Mission

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.
Thank you for your interest in supporting the Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park (EEC). Sponsoring us provides you with a unique opportunity to connect with the greater Somerset County community, to build brand awareness, and to show your company’s support for an important cause.

The Somerset County Environmental Science Department is dedicated to stimulating awareness and understanding for the natural world in order to foster a sense of responsibility for its care.

We support youth development, community engagement, schools and teachers, and the natural world around us. We do this through connecting people with nature and promoting environmental literacy through hands-on, inquiry-based learning.

Environmental education teaches people how to learn about and investigate their environment, and to make intelligent, informed decisions about how they can take care of it.

Our programs focus on natural and cultural features of the Great Swamp region to develop a strong sense of place. We also engage diverse urban youth, and focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and the arts.

We are proud to partner with national initiatives like Let’s Move!, which fights against childhood obesity by encouraging people to engage in outdoor activities and to eat healthy.

Through outreach we reach beyond the EEC into schools and communities to extend the impact of our programs.

The Environmental Education Center has a wide array of events, educational programs, and exhibitions that can provide your company or foundation with donor name or logo recognition, and employee engagement opportunities, depending on sponsorship level. Below are listed just a handful of the many opportunities available.

Past corporate supporters include Chubb Corporation, Pfizer, The Olde Mill Inn, PSE&G, Goldman Sachs, L’Oreal, Ethicon, AT&T, Verizon, and more.

To learn more about how your business or foundation can support the Environmental Education Center, please continue reading, or contact Carrie Springer, Manager, Environmental Science Department, at 908.722.1200 ext. 5324 or cspringer@scparks.org.
ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER AT LORD STIRLING PARK

The Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center has been an innovator in the field of environmental education since its inception. The office and education building was the first public building in the United States that was solar-heated when it was opened in 1977.

The Center is located within Lord Stirling Park in the Basking Ridge section of Bernards Township, and is nestled within 435 acres of the western portion of the Great Swamp Basin of the Passaic River. The variety of habitats of floodplains, swamps, rivers, intermittent streams, marshes, meadows, ponds, fields, and forests provide homes for diverse plant and animal populations in this environmentally sensitive park. All are within walking distances of the multi-faceted building. The Great Swamp Experience Exhibit, a swamp vivarium, and an environmentally-based library are located within the Center.

The Environmental Science Department designs and delivers a wide range of environmentally-themed programs to an audience that ranges from toddlers to senior citizens. School programs are written to meet the New Jersey Core Curriculum and Next Generation Science Standards, as well as the needs of individual classroom teachers. The summer science program experience for youth and teens provides the opportunity to explore, enjoy, and experience the outdoors through two well-respected summer programs – Eco-Explorers and AWESIM Kids. From discovering the complexities of our ecosystem through formal programs to paddling down the Passaic River, children develop a love of their environment. Adults enjoy the learning experiences provided through lectures, field trips as close as the mid-Atlantic region and as far as Costa Rica and Africa, and canoeing and kayaking on various rivers throughout the tri-state area.

The community can also experience the environment through a variety of special events and exhibits such as the 1770s Festival, the Halloween Hullabaloo, the Eco-Rally, and the County Caper. Hiking the 8.5 miles of trails through the swamp provides unique nature experiences. The Book and Gift shop complements the programs and trail experiences with a multitude of natural history and environmental materials and gifts, and the resource library is filled with a wide variety of natural history topics. A multitude of awards have been presented to the Environmental Science department through the years.
WHY IS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Studies from the No Child Left Inside Coalition have found that:

Environmental education increases student engagement in science

In our schools, research has shown enormous benefits from environmental education. When integrated into a science curriculum, environmental education demonstrably improves student achievement in science.

Environmental education improves student achievement in core subject areas

When integrated into the core curricula or used as an integrating theme across the curriculum, environmental education has a measurably positive impact not only on student achievement in science, but also in reading (sometimes spectacularly), math, and social studies. The same study found that schools that taught the core subjects using the environment as an integrating context also demonstrated reduced discipline and classroom management problems, increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning, and greater student pride and ownership in accomplishments.

Environmental education provides critical tools for a 21st century workforce

The vast majority of Americans are convinced that the environment will become at least one of the dominant issues and challenges of the 21st century, as the needs of the growing global population presses up against the limits of the earth’s resources and ecosystems. At the same time, business leaders increasingly believe that an environmentally literate workforce is critical to their long term success and profitability, with better environmental practices and improved efficiencies impacting positively on the bottom line while helping to better position and prepare their companies for the future.

Environmental education helps address “nature deficit disorder”

A recent study found that children today spend an average of 6 hours each day in front of the computer and TV, but less than 4 minutes a day in unstructured outdoor play, leading researchers to discover a new condition specific to this current generation that they have called “nature deficit disorder.”

What do an increased study of science and nature and increased outdoor time accomplish? Especially in the very young, it has proved extremely beneficial for cognitive functioning, reduced symptoms of attention deficit disorder, increased self-discipline and emotional well-being.
OUR REACH

The Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park serves 30,000 children, families, adults, seniors, and schools and educators every year. The population of Somerset County is approximately 350,000.
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center offers a wide variety of opportunities for businesses and foundations to fulfill their philanthropic and marketing goals through sponsorships and grants. This may include brand exposure and recognition to the Environmental Education Center’s 30,000+ annual visitors. Most importantly, your investment in the Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center benefits our community and the state of New Jersey by supporting environmental education, cultural programs, conservation, scientific research, and enriching exhibits and events. Choose from a variety of categories:

- Events
- Environmental Education Programs
- Conservation and Scientific Research
- Exhibits and Lecture Series
- Facilities and Trails

To learn more about how your business or foundation can support the Environmental Education Center, please continue reading, or contact Carrie Springer, Manager, Environmental Science Department at 908.722.1200 ext. 5324.
Environmental Education Programs

Our environmental education programs focus on building environmental literacy and support cross-curricular STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) initiatives, as well as promote health and well-being through outdoor exploration. Our programs reach toddlers, youth, teens, adults, families, seniors, schools, and educators.

**K-12 School Field Trip Program**

Our Naturalist-led formal education programs are hands-on and inquiry-based. We offer STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) focused on-site field trips and in-school programs, which support teachers and educators as they prepare students to enter the workforce. Programs like Habitat Math, Watershed Wonders, and Amazing Adaptations are in line with New Jersey Common Core and Next Generation Science standards.

**Eco-Explorer, AWESIM KIDS, and Coyote Kids Summer Programs**

Eco-Explorers offer participants an exciting experience while developing an appreciation for nature and a fondness of science. Fresh air, lessons, hiking, canoeing, and games will create a fun and educational summer experience. Eco-Explorers use a hands-on approach to encourage learning through creative expression, nature exploration, imagination, and physical skill development.

The award-winning AWESIM KIDS program celebrated its 20th summer season in June of 2014. AWESIM KIDS is a unique combination of learning and summer vacation fun. Participants spend their days hiking, boating, learning about local wildlife, exploring the park, meeting interesting professionals, and going on unique day trips each week. The program encourages hands-on learning and peer leadership opportunities, working together daily in both small and large groups.

Coyote Kids is a four-day Naturalist-led nature-themed program for ages 4-6 that introduces environmental concepts to the children via discovery hikes, interaction with live animals, hands-on nature activities, ecology games, crafts, and water play. Various habitats and their flora and fauna are explored during the extensive time that the children spend immersed in the outdoor environment in Lord Stirling Park.
Preschool Programs

Our preschool and early childhood programs immerse infants to 5-year olds in nature and the outdoors, while preparing them for the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical challenges of kindergarten. Programs like Tree House Gang, Tot Trek, and Young Explorers Club explore the natural world by using all of the senses. Scientific research in early childhood development is revealing the critical connection between time spent in nature and a child’s developing brain. Immersive time in nature fosters a child’s intellectual, emotional, psychological, and physical growth.

Teen Programs

Our teen volunteer program is called the Green Team for ages 12-15. Teenagers learn about natural science, have outdoor adventures in the Great Swamp, and participate in meaningful projects through volunteer activities at the Environmental Education Center.

The Xtreme Adventure program for ages 13-16 encourages teens to turn off those video games and computers and let nature connect them to their wild side. Unforgettable adventures such as white water rafting, hiking, swimming, overnight trips and stand-up paddle-boarding create an opportunity for new and challenging experiences and to connect with others by making new friends.

Public Programs (Adult education classes and workshops, family programs, senior center outreach)

The Park Commission’s Naturalists maintain offices at the Environmental Education Center and conduct many programs each year that are all available to the public. Botanical garden tours, kayaking, Forest Fitness walks, bird watching, wildlife presentations and gardening classes are just a few of the public program offerings at the Environmental Education Center.
Events

Project E.A.R.T.H – Swamp Search! (April)
Participants join us for an exciting scavenger hunt on the Environmental Education Center trails to learn about the importance of the Great Swamp as an ecological and recreational resource. Visitors enjoy environmental activities and games and use their “eco-skills” on a scavenger hunt as well as participate in engaging activities that promote positive environmental actions for everyone. The event is followed by a program with live mammals. Participation: approximately 1000 visitors.

The County Caper (August)
The County Caper is a one-day game that takes families and friends on an interactive tour of Somerset County parks and facilities. It is designed to encourage everyone to explore, learn, and protect our parks and other natural areas. This special event is open to everyone with a yearning to discover all that Somerset County has to offer. There is also an accelerated version of the County Caper for adults. Teams challenge their mental and physical capabilities while completing fun tasks throughout the day as they race against the clock. This exciting event is for those who crave adventure in their own backyard. Participation: approximately 200 registered participants.

The Lord Stirling 1770s Festival (October)
Return to the past and experience daily colonial life and craft industry at the annual Lord Stirling 1770s Festival. Colonial craftspeople ply their trades while a Town Crier announces the local news. A Revolutionary War Military detachment camps on the former estate lawn of Lord Stirling and conducts maneuvers. Guests stroll the grounds of “The Buildings” and tour Lord Stirling’s personal 1762 wine cellar. The Lord Stirling 1770s Festival also features displays of authentic artifacts discovered on site by our archeological field project. Children of all ages enjoy the hayrides, clay crafts, stenciling, tin piercing, and colonial games. Experience what life was like here in the fall of 1770 and learn about our local Revolutionary War hero, Lord Stirling. Craft sales are prohibited to ensure an enjoyable and educational living history event. Snacks, lunch, and cold drinks are available. Participation: approximately 1,000 visitors.

Festival of Trees (December)
December is the time to visit the Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center and get into the holiday spirit! The Festival of Trees, held at the EEC in Basking Ridge, is an indoor exhibit of decorated trees by various community groups and individuals. Visitors come to enjoy live holiday music on select Saturdays and Sundays, and relax in the Snowflake Café with a hot beverage and homemade goodies. Participation: approximately 2,000 visitors.
Exhibit and Lecture Series

The Environmental Education Center showcases thought-provoking and inspiring art exhibitions throughout the year which highlight nature and the environment.

**Nature through a Child’s Eye (January)**

This annual children’s environmental art exhibit features Somerset County kindergartners through sixth graders who have expressed their love of our natural world and our environment through their artwork.

**Special Exhibits (Ongoing)**

Artists display work from a variety of media that is as thought-provoking as it is beautiful. Ridge High School AP art students have partnered with the EEC to provide insightful and extraordinary artistic creations. Their recent exhibits included Vanishing Act – New Jersey’s Endangered Species and Biomimicry: A Curious Expedition into Design through Natural Forms. Exhibits from regional professional artists and photographers are displayed at various times throughout the year and Bernards Township holds its community art show annually at the EEC.

**Great Swamp Exhibit Hall**

When completed, this permanent interpretive exhibit entitled The Great Swamp Experience will be a place where visitors of all ages will obtain positive feelings about nature. The exhibit showcases diversity in nature, the importance of wetlands, change of geologic and human history over time, and offers tools for exploring nature. The Great Swamp is an enduring landscape that has many chapters, and each one has lessons to teach us about nature and our relationship to this landscape.
American Chestnut Tree Project

The American Chestnut was the predominant tree in the Northeastern forest before the 20th Century. The Chestnut blight, a fungal disease that was introduced in the early 1900’s, killed billions of American Chestnut trees. On May 8, 2014, working with the American Chestnut Foundation and Penn State University, the EEC and volunteers from Goldman Sachs planted 280 blight-resistant chestnut seeds designated as Restoration 1.0. These chestnuts have all of the characteristics of American Chestnuts and the blight-resistance of Chinese Chestnuts. The test site on the western edge of Environmental Education Center property at Lord Stirling Park is now part of a long-term research study to bring back the American Chestnut. Corporate groups from Johnson & Johnson and Verizon helped the EEC staff clear and prepare the area for the planting. The trees are currently 2 feet tall. Please come and watch our Chestnuts grow; these Restoration Chestnuts are the first in NJ.

Ongoing Conservation & Science Research Projects

The Environmental Education Center is located on 425 acres of protected land in the Great Swamp watershed basin. A variety of animal habitats and plant communities are present in a relatively small area and are accessible through the trail system. Marshes, swamps, a river, intermittent streams, springs, floodplains, ponds, fields, and forests make this an ideal location for science and research projects. Many of these ongoing research projects are conducted in partnerships with universities and colleges like Penn State or Rutgers University, as well as agencies like The Great Swamp Watershed Association and The Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. We also have a greenhouse for propagating plantings of restoration projects.

The Environmental Education Center continually seeks partnership opportunities for science-based conservation and research projects.
Facility and Trails

Trails

Eight and one-half miles of relatively flat trails meander through 435 acres of The Great Swamp, approximately three miles of which are boardwalked. They are open every day from sunrise to sunset. Cattails and sedges are found as you wander the boardwalks in the freshwater marsh. Along the Yellow Trail that takes you close to the Passaic River, the seasonally-inundated floodplain is home to Pin Oak, Red Maple, and Ash. Along the southern perimeter of the park, the natural process of succession is slowly changing abandoned farm fields to woodland. In these areas, wildflowers and shrubs mingle with grasses and saplings and provide homes for many birds, mammals, and insects. Interpretive signage that educates and inspires visitors is regularly updated and added along our trail system. The trails also feature wildlife observation blinds for standout views of the Great Swamp.

The Garden Discovery Trail

The Garden Discovery Trail travels between the Environmental Education Center and along the banks of Branta Pond in an area affectionately known as The Gardens. It is an easily accessible boardwalk trail for those who are looking for a short walk or for those with limited abilities. It has a native plant garden, herb and sensory gardens, fern and shade gardens, deer-resistant plant examples, an arboretum with native New Jersey shrubs and trees, and a pleasant gazebo in which to sit and enjoy the surroundings. Sponsorship of projects in The Gardens ensure that people of all abilities can experience the beauty and splendor of the Great Swamp basin and get inspirational ideas for their own gardens.
SPONSOR A TRAIL AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Sponsor your favorite trail or boardwalk at the Environmental Education Center or give one as a gift to a friend or family member. Your donation will allow the EEC to help preserve, protect, and enhance the EEC. Together we will ensure our treasured swampland park is enjoyed by all people, for all time.

When you buy or gift a trail section, you or your loved one will receive:

- A certificate of trail sponsorship, including the latitude and longitude.
- A map of the landmark so you can see exactly where the acre is located.
- You will be added to our events and updates list to receive the Environmental Education Center e-newsletter.
- A mention on our social media and a link to your business on our website.
- Affirm that you place a high value on the park and the benefits it provides you.

Trail Sponsorship pricing begins at $250.

Green House and AWESIM Kids’ Summer Garden

A 16’x20’ green house is attached to the EEC building and used for overwintering delicate plants and preparing a garden for the AWESIM Kids’ Summer Science Program, as well as for other public programs. It is filled with delicious edibles like kale, carrots, chamomile, garlic, and native pollinator plants. Seeds trays are prepared in the green house, and program participants transplant the young seedlings into the outdoor growing garden in the spring, and then maintain it throughout the summer. This is a perfect way for kids to learn about where their food originates and how to grow their own garden.

Building and Classrooms

The Environmental Education Center building contains classrooms and meeting rooms that are used by the community. The bookshop contains books and gift items relating to the environmental programs and topics offered at the Center. The reference library has a collection of environmental books, history books and periodicals. An auditorium is used for lectures, public meetings, concerts, and special events.
Program or Operating Grants

Help Us Grow

Foundations can support the Environmental Education Center’s mission and special initiatives through grant support. The Environmental Education Center is continually evaluating our facilities and programs to meet the needs of the community.

To learn more about how your business or foundation can support the Environmental Education Center, contact Carrie Springer, Manager of Environmental Science at 908.722.1200 ext. 5324

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer efforts are crucial to the success of the Environmental Education Center programs, events, and maintenance. On average, volunteers contribute 1,700 hours of service per year. Group and Corporate volunteers donated 400 hours. No matter your interests, skills, or schedule, you can help the EEC in its valuable work. Volunteering at the EEC is a great way to expand your knowledge of environmental science, give back to your community, meet new people, and share your love of environmental education with others.

Why not plan your next corporate team building day at the EEC? Employees from Antea, Ethicon, L’Oreal, Merck, and Verizon have helped to support the environment by volunteering at the EEC. Past activities have included planting trees, working on meadow and pond restoration, and building an arboretum.

For information about volunteering at the EEC, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 908.722.1200 ext. 5336.
# BENEFIT TIERS

## TITLE SPONSOR FOR ALL EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willow $500</th>
<th>American Beech $1,000</th>
<th>Great Swamp Oak $2,500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Title sponsorship includes all benefits at the Great Swamp Oak level.

## PROJECT E.A.R.T.H. SWAMP SEARCH

### Sponsor Benefits

| Add marketing questions to event survey/evaluation | X |
| Product coupon distribution to all attendees | X |
| 20% discount in the EEC Gift Shop | X |
| Corporate logo on event flyer/poster | X X |
| Corporate logo in event program | X X X |
| Display corporation supplied banner | X X X |
| Promotional announcements at the event | X X X |
| Corporate logo on on SCPC website with a link to the sponsor’s website | X X X |
| The money you donate will be 100% tax-deductible! | X X X |

## 1770s FESTIVAL

### Sponsor Benefits

| Add marketing questions to event survey/evaluation | X |
| Product coupon distribution to all attendees | X |
| 20% discount in the EEC Gift Shop | X |
| Corporate logo on event flyer/poster | X X |
| Corporate logo in event program | X X |
| Display corporation supplied banner | X X X |
| Promotional announcements at the event | X X X |
| Corporate logo on on SCPC website with a link to the sponsor’s website | X X X |
| The money you donate will be 100% tax-deductible! | X X X |

## COUNTY CAPER

### Sponsor Benefits

| Corporate logo on T-Shirts | X |
| Add marketing questions to event survey/evaluation | X |
| Product coupon distribution to all attendees | X |
| 20% discount in the EEC Gift Shop | X |
| Corporate logo on event flyer/poster | X X |
| Corporate logo in event program | X X |
| Display corporation supplied banner | X X X |
| Promotional announcements at the event | X X X |
| Corporate logo on on SCPC website with a link to the sponsor’s website | X X X |
| The money you donate will be 100% tax-deductible! | X X X |

## FESTIVAL OF TREES

### Sponsor Benefits

| Add marketing questions to event survey/evaluation | X |
| Product coupon distribution to all attendees | X |
| 20% discount in the EEC Gift Shop | X |
| Corporate logo on event flyer/poster | X X |
| Corporate logo in event program | X X |
| Display corporation supplied banner | X X X |
| Promotional announcements at the event | X X X |
| Corporate logo on on SCPC website with a link to the sponsor’s website | X X X |
| The money you donate will be 100% tax-deductible! | X X X |
SPONSORSHIP FORM

Please complete the following form to confirm your chosen sponsorship package. Completed forms can be returned by mail to PO Box 5147, North Branch, NJ 08876, or via email at cspringer@scparks.org, or by fax at 908.766.2687 attention Carrie Springer, Manager of Environmental Science.

Custom sponsorship packages may be created for events, environmental education programs, conservation and research projects, exhibits and lecture series, and facilities and trails. Your generous donations are 100% tax deductible.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Company Name _____________________________________________

Contact Person _____________________________________________

Contact E-mail Address ______________________________________

Contact Phone Number _______________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________

City/State/Zip Code __________________________________________

EVENT SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES:

Title Sponsor

____ $10,000 Title Sponsor for all EEC Events

Project E.A.R.T.H. Swamp Search

____ $2,500 Great Swamp Oak
____ $1,000 American Beech
____ $500 Willow

County Caper

____ $2,500 Great Swamp Oak
____ $1,000 American Beech
____ $500 Willow

1770s Festival

____ $2,500 Great Swamp Oak
____ $1,000 American Beech
____ $500 Willow

Festival of the Trees

____ $2,500 Great Swamp Oak
____ $1,000 American Beech
____ $500 Willow

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM SPONSORSHIP

I would like to sponsor the below environmental education program in the amount of $__________.

____ K-12 school programs
____ Summer programs (Awesim Kids, Eco-Explorers, Coyote Kids)
____ Preschool/Early childhood programs
____ Teen programs
____ Public programs (adult education classes, and workshops, family programs, senior center outreach)

EXHIBITS AND LECTURE SERIES

I would like to sponsor the below exhibit or lecture series in the amount of $__________.

____ Nature Through a Child’s Eye
____ Special Exhibits (ongoing)
____ Great Swamp Exhibit Hall
____ Lecture Series (ongoing, various topics)
CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH

To sponsor a conservation and research project please call 908.766.2489

TRAILS AND FACILITIES

Sponsor a Trail

_____ $250 (1 year)
_____ $500 (1 year, and listed on our website as trail sponsor)
_____ Other $____________

Name or section of trail you would like to sponsor_____________________________.

☐ This is a gift. Please send this trail sponsorship certificate to:

Name: _________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Sponsor the Environmental Education Center Building

I would like to sponsor an area of the EEC building in the amount of $____________.

List the facilities area that you would like your donation to benefit: _______

______________________________________________________________

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

_____ Please send me an invoice

_____ I have enclosed a check made payable to:

Somerset County Park Foundation
PO Box 5147
North Branch, NJ 08876

_____ Please charge my credit card

Card Type: Visa / MC / AmEx / Discover ___________________________

Card Number ________________________________________________

Expiration Date ________________________

Security Code _________________________

Signature ___________________________________________________

Date _________________________

The Somerset County Park Foundation is a 501(c)(3) recognized by the IRS; I.D. #22-2562113 created to preserve, support, and promote Somerset County Park Commission programs, facilities, and open space through advocacy and fundraising. The Park Foundation is managed by a nine-member Board of Trustees including one member of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Foundation funds are used to sponsor, underwrite, support, and promote park activities and recreation. Additional funds raised by the Foundation benefit Somerset County Park Commission through expansion of programs, improvement of facilities, and capital expenditures to enhance access to active and passive recreation opportunities.