

Smithgall Woods Regional Education Center

Educational Programming

Brochure



Hands-on Environmental Education



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General Information



Smithgall Woods Regional Education Center (SWREC) was established at the Smithgall Woods - Dukes Creek Conservation Area in 1997 in response to the growing demand for hands-on environmental education.

Smithgall Woods is situated on 5,600 acres, most of which was acquired by the state of GA through a gift-purchase from Charles Smithgall, Jr., a noted conservationist and entrepreneur.

SWREC offers programs for students of all ages in cooperation with the GA Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR) Wildlife Resources Division, GA DNR State Parks and Historic Sites Division, and Pioneer RESA. Teacher workshops are held to help teachers learn more about North Georgia's ecosystems and the unique opportunities available at Smithgall Woods.

All programs are site-specific and are grounded on biologically-sound principles. GA DNR professionals from Parks, Game Management, and community volunteers collaborate to share their personal experiences and expertise on a wide variety of topics. All programs correlate to Georgia's Performance Standards (Available upon request).

Two or three, hour-long programs can be combined for a half-day field trip experience, or single programs can provide an in-depth study addressing specific educational objectives. Teachers, parents and chaperones are encouraged to participate or even to lead an onsite activity. A variety of habitat types - pond, stream, field, and forest - as well as an informative, self-interpretive Discovery Room allow for unlimited educational opportunities.

Outreach Programming- All ages

Winter months are an ideal time to plan an outreach program. Scheduling at other times is subject to staff availability. Talks are 45-60 minutes in length, can be adjusted for any age group and include:



Animal Adaptations:

Find out how form and function combine to help animals native to our area find their niche in life. Examine skulls, pelts, antlers, and shed skins while discussing animal behavior, predator avoidance and feeding habits.

Arachnids:

Learn about those amazing 8-legged, silk-spinning marvels as you view larger-than-life images of spiders through a fascinating power-point presentation.

Birds of Prey:



These precision aerial hunters have been the subject of legend and the inspiration for human-designed flying machines. Find out why eagles, hawks and owls deserve special respect and protection.

Dress-A-Beaver:

Learn how special adaptations help nature's engineers to survive and thrive in their aquatic environment. A beaver costume makes this learning experience fun for all ages.

Snakes Alive!:

Gain a new respect for these often-misunderstood creatures. Both models and live specimens allow students to learn about the anatomy, morphology and lifestyle of GA's snakes.



Teacher-led Onsite Programs

Any teacher or youth leader may conduct teacher-led educational programs at Smithgall Woods.

Please call ahead to schedule your group to use Smithgall Woods' facilities or educational equipment.

Ages Pre-K thru 2nd Grade

Living or Nonliving:

Learn about the traits of living and nonliving things during a brief discussion before taking a teacher-led nature hike to classify objects along the trail

Environmental I-Spy:

Enjoy a teacher-led nature hike while finding objects in nature whose names begin with letters on a game card.

Matching Trees With Leaves:

Take a teacher-led scavenger hunt and find trees that match laminated leaf cards or that fit special categories.

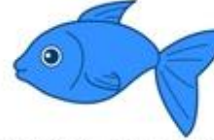
Birds & Worms

Play a game by pretending to be birds in search of food to demonstrate how both predators and prey use camouflage as a survival adaptation.

Other opportunities include hiking/walking, a Visitor's Center scavenger hunt, or fishing at one of the park's two ponds. Stop by our indoor Discovery Room to learn more about local history & ecology.

Onsite Programming: 3rd grade & up

Aquatic Activities:



Fishing is Fun:

Learn the basics of how to think like a fish, how to tie a fisherman's knot and how to use spin-casting equipment. Bring your own worms, crickets or other bait suitable for bass and bream. *No bread or corn, please*

Pond Exploration:

Watch how students' natural curiosity is rekindled as they collect tadpoles and learn about aquatic plants along the edge of a small pond or beaver wetland

Stream Ecology:

Use a kick-seine to collect and identify benthic macro-invertebrates (aka 'stream critters'). Learn how stream health is related to the presence of certain insect larvae and what it means to "match the hatch."

Water Canaries:

Analyze pond or stream water for pH, nitrates, dissolved oxygen, temperature and turbidity. Find out how human actions impact these physical and chemical characteristics of our water supply.

Rolling Down the River:

Determine how much water is drained from a watershed by quantitatively analyzing a stream's velocity and discharge.



Water activities may require participants get wet or dirty

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Basic Orienteering:

Learn to use a compass in a simple, circular course or add-in math for some educational fun!

Native American Life:

Hear about the First Peoples that inhabited our area and how their skills and ingenuity helped them to utilize North Georgia's natural resources

Archery:

Try your hand at the skill of shooting arrows with a bow while learning about how technology has advanced through the ages both as a means to obtain food and as a popular outdoor sport.



Oh, Deer!:

Play an active game to illustrate the importance of key habitat components as they relate to survival of our white-tailed deer population.

How Many Bears?:

Demonstrate the concepts of biological carrying capacity and limiting factors by imitating bears in search of food. Learn about black bear biology and habits.



.....but wait, there's more.....

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Tree ID:

Learn the basic terminology of tree identification while walking a half-mile trail. Use a "dichotomous key" to name over a dozen trees common to North Georgia.



Champion Trees:

Hone your basic math skills while applying the measuring methods used to place trees in the National Register of Big Trees. Estimate the height, crown spread and circumference of a tree to see if it qualifies as a "Champion Tree."

A Walk Through Time:

Learn about how our environment changes over time and how different stages of forest succession influence wildlife. Discuss the impact each of us has on this natural process through both intentional and accidental actions.

Other Programs:

Ask us about new programs. Talks on conservation, careers in the wildlife field, and other topics may be requested.

High school versions of programs are available, as well as specialty activities. Call for information

Continuing Education

Project Wet, WILD, & Learning Tree workshops expand teachers' understanding of ecological principles and provide them with two multidisciplinary curriculum



Smithgall Woods Trainer of Trainer workshops are designed to help teachers make the most of student field-trips to Smithgall Woods and to familiarize them with this unique 5,600 acre resource in their own backyard.

Adopt-a-Stream workshops allow teachers to learn water quality testing procedures, and aid their community with available monitoring opportunities.



Trip Tips

Teachers and chaperones are expected to participate and to assist with student discipline and safety. You may bring food/drinks to eat lunch onsite. There is a drink machine at the Visitors' Center, and restroom facilities are available at, or near, all programming sites.

Weather appropriate clothing (layered) is recommended, as are insect repellent, water, and sunscreen. Bus or van drivers are expected to remain with the group.

Smithgall Woods State Park



Making Reservations

Call Kathy Church at (706) 878-3087, or e-mail at kathy.church@dnr.ga.gov for reservations. Onsite field-trips are recommended for fall (Aug-Nov) and spring (Mar-May). Outreach programs may be scheduled anytime staff is available.

Onsite group size is typically limited to 60 students.

Please be ready to provide the following information:

- Teacher's name and contact information
- Name and mailing address of school or organization
 - Choice(s) of dates and programs
 - Number and grade-level of students
 - Identify any "special needs"

Wildlife Interpretive
Specialist/Programming
Coordinator, Kathy Church. BS
Wildlife Management, University
of Georgia & MAT Secondary
Science Education Piedmont
College.



Fees

A \$5 per student fee is charged for onsite programming for school groups, homeschool groups, & youth groups.

Onsite fees may vary for very large groups with multiple programs, or for programs that require extra supplies.

The charge for outreach programming within the 11-county WRD Region 2 area is \$65 per program.

Outreach programs conducted outside of the WRD Region 2 area are \$75 per program with an additional, one-time, \$40 mileage fee.