

2023 Summer Report Warner Park Nature Center



FRIENDS
OF WARNER PARKS



2023 Summer Report Public Programs & Visitors



Weekday Programs

A wide range of morning and evening programs were offered throughout the summer for families and adults.

Highlights:

- Summer Sound Bath Meditation
- Summer Solstice Saunter
- Map and Compass Family Adventure
- Nature Inspired Collage
- Nature Play facilitated days
- Summer Butterfly Bonanza
- Crawdad Creek
- Ask a Master Gardener
- Backyard Gardening for Pollinators
- Summer Star Party



Photo (above): Seasonal staff designed and led Explore with a Naturalist programs every Saturday

Staff also engaged visitors in the organic garden and pollinator beds, through Pond and Nature Play Exploration Kits, during Bird Banding sessions and through other daily impromptu programming

42 public programs with **930** participants

4,930 visitors engaged through impromptu and on-your-own exploration kits

7,008 campus visitors during Nature Center open hours

Photo (above): Checking out insects with hand lenses during a program

Photo (right): Families enjoying roasting marshmallows during the Summer Solstice Saunter program



Explore with a Naturalist

Every Saturday from 10am-2pm in June and July, seasonal naturalists and interns led drop-in style family programs focused on discovery, observation and connection with nature.

Topics Included:

- Mud Mysteries
- The Sensory World of Animals
- Botanical Bliss
- Vultures, Scavengers & Decomposers
- The "S"'s of Summer: Snakes, Skinks & Salamanders
- Aerial Insectivores

- True Blue
- Destination Pollination
- Dendrochronology
- Dragonflies & Damselflies

After an Explore with a Naturalist program, a little girl said, "I want to be a scientist now!"

2023 Summer Report Urban Nature Program



Field Trips & Outreach

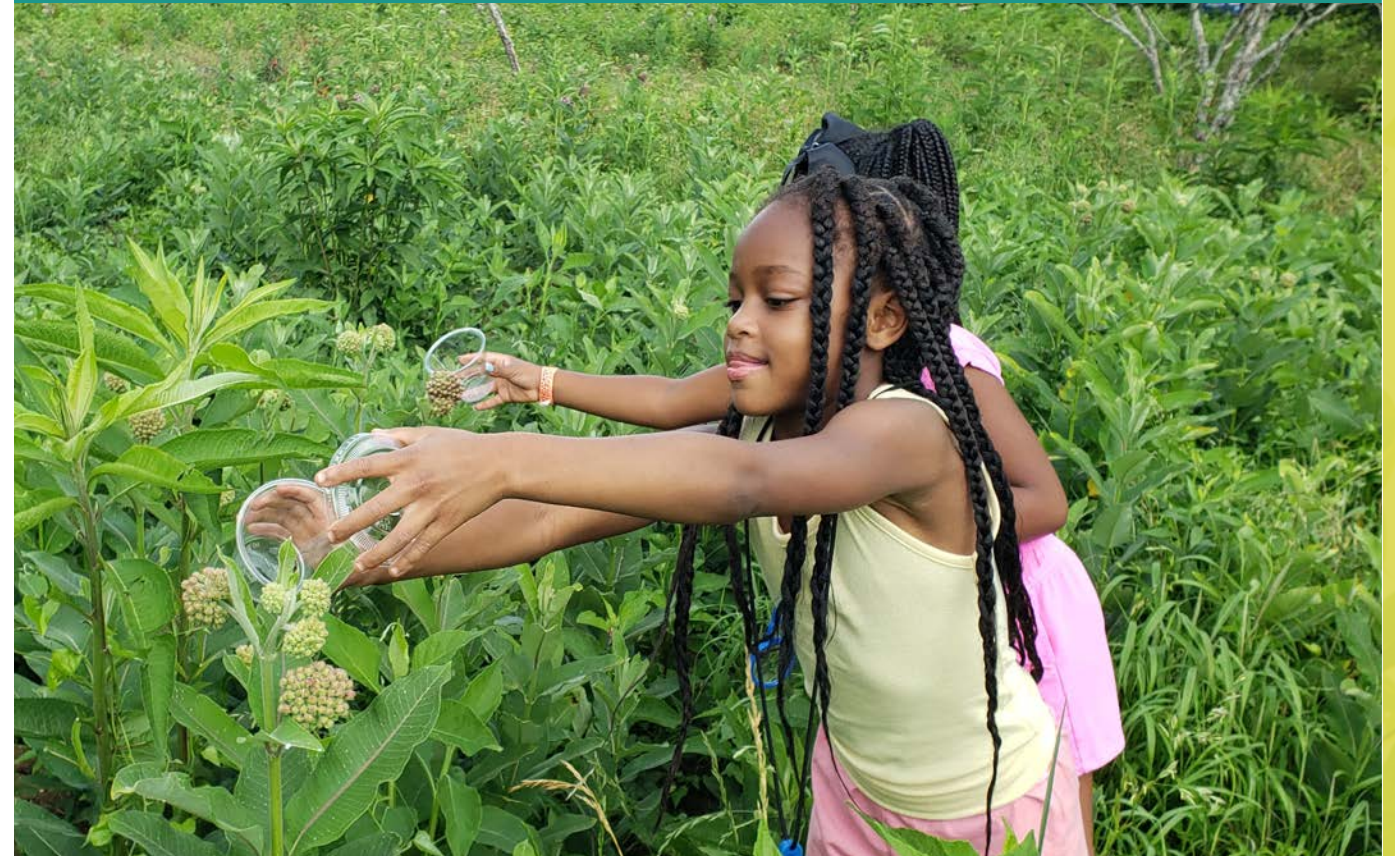
Urban Naturalist Caroline Crews and Nature Center staff also continued Urban Nature programming through the summer, including field trips to Warner and Beaman Park and outreach experiences at the Community Centers!

Highlights

Crawling through a cave, building forts out of natural materials, hiking to the Lodge, roasting s'mores, touching a live snake and being outside in nature!

Photo (left): Learning to hold a crayfish for the first time!

Photo (right): Catching insects in the meadow at WPNC was a favorite activity all summer



A total of **327 community center youth** participated in the Urban Nature Program this summer!

6 full day PEN Pal camps, 9am-4pm

150 PEN Pals participants

1 all day field trip to Warner Park

2 field trips to Beaman Park

72 field trip participants

6 Nature Detective programs

105 Nature Detective participants

22 community centers served

Photo (right): Camper holding nature suncatcher he made using natural objects sustainably collected



PEN Pals Day Camp

People Exploring Nature (PEN) Pals Day Camp brings Community Centers to Warner Park Nature Center for a full day of outside fun, where youth explore the diverse habitats that make up Warner Parks - the meadow, pond, garden, forest and river! They also spend crucial time in unstructured outdoor play in the new Nature Play area, take a long hike in the woods and learn to conscientiously collect natural objects for a nature craft.

Highlights of PEN Pal this year: tasting arugula flowers and miniature tomatoes in the garden, catching insects in the meadow, learning to kayak in the river and finding and holding crawdads in the creek.

"I'm not afraid of bugs anymore! I actually like nature now!"

"I want to come back to PEN Pals every year!"

"I want to be an explorer now! I want to learn about bugs and insects."

2023 Summer Report Naturalist Camps



Camper Quotes

This is more fun than even playing

I love getting dirty and I love nature now!

This is my favorite camp, I love this camp!

I wish I could stay here forever!

*I hope I see mouse poop at home
- camper after seeing scat in the museum*

Photo (left): Campers journal their discoveries at the amphitheater
Photo (right): Exploring and cooling off in the Little Harpeth River during a full day of Naturalist camp



Seven weeks of Naturalist Camp with 109 campers and 2,738 hours exploring nature

3 full day sessions

4 half day sessions

12 scholarship spots awarded

Countless crayfish caught, new friends made, sticky marshmallow fingers washed...

My daughter attended summer camp and had SO MUCH FUN! We'll definitely be doing this again next year! camper parent

Photo (right): Making an outdoor fort takes patience and concentration.



Activity Highlights

Camp Leader Allie Horick planned a packed day with guided explorations and unstructured outdoor time for campers ages 6-10 years. Each week, curious campers learned the skills to make observations while discovering different topics including invertebrates, birds, plants and herps (amphibians and reptiles).

This summer, campers...

Explored the Little Harpeth River

Made cyanotype bandannas

Learned and practiced naturalist skills

Built natural shelters

Flew high on a rope swing

Roasted marshmallows over a fire

Observed first hand how and why researchers band a bird

Hiked and explored special habitats including the pond, creek, field and forest

Journaled discoveries

Had unstructured outdoor play in Nature Play

2023 Summer Report B.I.R.D. Program

MAPS Banding

This was the 33rd season of MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship). During this summer breeding research, we captured **147 birds** of **26 species**.

Highlight

Two Kentucky Warblers (we think a pair), were first banded by us in 2017 and recaptured this year. They are at least 8 years old and tie the record as the oldest documented Kentucky Warblers!

Photo (left): 8-year old female Kentucky Warbler by Jenna Atma
Photo (below): Male Blue Grosbeak by Charlie Curry



Breeding Bird Survey

The annual summer Breeding Bird Survey - ongoing for 39 years since 1985 - was conducted by Sandy Bivens. This year documented 337 birds of 50 species within Warner Parks. While there were few grassland species, observations did include Wood Thrush and Blue Grosbeak.

Highlight

This year, the 25 observation locations were geo-referenced and will be digitally mapped to assist with future resource management plans.



Purple Martin Nesting Project

There were 11 nests at Warner Park Nature Center with 55 eggs and 52 fledglings (95% egg to fledge success rate) which was a particularly good year for these birds. Of these nesting birds, we radio-tagged 16 Purple Martin nestlings at WPNC and an additional 6 martins at Ellington Ag Center and 6 at Bells Bend Outdoor Center.

At least 15 of our radio-tagged birds were detected at the downtown Nashville roost this August, which also boasted 200,000 birds, the largest it has been since the roost appeared in this location in 2020.

The B.I.R.D program was featured in a New York Times article by Margaret Renkl, WPLN and Channel 2 news.

Photo (above): Downtown Nashville Purple Martin Roost by Terry Cook

2023 Summer Report Seasonal Staff & Interns



Seasonal Naturalists

The Outdoor Seasonal Naturalists and Summer Camp Leader were the backbone of the summer, leading public programs, field trips, impromptu programs, PEN Pals and Naturalist camps, plus keeping the museum and grounds looking fantastic.

Working at WPNC this summer has helped solidify my desire to continue to have environmental education as a part of my life and career, and it has established relationships that I hope will continue long into the future. Allie, Adjunct Professor



With this being my second summer at WPNC I have fully come to the conclusion that this is what I want to be doing with the rest of my life. I love going home at the end of the day feeling like I've accomplished something and sometimes feeling like I have inspired or changed a kid's life in just ONE day. Paige, University of the South, Sewanee

BIRD Interns

The BIRD program hosted 3 fabulous interns this year, for the 8th year partnering with Lipscomb University.

Anna Sawyer, Amelia Browning and returning intern Anna Money helped with MAPS research, led the Barn Swallow nest project, engaged campers with a Band-a-Bird activity and conducted their own avian research!

Photo (above): Naturalist camp leader Allie Horrick showing off insects collected by campers.

Photo (right): Seasonals (l to r), Austin Anderson, Gurnoor Majhail, Bekah Truss, Elyse Dilks, Kinsley Reid, Paige Range (inset photo)

Photo (right): Summer BIRD interns Anna Money, Anna Sawyer and Amelia Browning with banded Tree Swallow nestling



Working here changed my entire trajectory as I learned about the possibilities of having a career in environmental education, and I'm even more invested in finding ways to engage with learning and teaching in the context of human and ecological communities. Gurnoor, Duke University

Working at WPNC has shown me a tangible and meaningful way to support the communities in my city, and has given me a passion for working with kids and the outdoors. With that guidance and experience, I will now be able to put into practice what I have learned. Bekah, graduate Saint Louis University

2023 Summer Report Volunteers & Community Partners



BIRD Volunteers

This summer (June – Aug), **BIRD Volunteers contributed 850 hours!**

These dedicated volunteers...

Engaged visitors and helped with MAPS and hummingbird banding research

Ensured bird feeders were cleaned and full

Assisted with Motus and the Purple Martin project

Provided vital data entry and office work

Photo (left): Marie Campbell of Harpeth Conservancy helping a PEN Pals camper explore recent creek discoveries



Master Gardeners of Davidson County assisted with planting and maintaining the beautiful pollinator garden beds behind the Learning Center and provided public programs!

In addition...

10 garden volunteers cared for the Organic Garden and eight native landscaping beds over the summer

10 volunteers provided 126 hours of front desk and library support

26 volunteers supported the Urban Nature Program through 180 hours of their time

Photo (right): Volunteers serve lunch during PEN Pals



PEN Pals Community Partners

Friends of Warner Parks

Metro Parks Community Centers

Metro Parks Recreation Department led the PEN Pals kayaking program

Marie Campbell and Maddy Johnson of Harpeth Conservancy guided campers in river exploration

Corporate Volunteer Groups: Deloitte cleaned up the Lodge, Piedmont and Swiftwick helped with PEN Pals lunch.

University School of Nashville provided bus transportation!

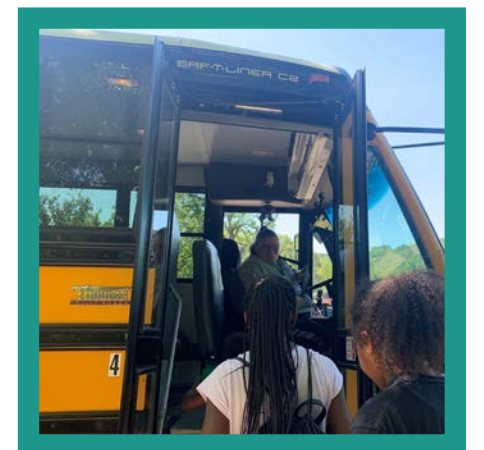


Photo (above): USN driver, Amy, picks up PEN Pals campers

Photo (top right): BIRD volunteers during a summer banding session