Mission Statement

The Environmental Science Department is dedicated to stimulating awareness and understanding of the natural world in order to foster a sense of responsibility for its care and use through environmental, cultural, and recreational learning experience, as well as serving as trustees to preserve, maintain, and improve both developed and undeveloped natural areas of Somerset County parkland.
A Place to Learn

Lord Stirling Park, located in Basking Ridge, is home to the Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center. With approximately 500 acres of land and eight-and-a-half miles of hiking trails, it provides the perfect opportunity to explore New Jersey’s natural habitats. The park serves as an outdoor classroom where students can use hands-on learning to explore fields, forests, marshes, and swampy areas along the upper reaches of the Passaic River.

Programs are led by Somerset County Park Commission Naturalists. All programs are designed to be supportive of New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). A complete list of specific program connections to NJCCCS and NGSS can be found on our website at www.somersetcountyparks.org.

For More Information or To Schedule a Program

Call 908 722-1200 ext. 5332, e-mail kbender@scparks.org, or come in-person, Monday – Friday 9:00am-4:30pm.

- Certain dates fill quickly. Please book early to ensure availability.
- Programs are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Go on-line to www.somersetcountyparks.org.
- Once there, click on Parks & Facilities>Environmental Education Center>School Programs.
Let’s Do Lunch!

- Classes are welcome to bring lunch. Picnic tables, trash, recycling, and compost receptacles are available. An indoor space may be available during inclement or cold weather. Please inquire about availability when booking your program.
- We request your class bring lunch in reusable/recyclable containers to reduce their trash impact.

Field Trips & Weather

- Programs are held outdoors unless dangerous weather conditions exist. If your trip date forecast looks questionable, please contact us to discuss the options.
- Please ensure that students DRESS APPROPRIATELY. Waterproof footwear, layers, and rain gear or coats are recommended for a better experience.

Payment Information

Cash, check, credit cards, and purchase orders accepted.

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<tr>
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<th>In-County</th>
<th>Out of County</th>
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<tr>
<td>Programs at EEC: One program title per 30 students</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
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<td>Programs at School: One program title, first hour of program</td>
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<td>Programs at School: Additional hours of program</td>
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Scheduling Guidelines

The Somerset County Park Commission Naturalists want you to enjoy your field trip or in-school program.

- If scheduling allows, we encourage classes to schedule more than one program during their visit and to plan their lunch break between their first and second programs.
- We require one chaperone for every 15 students unless otherwise stated.
- Aquatic programs are offered mid-April to mid-October. To help preserve the diversity of life and the environmental integrity of our ponds, aquatic programs are limited to four classes per week.
- Consider scheduling a visit to our interactive, educational exhibit “The Great Swamp Experience”. Recommended 30 minutes, with no more than 20 students at a time. Adult supervision is required.

Certificate of Insurance

All schools engaged in formal programing on-site at the Environmental Education Center are required to secure a Certificate of Insurance naming the Somerset County Park Commission as an additional insured for $1,000,000.
Environmental Education Center programs are designed to be supportive of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). A complete list of program connections can be viewed at www.somersetcountyparks.org.

**In-School Programs**

**WHO’S TRACK IS THAT**
Grades PreK, K  
45+ minutes
In this program we will discover how to identify animals by their tracks and other signs they leave behind. We will read a story, examine animal artifacts, and explore how animals move. Each student will make their own track identification sheet to take home.

**MAPLE SUGARING**
Grades 1+  
45+ minutes
Maple sugaring and winter go hand in hand. A Naturalist will help participants discover the secret life inside a maple tree. Participants will learn about the history of maple sugaring from the time of the Native Americans through today, as well as the techniques used to make this tasty treat. Finish off the program with a sweet taste of 100% pure maple syrup. *Available January to March.*

**AMAZING ADAPTATIONS**
Grades 1,3,4  
45+ minutes
In this program we will explore how and why wildlife survives in its environment. The concepts of habitat, niche, and adaptation will be covered in an interactive discussion while using props to further illustrate these ideas.

**BASICALLY BUGS**
Grades 3,4,5  
45+ minutes
The creepy crawlies in our lives are basically bugs! After learning the characteristics of insects and how they differ from other arthropods, your students will begin to appreciate their function in the natural world. Topics will cover insect life cycles, adaptations, and diversity of insects through the use of interactive discussions, live creatures, mounted specimens, and grade appropriate activities.

**SCIENCE FAIR PREP: The Scientific Method**
Grades 3,4,5  
45+ minutes
Bring a science fair to life with our hands-on explanation of the scientific method. Tips on how to set up and conduct an award winning science fair experiment will be given as we work our way through an actual experiment. *This is a two-part program. Each 45-minute session is held approximately two to three weeks apart.*

**CUSTOM PROGRAM**
Have a special request? Are the students learning about something in the classroom to which we can help create a hands-on connection? We are always happy to work with teachers and schools to create programs that fit your specific needs.
Field Trip Programs

To facilitate the student learning experience please plan on one teacher per Naturalist, unless otherwise indicated by the program title. Additional chaperones are always welcome.

MAPLE SUGARING Grades 1+ 1 ½ hours
Hike to our sugar bush and see our tapped trees. Learn about the history and evolution of sugaring. Finish off this program with a sweet taste of 100% pure maple syrup. Dress for the weather with layers and warm, waterproof boots. Book early to avoid disappointment. Available late winter to early spring.

AMAZING ADAPTATIONS Grades 1,3,4 1 hour
In this program we will explore how and why wildlife survives in its environment. The concepts of habitat, niche, and adaptation will be covered in an interactive discussion while using props to further illustrate these ideas. This is an indoor program that pairs well with Maple Sugaring.

WHO LIVES IN A POND? Grade 2 1 ½ hours
Learn about life in and around a pond as we investigate this unique environment. Students will first be introduced to the concepts of community, habitat, food chains, and the adaptations needed for aquatic life. Then, students will explore life in the pond with the use of dip nets and field guides. Maximum of 45 participants per program. Adult chaperones are required to ensure a 6 students:1 adult ratio. Program available April to June & mid-September to mid-November.

SENSORY SLEUTHS Grades 2,4 1 hour
Participants of this program will explore four of the five senses and use them to discover the natural world. A nature walk and hands-on activities will provide the opportunity to look, listen, feel, and smell!
ECOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS  
Grades 2, 3, 4, 5  
1 ½ hours
During this field experience students will be hands-on and discuss observations of the ecosystems they explore. Questions addressed will include: what is an ecosystem, how does an ecosystem function, how are the elements of a community interrelated? During the hike, students will investigate the different plant and animal communities including marsh, field, and forest that comprise Lord Stirling Park. Grades 4 and 5 will also complete written Field Observation Reports.

BUGGING OUT!  
Grades 3, 4, 5  
1 ½ hours
Don’t swat it, catch it! This hands-on experience for students will help them learn about insect life cycles, adaptations, and diversity. This field trip may include sweep netting and the use of simple keys to identify the captured insects. Sweep netting yields the most success in September and October.

LET IT ROT  
Grades 3, 4, 5  
1 ½ hours
Come for a rotting good time where students will learn about recycling and decomposition from experts. Although students may just be beginning to recycle, creatures such as fungi, earthworms, and termites have been doing it since time began. Your students will look under rotting logs with a Naturalist to get up close and personal with the animals and plants that aid in this natural process.

BIOMIMICRY: STICKINESS  
Grades 3, 4, 5  
3 hours
This fun, hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) program is an excellent experiential introduction to the concepts of biomimicry. While on a two-hour nature walk, students will encounter examples in nature that have inspired scientists, engineers, and designers. During the one-hour lab experience, students will conduct a scientific investigation exploring the concept of stickiness. Maximum 45 participants per program.
ECOLOGY OF POND LIFE  Grades 5+  1 ½ hours
During this fun and educational program, students will be hands-on, using the same techniques as biologists, as they collect and identify specimens from a pond. Working together they will construct a model food web showing both movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment, as well as the interdependent relationships in the ecosystem. Maximum of 45 participants per program. Adult chaperones are required to ensure a 6 students:1 adult ratio. Available April to mid-October.

AQUATIC HABITAT MATH  Grades 5+  2 ½ hours
Give your students the opportunity to experience what it is like to be a field scientist with our Aquatic Habitat Math program. During this program students will experience the scientific method in action when collecting data, identifying species, and recording their observations just as field biologists do everyday. While exploring our ponds to discover what lives in and around them, we will discuss the concepts of accuracy, bias, diversity, water quality (pH and dissolved oxygen), and human impact. Students will leave with information that can be used to discover patterns, draw scientific conclusions, and create assessments back in the classroom. Maximum 45 participants per program. Adult chaperones are required to ensure a 6 students:1 adult ratio. Available April to mid-October.

BIOMIMICRY: ARCHITECTURE  Grades 6,7,8,9,10  3 hours
Today most innovative scientists, engineers, and designers actively look to nature for inspiration. While on a 90-minute nature walk, students will encounter examples of biomimicry, be introduced to biomimicry life principles, and be asked to consider what humans can learn from nature about architecture and building structures that survive severe conditions. Working in small groups in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) lab students will apply what they have discovered in a 90-minute, hands-on lab. Maximum 45 participants per program.

CUSTOM PROGRAM
Have a special request? Are the students learning about something in the classroom to which we can help create a hands-on connection? We are always happy to work with teachers and schools to create programs that fit your specific needs.
TRIP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Date of Visit   _________________________________________________

Time of Arrival  _______________________________________________

Time of Departure  ______________________________________________

School Name  _________________________________________________

School Contact Person ________________________________

Phone number ________________________________

Email ________________________________

Lead Teacher (on trip) ________________________________

Phone number ________________________________

Email ________________________________

School Address ________________________________

Student Grade Level(s) ________________________________

We are interested in the following program title(s) ________________________________

___________________________________________

What topics are the students studying which relate to the program
choice(s)?  __________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Does your group need any special accommodations, have any learning/
physical disabilities we should be aware of when planning the details of
your group’s visit?  __________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Will you be bringing a school nurse with your group? Yes  No

Will you be having lunch at the EEC?  Yes  No

Will you be visiting our exhibit hall, The Great Swamp Experience?

Yes  No

How will your group be getting here? ________________________________

Number of students on visit ________________________________

Names of additional teachers attending ________________________________

Number of additional adult chaperones attending ________________________________

Shared Student Conduct and Chaperone Information with all involved?  Yes  No

Emailed or called in request for booking on: ________________________________

Received confirmation of booking via email on: ________________________________