

# EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO PROGRAMS AT

## BROOKSIDE NATURE CENTER



**Brookside Nature Center**  
Wheaton Regional Park  
1400 Glenallan Ave.  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
**301-946-9071**  
[www.brooksidenature.org](http://www.brooksidenature.org)

### **Center hours:**

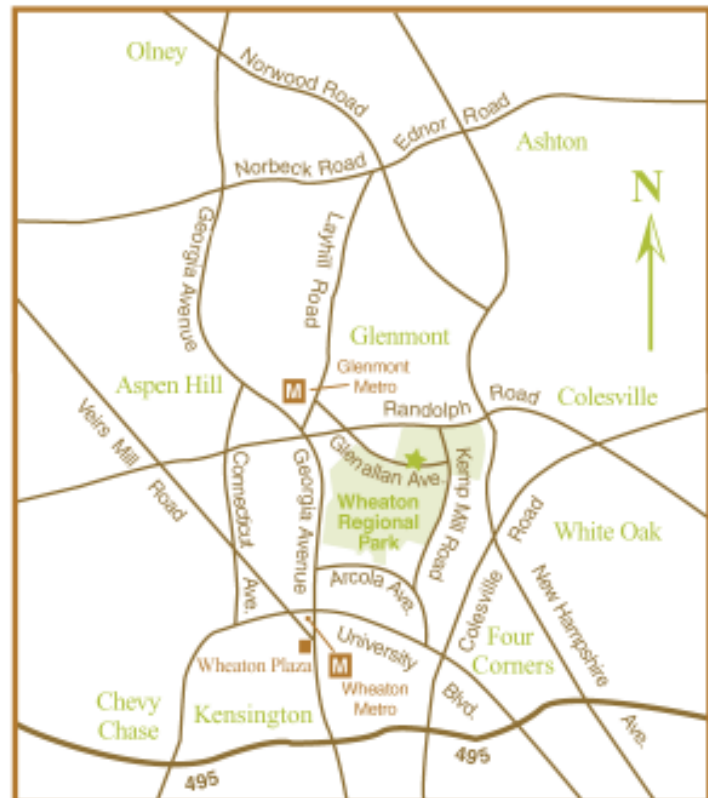
Tuesday - Saturday, 9 am - 5 pm

Sunday, 1 - 5 pm

Closed Mondays and major holidays

**Trails open daily sunrise - sunset**

## Wheaton Regional Park Vicinity Map



### **Inclement Weather Policy**

In inclement weather, we follow the Montgomery County Public School system. If school is closed, programs are cancelled. If opening is delayed, morning programs are cancelled. If schools close early, afternoon programs are cancelled.

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**WELCOME!** Our mission is to bridge the gap between people and nature, and to encourage the fullest appreciation of both human and natural resources.

### Program Information

We hope to excite students of all ages through direct experiences in our parks, helping students develop a sense of responsibility to care for natural and historical resources now and in the future. This comprehensive guide is for educators wanting a field trip experience as an extension of classroom studies. Programs vary in length (45 min. to 1 1/2 hours), and are tailored to each group's educational level and interests.

### Montgomery County Curriculum

Our programs complement the Montgomery County Public School science and social studies curricula.

### Fees

\$5/ participant. No fee for leaders/chaperones and MCPS Title One and special focus schools.

## Scheduling and Guidelines

### Program Scheduling

- Naturalist-led programs are available Tuesday through Friday by reservation only.
- We require a minimum of 8 students per program. Some programs can accommodate groups up to 100 students, depending on staff availability.
- When you phone for your reservation, have several dates and times in mind, in case your first choice is unavailable.
- Make program reservations by calling Brookside Nature Center at 301-946-9071, according to the following schedule:

If you want reservations for:	Phone us beginning:
September through January	4th Tues. of August
February through mid-June	1st Tues. in January
Mid-June through August	1st Tues. in May

- Can't make it to the park? Let us bring nature to you! Call for information.

### Self-Guided Programs

Groups may visit the nature center on a self-guided basis. However, priority use of the facility is given to scheduled groups. Call and let us know if you're coming on your own.

### Picnicking

Limited picnicking facilities are available near the nature center on a first come, first served basis. No indoor eating areas are available. This is a trash-free park area. Please plan to take your trash with you.

### Resource Protection

All park areas are nature preserves. By law, all plants, animals, rocks, and minerals are protected in their natural state and cannot be altered or collected.

### Spend The Day In Wheaton Regional Park!

To extend your field trip experience, we invite you to enjoy other activities during your visit to the park!

- Hike the self-guided nature trail at Brookside Nature Center
- Visit Brookside Gardens
- Picnic at Shorefield picnic area
- Play at Adventure Playground
- Hike around Pine Lake
- Skate at the ice rink
- Ride the carousel and miniature train (in season)

# Program Topics

## DISCOVERING WILDLIFE



### Getting To Know Insects (April-October)

What makes an insect an insect? Learn about the largest and most diverse group of animals. Examine characteristics, life cycles, and adaptations of insects. Through field explorations, identify what's hopping, crawling, and flying in the park.

### Birds! Birds! Birds!

This fun avian adventure examines bird characteristics, behavior, adaptations, and identification. Compare birds with other animals. Hike and observe our feathered friends in their habitats.



### Animal Tracks And Traces

Students become nature detectives as they study the habits and behavior of local wildlife. On a hike through the woods and fields of the park, analyze clues like tracks, scat, nests, food, and other evidence the animals leave behind.

### Butterflies (May - September)

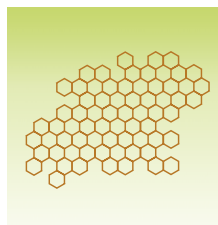
Butterflies are a wonderful example of life cycle change. Identify nectar plants, butterfly life stages, and behavior patterns through capture and release of live butterflies in their habitats.

### Reptiles And Amphibians

Learn about the fascinating world of reptiles and amphibians. First, participate in a hands-on investigation of some resident reptiles and amphibians. Compare life cycle characteristics. Then hike, explore their habitats, and maybe even see one!

### Animal Architects

Experiment with construction techniques used by local wildlife. Examine natural building materials and how they are used in the wild. Learn about the animals that build their own homes.



### Meet The Honeybees

One of the most delicious products we get from insects is honey. Observe a live honeybee hive and identify the jobs in a colony. Discover honeybee traits and life cycle through role play activities.

## Food Chains And Food Webs

Investigate the world of producers, consumers, and decomposers. Hike and participate in our exciting food chain survival game in which we predict animals' fates. Discover wildlife's challenge of needing to eat while trying not to be eaten.

## Mammals Of Montgomery County

Large ears, wet noses, and glowing eyes are some adaptations of our wild mammal neighbors. Categorize and examine mammals through their skulls, skins, and tracks. Explore the woods and meadows for signs of mammals such as scat, dens, and feeding areas.



## WET AND WILD

### Life In A Stream (May - mid-October)

Discover our local watershed—where the water comes from and where it goes! Then wade through the stream in search of crayfish and other stream critters. Adaptations, food webs, and stream cleanliness highlight our discussion as we look at what we found. Wear shoes that can get wet.

### Explore A Pond (mid-April - mid-October)

Learn about the water cycle and the wet world of water! Using dip nets and other tools, wade along the shore locating pond creatures. We'll discuss pond life adaptations and food webs during examination of our discoveries. Wear shoes that can get wet.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

### Woodland Indians

Learn about the lifestyles and culture of the early human residents of our area through story, craft, and games. Examine primitive tools and experiment with skills needed for survival.

### Pioneer Life

Experience life in the mid-1800's through story, craft, and games. Hike to our log cabin and, through activities, compare our lifestyle with those of early settlers. Compare differences between past and current architecture.

## CONNECTED TO PLANTS

### Wonders Of The Rain Forest

Learn to connect the threatened tropical rain forests to our lives in the temperate zone. Through an exciting hike, examine rain forest resources, animal adaptations, and environmental problems.



### Maple Sugaring (February only)

It may be snowy and chilly outdoors, but the maple trees are already preparing for spring! Learn about the science of maple sugaring and photosynthesis, visit our “sugar bush”, see how to tap a tree, and watch sap being boiled down into syrup.

### Green And Growing

Identify and describe the six plant parts through song and activity—roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, and seeds. Determine the job of each plant part and the interdependence between plants, animals, and people. Investigate the plant parts found along the trail.

### Flowers For An Hour (April - October)

Investigate the intricacies and diversity of wildflowers through hands-on activities. Identification, flower structure, pollination, adaptations, and folklore are some of the topics included in this outdoor exploration.



### TREE-mendous

Learn about the parts of a tree and how they work. In an outdoor exploration, examine the forest community, identify some common trees, determine the importance of trees, and observe wildlife that lives there.

### How Seeds Travel (September - December)

Seeds are packages of new plants that come in an amazing assortment of shapes, sizes, and textures. Discover the many ways seeds get from here to there.

### A Rottin' Place To Live

Discover the world beneath your feet! Study a decayed log and investigate leaf litter to learn how things decompose.

### Woodsy Hunt

Look what I found! Through a puppet show and hike, examine the plants and animals that live in the forest.

## LEADER'S CHOICE

If you would like a program not listed in this guide, we will gladly develop one for you.

## NATURAL DISCOVERIES



### Weather Watchers

Through stories and games, students learn what makes weather and how the water cycle works. On an outdoor scavenger hunt, interpret signs of weather and discover how weather affects plants, animals, and people.

### Sensory Awareness Adventure

Identify and compare your five senses. Examine the natural world through sensory awareness investigations. Each activity engages a different sense as we explore field and forest.

### Habitat Sweet Habitat

Animals live in just about every nook and cranny in the natural world. Through a puppet show and hike, students examine different habitats, describe animals living there, and determine how those animals are adapted for their homes.

### Changing Seasons

Fall, winter, spring, and summer—Each season has its own blend of natural events. After an interactive introduction including a fun puppet show, we'll go outdoors and examine signs of the present season.



### Hike To The Planets

Hike and learn the order of the planets and their relative positions and sizes. This active, hands-on hike is designed so students discover what makes each planet and its moons unique.

### Geology Rocks

Identify rocks and minerals by physical properties and unique features. Through outdoor exploration, find out their importance to people, plants, and animals.

## FOR SCOUTS & THE ADVENTUROUS

### Finding Your Way In The Woods

Map reading and compass use on the trail

### Outdoor Living Skills

Fire-building, shelter building, and more

### Scouts Outdoors

A program designed to meet badge requirements.

