

Science Based Programming

Arthropod Hunt (suggested age group: 1st through 5th grades): Students will peak under leaf piles and sift through pond water to discover arthropods and investigate the roles these animals play in the forest ecosystem. Students will compare arthropods living in three different habitats; forest floor, trees/shrubs, and a freshwater pond. This program addresses the concepts of arthropod body structure, adaptations, lifecycles, metamorphosis, and diet. For older students we discuss how arthropods are connected to issues of forest health and water quality. Bring shoes that can get wet and muddy.

Bogs, Bugs, and Beavers (suggested age group: 4th grade & Up): Examine wetland ecosystems of the Pink Beds valley with a guided hike to areas of past beaver activity. While discussing positive and negative consequences of change, we'll explore and learn about aquatic life, mountain bogs, forest succession, and beavers. Bring shoes that can get wet and muddy.

Citizen Scientist Program: In this program students will focus on learning about citizen science, forest management, what tools scientists use, and how we can help! This is a hands-on program taking place along the Cradle's paved trails and at our new Citizen Science Lab in our exhibit hall. Your program can focus on Ecology, Forestry or both!

- In the Ecology lab (best for 2nd grade & up) students will take part in a bioblitz, recording plants and animals found in Pisgah National Forest. Students will practice using field guides to identify plants and animals, and learn different invasive and non-invasive monitoring techniques such as camera traps, tracking, and collection.
- In the Forestry lab (best for 5th grade & up) students will learn how to identify and measure local tree species and help us monitor an invasive species attacking our hemlock trees. Students will measure tree height, diameter, and board feet.

Designed for the Forest (suggested age group: 4th and 5th Grades): Learners will walk our Forest Festival Trail (1.3 mile), learning about local wildlife, their habitat needs and what biotic and abiotic elements make up the forest ecosystem. This program involves storytelling and playing some games along the trail to learn more about local animal adaptations.

Forest Festival Trail- Guided Tour (suggested age group: middle school through adults): This 1.3 mile trail explores Dr. Schenck's forestry experiments, a portable saw mill, and a logging locomotive that students can climb aboard. The trails stimulate discussions about ways of living, habitat, how plants grow, succession, energy cycling, and forestry concepts. Great for adult groups too!

Getting to Know Trees (suggested age group: 3rd grade & Up): Learners will walk our Forest Festival Trail (1.3 mile), learning along the way about what trees need, how they grow, and how to identify different species. This is a versatile program that can incorporate reading The Lorax story and collecting citizen science data on our trees.

Plant Discovery (suggested age group: 3rd & 6th grades): Investigate a diverse forest while observing, identifying, comparing, and personalizing plants. Through fun activities students will build an understanding of plant growth, adaptations, and interdependence with wildlife and people. This versatile program can include activities on topics of your choice: such as lifecycle, identification, pollination, soil and invasive exotic species. Older students will focus on the structure and function of flowering plants and different strategies used for survival.

Social Studies Focused Programming

The Great Wagon Road Game (suggested age group: 3rd grade & Up): Learners will become immersed in the early 1700's when European settlers first settled in WNC. Students will play an interactive role-playing version of the "Oregon Trail" game of their teacher's youth. The Cradle of Forestry has brought the game to life along our Biltmore Campus Trail (1 mile). This interactive walking game takes you around the trail to learn more about the trials and tribulations the first European settlers faced as they traveled the Great Wagon Road and settled our beautiful mountains. Learners will travel in "wagon groups", "purchase" supplies (no real money involved in the game) for the journey and stop to roll the dice of destiny that will choose their cards of fate.

Biltmore Campus Trail- Guided Tour (suggested age group: middle school & Up): This 1 mile trail passes seven historical buildings, including a schoolhouse, commissary, and student quarters. Visitors will learn about the beginning of the Biltmore Forest School in 1898, the community that was living here at that time and the effects on forestry in the area. Great for adult groups too!

Toys, Tools, and Resources (suggested age group: Kindergarten through 5th grades): This program provides a hands-on experience to capture students' imaginations and challenge their critical thinking skills as they compare the technology of the past with what they see in their own lives. Students will be immersed in an Appalachian mountain community from the early 1900's, visiting historical buildings along our Biltmore Campus Trail (1-mile paved loop). Younger students will explore toys and play from the past, while older students will discover the advantages of tree identification and how wood products were useful in everyday life.

Get Your Bearings (suggested age group: Kindergarten through 3rd grades): This versatile program introduces students to the world of navigation, maps, and cardinal directions with students designing a visual map for a story walk. Students will learn why and how people and wildlife navigate their habitat and explore the forest with the help of a map and compass.