

# Cincinnati Parks Explore Nature! School Programs



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# Cincinnati Parks Explore Nature!

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In the pages of this guide, you'll find Park Naturalist-led programs for participants of all ages and levels of ability. Use the guide to locate those programs that best complement your lesson plans/activity calendar and to help you schedule a program or field trip for your class. *See you out in the parks!*

We operate 5 Nature Centers and also offer programs in neighborhood parks. For information about a specific center, call the Naturalists at the numbers below.

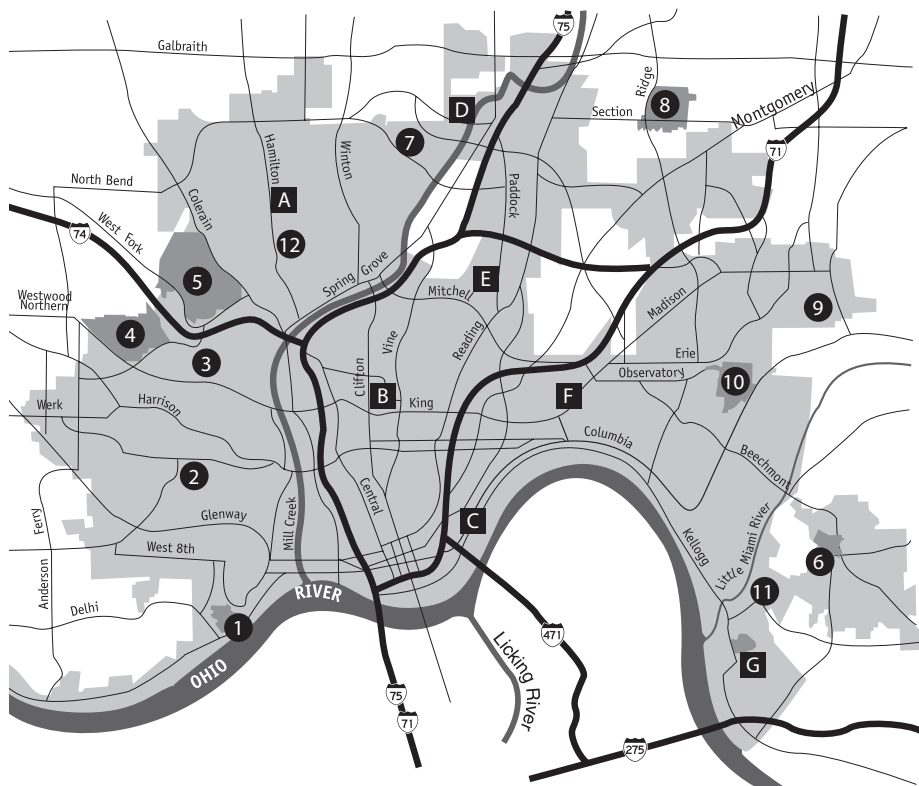
## **For general information and reservations, call the Bettman Center.**

Avon Woods Nature Ctr. Inner-City Outreach	4235 Paddock Rd.	513-861-3435
Bettman Natural Resources Ctr.	4 Beech Lane	513-321-6070
Caldwell Nature Ctr.	430 W. N. Bend Rd.	513-761-4313
California Woods Nature Ctr.	5400 Kellogg Ave.	513-231-8678
LaBoiteaux Woods Nature Ctr.	5400 Lanius Lane	513-542-2909
Trailside Nature Ctr. and Wolff Planetarium	3251 Brookline Ave	513-751-3679

Cincinnati Parks is committed to providing a quality experience at all parks and facilities by providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities upon request, call 513-321-6070.

Visitors may be recorded by Cincinnati Park Board for educational and promotional uses.

# Welcome to your Cincinnati Parks!



## Parks & Preserves with Trails

- 1 - Mt. Echo Park
- 2 - Glenway Woods
- 3 - Brodbeck Preserve
- 4 - McFarlan Woods (Mt. Airy)
- 5 - Mt. Airy Forest
- 6 - Stanbery Park
- 7 - Seymour Preserve
- 8 - French Park
- 9 - Little Duck Creek
- 10 - Ault Park
- 11 - Magrith Preserve
- 12 - Buttercup Valley / Parkers Woods

## Nature Centers - Neighborhood

- A - LaBoiteaux Woods - College Hill
- B - Trailside - Clifton (Burnet Woods)
- D - Caldwell - Carthage/Hartwell
- E - Avon Woods - Paddock Hills
- G - California Woods - California

## Explore Nature! Main Office

- F - Bettman - O'Bryonville/ Evanston

## Visitor Center

- C - Krohn Conservatory - Eden Park/  
Walnut Hills

# Caldwell Programs

## NATIVE AMERICANS



**Season Available:** F, W, S

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 4

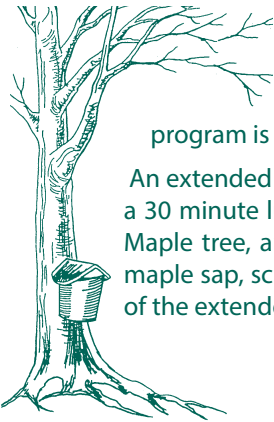
This interactive program focuses on the everyday life of an Ohio Native American child in the late 1700's, including food, clothing and shelter. Children experience daily life skills, pictographs, games and stories. The hike stresses Native Americans' historic uses of forest resources.

**Note:** To include daily life style activities, program must run a minimum of 2 hours.

## MAPLE SUGARING

**Season Available:** Jan-Feb

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 5



Experience how Sugar Maple trees produce sap and why it is collected for syrup only during this brief season. Watch us collect the sap and cook it down. Taste maple sap in three stages of production. The basic program is one hour in length with half taking place outdoors.

An extended program for grades K - 5 that lasts up to 3 hours, including a 30 minute lunch break, covers the basic program plus a hike to tap a Maple tree, and interactive demonstration of Native Americans' use of maple sap, science experiments and additional hands-on activities. Half of the extended program occurs outdoors.

## FOSSILS, SOILS AND CINCINNATI GEOLOGY

**Season Available:** F, S

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 6

Children participate in an interactive introduction and an exploratory creek hike to find Cincinnati's famous fossils. A two hour program for Pre-K through Kindergarten covers fossils only.

Grades 1 and older investigate geologic processes such as rock formation, soil types, weathering and other forces, past and present, that shape Cincinnati.



# Caldwell Programs

## ADAPTING TO HABITATS



**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: K – 2**

Discover the differences between living and non-living things as we learn how plants and animals interact with their physical environment. We investigate the basic needs of organisms, how their habitat fills those needs and the important role of adaptations. During the hike, children explore three different local habitats.

## ECOLOGY: WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?



**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: 3 – 5**

Everything is connected! Study how organisms survive in their ecosystem and how the energy all organisms need flows through the system. As children explore food chains and food webs, they discover what roles everyone plays in an ecosystem and that everything is important.

## THE GREEN TEAM



**Season Available: F, S**

**Grade Level: 3 – 6**

Children investigate the unique role of plants as producers of food through photosynthesis. A hike can include plant life cycles, pollination, seed distribution, how plant structures are related to function and interactions between plants and animals. Fall programs can include leaf collections and the use of classification keys.



## WEATHER 101



**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: 2– 6**

A lively series of demonstrations introduces children to how air, water and heat produce Earth's weather. Children learn how to read a weather map. They perform experiments introducing air pressure, convection currents, and how different types of clouds bring different types of weather. On the hike, we look for the effects of weathering and erosion and measure temperature in various locations.



# California Woods Programs

## LOCAL WILDLIFE



**Season Available:** F, S

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 2

Explore the wildlife in the Cincinnati region! Hike the preserve to look for animal homes, and how they meet their needs in our area: food, water, shelter, space. Meet some local animals in the Nature Center and learn about the adaptations that help them live here. We will also explore a little bit of animal classification. Suggested program times: Pre-K up to 2 hours, K - 2 up to 3 hours



## WONDERS OF THE SEASONS

**Season Available:** F

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 2

**Fabulous Fall:** Learn all about the wonders of fall. Enjoy a puppet show highlighting how animals prepare for winter, take a hike to explore the season in person, and make a fall-themed craft. This program is typically 1.5 - 2 hours long.

**Season Available:** S

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 2

**Spring Into Spring!:** After a long winter, explore the wonders of spring renewal in nature! Enjoy a puppet show that focuses on how local animals got through the winter and prepare for spring. Take a hike to explore the wonders of the new season, and make a spring-themed craft. This program is typically 1.5 - 2 hours long.

## “TREE”-MENDOUS TREES



**Season Available:** F, S

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 5

This program is a well-rounded introduction to all aspects of the plant kingdom. Hike the preserve and explore basic tree identification and uses, based on the season. Inside, learn about plant physiology and photosynthesis. Suggested program times: Pre-K up to 2 hours, K up to 3 hours, 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> up to 4 hours.



## HISTORY AND MYSTERY OF MAPLE

**Season Available:** Feb-1<sup>st</sup> week of March

**Grade Level:** Pre-K – 5

From the Native American, to pioneer, to current sugar farmers, we taste and experience the magic of maple sugaring. Learn about the fascinating process trees use to make sweet sap and why this is the only time per year we can use it. Assist the Naturalist in tapping trees, collecting sap, and witness the transformation from sap to syrup. Program length: Pre-K - K up to 2 hrs, 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grades up to 3 hours.

# California Woods Programs

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## WHAT'S UP WITH THE WEATHER

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**Season Available:** F, W, S      **Grade Level:** 2 – 5

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Why is weather so hard to predict? Become Junior Meteorologists and learn about the many factors involved in figuring out the weather. A lively series of demonstrations introduces children to how air, temperature, water, the sun and the Earth itself interact to produce weather. Students learn how to read a weather map and symbols with a hypothetical weather situation in our area. Learn about convection currents, air pressure, cloud formation, and how to read the clouds to make predictions about the weather. See how the Earth's orbit influences the seasons. Go outside and look for the effects of weathering and erosion and we explore temperature differences and microclimates around the park.

## THE ECOLOGY OF HABITATS

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**Season Available:** F, S      **Grade Level:** 2 – 8

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Explore the forest, meadow and creek habitats in a single day! Hike to each habitat and learn about their fascinating ecological interactions. A short indoor presentation looks at various animals and their adaptations for success as well as predator/prey relationships. This program can be adapted to include cycles in nature. Life cycles can include: insects, amphibians, even fungi! Natural cycles can include the water cycle, carbon cycle, etc. This program is easily customized.

## LANDS ACROSS TIME - THE GEOLOGY OF CINCINNATI

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**Season Available:** F, W, S      **Grade Level:** 3 – 6

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Through interactive demonstrations and hands on exploration, learn about the rock cycle, soils, glaciation, freeze/thaw processes and fossilization. Hike our Lick Run Creek to learn about erosion. Find fossils in the field. Children will be permitted to take a fossil home. *Program can be customized to the teacher's lesson plans. Sturdy footwear is required. Plan to get dirty.*

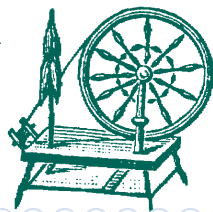
## AN OLD WAY OF LIFE: A PIONEER EXPERIENCE

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**Season Available:** F, S      **Grade Level:** 3 – 6

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Learn about pioneer ways and experience a typical day in the life of a pioneer child. Children discover how lifestyles, religion, customs and traditions helped shape Cincinnati. An Oregon Trail inspired game and interactive hike introduce children to characters of that period.



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CINCINNATI PARKS EXPLORE NATURE!

# *LaBoiteaux Woods Programs*

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## **SPRING MAGIC**

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**Season Available: S**

**Grade Level: Pre-K – 2**

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Celebrate the season of new life with a trail walk and activities that illustrate nature's important cycles. Discover how plants and animals meet their basic needs in various local habitats.

## **THE WONDERS OF FALL**

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**Season Available: F**

**Grade Level: Pre-K – 3**

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Naturalists focus on how plants and animals meet their survival needs in the Fall. Hike to observe seasonal plant changes and signs of animals preparing for winter. Activities on migration, hibernation and other ways local animals survive cold weather complete the day.

## **NATIVE AMERICAN LIFE**

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**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: Pre-K – 4**

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This interactive program focuses on the everyday life of an Ohio Native American child in the late 1700's, including food, clothing and shelter. Children experience daily life skills, create pictographs, and participate in fun games. The informative hike stresses Native Americans' historic uses of forest resources.

## **THE NATURAL WORLD**

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**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: Pre-K – 6**

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Does your class know more about the Internet than their backyard? Enjoy a grab-bag of the Naturalists' favorite activities with the emphasis on fun and exploration (They'll soak up lots of information as well).

Wear old clothes and sturdy shoes for woods exploration. Touch nature, meet an animal or two and play a game.

## **RECYCLING**

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**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: 1 – 8**

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"Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" is also Nature's way. Learn about natural resources and cycles, composting, recycling and other ways to minimize waste through a hike and fun activities.

# LaBoiteaux Woods Programs

## PLANTS ARE FUN-DAMENTAL

**Season Available: F, S**

**Grade Level: 2 – 4**

Explore on a hike through a meadow and forest how a wide variety of plants provide food and shelter to animals, and see how they grow and change through the seasons. Investigate the parts of a flower and the importance of pollination for all living things. Learn about seeds and the life cycle of trees.



## BRINGING LITERATURE TO LIFE: SURVIVAL LITERATURE

**Season Available: F, S**

**Grade Level: 4 – 8**

*Hatchet* or *My Side of the Mountain* comes to life as students hike, locate sources of water and wild edibles, practice survival skills like creating a shelter and fire building and discuss animals from the book using taxidermy mounts and live specimens from the Nature Center. The program builds excitement, deepens understanding and instills self-confidence. Please let us know which book you choose and read it before the program. Minimum of three hours needed for this program.



## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, RAVINE TO FREEDOM

**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: 3 – 8**

LaBoiteaux Woods was on the path of an important network of Underground Railroad activity in College Hill during the 1840s-1850s. Children walk part of a route used by escaping slaves on a rugged trail hike through the woods. Indoor activities include a simulated journey to freedom and using maps to trace escape routes. Winter is the best time to experience this program: with fewer tree leaves, views are better of the local topography, students can imagine the harshness of the cold weather with minimal clothing as it was the preferred time of the year for the slaves to escape due to more hours of darkness.

# Trailside Programs

## A BUG'S LIFE



**Season Available: F, S**

**Grade Level: K – 6**

They're creepy, crawly and all together fascinating! Discover the exciting world of a bug's life, as we look at the most successful group of animals on the planet. From the depths of Burnet Woods to the butterfly gardens of Trailside Nature Center, this program offers a unique opportunity to examine metamorphosis, life cycles and the unique roles they play in our day-to-day lives.



## CINCINNATI SKIES

**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: 1 – 4, 5 – 8, 9 – 12**

Experience the oldest planetarium west of the Allegheny Mountains. Discover stars, constellations, galaxies and more. Learn the stories behind Orion, the Big and Little Dippers and many others. Includes Native American, African, Greek and Roman legends. Children participate in hands-on activities revolving around planets, moon phases and constructing star charts for nighttime viewing.

## PLANTS: SEEDS TO TREES



**Season Available: F, S**

**Grade Level: 1 – 6**

This exciting program functions as a primer on plant life. Children learn about the structure, function and reproduction of local trees and wildflowers as they explore the wooded hillsides of this urban forest. Through the use of hands-on activities, children are exposed to the process of photosynthesis, seasonal changes, seed dispersal and more.

## HABITATS AND ADAPTATIONS

**Season Available: F, W, S**

**Grade Level: 1 – 6**

This program introduces children to our local habitats, their composition and how plants and animals have adapted to live within them. Through a combination of exploration, fun-filled activities and live animal demonstrations, children gain a greater understanding of the world around them.



# Trailside Programs

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## WEATHER MILD TO WILD

**Season Available: F, W, S**      **Grade Level: 2 – 6**

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A lively series of demonstrations introduces children to how air, water and heat produce Earth's weather. Engaging activities bring the water cycle to life. On the hike, we look for the effects of weathering and erosion and explore how animals cope with the changing seasons.



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## RECYCLING AND RESOURCES

**Season Available: F, W, S**      **Grade Level: 2 – 6**

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Children explore ways to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle our natural resources through hands-on and interactive activities. Fun and active techniques are employed to engage children in the recycling of solid waste, nature's recycling methods, composting and natural resources.

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## NATURALIST GUEST SPEAKER

**Season Available: F, W, S**      **Grade Level: 9-12**

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Looking for a guest speaker to add to your classroom discussion? Cincinnati Parks provides a variety of 30-to-45-minute talks and presentations that can be brought in person to your classroom. Topics include Natural History, Local History, Astronomy and Environmental Issues. Presentations can be tailored to meet your curriculum standards.

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## LOCAL HISTORY TOURS



**Season Available: F, W, S**      **Grade Level: 9 – 12**

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Have a bus and need a tour guide? A Cincinnati Park Board Naturalist can bring your next field trip alive with exciting visits to destinations throughout the city. Tours include: Memorial Pioneer Cemetery and the founding of Cincinnati; Along The Waterfront, the Rise of the Queen City; Inclines and Overlooks, and Escaping the Basin. Or explore the exciting history behind the city's older parks and diverse neighborhoods. Tours can be customized to meet your educational needs.

# *Habitat for Homeschoolers*

Cincinnati Parks provides a local resource for homeschooling families with weekday nature programs that are educational and encourage hands-on learning. Lesson plans include investigative hikes, active games, experiments, field studies, activity stations, engaging presentations, and live animal encounters. From prehistoric fossils to the Underground Railroad, space, and present-day natural resources, we cover it all!

Homeschool groups can schedule any programs listed on pages 4-11 of this booklet. Refer to our scheduling information on pages 14-16 and call the Nature Center offering the program you are interested in.

Don't see what you are looking for? We may be able to customize a program for your group. Contact the Cincinnati Parks Nature Center near you to start the discussion.

**• Fee: \$8 per person per program, 15 person minimum. Program length varies depending on topic and age of group: 1.5 to 3 hours.**

Drop-off 2-hr Homeschool mini-camps/series programs for children 8 and older: \$60 for four sessions of 2-hour programs. These programs are scheduled by Cincinnati Parks Naturalist staff. Registration for these programs must be done online.

Parents/caregivers are required to pay and stay with children for shorter programs. Drop-off programs require emergency contact and health information as part of the registration process.

Homeschool programs are created for and taught to specific age/grade level ranges as mentioned in their descriptions. Speak with the Naturalist to determine if it is appropriate to register younger/older siblings.

All programs require advance registration.

The Cincinnati Park Board is a non-political, non-religious governmental agency. We teach all our programs based on commonly accepted scientific principles and theories.

If you want to be placed on our email list to receive newsletters and notification of upcoming programs, call 513-321-6070.

## **CREATE YOUR OWN PROGRAM**

Homeschoolers are encouraged to team up with a minimum of 15 paid participants (adults and children) and schedule any program offered in this booklet from pages 4 – 11. Refer to our scheduling information on pages 14 – 16 and call the Nature Center offering the program you are interested in.

# Specialized Programming for Preschoolers

## PROGRAMS AT NATURE CENTERS OR CITY PARKS

- \* All programs emphasize age-appropriate hands-on activities for children ages 4 and 5 year olds. Please no 3 year olds.
- \* Programs are 1 ½ - 2 hours long.
- \* Naturalists are happy to answer questions about program specifics.
- \* Most centers offer specific preschool programs, listed on pages 4 – 11 of this booklet. Seasonal programs are available at all centers.

## SEASONAL PROGRAMS

### *Fabulous Fall*

The leaves are changing colors. Animals need to make preparations for migration or hibernation as the cooler weather sets in. Join us as we find out what makes this season special!

### *Winter Wonders*

There is a chill in the air! Find out who is out and about and who is snoozing the winter away. Bundle up for some winter exploration.

### *Springing into Spring*

Things are warming up. Plants are greening up. Animal babies are springing up. Come see what's happening in spring.

### *Maple Sugaring*

This program is offered at Caldwell and California Woods Nature Centers. Learn and experience the magic of maple sugaring first-hand! In this program, we will have a simple, interactive photosynthesis talk, a short tree-tapping hike, and see how maple sap is turned into maple syrup at the evaporator. This program is offered for a short time window in late winter. Please refer to the page of the center you wish to visit to know more.



## HAVE A SPECIAL REQUEST?

Cincinnati Park Nature Centers are able to do other programs as well for your preschoolers. Enjoy programs like:

- Native Americans (Caldwell and LaBoiteaux Woods Nature Centers)
- Local Wildlife
- Habitats, and many more.

## PROGRAMS AT YOUR FACILITY

To find out the potential for the above programs to be brought to your location, call the Nature Center closest to your facility with the chosen program.

# To Schedule a Program

**TO SCHEDULE A PROGRAM; Call the Nature Center you plan to visit (see page 2) or the Bettman Natural Resource Center at 513-321-6070 for more information.**

Program dates fill quickly, so please schedule at least 2 weeks in advance. If you have any questions on program content, call the Nature Center chosen for the program.

**When you call, please have ready:**

- *Several preferred dates already cleared with administration and transportation, since we cannot put "holds" on dates*
- *Preferred program and location, and an alternate*
- *The number of children, grade level and adults coming*
- *Contact information; name, e-mail, phone*



## GROUP SIZES / CHAPERONES

The number of participants we may accommodate varies. Typically, each Nature Center can receive up to 65 people simultaneously. If you are planning to bring more than 65, we may need to schedule multiple centers or multiple days.

Preschool – adult to child ration of 1/10

Grade school – adult to child ration of 1/20 is preferred

The Naturalists rely on you to control the group and be with them during all the activities.

## TYPICAL PROGRAM / TIMES

Programs for preschool and kindergarten are usually shorter, lasting 1 ½ to 2 hours. These half-day programs can be either morning or afternoon, and can include a picnic at the center in suitable weather. A half-day program consists of either a hike or a hike with an indoor program.

Most programs for older children (First grade and up) last 3 - 4 hours and include a lunch break. They typically consist of an indoor program, a hike related to the day's theme and various hands-on activities. Most of these programs can also be offered in a half-day format. However, some activities will be dropped due to time constraints.

## ABOUT GRADE LEVELS

Some of our programs show a broad age/grade range in their descriptions. These programs can be customized to accommodate a broader age group through adjusted activities and games.

# To Schedule a Program

## FEES / PAYMENT FOR PROGRAMS AT NATURE CENTERS

**The current program fee, regardless of length, is \$6 per child and chaperones.** All teachers/facility staff attend FREE. Programs with consumable supplies may cost more and are noted in program descriptions.

**Minimum Fee:** equivalent to \$150 which equals 25 children / paying adults

Payment can be made by P.O., or by credit card, money order, cashier's check (payable to: Treasurer, City of Cincinnati) in advance or cash at the time of the program. **We regret that we can no longer accept personal checks.**

## OUTREACH FEES

Programs are designed for presentation at the Nature Centers. However, some topics (indicated in their descriptions by the icons shown below), can be handled as outreach programs in

*neighborhood parks*  or at a *school*. 

**Of course, activities will be modified; what can be done depends on the resources available at the outreach site.** Call the appropriate Nature Center to discuss details of what can be offered at specific locations and how programs would vary from what is described. Teachers are free.

Outreach Fees:

**At Parks:** \$6 per participant including chaperones.  
**Minimum Fee:** equivalent to \$150 which equals 25 participants.

**At Your Location:** \$100 for the first 30-60 minute program for up to 30 participants  
\$50 each additional program, same topic, same day  
There may be additional cost for mileage

## CONFIRMATIONS / CANCELLATIONS

Approximately one week prior to your program, a Naturalist will contact you regarding program details. Except in cases of severe weather emergencies, cancellations must be made at least 48 hours in advance of your scheduled visit, or a \$50 cancellation fee will be charged. If your facility is closed due to snow or extreme cold, there is no cancellation charge provided Naturalists are made aware of your facilities closure. We do proceed with programs in cases of rain, normal winter cold, etc.

# Program Details

Last Edited 1/6/23

## CUSTOMIZING

Park Naturalists are happy to work with you to customize to best fit your instructional and group needs. If you would like specific vocabulary, concepts, activities or information emphasized, call the appropriate Nature Center as soon as possible to work out those specifics.

## PARKING

FREE parking is available at all of the Nature Centers and city parks.

## DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Come prepared for the weather and count on being outside for at least part of the visit. The true value of a Nature Center is in its forests and fields; we want everyone to experience nature outdoors.

Participants should wear rain gear or coats as the weather requires, sturdy closed-toe shoes (no sandals or flip-flops), and hats and gloves in cold weather.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Reasonable accommodations are available upon advanced request. Wheelchair accessibility hikes are available at Caldwell, Mt. Airy Forest, and Bettman Natural Resource Center. Some indoor program elements are not wheelchair accessible at California Woods and Trailside Nature Centers. Call the nature center you are interested in scheduling for details. Park Naturalist will work with group leaders to create an appropriate program to accommodate participants with learning delays or disabilities.

## LUNCHESES

Lunches should be marked with each child's name, and include a drink (The Nature Centers and city parks do not have vending machines). Depending on the weather, participants eat outside at picnic tables or inside the Nature Center.



**CINCINNATI PARK BOARD**  
**BETTMAN NATURAL RESOURCES CENTER**  
**4 BEECH LANE**  
**CINCINNATI, OH 45208**  
**513-321-6070**  
[www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cincyparks](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cincyparks)