How to Schedule a Visit

- Decide on the date and time you would like to visit prior to calling the nature center. Have alternative dates, in case your first choice is not available. Be sure to call well in advance of the date you want— 2 weeks minimum. We recommend a month ahead.

- Call the nature center you'd like to visit and ask to speak to the naturalist in charge of scheduling programs.

- Discuss program topics with the naturalist and any specific goals you have for your visit. The more specific you are, the more effective we can be in designing a program for your group. This list is intended to be a starting point—we are happy to work with you to develop a program that suits your individual needs.

Tips for a Successful Visit

Prepare your students by discussing the purpose of the visit.

Arrive on time. We may not be able to extend your program past the agreed upon time.

Teacher or chaperone is responsible for discipline, not the naturalist.

About the Nature Centers

Gulf Branch Nature Center

The center is located on a 38 acre park surrounded by a wooded stream valley. The park has wooded trails, a stream, and a pond to explore. Also on site are the Robert Walker log house and the blacksmith's forge. Inside you can find an observation beehive, live animals, and the exhibit *The Woodland Indians of Arlington.*

Gulf Branch Nature Center
3608 Military Rd.
Arlington, Virginia 22207
Phone: 703-228-3403

Long Branch Nature Center

The center is located on a 17 acre site which connects to Glencarlyn Park. The park contains trails that follow Long Branch to where it flows into Four Mile Run. The park also offers wooded trails, ponds, and native plant gardens to discover. The nature center houses live animals, an indoor pond, a large taxidermy display, and a children's discovery room.

Long Branch Nature Center
625 S. Carlin Springs Rd
Arlington, Virginia 22204
Phone: 703-228-6535

Guide to Environmental Education Programs

From Arlington County's Conservation & Interpretation Section

ARLINGTON VIRGINIA | DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Program Ideas






ADAPTATIONS– Learn about the ways in which plants and animals have adapted to their environment in order to survive. **Science: 1.5, 2.7, 3.4, 4.5**

ANIMAL COVERINGS– Observe live animals and study skins will be used to take a closer look at how animals are classified by what is covering their skin. **Science: K.1, K.8, 1.5**

BIRDS– Birds are some of the most interesting types of animals in the world. This program will discuss the many adaptations birds use the their daily lives. Topics for discussion may include nests, feathers, bills, feet, migration, and local species. **Science: K.1, K.6, 1.5, 2.5, 4.5**

CREATURE FEATURE– Students will meet some of the nature center's resident animals and learn about their interesting lives through hands-on activities. **Science: K.1, 1.5, 2.5, 3.4, 4.5**

ENDANGERED SPECIES– Through games, activities, artifacts, and a discussion, we will learn what it means to be endangered, how it happens and what students can do to help. **Science: 1.5, 3.6, 3.10**

FOOD WEBS– Students will learn about the many components of a food web and how they are tied together. This is demonstrated through discussion and hands-on activities. **Science: 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, 4.5**

GEOLOGY– Choose from several geologic topics. Hands-on programs on fossils, mineral and rock identification and glaciers are available. Other topics may include caves, soils, stream features, and landform hikes that enable students to identify landscape features and the forces that shape them. **Science: 2.7, 3.7, 4.8, 5.7**

HABITATS– Every species of plant and animal lives in a specific habitat. This program will discuss what makes up a habitat. **Science: K.6, 1.4, 2.5, 3.4, 3.6, 4.5**

INSECTS– We will discover what insect are, how they differ, and how they play an important role in our environment. **Science: K.6, 1.5, 2.5, 3.4, 3. 8, 4.5**

LIFE UNDER A LOG– The world found under a log is a whole network of plants and animals working together. We will discuss decomposition, insects, fungi, and other principles as we examine this miniature ecosystem. **Science: K.6, 1.5, 2.5, 3.4, 4.5**

LIFE CYCLES– We will explore how animals and plants lives are cyclic, where each stage is dependent on the next and forms a continuing pattern. **Science: K.6, 2.4, 3.8, 4.5**

NATIVE AMERICANS– This is an opportunity to learn about the area's Native American Indians. We will focus on the local Algonquian speaking culture in a program that includes games, stories, and artifacts. **History: K.2, 2.2, VS 2.E**

PATTERNS IN NATURE– Spending time in nature can give a sense of order, balance, and harmony. Nature's patterns can be discovered by using our senses to see, smell, and hear the world around us. **Science: K.8**

PLANTS– Seed dispersal, trees, wildflowers, and animal dependence are all potential themes for this broad topic. **Science: K.6, 1.4, 2.4, 2.8, 4.4**

SIGNS OF THE SEASONS– Discover the signs of seasonal change as we explore what plants and animals are doing throughout the year. **Science: K.8, 1.7, 2.7, 3.8**

WATER– The intricate balance of life is so tied to water— it is the common bond to all living things. Suggested programs on this topic are wetlands, pond life, the water cycle, watersheds, and stream studies. **Science: K.5, 3.6, 3.9, 4.8, 5.6, 6.7**

Leader's Choice

If you don't see the program topic for which you are looking , talk to us. We would be happy to discuss any natural history topic in which you are interested.