



## Beaufort County Land Preservation Department Environmental Education Program Information and Reservation Form

### Beaufort County Land Preservation Department

The Beaufort County Land Preservation Department (Department) oversees over 14,000 acres of fee-simple purchased properties with the intentions of sustainability, multi-use, and revenue generation. The Department's primary goal is to promote sustainability and safeguard the conservation values and natural resources from being compromised. That goal is always at the forefront when determining multi-use passive recreation and revenue generation possibilities on preserve properties. The Department currently has 17 properties accessible to the public, including nature preserves, historic sites, and an interpretive center.

### Environmental Education

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Environmental Education as *"a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment"*. Through this process, individuals are invited and encouraged to think more critically and allow for more responsible and educated decisions to be made about the environment they inhabit, and the issues that arise as populations increase and accessible open land decreases. Beaufort County has been a frontrunner among local governments in land preservation since 1999 with the creation of the Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program and continues to do so with the 2023 creation of the Green Space Program. Naturally, the next logical step is for the Department to create an environmental education program for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.

### Land Preservation Department Environmental Education Program

Under the influence of the EPA's Nonformal Guidelines for Excellence, the Department's Environmental Education Program (Program) is intended to build a community of environmentally literate individuals who can consider and understand Beaufort County's ecologically sensitive land when making personal, social, and political decisions. The Program will give individuals the opportunity to safely spend time outside in a nonformal setting to enjoy the scenic and unique environment Beaufort County has to offer.

The Program will consist of varying opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, for individuals of all ages to dive into all sorts of environmental topics. Topics may include native and nonnative species, land management, conservation, nature walks, birding trips, marsh ecology, and more. Each program offering is **FREE** to the public and can last anywhere from 30 minutes to upwards of 2 hours. Program offerings will have varying numbers of participants and may be short term,

reoccurring, or one-time events. Individuals under the age of 16 will require an adult in attendance.

Please contact the County's Naturalist at 843-255-7309, or at [destiney.rains@bcgov.net](mailto:destiney.rains@bcgov.net), for program availability or requests.

### **Program Offerings**

Join the County Naturalist to explore many of the rich and unique ecosystems the County has to offer. With over 14,000 acres of land overseen by the Department, you will have the opportunity to experience lush maritime forests, get muddy in the marsh, talk with native plants, and learn how to identify a bird or two. The Department's Environmental Education Program will offer free public programming and free private programming for educational institutions and private community groups. All program offerings will be scheduled in advance and noticed on the Department's website. Program development will be ongoing so be sure to check the Department's website for new and updated environmental education opportunities.

Types of program offerings include, but may not be limited to:

#### Trail Talks

Naturalist guided generalized walks along Preserve trails. Each preserve will feature different ecosystems along trails of varying distances. Talks will focus on the local flora and fauna seen throughout the Lowcountry.

#### Fish Clinics

Naturalist guided programs focused on freshwater and saltwater fishing. These programs can occur on beaches, marsh accesses, docks, and freshwater ponds that are overseen by the Department. Participants will learn to use different types of equipment such as sein nets and cast nets to observe the different types of fish featured in these ecosystems.

#### Birding

Naturalist guided walks through Preserves can feature birds of prey, songbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. The use of binoculars and a spotting scope will be encouraged.

#### Saltmarsh Meanders

Naturalist guided wanderings along Preserve shorelines focused on the saltmarsh flora and fauna, as well as its importance to the South Carolina coastline. Participants should prepare to get muddy.

## Herpetology

Naturalist guided programs on Preserves focused on the native and non-native reptiles and amphibians found in the Lowcountry. Participants will get hands-on experience with biofacts and possibly some animal ambassadors.

## Park Pollinators

Naturalist guided programs on Preserves focused on the importance of our local pollinators and the small conscious steps people can take to ensure their existence continues for years to come.

## **Public Programming**

Public Programming will be updated monthly via the Department's website. It is intended that these program offerings will be scheduled regularly at the same place and time by the County Naturalist. Public Programming is subject to change dependent on the type of program offering available, other scheduling conflicts, and the potential for inclement weather.

Public Programming is FREE to the public and may require an advanced reservation depending on the program offering. Due to limited participant availability, walk-ups are not encouraged and a spot in the public program may not be guaranteed without a reservation. Reservations can be made by contacting the County Naturalist via phone or email during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm). Reservations should be made at least 24-hours prior to the program start time. Reservations will be confirmed in writing via text or email from the County Naturalist.

A participation waiver will be required to be signed by each participant prior to the start of the program. If a program needs to be canceled or rescheduled, the County Naturalist will contact participants no later than the end of the business day prior to the scheduled program date. Additionally, a cancellation or rescheduling announcement will be posted on social media at least 1 hour prior to the scheduled time.

## **Educational Institution/Private Community Program Requests**

The Land Preservation Department Environmental Education Program (Program) can accommodate requests for all age groups. Whether you are an educational institution, a nonprofit organization, or casual organized group, the Program can cater to any need. Program requests can be offered in a classroom setting or out in the field. Topics can include native and nonnative species, land management, conservation, nature walks, birding trips, marsh ecology, and more. Program requests are offered at a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of 2 hours.

For Educational Institutions, the Program can support in-class programs and off-site field trips. In-class program requests will be an extension of standard classroom curriculum and can be tailored to class specific needs. Off-site field trips will require participation waivers and chaperones at a ratio of 1 adult per every 10 children.

All educational institution and private community program requests require the submittal of a reservation form (Exhibit A). Exhibit A must be completed, signed and submitted by email to the County Naturalist at least 15 business days in advance of the requested program date. Reservation requests require a 5 business day cancellation notice via email to the County Naturalist.

Please call or email the County Naturalist at 843-255-7309 or [destiney.rains@bcgov.net](mailto:destiney.rains@bcgov.net) for any questions regarding program reservations.

### **Ethical Standards**

The County presumes that all individuals participating in the Environmental Education Program at County Preserve properties and facilities will uphold high ethical standards without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, and/or disability. Failure to do so will result in immediate dismissal from the program and property.

### **Hold Harmless/Indemnification**

All Beaufort County Land Preservation Department Environmental Education Program participants will sign a participation waiver form prior to the start of any public program offering and any private community programming.

Educational Institutions will be required to provide copies of the school liability waiver form for each student participating in an off-site field trip. All chaperones will be required to sign a participation waiver form as well.



**Exhibit A**

**Beaufort County Land Preservation Department  
Environmental Education Program Reservation Form**

<b>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION</b>
Contact Name:
Organization Name (if applicable):
Street Address:
City/State/Zip:
Phone Number:
Email Address:
<b>REQUESTED PROGRAM INFORMATION</b>
Program Name:
Program Date(s):
Program Time(s):
Estimated Attendance:
Special Request(s) (attach separate sheet if needed):

I hereby stipulate that I have read and understand all the rules and regulations as set forth by the Environmental Education Program information, associated Exhibit and the governing body of Beaufort County for the participation in the Environmental Education Program. I agree to abide by the terms of the Environmental Education Program information and Exhibit and further understand that if any of the terms are not complied with the County may terminate my reservation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Participant Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

For Office Use Only	
Reservation #:	Approval Date:
Staff Approval (Print Name):	
Staff Approval (Signature):	
Staff Equipment Needs:	