

Fall 2024-
Spring 2025

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 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*

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.

To request a trip, choose your desired theme and let us know your grade level. Students will investigate your chosen topic through hands-on investigations tailored to their age and the park ecosystems. More detailed descriptions of activities available on request.

Themes

(Please note seasonality)

Forest

Meadow (Fall)

Pollinators

Birds

Wetlands (Spring)

(Aug-Sept, April-May)

We conduct all activities to be developmentally appropriate for our visiting groups. Please see our target science skills for each grade range below.

K

Explore, make observations with all senses, and record findings
***K trips shorter at 1.5 hours**

6-8

Collect, evaluate, and analyze data to draw conclusions

1-2

Practice inquiry, make connections, and compare park habitats

9-12

Investigate questions to construct explanations and design solutions

3-5

Use observation and discussion to construct explanations

Need to target a specific academic standard or science skill? 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

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

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
- Planting
- Litter cleanup
- 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.



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