

SCHOOL PROGRAM GUIDE



*Somerset County
Park Commission*

Environmental
Education Center

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.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



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.



The Somerset County Park Commission services are available to everyone. If your group requires special assistance or has specific interests, please let us know when booking your program.



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.

| | In-County | Out of County |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Programs at EEC: One program title per 30 students | \$100.00 | \$175.00 |
| Programs at EEC: Two program titles per 30 students | \$165.00 | \$290.00 |
| Programs at School: One program title, first hour of program | \$125.00 | \$225.00 |
| Programs at School: Additional hours of program | \$ 50.00 | \$ 75.00 |

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 programming 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.





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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.



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) _____



Somerset County
Park Commission

Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park | 190 Lord Stirling Road | Basking Ridge, NJ 07920 | 908 722-1200

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: _____





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