

Brookside Nature Center's Guide to Education Programs

appreciation of the natural world.



Nature Center
in Wheaton Regional Park

Our mission is to connect people and nature, and to encourage the fullest

Brookside Nature Center

Wheaton Regional Park
1400 Glenallan Ave.
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-962-1480
mcp-brooksidenc@montgomeryparks.org
www.brooksidenature.org

Center hours:

Tuesday-Friday, 9 am–5 pm
Saturday and Sunday, 1 - 5 pm
Closed Mondays and major holi-
days
Trails open daily sunrise - sunset

Our Curriculum

We hope to excite students of all ages to explore nature, helping them develop a sense of curiosity and stewardship now and in the future. This comprehensive guide is for educators and group leaders wanting natural or cultural history experiences as an extension of classroom studies.

Naturalists lead students in small groups to make observations, collect data, and draw conclusions. Our programs complement the Montgomery County Public School science and social studies curricula. They can be adapted to meet the needs of any group (scouts, homeschoolers, hiking clubs, etc.) wanting an enriching nature experience. We also have ADA-accessible outdoor areas.

We welcome partnerships with middle school, high school, college and special interest classes and environmental clubs and modify our programs to be age appropriate. We coordinate volunteer service projects for groups and individuals and are an approved SSL (student service learning) host.



Fees

- \$5 per participant (\$50 minimum charge). A \$50 deposit is required for each program reservation. Balance is due on your program date. Effective Sept. 1, 2011, reduced fee for MCPS Title 1 schools.
- No fee for leaders/chaperones.
- If schools are closed or delayed, we try to reschedule your program. Refunds are given only if MNCPPC staff cancels the program.

How To Schedule

Naturalist-led programs:

- are available Tuesday through Friday by reservation only.
- vary in length (45 min. to 1.5 hours).
- are tailored to each group's level and interests.
- can accommodate groups up to 120 students, depending on staff availability and program topic.

Make program reservations by calling us at 301-962-1480. Have several dates and times in mind, in case your first choice is unavailable.



MontgomeryParks.org
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL
CAPITAL PARK AND
PLANNING COMMISSION

Nature Everywhere (September – November & March – May)

Can't make it to the park for a field trip? Let us bring a field trip to you—no buses required! BNC naturalists conduct outdoor science programs in your school yard that complement curriculum requirements. Each one-hour program includes guided discussion in the classroom followed by firsthand observation and hands-on activities outside in the school yard. For a list of program topics visit brooksidenature.org and click on the Nature Everywhere link.

Inclement Weather Policy

If weather is inclement, call to see if programs are being conducted and if the nature center is open.

Self-Guided Programs

Groups may visit the nature center on a self-guided basis. However, priority use of the facility is given to scheduled groups. Call and let us know if you're coming on your own.

Picnicking

Limited picnicking facilities are available near the nature center on a first come, first served basis. No indoor eating areas are available. This is a trash-free park area. Please plan to take your trash with you.

Resource Protection

All park areas are nature preserves. By law, all plants, animals, rocks, and minerals are protected and cannot be altered or collected.

Birthday Parties

Visit brooksidenature.org for more information on birthday parties.

Spend The Day In Wheaton Regional Park!

To extend your field trip experience, we invite you to enjoy other activities in the park!

- Hike the self-guided nature trail
- Play at our Nature Exploration Area
- Visit Brookside Gardens
- Picnic at Shorefield picnic area
- Play at Adventure Playground
- Hike around Pine Lake
- Skate at the ice rink
- Ride the carousel and miniature train (in season)

Field Trip Program Topics

CONNECTED TO PLANTS

Maple Sugaring (February only)

It may be snowy and chilly outdoors, but the maple trees are already preparing for spring! Learn about the science of maple sugaring and photosynthesis, visit our "sugar bush", see how to tap a tree, and watch sap being boiled down into syrup.

TREE-mendous

Learn about the parts of a tree and how they work. In an outdoor exploration, examine the forest community, identify some common trees, determine the importance of trees, and observe wildlife that lives there.

The Secrets Of Plants

Identify and describe plant parts and determine the job of each part. Investigate the relationship between plants, animals, and people. **Choose between Green and Growing**—discovering plant parts as we hike along the trail (available March–October),

Flowers For An Hour—focusing on pollination, flower structure, and a close up look at pollinators (available April – Sept.), or

How Seeds Travel—discovering the many ways seeds get from here to there (available September – December).



PEOPLE AND PLACES

Woodland Indians

Learn about the lifestyles and culture of the early human residents of our area through story, craft, and games. Examine stone and bone tools and experiment with skills needed for survival.

Pioneer Life

Experience life in the mid-1800's through story, craft, and games. Hike to our log cabin and, through activities, compare our lifestyle with those of early settlers.



DISCOVERING WILDLIFE

Getting To Know Insects/ Butterflies (April – October)

What makes an insect an insect? Examine insect characteristics, adaptations, and life cycles through field study. Identify live insects through capture and release in the meadow. **Choose between a general insect or butterfly program.**

Fur And Feathers

This fun adventure examines animal adaptations by comparing characteristics and behavior using mammal and bird skulls, skins, and tracks. Hike and explore the places birds and mammals live and discover how animals are adapted to survive in their habitats.

Tracks And Traces

Students become nature detectives as they study the habits and behavior of local wildlife. On a hike through the woods and fields of the park, analyze

clues like tracks, scat, nests, food, and other evidence animals leave behind.

Reptiles And Amphibians

Learn about the fascinating world of reptiles and amphibians. First, participate in a hands-on investigation of some resident reptiles and amphibians. Compare life cycle characteristics. Then hike, explore their habitats, and maybe even see one!



Meet The Honeybees (Apr - Oct)

Let's thank honeybees for many of the foods we eat! Discover the importance of honeybees as pollinators, learn about their life cycle, and role play colony jobs. See a honeybee hive and the equipment beekeepers use to harvest honey.

The Ground Beneath Your Feet (March – November)

Worms have been called the “intestines of the earth” and we'll find out how they and other decomposers keep soil healthy. We'll search beneath decaying logs and investigate leaf litter to learn how things decompose.

Food Chains And Food Webs

Investigate the world of producers, consumers, and decomposers. Hike and participate in our exciting food chain survival game in which we predict animals' fates. Discover wildlife's challenge of needing to eat while trying not to be eaten.

Leader's Choice

If you would like a program not listed, we'll gladly develop one for you.

For Scouts & Adventure Seekers

Scout Badges

Trying to meet a badge requirement but need some help? We'll tailor a program to complement your badge requirement.

Outdoor Living Skills

Choose from: Finding Your Way in the Woods (using map reading and compass), Fire Making, Shelter Building, and more.

NATURAL DISCOVERIES

Pond And Stream Exploration (mid-April - mid-October)

Explore our local watershed—where water comes from and where it goes. Learn about the water cycle. Wade along the shore and use dip nets in search of crayfish, fish, water insects and more. Find out about adaptations and food webs as we get a close look at the animals we find. Wear shoes that can get wet.

Choose between exploring the pond, stream, or both.

Weather Watchers

Through story and activities, students learn what makes weather and how the water cycle works. On an outdoor scavenger hunt, interpret signs of weather and discover how weather affects plants, animals, and people.

Habitat Sweet Habitat

Animals live in just about every nook and cranny in the natural world. Through a puppet show and hike, students examine different habitats, describe animals living there, and determine how those animals are adapted for their homes.

Changing Seasons

Fall, winter, spring, and summer—using our senses we'll explore the season's own blend of natural events. After an interactive introduction including a fun puppet show, we'll go outdoors and examine signs of the current season.

Hike To The Planets

This active, hands-on hike is designed so students discover what makes each planet and its moons unique.

Geology Rocks

Through outdoor exploration, find out how soil, rocks, and landforms are important to people, plants, and animals.

Brookside Nature Center Vicinity Map



Wheaton Regional Park Phone Numbers

Brookside Nature Center	301-962-1480	Wheaton Carousel/Train	301-942-6703
Park Police	301-949-3010	Indoor Tennis	301-905-3030
Wheaton Park Manager	301-905-3045	Horse Riding Stables	301-622-3311
Wheaton Ice Rink	301-905-3000	Brookside Gardens	301-962-1400

www.montgomeryparks.org