one is different. I like it!"*

*"I didn't think this would be fun but it's actually fun!"*

*"This is the best day ever!!"*

*"The more you learn about nature, the less scary it becomes!"*

*"I'm going to work here when I'm older!"*

*"I've never seen a real frog in my whole life"*

Photo (above): Campers learned to use binoculars and went on a bird-watching walk around the gardens and pond.

# 2024 Summer Report Naturalist Camps



## Camper Quotes

*If I had to design my own camp, it would be exactly like this camp!*

*This is the most fun I've had in my entire life!*

*I've never been able to pick and eat something from a garden before!*

*Is this the last day? Dang it! I like it here!*

*This is the best time I've ever had outside before*

Photo (right): Caving is dirty but fun!

Photo (left): What? Something is on my nose?

Photo (below): Campers pause in their fort-building to pose for a photo and show off their creative design



Seven weeks of Naturalist Camp with 97 campers and 3,129 hours exploring nature

2 weeks of Outdoor Adventure Camp

4 weeks of Naturalist Camp

1 week of Little Sprouts Camp

5 scholarship spots awarded

Countless crayfish caught, new friends made, sticky marshmallow fingers washed...

*"My daughter has done several different camps...this is by far her favorite. She comes home telling us all the amazing things she did and goes to bed so excited about what is planned for the next day. Thank you for all you do to make this the best camp around!!" -- camper parent*



## Activity Highlights

Full day Outdoor Naturalist and Nature Explorer camps were packed with guided explorations and unstructured outdoor time for campers ages 7-10 years, and half day Little Sprouts camp gave 5-6 year olds a great introduction to exploring nature.

*This summer, campers...*

Fished for crayfish with hotdogs

Creek-walked all morning

Caught insects in the field

Observed birds up close during banding

Made cyanotype bandannas

Learned and practiced naturalist skills

Roasted marshmallows over a fire

Flew high on a rope swing

Had unstructured outdoor play in Nature Play

Built natural shelters

Explored the pond for frogs

Kayaked down the river

Explored a cave

Spent an entire day hiking

Built fires and learned wilderness skills

# 2024 Summer Report B.I.R.D. Program



## MAPS Banding

This was our 34th year of MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship). Despite a slow start and warm temperatures, we had good captures including several Louisiana Waterthrushes, Indigo Buntings, and even several Eastern Bluebirds - capturing a total of 140 birds of 25 species. Our team of skilled and dedicated volunteers make this all possible.

### *Highlight*

An adult male Canada Warbler was caught and banded as it was migrating to its summer breeding area!



## Purple Martins

Volunteer Kathy Shaw led weekly checks of our Purple Martins nests at Warner Parks and at Ellington Agriculture Center to document nest success. We radio-tagged 26 martin nestlings and will be tracking them at the Nashville downtown migration night roost with hand-held receivers and with a temporary receiver station at Bridgestone. Naturalist Jenna Atma will be leading volunteers for public engagement at roost through early September.

In August, more than 250 people attended the Purple Martin Watch Party at Nissan Stadium



## Eastern Bluebirds

Started in 1936 by Amelia Laskey, Warner Park now hosts the oldest bluebird monitoring project in the U.S. Every week, our team of volunteers monitor and band bluebird nestlings throughout Warner Parks. This data is submitted to the Tennessee Bluebird Society to help monitor populations throughout the state. The Brood XIX cicadas gave a big boost to the bluebird babies this year - helping them grow quickly and leave the nest very healthy!

### *Highlight*

This year we moved several of our bluebird boxes to poles and baffles and have seen a significant decline in predation from snakes and raccoons.

Photo (upper left): A Purple Martin brings food to the gourds on the Nature Center campus. *Photo by Terry Cook*  
Photo (center): Campers observing a Red-eyed Vireo held by Naturalist Jenna Atma during bird banding  
Photo (above): A banded baby Eastern Bluebird, by Terry Cook

# 2024 Summer Report Seasonal Staff & Interns



Along with supporting daily WPNC operations, our incredible summer staff and interns led, assisted and participated in Naturalist Camps, PEN Pals Camps, Public Programs, BIRD Research, Insect Inventories, and impromptu visitor engagement.

These young people learn and give so much for a very short 10-week period and they impressed us with their professionalism and dedication to all we do at Warner Park Nature Center.

*I have never worked any place so welcoming as Warner Park Nature Center. The collective mindset of protecting the environment fosters a uniquely kind and considerate community that is rare to find elsewhere.*  
**Kinsley, University of the South, Sewanee**



Photo (above): Seasonal staff, interns and permanent staff (l to r top bench) Caroline Crews, Laura Cook, Anna Sawyer, Amelia Browning, Lake Porter, Lexi Price, Harper Johnston, Anna Hawkins Dulaney; (l to r bottom bench), Kinsley Reid, Allie Horick, Sydney Korn, Vera Roberts, Rachel Linn, Rachel Carter

*I was surprised to see the vast variety of wildlife that are native to the park. Seeing how Nashville wildlife continues to thrive despite the constantly growing rate of urbanization is inspiring.*  
**Dorothy, MTSU**

The SWEAT team maintained trails and bridges, repaired fences and walls, installed benches, signposts and the new Storywalk, cleared downed trees and brush piles, mulched gardens, mowed cemeteries, cleaned litter in the woods and river, and even rescued a watersnake this summer!



Photo (above): Seasonal staff Kinsley Reid, Dorothy Brandon, Rachel Linn

Photo (right): SWEAT team: Adrian Kinkle, Wesley Smail, Austin Anderson, Noah Parrott, Adrian Moolman

*Being a seasonal showed me that I enjoy the outdoors even more when I get to share it with others. This summer, I really enjoyed getting other people to interact with nature in ways that previously scared them or just seemed disinteresting to them. Watching someone grow curious instead of guarded is so rewarding. Now I want to continue to seek out careers that allow me to go outside and share nature with others.*  
**Harper, American University**

*I learned that I really enjoy working with children, planning and organizing programs and educating others about the environment - getting to make an impact on other people's lives was truly fulfilling.*  
**Sydney, UT Chattanooga**

*This summer has reassured me that I am on the right path when it comes to pursuing a career that I can be passionate about and have fun doing at the same time. This was my very first job and I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to the world of educating about and exploring nature with the public. I plan to take everything I've learned this summer into the rest of my college career and beyond.*  
**Rachel, University of Missouri**

# 2024 Summer Report Volunteers & Community Partners

## BIRD Volunteers

For the 9th year, the BIRD Program hosted summer interns from Lipscomb University. This year interns Amelia Browning and Lexi Price assisted with our summer MAPS banding, Barn Swallow nest monitoring and conducted their own research on Wood Thrushes. Their work was featured in the latest issue of Lipscomb Now: Discovery

More than 30 volunteers provided 630 hours assisting with the BIRD program!

*Volunteers engaged visitors and helped with MAPS banding research, ensured bird feeders were cleaned and full, assisted with Motus and the Purple Martin project and provided vital data entry and office work.*



## PEN Pals Community Partners

Friends of Warner Parks

Metro Parks Community Centers

Corporate Volunteer Group Amazon Air

Metro Parks Recreation Department led the PEN Pals kayaking program

Jess with the Harpeth Conservancy and Lake, a Lipscomb intern, guided campers in river exploration

University School of Nashville provided bus transportation

Photo (top right): Lipscomb interns Amelia Browning and Lexi Price getting ready to lead a bird banding program for naturalist campers

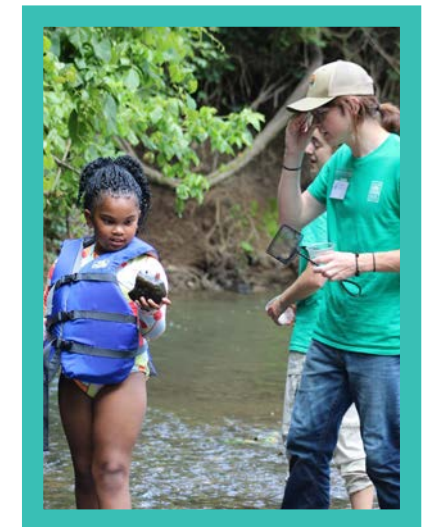


Photo (above): Lake Porter, Nature Discovery Program intern from Lipscomb University

Photo (above): Jess with Harpeth Conservancy helping a PEN Pals camper explore recent creek discoveries

## WPNC Volunteers

Master Gardeners of Davidson County planted and maintained the beautiful pollinator garden beds behind the Learning Center and led public programs!

27 volunteers supported the Urban Nature Program through 216 hours serving lunches, helping with morning rotations and assisting campers during kayaking, river exploration and crafts in the afternoon!

Photo (right): Volunteers serve lunch during PEN Pals

