

Welcome to your backyard!

SCHOOL PROGRAMS





Welcome to your backyard!

WHO WE ARE

We are the fun people! Our program staff has over 50 years of combined experience as educators and event planners in our parks. We know our parks and we know how to engage your students to maximize what they learn and how much fun they have while they're with us. Above and beyond the programs you see listed here, you can also reach out for help with the following:

- Inquiry based and project based learning consultations
- Help identifying plants and animals you photograph in your schoolyard
- Help planning events – like fun runs and field days – in our parks

We love our parks and can't wait to share them with you and your students!

NEED HELP GETTING TO US?

We have some limited funds available for bussing grants. Contact us at 937-562-6440 or education@gcparkstrails.com for more details.



PROGRAM OVERVIEWS

All of our programs are offered free of charge! Our program staff loves showing off our parks, sharing their knowledge, and having fun!

You can schedule your program online at gcparkstrails.com/school-programs. Feel free to call our office or email our team with any questions you have.

Park Programs 4

Park Programs are our bread and butter – the classic field trip to an outdoor space. Your students will experience firsthand the wonders and fun to be found in Greene County’s forests, fields, and streams. Half day (2 hr) and full day (4.5 hr) options are available depending on the program you choose. Two half day programs can be combined to form a full day field trip. Full day trips include a half hour break for students to eat their packed lunches.

School Events 9

A few times a year we transform our parks into something special – a one stop spot for exploration. Your group can go from station to station to find out more about Greene County’s natural or cultural history. All you have to do is register and show up, the activities will be waiting for you!

Classroom Totes 10

Can’t make it out to our parks for a program? Or maybe you want to beef up your unit with hands on resources and artifacts? Borrow one of our Classroom Totes!

Pre-school Programs 12

We offer some special opportunities for our littlest learners. These experiences focus on making and doing – getting your class moving, exploring, and learning.

SECONDARY EDUCATORS

We are experienced in inquiry-based education and can help you develop, plan, and deliver project-based field experiences in our parks. Give us a call or shoot us an email and we can begin creating a custom program for you and your students.

PARK PROGRAMS



Cold-blooded Critters

HALF DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 5th

Dates Offered: August – October, March – May

Recommended Parks: Spring Lakes Park, Narrows Reserve, Caesar Ford Park, Russ Nature Reserve, Indian Mound Reserve, Pearl’s Fen

Insects, Fish, Amphibians, and Reptiles are all ectotherms - animals that get their heat from the world around them - aka cold-blooded critters. Come out and meet some of Greene County’s most common cold-blooded critters, learn about their special survival skills, and explore their favorite places to chill.

Ohio Owls

HALF DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 5th

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Spring Lakes Park, Narrows Reserve, Caesar Ford Park, Russ Nature Reserve, Indian Mound Reserve, Pearl’s Fen

Hooo better to teach your students about owls, than the owls themselves? Get an up close view of a live owl, compare and contrast owls to other birds of prey, search for wild owls in their favorite places to nap, and investigate what owls eat by dissecting owl pellets.

Insect Investigators

HALF DAY

Recommended Grades: 3rd – 5th

Dates Offered: August – September, April – May

Recommended Parks: Narrows Reserve, Russ Nature Reserve

Insects are so small, we don’t always pay attention to them, but they leave behind a lot of clues about their lives. Can your students solve the clues and discover the insects playing big roles in our parks? We’ll explore pollination, life cycles, food webs, and niches as we solve the mysteries of insect lives.





Discovery Hikes

HALF DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 8th

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Spring Lakes Park, Narrows Reserve, Caesar Ford Park, Russ Nature Reserve, Indian Mound Reserve, Pearl's Fen

It's time to explore! Students will engage their senses and discover new things about nature. Discovery hikes can be scheduled seasonally to allow students to compare how the park changes with the seasons.



Maple Sugaring Tours

HALF DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 8th

Dates Offered: February

Recommended Parks: Narrows Reserve, Sperling Lane Entrance

Experience the wonder of turning sap into syrup. Enjoy a winter walk through the woods as your students learn where sap comes from, the history of making maple syrup, and see (and taste!) how we make syrup today.

Examining Ecosystems

HALF DAY or FULL DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 5th

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Caesar Ford Park, Narrows Reserve, Russ Nature Reserve, Spring Lakes Park, Sara Lee Arnovitz Preserve (half day), Pearl's Fen (half day), Indian Mound Reserve (half day)

Have your students ever wondered why a frog lives in a pond and a toad lives in a garden? Through exploration of the land and examination of live animals, this program gives your students the opportunity to compare the traits of ecosystems and the adaptations of animals to see how animals succeed in their habitats. Depending on the park chosen, your group will explore a river, a creek, a pond, a forest, a meadow, and/or a prairie. Half day programs will compare 2 ecosystems, full day programs will compare 4.



Get Outside Day

HALF DAY or FULL DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 12th

Dates Offered: August – September, April-May

Recommended Parks: Caesar Ford Park, Russ Nature Reserve, Spring Lakes Park, Hobson Freedom Park, Fairgrounds Recreation Center, Frank Seaman Park



Let's have some fun! You'll play with bubbles and a giant foam machine, hide in the woods in a huge game of camouflage tag, launch water balloons across the park, or roll a humongous earth ball around the yard! Plus we'll have lots of team building and yard games available for you. The activities included in this program depend on the facilities available at the chosen park. Some activities are weather dependent. Inflatables can be brought out for a fee.



Life on the Little Miami River

HALF DAY or FULL DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 12th

Dates Offered: August – September, April – May

Recommended Parks: Narrows Reserve

Citizen scientists are becoming a critically important part of the scientific community. In this program, students will become citizen scientists for the day and experience the inquiry process from start to finish. We'll pursue comparative questions like: do tributary streams provide better insect habitat than the Little Miami?; are bird communities more diverse along the river than in the uplands?; or are mammals easier to track in the woods or by the river? Students will use scientific tools to collect data and meet some live animals up close to learn more about what they are studying.

How Greene County Was Made

FULL DAY

Recommended Grades: 3rd – 5th

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Indian Mound Reserve

Powerful forces are at work, shaping and forming the landscapes of Greene County. We'll explore how glaciers and streams changed the land in the past, how soil impacts life today, and how the ways people use the land can shape our future. We'll hike the gorge, investigate soil samples, and explore the rocks and minerals we use – all to figure out how Greene County was made.





The Crawdad Challenge

FULL DAY

Recommended Grades: K – 5th

Dates Offered: August-September, April – May

Recommended Parks: Spring Lakes Park, Caesar Ford Park

Which class can come out on top in this competition to see who would be the best crawdad? Who's got the best grip? Who can find the most food? Who notices danger in their habitat the best? The class that wins the most challenges gets to take home the Crawdad Challenge Cup at the end of the day. Challenges will take place along the hiking trails and in the creek. This program will help your students learn the role crawdads play in their ecosystems, their habitat requirements, their life cycle, and their special adaptations. This program works best if at least two classes are able to attend at the same time.

Mound Builders

FULL DAY

Recommended Grades: 3rd – 8th

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Indian Mound Reserve

Put on your hiking shoes because we are going to explore the ancient earthworks of Indian Mound Reserve! Along the way we'll learn about the lives of Ohio's mound building cultures through immersive and interactive activities. Students will test their skills with a real atlatl, visit a mound built by Adena people, and play a game where they trade resources like Hopewell cultures did.



SCHOOL EVENTS



School events are one day opportunities for your class to have first-hand experiences with science and history through self-guided, station based adventures. Our staff and volunteers will have activities set up throughout the park and you and your class can visit their stations to learn more. You can come to the event anytime during the listed times, just let us know you are coming no later than one week prior to the event.

Pollinator Winging

Recommended Grades: K – 8th

Date: Event occurs in September, check our website for details

Location: Russ Nature Reserve (2380 Kemp Rd, Beavercreek)

The bees are buzzing and the monarchs are migrating. Join us for a day of pollinator appreciation! We'll play games, make butterfly themed crafts, talk with beekeepers, taste honey, catch butterflies, and take part in an international citizen science project studying monarch migration.



Settler's Shindig

Recommended Grades: K – 8th

Date: Event occurs in October, check our website for details

Location: Indian Mound Reserve – Williamson Mound Lot

The whole county is coming out to our log house for a day of settler's fun. We'll have yard games to play, fresh pressed cider to drink, and old timey tools to work with. Plus you can tour the log house, make a toy, and try your hand at archery.



Bird Fest

Recommended Grades: K – 8th

Date: Event occurs in May, check our website for details

Location: Caesar Ford Park

Let's get together and celebrate World Migratory Bird Day one day early! Bring your students out to explore the wonders of birds through games, crafts, and hands on investigations. They'll also see live birds on display and have a chance to try birding.

CLASSROOM TOTES



Native Americans

Explore the history of Native Ohioans in your own classroom! This tote will include a timeline of Native cultures in Ohio, maps showing important Native sites in Ohio, photos of artifacts, a game featuring parts of Adena life, a game about Hopewell traders, and videos featuring conversations with and music by Native Americans.

Ohio Settlers

Bring some history into your classroom! This tote is full of settler artifacts like clothing, tools, and toys. Examine Greene County history through a human timeline, maps, and documents. This tote is a treasure trove of local history resources!

Underground Railroad

Focused on the history of the Underground Railroad in Greene County, our tote is a collection of primary source materials as well as reproduced artifacts from the late 19th century. You can examine maps, listen to songs, and hold tools people would have used at the time. Your students will also have the chance to imagine what they would have taken with them if they were leaving on the harrowing journey to escape slavery.



Fossils

What amazing animals called Ohio home millions of years ago? How has Ohio changed since then? Do any similar animals still live here? Answer these questions and more by digging into our fossil tote. You'll use an interactive timeline to see how fossils form, get your hands on examples of Ohio's fossils to examine and make plaster casts of, and compare paleontologists' drawings of fossil animals to photos of animals alive today.



Weather

Explore the water cycle, play with the wind, and learn to measure changes in our environment. This tote includes materials to watch the water cycle happen in your classroom, streamers and bubbles to measure the wind with, supplies to make books on clouds, and a collection of weather measuring tools.



Creek in a Box

Is the neighborhood creek clean or polluted? Explore how biological indicators help us understand the health of our ecosystems. Then figure out how human choices play a role in our streams. The box includes supplies for hands on investigation of several Greene County “streams” as well as digital media explaining macroinvertebrates, pollution, and aquatic food chains; plus instructions for games to play to celebrate the animal life in our rivers and creeks.



PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS



Cider Making

60 MINUTES

Dates Offered: Late September – Early November

Recommended Parks: Russ Nature Reserve, Narrows Reserve, Spring Lakes Park, Caesar Ford Park, Indian Mound Reserve, Fairgrounds Recreation Center

Experience the fun of making your very own apple cider. We'll talk about how apples grow and then the kids can help us use our hand operated cider press to make some cider. The kids will even get to taste the cider they make, fresh out of the press.



Batty about Bats

60 MINUTES

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Russ Nature Reserve, Narrows Reserve, Spring Lakes Park, Caesar Ford Park, Indian Mound Reserve, James Ranch Park

Join us for an interactive look at what makes bats so cool! We'll take a look at echolocation, bat wings, and bat diets through games, pictures, and stories.

Butterfly Friends

60 MINUTES



Dates Offered: August – September

Recommended Parks: Russ Nature Reserve, Pearl's Fen

From egg, to caterpillar, to chrysalis, to butterfly – we'll investigate the lives of some of our favorite flying friends. Students will experience the changing life of butterflies and have a chance to catch one! They might even get to be part of an international science project studying monarch butterflies!



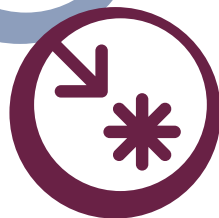
Maple Sugaring Tours

90 MINUTES

Dates Offered: February

Recommended Parks: Narrows Reserve, Sperling Lane Entrance

Experience the wonder of turning sap into syrup. Enjoy a winter walk through the woods as your students learn where sap comes from, the history of making maple syrup, and see (and taste!) how we make syrup today. Our preschool tours use a shorter trail than our school aged tours.



Discovery Hikes

60 MINUTES

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Russ Nature Reserve, Narrows Reserve, Spring Lakes Park, Indian Mound Reserve, Pearl's Fen

We'll use our senses to explore the natural world. What colors do we see? What sounds do we hear? What do different trees feel like? What does soil smell like? Let's find out together!



Animal Experiences

60 MINUTES

Dates Offered: Year round

Recommended Parks: Russ Nature Reserve, Narrows Reserve, Spring Lakes Park, Indian Mound Reserve, Caesar Ford Park

Are your kiddos curious about birds, mammals, turtles, snakes, or amphibians? We can give them an up close look and tell them all about the special things they can do. This program is customizable, so let us know what animals you are interested in learning about.





Get Outside Day

2 HOURS

Dates Offered: August – September, April – May

Recommended Parks: Caesar Ford Park, Russ Nature Reserve, Spring Lakes Park, Hobson Freedom Park, Fairgrounds Recreation Center, Frank Seaman Park

Let's have some fun! You'll play with bubbles and a giant foam machine, hide in the woods in a huge game of camouflage tag, launch water balloons across the park, or roll a humongous earth ball around the yard! Plus we'll have lots of team building and yard games available for you. Activities included in program depend on facilities available at the chosen park. Some activities are weather dependent. Inflatables can be brought out for a fee.



Welcome to your backyard!



1. Hebble Creek Reserve
2. Cemex Reserve
3. Pearl's Fen
4. Twin Towers Park
5. Jacoby Road Canoe Launch
6. Clifton Reserve & Lodge
7. Indian Mound Reserve (Cedar Cliff Falls)
8. Hobson Freedom Park
9. Koogler Wetland Prairie Reserve
10. Russ Nature Reserve
11. Karohl Park
12. Creekside Reserve
13. Phillips Park
14. Beaver Creek Wetlands Reserve
15. Glenn Thompson Reserve
16. Pierce Park
17. James Ranch Park
18. Fairgrounds Recreation Center
19. Old Town Reserve
20. Sara Lee Arnovitz Nature Preserve
21. Kinsey Road Mound
22. Narrows Reserve
23. Mill Bridge Launch
24. Spring Lakes Park
25. Constitution Park
26. Caesar Ford Park
27. Frank Seaman Park
- XS. Xenia Station

