



Elachee

Nature Science Center

In the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve

Nature Mixed In

Quarterly News from Elachee Nature Science Center • February 2020

Students Granted Access to Nature

Grant Award Provides 7,200 Students Science Education Programming

Thanks to a \$15,000 grant award from the Jackson EMC Foundation, funded by the contributions of the cooperative's members, some 7,200 students (PreK-12) have, and will benefit from Elachee's innovative programming this school year. Funding helped subsidize a portion of student program fees for Elachee's STEAM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) nature education field trips to the Nature Center and *Elachee in Your Classroom* outreach classes for schools unable to bring their students to Elachee.



Grant funding has been made available to schools throughout the cooperative's 10-county service area. Elachee's grade-appropriate curriculum correlates with the Georgia Standards for Excellence (GSE) and Gwinnett County Public Schools Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS). Each year, nearly 35,000 children and teens from dozens of Georgia school systems and home school programs, engage in memorable and meaningful educational experiences at Elachee, the only nature center in the southeastern U.S. accredited by the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS/AdvancED). **BOOK A FIELD TRIP:** elachee.org/school-programs

Meet Elachee's 2020 Annual Sponsors

Special Thanks to These Community Partners

PRESENTING PLATINUM SPONSOR	 NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL			
SILVER SPONSORS				
BRONZE SPONSORS			Steve and Gale McKibbin	
				

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Elachee Nature Academy

Now Enrolling for 2020-2021

PRESCHOOL

and

KINDERGARTEN

www.ElacheeNatureAcademy.org

Offering Parents an Innovative 'Nature School' Choice for Their Young Children

Key Advantages

- Our educational philosophy promotes a nature-based learning environment.
- Inquiry-based curriculum meets Georgia learning standards.
- Accredited by SACS/AdvancED, licensed by *Bright from the Start*.
- Small class sizes allow for personalized instruction.
- Students benefit from 3 hours of guided outdoor instruction, equaling 50% of each school day!

Call 770-535-1976 to schedule a tour.

Rick Boyd Named an Elachee Trustee



Elachee seated its 2020 Board of Trustees at the organization's leadership meeting last December. New to this governing body is Rick Boyd, community leader and owner of Chattahoochee Marketing Group.

"Rick's business experience is a welcome addition to Elachee's Board of Trustees," says Emily Bagwell, Chair of Elachee Board of Trustees.

"I support Elachee because I believe in the mission, the people and in preserving a crown jewel natural resource of Gainesville, Georgia," Rick confides. "The educational opportunities that Elachee offers northeast Georgia residents, especially our youth, is unmatched. I look forward to continuing to help this organization grow and provide educational opportunities for the next generation."

Elachee's 2020 Board of Trustees

Emily Bagwell (Chair), Jason Everett (Vice-Chair), Anna Guzman (Secretary), Nick Bruner (Treasurer), Kevin Bales, Beth Bell, Phil Bonelli, Rick Boyd, Maria Calkins, Will Cobb, Lance Gardner, Jay Kilroy, Gale McKibbin, Martha Nesbitt, Richard Oates, Rob Robinson, Al Trembley, Dixie Truelove, Kelvin Whisenhunt and Trey Wood.

TRUSTEES EMERITUS: Dallas Gay, Steve Gilliam, John Girardeau, Jock Hornor and R.K. Whitehead.

Raptor Fest

10am-2pm • Saturday • March 21, 2020
elachee.org/raptor-fest



BIRD FLIGHT PROGRAMS • CRAFTS • BIRDING ACTIVITIES

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EVENT SPONSOR
WHITEHEAD



Greetings from the Chicopee Woods

Seasoned hikers make a point of calling out, "Hi," when passing these trees, seen from the Lake Loop, that are forged together via a 'pressure graft.' Not only is this natural phenomenon a sight to behold, the results of the Elachee Volunteer Trail Crew's ongoing hiking trails work in the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve is another!

This volunteer corps, managed by Elachee Nature Science Center, had a productive December and January. The following recaps the Elachee Trail Crew's recent efforts.

- Repaired one Lake Loop bridge and structurally reinforced another.
- Constructed and installed a map pedestal at the start of the Bridge Loop.
- Added trail blaze markers to the directional signage at the intersection of the Bridge Loop/ Lake Loop to enhance hiker navigation.
- Added water bars to the Bridge Loop/Lake Loop overlap to protect the trail from erosion.
- Closed an unofficial side trail near the rock staircase on the Bridge Loop/Lake Loop overlap to protect the land from degradation.
- Removed aged railing from the bridge on the Lake Loop (pictured at right).
- Removed 12 blowdown trees from the trail system.



Volunteer Trail Crew members demonstrate their engineering and construction skills in repairing pedestrian bridges along the hiking trail system.

The Trail Crew also routinely removes dirt, leaves and debris from pedestrian bridges and steps along this 8-mile trail system. Ongoing maintenance is important to protect these structures from break down, caused by soil and natural debris. Elachee's Natural Resources Manager Lee Irminger, with help from the Trail Crew and third party experts, keeps a vigilant eye on all trail system bridges. A January 2020 inspection helped him prioritize routine maintenance schedules for each.

Of note, the bridge over Vulture Rock Creek (Lake Loop), previously identified as needing structural improvements, is ready for construction. Volunteer engineers and bridge builders have developed a plan to improve its condition. Elachee is grateful to Builders First Source of Gainesville who will be donating the materials, as well as an anonymous donor who has donated power tools. The Elachee Trail Crew will perform the work.

How You Can Protect the Nature Preserve While Hiking

This hiking trail system has been purposefully built to a relatively narrow path to limit degradation of the surrounding environment. Lee encourages hikers to travel the trails single file and stay on the official trails. Keep dogs leashed Saturday and Sunday. No dogs Monday through Friday. **TRAIL MAPS:** elachee.org/hiking-trails

Georgia Master Naturalist Program

Now enrolling. The 2020 spring semester series is 1-5:30 p.m., primarily on Thursdays, from April 2 through June 4, 2020. Elachee tailors the Georgia Master Naturalist course for the local environment, within the framework developed by The University of Georgia (UGA) Cooperative Extension Service and the UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. Explore local habitats and ecosystems in this interactive 11-program course. Elachee has lined up guest ecology experts to facilitate combined indoor lectures with outdoor field experiences. **ENROLL ONLINE** <https://bit.ly/2UIXnfV>

2020 SPRING SEMESTER COURSE TOPICS

- Intro to Ecology and Natural Communities of the Piedmont
- Spring Bird Migration
- Trees of Georgia
- Geology of North Georgia
- Watershed Analysis & Stream Ecology
- Introduction to Mushrooms
- Spring Ephemeral Wildflowers
- Blue Ridge Mountain Ecology Field Trip
- Plant & Insect Interactive Ecology
- Lake Lanier and the Upper Chattahoochee Watershed
- Snakes of Georgia

Program Fee is \$300 per person. Elachee members receive a \$25 discount at registration. Pre-registration required. Enrollment is limited to 20 adults. Course participants receive a certificate of completion. **LEARN MORE:** elachee.org/lifelong-learning



Elachee welcomed Stan Cox, of The Land Institute, as guest speaker for the January 2020 Science Night program.

Science Nights: New Venue, New Format

Elachee Nature Science Center hosts a monthly Science Night Program Series in downtown Gainesville to engage the community in environmental education and discussion. This popular gathering is best suited for adults. The new host venue and program sponsor is **The Loft @ Scott's Downtown**. Pre-registration is required. Choose from two options: Buffet and Program or Program-only admission. Presented by **Northside Hospital**, the additional Spring 2020 program series' sponsors are **David Lloyd and Adrienne West** and **McDonald's NEGA, Inc.**

Spring 2020 Schedule: Upcoming Elachee Science Nights

- **Raptors in Georgia** with guest speaker and ornithologist Georgann Schmalz, Birding Adventures, Inc. **Tuesday, March 10, 2020** – **REGISTER ONLINE:** <https://bit.ly/2Sj9FTn>
- **Pocket Prairies** with guest speaker Jennifer Ceska, State Botanical Garden of Georgia **April 14, 2020** – **REGISTER ONLINE:** <https://bit.ly/3816lhc>
- **Black Bass Speciation** with guest speaker Dr. Bud Freeman, University of Georgia **May 12, 2020** – **REGISTRATION ONLINE:** <https://bit.ly/36QTthC>

Call for Elachee Volunteers

We seek **eager, energetic and enthusiastic** individuals to work with us at Elachee's seasonal public events (**Raptor Fest, Trillium Trek and Snake Day**) and to help with set-up for the **20th Annual Flights of Fancy Benefit & Auction**. If you are age 14 or older and interested in volunteering, please contact Amy Bradford (email amy@elachee.org) for details.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER: elachee.org/volunteer

L-R: Felicia Lane and Nicoll Moss took this selfie while serving as silent auction volunteers at Elachee's 2019 Flights of Fancy Benefit & Auction last April.



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NEW URBAN FORESTRY
P
SOUTHDAKOTA WILDLIFE CHARITIES
KREI
COOP

Trillium Trek

Trail Run & Walk

Run Wild at Elachee!
April 18, 2020
HALF-MARATHON • 5K RUN/WALK

elachee.org/trillium-trek

Which Tree Will You Be?

Join us at Elachee for the outdoor party of the year. Secure your sponsorship today!



20th Annual

Flights of Fancy

BENEFIT & AUCTION

Saturday Evening • April 25, 2020

elachee.org/flights-of-fancy

\$2,500 Oak Sponsor

Premium Table for 6, Tier 1 Maximum Recognition Package

\$1,500 Dogwood Sponsor

Premium Seating for 4, Tier 1 Maximum Recognition Package

\$750 Maple Sponsor

Reserved Seating for 4, Tier 2 Recognition Package

STAFF PROFILE Wes Hatch

Education Programs Specialist **Wes Hatch** joined the Elachee team in August. Hike with Wes and he'll share why the path sparkles in the sunlight (mica in the rocks), which acorns are the most nutritious and tasty for foragers (those from the White Oak) and why an Orange Witch's Hat Mushroom has funny white lines etched across its cap (a slug did it).



"I get to be outside, work with animals and people at Elachee," Wes explains. "But I don't just teach other people about nature. I get to learn something new and grow as a person every day."

Much of what Wes does is guide children in exploring diversity of the natural world during their field trips here and in *Elachee in Your Classroom* outreach programs.

"I love it when kids realize how cool nature is. I encourage them to touch things, get a little dirt and mud on their hands." Wes will also be the Camp Elachee 2020 staff liaison for the Counselors-in-Training leadership program.

Spring and fall, Wes conducts Saturday demonstrations for Elachee visitors. He enables them to interact with residents of Elachee's live animal exhibit. He will also lead guided Saturday hikes in Chicopee Woods, planned throughout 2020.

Birding, however, is his passion. "I've been a big birder for 10 years," he shares. "I have been around the U.S. and to every county in Georgia to look for birds."

INTRODUCE A CHILD TO NATURE

"I've worked with some kids who've never been out in the woods." Wes challenges us all to "help a child get excited by the green of the leaves, birds calling overhead or something wiggling across the trail."

LEARN HOW WES GOT HIS START:

elachee.org/finding-what-you-want-to-do



Camp Elachee Gets Children Unplugged and Outdoors During School Breaks

Camp Elachee is where *nature* is the adventure. Here children can be carefree and have the time of their lives exploring creeks and woods, forging lasting friendships and making incredible memories. Call 770-535-1976 with questions or for financial aid details.

NEW! EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT: Register your camper(s) in February to receive an **extra** 10% discount!

ELACHEE MEMBERS: Benefit from a \$20 per camper, per camp week registration discount!

FINANCIAL AID: Thanks to generous Elachee supporters, limited aid is available. Requests are considered case-by-case.

CAMP ELACHEE 2020
PRESENTED BY

 **NORTHSIDE**
HOSPITAL

CAMP ELACHEE 2020

Elachee Nature Science Center in the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve

REGISTER ONLINE
elachee.org/camp-elachee

2020 Themed Weekly DAY CAMPS	PRE-KINDERGARTEN 8 a.m. to Noon, M-F Ages 3, 4 and 5 <i>Must be Fully Toilet-Trained</i>	ELEMENTARY 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., M-F Entering Kindergarten through 6th Grade in Fall	MIDDLE SCHOOL 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., M-F Youth Entering 7th or 8th Grade in Fall			
April 6-10	Spring Break Day Camp	Spring Break Day Camp	-----			
June 1-5	Mad Science Mayhem	Mad Science Mayhem	Mad Science Mayhem			
June 8-12	Habitat Haven	Habitat Haven	-----			
June 15-19	Space Week	Space Week	Space Week			
June 22-26	Nature Escape	Nature Escape	-----			
June 29-July 3	Water Week	Water Week	Water Week			
July 6-10	Creature Feature	Creature Feature	-----			
July 13-17	Sense of Wonder	Wilderness Survival	Wilderness Survival			
July 20-24	Wet and Wild	Wet and Wild	-----			
July 27-31	Camp Rewind	Camp Rewind	Creature Care			
FEES ▶ PER CAMP WEEK, PER CAMPER	PRE-K NON-MEMBER FEE \$165	PRE-K ELACHEE MEMBER FEE \$145	ELEMENTARY NON-MEMBER FEE \$195	ELEMENTARY ELACHEE MEMBER FEE \$175	MIDDLE NON-MEMBER FEE \$265	MIDDLE ELACHEE MEMBER FEE \$245
OPTIONAL: AFTER CAMP CHILD CARE ▶					PER CAMPER, PER WEEK FEE \$50	
ELEMENTARY and MIDDLE SCHOOL Only • M-F • 3:30-5:30 p.m.						
COUNSELORS-IN-TRAINING (CIT) ▶					ONE-TIME FEE, PER CIT \$100	
Leadership Program for High School Students					2-WEEK COMMITMENT	

Camp Elachee meets the requirements and standards for 'exemption status' from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning's Bright from the Start. Attendance policies for Pre-Kindergarten require that each child will attend no more than four (4) hours per day.