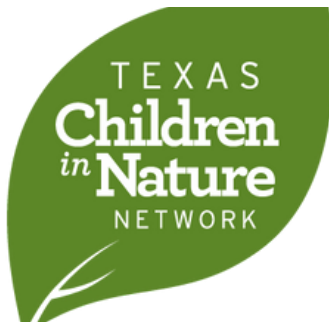


TEXAS CHILDREN IN NATURE NETWORK 2023 SUMMIT



December 6-8, 2023

Kids Need Nature and Nature Needs Kids

Houston, Texas
C. Baldwin Hotel

Sponsored By:



Children & Nature Network



Hayden and Lynn Brooks
Sustainable Forestry Initiatives



Lyda Hill Philanthropies



2023 SUMMIT AT A GLANCE

Wednesday, December 6

- 12:00-4:00 - Workshops around Town
- 6:00-9:00 - Texas Children in Nature Network
Night Out at *Buffalo Bayou Park*

Thursday, December 7

- 7:30-8:30 Breakfast
- 8:30-9:15 - Welcome
- 9:15-10:15 - Keynote Speaker - Parker McMullen
Bushman
- 10:30-12:00 - Regional Collaborative Meetings
- 12:00-1:15 - Lunch
- 1:15-2:15 - Concurrent Sessions
- 2:30-3:30 - Concurrent Sessions
- 3:30-4:00 - Coffee Break
- 4:00-5:00 - Concurrent Sessions
- 5:00-6:00 - Poster Sessions and Networking

Thursday Evening, December 7

- 6:00-9:30 - Champions Awards Dinner

Friday, December 8

- 7:30-8:30 - Breakfast
- 8:30-9:30 - Concurrent Sessions
- 9:45-10:45 - Keynote Speaker - Dr. Melissa Lem
- 11:00 - 12:00 - Concurrent Sessions
- 12:15-12:30 - Close



SUMMIT LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our 2023 Summit is taking place in Houston, Texas. We are on the ancestral and unceded land of the Coahuiltean, Karankawa, Sana, and Ishak people. Our ongoing colonial presence on Indigenous lands compels us to take action now to counteract the effects of colonization. The work we do through the Texas Children in Nature Network is one small step towards that effort.

Learn more about land acknowledgments and how to find out about your organization's land here: native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement

Learn more about the Coahuiltean: tappilam.org

Learn more about the Karankawa: karankawas.com

Learn more about the Sana: native-land.ca/maps/territories/sanan

Learn more about the Ishak: native-land.ca/maps/territories/ishak

Learn more about the Indigenous Cultures Institute: indigenousthoughts.org

A resource featuring Indigenous voices to learn more about Indigenous People's history and current efforts to fight colonization is the [All My Relations Podcast](#).

As part of our efforts to counteract the effects of colonization, TCiNN has donated a portion of the proceeds of this Summit to the organization who provided land acknowledgement and dancers for our event, Grupo Chikawa.

Earlier this year TCiNN hosted a webinar with Skye Howell on Beyond A Land Acknowledgement. We are working to put lessons learned during this webinar into practice. You can watch the webinar on our YouTube.

Follow Us On Social Media

Use #TCiNNSummit2023 on your posts to continue the conversation, and be sure to tag us in your photos!



/texaschildreninnature



**Texas Children
in Nature**



@texaschildren_innature



**/texas_children_in_
nature_network**

2023 Keynote Speakers

PARKER MCMULLEN BUSHMAN

Chief Operating Officer and Co-founder of Inclusive Journeys, and the founder and CEO of Ecoinclusive Strategies. Parker Bushman has been a leader in the conservation, environmental education, outdoor recreation and non-profit fields for 24+ years and has served in top leadership for Marine Science, Environmental Educational, and Cultural Interpretive Facilities. Her current work focuses on helping organizations create dynamic organizational change to cultivate diversity and equity at all levels through strategic activism and education.



DR. MELISSA LEM

Vancouver family physician, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia and Founding Director of PaRx, Canada's national nature prescription program powered by the British Columbia (BC) Parks Foundation. Also President of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. A widely published writer, climate change panelist on CBC Radio's Early Edition and in-house medical columnist for CBC TV Vancouver, one of her major priorities is knowledge translation.



2023 Featured Speaker

DR. HOWARD FRUMKIN

A general internist and epidemiologist, is Senior Vice President and director of the Land and People Lab at Trust for Public Land, a national organization that creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. He is also Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington School of Public Health, where he served as Dean from 2010-2016. His career has focused on health aspects of climate change, the built environment, nature contact, and sustainability. He is author or co-author of over 300 scientific journal articles and chapters, and his ten books include *Making Healthy Places: Designing and Building for Health, Well-Being, and Sustainability* (2011 and 2022), *Environmental Health: From Global to Local* (3rd Edition 2016), *Planetary Health: Protecting Nature to Protect Ourselves* (2020), and *Planetary Health: Safeguarding Human Health and the Environment in the Anthropocene* (2021). He was educated at Brown (A.B.), the University of Pennsylvania (M.D.), and Harvard (M.P.H. and Dr.P.H.). He is an elected member of the Washington State Academy of Sciences and of the National Academy of Medicine, and is a Hagler Fellow at Texas A&M University.





Texas Children in Nature Network Night Out

Join us on Wednesday, December 6th, at the Buffalo Bayou Park from 6:30-9 for an exciting evening of food, activities, and networking. Partners from Buffalo Bayou Partnership, the Houston Public Library, Gulf Coast Master Naturalists, Asakura Robinson Design, and Fort Worth Botanic will host a variety of nature fun activities - including: Houston Illuminated Cistern Tours, a nature art activity, nature play, and more. Join us at the park for a night of play!

Transportation to Buffalo Bayou Park (105-B Sabine St) is not provided. The park is located within approximately a 10 minute walk of the C. Baldwin Hotel. There is also parking available for the park by the Visitor Center entrance (105-B Sabine St). Additional paid parking is available at 1643 Memorial Drive.



Buffalo Bayou Partnership

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 CHAMPIONS

LEGACY CHAMPION - BUSINESS

H-E-B: Our Texas Our Future: Through their support of sustainability and environmental education across the state of Texas H-E-B makes a large impact towards millions of children in Texas being able to regularly access and connect with nature. Through their support of program's like the Texas State Parks Centennial, Families in Nature, Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center, and so much more they are supporting the work of many of Texas Children in Nature Networks partners in their collective effort to ensure equitable access and connection to nature for all children in Texas.



LEGACY CHAMPION - INDIVIDUAL

Kiki Corry: As Project WILD coordinator for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Kiki Corry trains and supports the Project WILD facilitators across the state of Texas. She brings experience from both the classroom and informal educational settings.

She has served on the National Environmental Education Advisory Committee, represented the Project WILD Coordinators on the Project WILD Subcommittee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and been on the planning committee for the National Science Teachers Association's Congress for Chapters and Associated groups.

Here in Texas, she sat on the Boards of the Texas Association for Environmental Education and the Informal Science Education Association. She currently chairs the Texas Environmental Education Advisory Committee (to the Texas Education Agency) and is Past-President of the Science Teacher Association of Texas.



EMERGING LEADER

Fernanda Marrero Hi: In 2022 and 2023 Fernanda was instrumental in organizing the passage of the Houston Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights at the Houston Mayor's Office of Education and Youth Engagement. Fernanda is a first-generation college graduate of the University of Houston and a recent graduate from Harvard Graduate School of Education. She currently works for the Office of Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo as a Senior Policy Advisor where she advocates for equitable education policies and sustainable infrastructure. As a former science teacher now working in county government, Fernanda is a young professional who is using her voice as a first-generation American and educator to uplift Houston children and promote their access to nature. With Houston being the fifth biggest city to adopt a COBOR, Fernanda hopes her innovative work will be a model to other young people of color in local governments to spearhead nature accessibility initiatives, thus making her work both scalable and adaptable to other communities.



INDIVIDUAL

Michelle Medina, OTD: Michelle Medina is an occupational therapist and homeschool parent with a passion for helping families connect in nature. "Forest Friends" weekly meetups started in 2022 with 6 homeschool families and has grown into an online community of nearly 600 families. Wild+Free RGV is a network connecting nature-oriented families to weekly meetups, educational programs from area nature centers and local nature advocacy initiatives. Through her weekly groups and partnerships, she helps more than 50 families per week to get out and grow in nature. Her free, weekly, child-led nature play group draws in a diverse group of families. Participants of "Adventure Club" are all ages and come from cities throughout the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico. As a group leader, she has fostered a welcoming, accessible, bilingual space for all families.



ORGANIZATION

City of Pearland Delores Fenwick Nature Center: The City of Pearland Delores Fenwick Nature Center (DFNC) is the premiere urban nature center of the south Houston area. The DFNC uses native animals, interactive exhibits, in-person programs, and social media content to capture the interest of the Pearland community and educate all visitors about native wildlife and habitats. In addition to the nature education programs and outdoor recreation programs for individuals of all ages and abilities, youth summer camps, fieldtrips, and native animal interaction opportunities, one of the DFNC's best and most exciting educational projects is its Adventures with Edu-Katie (AWEK) video-series. The AWEK series takes nature and science topics and breaks them down into fun and edu-taining videos that help kids, and their families better understand the environment, especially native Texas species.



BUSINESS

Ready to Grow Gardens: For 21 years, Ready to Grow Gardens has helped children fall in love with gardening, nature, and science. During the 2023 school year, the Ready to Grow Gardens team of garden educators will work in 38 school gardens in the Houston area serving as a "gateway" for thousands of children to learn how to grow fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables. Ready to Grow Gardens works with schools to integrate what is planted and garden activities into school curricula, aligning lessons with TEKS. Even parents who come to volunteer on garden days can be heard exclaiming, "I didn't know that!" With their help, public and private schools have abundant gardens on their campuses thanks to their garden management expertise, garden educators, teacher resources, and hands-on learning for students.



TEXAS CHILDREN IN NATURE SUMMIT 2023

WEDNESDAY WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, Dec 7

All workshops are rain or shine. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes. Bring a full water bottle.

Attendees will check in at their pre-selected workshop and receive their Summit name badge there. They will not be able to pick up the name badge at the Summit Information Table at the hotel.

Transportation to all workshops is on your own EXCEPT for the SPARK School Park Tour and School of the Future: Building a Wildly Healthy, Climate Ready School and Campus which have charter buses. Many of the workshops are within easy walking distance of the hotel.

Public transportation, e-scooters and Houston BCycle (bike) rentals, and ride sharing companies are highly recommended.

- **Bike Share and Urban Greenways to Promote Access to Nature**

- Presenters: Dr. Jay Maddock and Dr. Deb Kellstedt, Texas A&M University and Houston BCycle, Laura Knutson and Tony Banks
- Location: Buffalo Bayou Greenways
- Time: 1-4
- Despite the amazing benefits of exposure to nature, many urban dwellers spend little time in nature. Riding a bicycle is an excellent way to get out into nature, to actively commute, and to accumulate the benefits of physical activity, however confidence and practice with bicycling often starts at a young age. Barriers such as bike ownership, physical fitness, and safety from traffic keep people from biking. Using pedal assisted electric bike share bikes (e-bikes) on an urban trail system can help to overcome all these barriers. In this hands-on workshop, participants will join a free group bicycle ride on the Houston Bayou-Greenways trails using e-bikes supplied by Houston BCycle. Participants will actively explore the Greenways and consider the promotion of urban bicycling to expose children (and adults) to nature. Health and Nature researchers from Texas A&M University, Dr. Jay Maddock and Dr. Deb Kellstedt, joined by Laura Knutson and Tony Banks of Houston BCycle will discuss safety, bikeability, and facets of the trail at several water and rest breaks along the way in addition to highlighting differences between cycling for transport or recreation.
- Meet at 12:30pm in the lobby of the C. Baldwin Hotel. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you. The group will depart at 12:40pm to walk to Buffalo Bayou Park and arrive at 1pm. The park is located about 1 mile from the hotel.
- Park Meeting Location: Buffalo Bayou Park, The Water Works Visitor Center and Cistern at the Houston BCycle docking station at Sabine Bridge. Park Address: 105-B Sabine Street.



Wednesday, Dec 7

- **Cultural Tapestry: Weaving Community Connections through Identity, Nature, and Art**

- Presenters: Student Conservation Association (SCA) Youth and Program Staff and Buffalo Bayou Partnership Staff
- Location: Buffalo Bayou Park
- Time: 1-4
- Description: Our cultures and identities shape the way we perceive and connect with the outside world, influencing our sense of place within it. Join SCA for an immersive workshop that combines art, mindfulness, cultural exploration, and storytelling. In collaboration with Buffalo Bayou Partnership, you are invited to embark on a transformative journey. This workshop includes a nature walk guided by the tranquil surroundings of Buffalo Bayou, a mindful stretch session led by passionate youth from the Student Conservation Association (SCA), and an interactive art-based activity, providing a canvas for exploration and discovery. Through this exchange, we will deepen our understanding of the significance of fostering cultural sensitivity and understanding in outdoor programming and beyond. Walk away from this workshop with a renewed appreciation for the interplay of identity, nature, and art. Carry with you the profound insight gained from embracing our cultural tapestry, and let it inspire future connections in your work and with the world around you.
- Meet at 12:30pm in the lobby of the C. Baldwin Hotel. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you. The group will depart at 12:40pm to walk to Buffalo Bayou Park and arrive at 1pm.
- The park is located about 1 mile from the hotel. ADA accommodations can be made prior to the workshop with Summit organizers if necessary.

- **Engaging New Audiences through Camping Adventures**

- Presenter: Lisa Jeane Reznicek, Texas Parks and Wildlife - Texas State Parks
- Location: Sam Houston Park
- Time: 1-4
- You're invited to the campout! Learn one method to create environmental stewards through meaningful outdoor recreation. Join Ranger Lisa Jeane at nearby Sam Houston Park to have fun, share your love of nature, help us connect families and youth to nature. Learn about the Texas Outdoor Family program, Texas State Parks outreach programs, and a train-the-trainer model for effectively welcoming new audiences to the power of nature experiences. Be ready for an afternoon spent learning about setting up a campsite (building a tent, using a stove), Leave No Trace principles, Jr. Ranger games (like Ranger Names, Tree ID, and Micro-hikes), and outdoor cooking hacks. You will also leave with some insider tips on enjoying your Texas State Parks and finding those ultimate camping adventures anytime of the year. Logistics: Be prepared to be outdoors, dress for the weather (synthetic layers are great), bring water, and expect to be active (short 5 min walk and group games).
- Meet at 12:30pm in the lobby of the C. Baldwin Hotel. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you. The group will depart at 12:45pm to walk to Sam Houston Park and arrive at 1pm
- The park is located about a 5-10 minute walk from the hotel. ADA accommodations can be made prior to the workshop with Summit organizers if necessary.



Wednesday, Dec 7

- **Engaging Your Community in Walking Programs: Wellness Walk and Walkshop in Buffalo Bayou Park**
 - Presenter: Laura Conely, Urban Paths
 - Location: Buffalo Bayou Park
 - Time: 1-4
 - Description: Take a guided walk along beautiful Buffalo Bayou to explore, learn, and experience the profound mental and physical health benefits of nature, movement, and connection. Following the walk there will be an informational discussion with tips and guidelines for creating successful community walking programs for children and adults. Laura Conely with Urban Paths will share strategies and resources and answer questions both during the Wellness Walk and the workshop. The Wellness Walk will be approximately 3 miles along accessible park trails in Buffalo Bayou Park. The group will then gather on the Buffalo Bayou Partnership Visitors Center Terrace for discussion and workshop.
 - Meet at 12:45pm at the entrance of the C. Baldwin Hotel. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you.
 - The group will depart at 1:00pm to walk to Buffalo Bayou Park together with Laura Conely with Urban Paths. At the end of the session participants will return with guides to the hotel.
 - Park Meeting Location: Buffalo Bayou Park, The Water Works Visitor Center and Cistern: 105-B Sabine St.
 - Participants should be aware that they will need to be physically able to walk, or roll (route will be accessible) approximately 3 miles. ADA accommodations can be made prior to the workshop with Summit organizers if necessary.
 - For the best experience participants should wear comfortable walking shoes and clothing compatible with the weather.
- **Fishing for the Next Generation of Conservationists - The Benefits of Fishing and Angler Education**
 - Presenter: Jason Mercer, Texas Parks and Wildlife – R3 Program
 - Location: Houston Public Library - Central Library & Sam Houston Park
 - Time: 1-4
 - Description: In this workshop, Texas Parks and Wildlife staff will cover the importance of fishing as it relates to the conservation of our natural resources, the barriers, and benefits of fishing for all members of the community and walk you through some of the activities and lessons taught during our Angler Education workshops, which will include Fish ID, Knot Tying, Backyard Bass and more!
This workshop will incorporate hands-on activities, classroom learning, program resources, information about how to become an Angler Education Instructor, and a trip to the nearby park to practice casting and learn about fish habitats. You will go home with tangible ways to include fishing in your programming as another way to connect children and families to nature.
 - Meet at 12:30pm in the lobby of the C. Baldwin Hotel. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you. The group will depart at 12:45pm to walk to the Central Library for an indoor presentation that starts at 1pm. After the presentation, the group will walk to Sam Houston Park for the remainder of the workshop.
 - The library and park are located about a 5-10 minute walk from the hotel.
 - ADA accommodations can be made with Summit organizers prior to the workshop if necessary.



Wednesday, Dec 7

- **Health and Wildlife Out Your Back Door: Optimizing health for people and ecosystems**

- Presenters: Erika Valdez and Staff, Memorial Park Conservancy
- Location: Memorial Park – Kinder Land Bridge and Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Prairie - Rally Pavilion
- Time: 1-4
- Description: Join Memorial Park Conservancy to explore the interplay between nature and human well-being. Have you ever wondered how nature supports not only birds, bees, and trees but also ourselves? Have you experienced the transformative power of stepping outside and feeling your mood uplifted?

Participants are invited for a tour of the newly opened Kinder Land Bridge and Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Prairie, to experience the interconnectedness that binds people and ecosystems. Immerse yourself in the tranquility of the prairie and discover the educational and interactive aspects that have been built into the landscape.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn about interactive programming techniques that can be implemented in their own educational environments and discover tools that community members can engage in to promote science both internally and externally.

- **In the Forest or on the Playground: A Case Study of Nature Play at The Fay School**

- Presenters: Melissa Sherman and Ozden Ozkanoglu, The Fay School and Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds Staff, and Stephanie VanDyken, Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds
- Location: The Fay School
- Time: 1-4
- Description: The Fay School is a 300-student school serving children from 3 years old to fifth grade and educates through hands-on, project and place-based learning, utilizing the whole campus to make lessons come alive for students. The Fay School recently renovated their outdoor space from traditional play structures to a natural playscape with the ingenuity and expertise of Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds. This created a natural gateway between the formal schoolyard to the bayou beyond.

In this field session, attendees will learn about the programs the Fay School offers, how nature play facilitates developmental milestones, how places of mastery were created, and the site-specific process from funding to construction. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about our preschool's forest mornings and how we utilize our spaces with elementary-aged students. This session will be led by staff members from the Fay School and Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds.

- Please make sure you bring water, wear sunscreen and a hat because most of the session is outside. Wear comfortable shoes. Please bring an ID that can be swiped at our guardhouse.



Wednesday, Dec 7

- **Inspiring Community Science through Wildlife Gardening**

- Presenters: Laura Davidson and Melissa Hudnall, Houston Museum of Natural Science
- Location: Houston Museum of Natural Science
- Time: 1-4
- Description: This workshop covers a range of topics, starting with an exploration of the crucial role of pollinators and the significance of creating wildlife habitats. It then delves into strategies for designing gardens that attract and support pollinators and wildlife, regardless of space limitations. These tactics can be applied not only in schools but also libraries, parks, and other public areas. Topics will include plant selection, creating diverse habitats, and providing food, water, and shelter. The workshop also highlights the importance of citizen science in conservation efforts, bringing children and families closer to nature. Throughout the program, participants will receive curated resources including ongoing community science projects, organizations that certify garden spaces, plant selection, and other related materials.

Participants will also visit the Cockrell Butterfly Center, their outdoor demonstration gardens, and the rooftop greenhouses to see some of the covered topics in action. By the end of the workshop, attendees will be empowered with the knowledge, skills, and inspiration to transform their own spaces into sanctuaries for pollinators and wildlife, while actively supporting their communities to engage with nature and science.

- **Interpretation on the Go**

- Presenters: Danielle Bradley-Okay, Texas Parks and Wildlife – Texas State Parks
- Location: Sam Houston Park
- Time: 1-4
- Join Texas Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Specialist Danielle Bradley-Okay for a hands-on workshop covering roving interpretation. Learn all about Bradley's Principles of Roving Description: Interpretation and how you can use them to connect kids (and their families!) to your site and its resources. In this workshop, you will develop a better understanding of roving, how to incorporate it into your daily practice, and time to create your own roving outline for your site!
- Dress for the weather and be sure to bring water. Participants are welcome to bring any program outlines/content they would like to develop into a roving outline.
- Meet at 12:30pm in the lobby of the C. Baldwin Hotel. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you. The group will depart at 12:45pm to walk to Sam Houston Park and arrive at 1pm.
- The park is located about a 5-10 minute walk from the hotel. ADA accommodations can be made prior to the workshop with Summit organizers if necessary.



Wednesday, Dec 7

- **It Takes a Village: How Houston-area Organizations are Collaborating Together to Strengthen Environmental Education in the Community**

- Presenters: Houston Zoo Staff and Community Partners - Galveston Bay Foundation, Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Houston Botanic Garden, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, Texas Association of Environmental Educators
- Location: Houston Zoo
- Time: 1-4
- Description: Across Texas, all our organizations are bringing incredible strengths and expertise to the global movement to connect our audiences with nature and inspire conservation action. Here in Houston, we've leaned into this and have been collaborating to lift, support and encourage one another as we work to create a community of citizens interested, aware and equipped to take conservation action. Join us as we share innovative ways to engage diverse audiences and how each of our organizations are bringing unique perspectives, skills, and strengths to the Houston-area environmental education community. Come prepared to join the conversation and share your organization's successes as well. Take away the tools and knowledge to plan effective environmental education programming that inspires conservation action. This workshop will include breakout rotations for discussion, brainstorming, troubleshooting and take-away resources for implementation (and of course some eye-to-eye moments with the animals we are all working to save).

- **Nature Smart Libraries: Connecting Nature and Literacy**

- Presenters: Cresencia Huff and Julia Lazarin, San Antonio Public Library, Melody Alcazar, City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department and Laura Tadena, Austin Public Library
- Location: Houston Public Library
- Time: 1-4
- Description: Libraries are recognized as a trusted source of information and entertainment, but library resources and services can go well beyond books and story time programs. Join staff from San Antonio Public Library, Austin Public Library, and Austin Parks & Recreation Department to hear how they are each approaching a Nature Smart Libraries strategy. Presenters will share how the Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) initiative can be leveraged to bring different city departments, local non-profits, and other partners together, and how a library/park relationship can evolve from a one-sided use of outdoor space to a true exchange between departments. Come learn about how nature-based programs can blend both library and park goals, from Story Walks to Take & Create kits, to State Park Pass programs, and experience new ways of bringing literacy outdoors in your community.
- Meet at 12:30pm in the lobby of the C. Baldwin Hotel. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you. The group will depart at 12:45pm to walk to the workshop location and arrive at 1pm.
- If you are not able to walk to the destination, ADA accommodations can be made prior to the workshop with Summit organizers if necessary.



Wednesday, Dec 7

- **School of the Future: Building a Wildly Healthy, Climate Ready School and Campus**

- Presenters: Jaime Gonzalez, The Nature Conservancy and Melissa Turnbaugh, PBK Architects
- Location: Jefferson Early Learning Center
- Time: 1-4
- All attendees will go on charter bus. Meet at 12:00pm. Departure promptly at 12:15pm. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you.
- Description: The many benefits of connecting children to nature at their schools and schoolyards are well known, if not yet fully acted upon. Yet, we are also living in a time of rapidly accelerating climate change, biodiversity loss, and nature inequity. How can we respond? The Jefferson Early Learning Center, in Alief ISD, is a living laboratory for trying a new paradigm by using most of the campus as resilience infrastructure, wildlife habitat, and a nature park. The campus sports 4.5 acres of restored prairie wetlands and is building towards planting 200+ trees. Its interior was built to be biophilic, incorporating natural elements, organic shapes, nature imagery, and lots of natural light. In short, this is an example of the future schools we need tomorrow, built today. The Jefferson Early Learning Center in Alief ISD stands as a remarkable testament to the possibilities of integrating nature, resilience, and equity into educational spaces, fostering a more sustainable and inclusive future for all.

From this workshop participants will understand how naturalistic elements can be incorporated into school design, learn about the challenges, techniques, and promise of creating campus-sized ecological restorations, and will lastly understand how to activate large schoolyard greening for educators.

- Driver's license required for campus entry as part of the standard school check-in protocol.

- **SPARK School Park Tour – Exploring Two Green Schoolyards**

- Presenters: Staff from SPARK School Park Program, National Wildlife Federation - Monarch Heroes Program, Asakura Robinson Design, Environments & Co., Families in Nature, Rose Toro-Artist, Urban Harvest
- Time: 12-3
- All attendees will go on charter bus. Meet at 11:15am. Departure promptly at 11:30am. A TCiNN Board Member will be holding a sign for this workshop to greet you.
- Description: Join SPARK School Park Program and other collaborators to explore two Houston ISD SPARK Parks - Travis and Davila Elementary Schools. The first school on the tour is Travis Elementary where we will learn about the SPARK School Park Program, its history, and current initiatives. Participants will hear from landscape architects who have been working with SPARK Committees (consisting of both school and community members) to design each of the parks, as well as school representatives and community members. The public art components of the sites are a key ingredient for students to actively participate and they will be discussed at each school. As gardens often complement outdoor play spaces, participants will also visit these schools' Monarch Heroes gardens; initiated by the National Wildlife Federation's Monarch Heroes pollinator garden grant program. A tour of these outdoor classroom spaces is included, and everyone will hear about the student, teacher, and community involvement in both the design and creation of these areas that support native wildlife. At Davila Elementary, Urban Harvest will share about their school garden program. Additionally, the organization Families in Nature who is working with both communities to provide self-driven programming opportunities for exploring nature in the SPARK parks will be there to explain their role in the program. Each of these parks is representative of the SPARK School Park Program which is celebrating its 40th year in 2023!
- Driver's license required for campus entry as part of the standard school check-in protocol.



Stream Our Texas, Our Future Today

H-E-B proudly presents Our Texas, Our Future Films: A five-part original docuseries celebrating Texas' beautiful State Parks, resilient wildlife, and the Texans helping conserve & protect them. These films are created in partnership with Fin & Fur Films, and feature narration & original music by native Texan Shane Smith of Shane Smith and the Saints.

H-E-B is fiercely proud of our home state. We support many Texas farmers, ranchers, researchers, and environmentalists who take good care of our land, water, and air. H-E-B is dedicated to putting Our Texas, Our Future first, so we can continue to support the communities we serve while helping preserve Texas's natural beauty for generations to come.



Welcome to the 2023 Texas Children in Nature Network Summit at the C. Baldwin Hotel

Speakers:

- Sarah Coles, Executive Director of Texas Children in Nature Network
- Dr. April Torres Conkey, Board Chair of the Texas Children in Nature Network
- Xochitezca (Alejandra) Tapia Cacheux - Grupo Chikawa
- Shannon Buggs, City of Houston Mayor's Office of Complete Communities
- Dr. Howard Frumkin, Senior Vice President and Director of the Land and People Lab at Trust for Public Land
 - **Nature contact: A poly-solution to a poly-crisis**
 - Our nation, and our planet, confront a daunting set of environmental, political, and social challenges, that have been termed a "polycrisis." These challenges affect children directly and indirectly; in many ways they set the parameters of contemporary childhood. In this context, nature contact is part of a "poly-solution." This talk will outline some of the broad contextual issues affecting children today, and discuss the pathways through which nature contact both protects children from specific threats and helps children thrive.



Dr. Howard
Frumkin



Xochitezca (Alejandra) Tapia
Cacheux



Shannon Buggs

TEXAS CHILDREN IN NATURE SUMMIT 2023

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Thursday, Dec 7 - 8:30-9:15 Welcome

- Welcome to the Summit
 - Featured Speakers:
 - Sarah Coles, Executive Director of Texas Children in Nature Network
 - Dr. April Torres Conkey, Board Chair of the Texas Children in Nature Network
 - Xochitezca (Alejandra) Tapia Cacheux - Grupo Chikawa
 - Shannon Buggs, City of Houston Mayor's Office of Complete Communities
 - Dr. Howard Frumkin, Senior Vice President and Director of the Land and People Lab at Trust for Public Land

Thursday, Dec 7 - 9:15-10:15

- **Keynote Speaker - Parker McMullen Bushman, Chief Operating Officer and Co-founder of Inclusive Journeys and founder and CEO of Ecoinclusive Strategies**
 - Description: Children from very young ages internalize messages about power and privilege with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, which they perpetuate through their play and talk. The link between Social justice and Nature Education offers a much-needed vision for environmental education in the face of the challenges weighing on our nation and confronting the planet. Join Parker McMullen Bushman as she talks about the links between the social and environmental justice movements and education outdoors.

Thursday, Dec 7 - 10:30-12:00

- **Regional Breakout Groups**
 - **Austin** - B. Jordan Ballroom
 - **Caprock** - Wilson
 - **Coastal Bend** - Dezavala II
 - **El Paso** - B. Jordan Ballroom
 - **Heart of Texas** - Coleman I
 - **Houston** - Dezavala I
 - **North Texas** - Dezavala III
 - **Pineywoods** - Coleman I
 - **Rio Grande Valley** - Coleman II
 - **San Antonio** - B. Jordan Ballroom



Thursday, Dec 7 - 12:15-1:00 (Lunchtime session)

- **Kids on the Farm: Creating Conditions Conducive to Life**

- Presenters: Cath Conlon and Megan Parks, Blackwood Educational Land Institute
- Room: Dezavala I
- Description: Join Blackwood Educational Land Institute for a roundtable dialogue between two women passionate about life, children and nature, informed by their work with young people at the Blackwood Educational Land Institute. They will tackle key issues that arise in their work with urban kids at the teaching farm. How do they bring Biomimicry into focus with children? How can we do a better job of blending the natural world with the human component? What does research have to say about the farm organism itself as medicine? How do we help kids follow nutrients from soil to food to their plates? Come away with inspiration ideas for engaging urban kids in farm setting, an appreciation of soil as a living kaleidoscope of life, ideas for using soil as the foundation for broader lessons on nature and life, and new ideas for sparking kids' joy in nature, even in contexts with many limitations (indoors, no tools, etc).
- Strand: Nature for All

- **A Family's Travels to America's National Parks**

- Presenters: Anthony Beverly, Anthony Beverley II, Justice Beverley, Kendall Beverley
- Room: Dezavala II
- Description: Lunch and learn with a discussion from the first family to visit every national park in the lower 48 states in the United States. Come away with a better understanding of America's National Park System. The Beverley Family will share stories of their experiences in the parks and will communicate how America needs to increase the number of people of color in the outdoors. They are excited to share how nature and the outdoors are a part of their everyday lives.
- Strands: Access, Community, Education, Health, Natural for All

Thursday, Dec 7 - 1:15-2:15

- **Health and Nature Policy Scan World Café**

- Presenters: Alicia Fontenot, TCiNN Health and Nature Liaison - Gulf Coast and Jenny Larios, TCiNN Health and Nature Liaison - North Texas
- Room: Dezavala I
- Description: Join Texas Children in Nature Network's Health and Nature Liaisons, Jenny Larios, and Alicia Fontenot, for a stimulating and engaging journey into the world of policy scans at our Policy Scan World Café. As a useful tool in guiding future policy work and legislation, this interactive event is designed to provide you with a unique opportunity to dive deep into policy scans. Attendants will have the opportunity to engage with professionals from various sectors, with each bringing their unique insights and experiences to the table. This diversity of thought will help broaden your understanding of policy scans.
- Strand: Health



Thursday, Dec 7 - 1:15-2:15

- **Using National Park Sites to Engage Kids in Nature**

- Presenters: Megan Urban, Nathan Pattee, PT Lathrop, Ariana Quazi - National Park Service
- Room: Dezavala II
- Description: National Park sites offer unique and diverse learning opportunities for students all across Texas. Big Thicket National Preserve and San Antonio Missions Historical Park staff will showcase the different opportunities they provide and share other ways the National Park Service engages students through other programs. Come learn about programming and how National Parks are great outdoor classrooms that give opportunities for all to access nature.
- Strand: Access

- **Empowering the Future: SCA Houston Youth Program - Fostering the Next Generation Workforce Through Community Collaboration**

- Presenters: Valeria Casas and Stephanie Vo, Student Conservation Association
- Room: Dezavala III
- Description: Join the Student Conservation Association (SCA) for an engaging presentation highlighting the local SCA Houston Youth Conservation Program! Discover how they provide hands-on natural resource management experiences to local Houston youth. Learn about the impactful work, partnerships, and SCA's collaboration with FURR High School on food and environmental justice projects and cultural education. Explore the significance of community representation, opportunities for underrepresented youth, and fostering the next green workforce. Experience the power of outdoor equity and hear inspiring testimonials from SCA alumni.
- Strands: Nature for All, Access, Health, Education, Community, Greenspace

- **Art in Parks! Students making their mark in SPARK Parks**

- Presenters: Kathleen Ownby, Elizabeth Howley, SPARK-School Park Program and Rose Toro, Artist
- Room: Coleman I
- Description: Celebrating 40 years, the SPARK School Park Program works with public schools to develop school yards into community parks. One key element of each SPARK Park is the public art component. Students work with art teachers and professional artists to design, create, and construct public art in the parks. During this session, SPARK will discuss the process and show examples of multiple public art components. Local professional artist Rose Toro, who's worked with SPARK since 2001, will discuss her methods for student engagement.
- Strands: Community, Health, Education, Nature for All, Access, Greenspace



Thursday, Dec 7 - 1:15-2:15

- **Time for a Reboot: Prescribing NaturePlay for Emotional Wellness for Children, Teens & Families**
 - Presenter: Jamie Lynn Langley, LCSW, Private Practitioner
 - Room: Coleman II
 - Description: NaturePlay Therapy incorporates nature's playroom for a healing space utilizing discovered "toys" from nature such as sticks, leaves, stones, and more. Participants will explore why play in nature is needed and learn forms of NaturePlay for clinicians, therapists, school counselors and more to incorporate in sessions and to prescribe outside of sessions for emotional wellness and self-care for children and teens and their families. In turn parents, caregivers and educators can implement these NaturePlay activities to enhance emotional resiliency with their families and/or students.
 - Strand: Health
- **Weeding Out Barriers to Accessible and Inclusive Gardening for Children**
 - Presenter: Skyler Mueller, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
 - Room: Wilson
 - Description: Gardening boasts many benefits and can be a rewarding activity for youth with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). How can we ensure that every child who wants to participate in gardening is able to do so? This session will offer hands-on learning and will explore accessible and inclusive gardening spaces, programs, educational content, and activities. Attendees will receive resources to support their delivery of inclusive gardening practices for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).
 - Strands: Access, Health, Community, Nature for All
- **Making Outdoor Learning Easy PEASy: Cultivating Joyful Connections with Children**
 - Presenters: Lauren Maples, Erin Magrath, Mat Garland, Lauren Renee Salinas-Garcia, Mariana Bonilla, Partners for Education, Agriculture and Sustainability (PEAS)
 - Room: Sam Houston Park (Meet in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to walk to park with volunteer. Less than a 5 minute walk to the park.)
 - Description: PEAS provides outdoor education classes to Austin area students DURING the school day because we recognize the importance of intentionally carving out instructional time to cultivate joyful connections within nature. In our session, we will introduce our top tips for successful outdoor programming, along with the philosophical pillars of the PEAS mission which create deep and meaningful experiences for our learners. Participants are invited to take a breath of fresh air in Sam Houston Park, (3 minute walk from the conference location) and take part in the lesson demonstrations to fully experience the hands-on, culturally relevant and socially-emotional focused curriculum of the Easy PEASy Guidebook. The hope is to inspire all educators to dedicate time to help students grow relationships with living and nonliving beings in the outdoors through our Easy PEASy Guidebook. This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
 - Strands: Education, Health, Nature for All, Access



Thursday, Dec 7 - 1:15-2:15

- **Watering a Weed in a Concrete Jungle**

- Presenters: Mat Dusza, Green Space Learning
- Room: Field - C. Baldwin Hotel Grounds (Meet presenter in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to session)
- Description: Educators and educational programs can be a catalyst for children to explore and experience nature on a greater level within a play context. An emphasis will be placed on how we can implement practical actions with providing opportunities to simulate children's nature play beyond their current exposure. Participants will understand the challenges of urban living and connection with nature. This session will challenge the advocate/educator role in promoting and advocating for outdoor nature play and how our institutions can be the opportunity for nature play. This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Strands: Nature for All, Health, Access

Thursday, Dec 7 - 2:30-3:30

- **Welcome to Nature Challenge - A Platform to Enhance Reach, Scale Successes, and Track Nature Engagement**

- Presenter: Jacey Tosh, Texas A&M Forest Service
- Room: Dezavala I
- Description: Become a Nature Challenge provider and learn how to scale your outreach, gather valuable insights into public participation, and build collaborative partnerships with other nature-based organizations using the free Nature Challenge platform. Come learn about the Nature Challenge platform tools and services. Participants will have the opportunity to complete the sign-up and onboarding to become Nature Challenge providers during the Summit, and providers will receive helpful tips and tricks for creating fun and engaging Nature Challenges using their existing programs and activities.
- Strands: Access, Health, Community, Nature for All, Greenspace

- **Natural Tribute: Goods Made for Good**

- Presenter: Andrew Maxwell, Natural Tribute
- Room: Dezavala II
- Description: Natural Tribute is an art brand looking to revolutionize the relationship between for-profit and non-profit companies in the outdoor space through art and products inspired by nature. Artist Andrew Maxwell, and his team, partner with outdoor non-profits to raise money and awareness for each corresponding organization. In this presentation you will learn, as a non-profit, how partnering with a company like Natural Tribute is beneficial in the retail and merchandising space; as a for-profit company, you will learn what Natural Tribute is doing to cultivate and grow the relationships with their outdoor non-profit partners.
- Strand: Community



Thursday, Dec 7 - 2:30-3:30

- **Collaborating for Conservation: Creating a Shared Vision for the Texas Hill Country**
 - Presenter: Josh Sendejar, Hill Country Alliance
 - Room: Dezavala III
 - Description: The Texas Hill Country Conservation Network released the Hill Country Land, Water, Sky, and Natural Infrastructure Plan this June. This resource provides a shared vision for an iconic region of Texas, and tools for collaborative conservation while seeking to raise the valuation of our natural systems in line with built infrastructure. Key aspects of the Natural Infrastructure Plan, its development, and how this plan can be used as a model for regional conservation will be discussed during this session. In addition, the value that educators have as connectors to their communities will also be discussed.
 - Strands: Greenspace, Access
- **The Workforce Solutions of Central Texas' Commitment to Quality Outdoor Classrooms - a 10 Year Review**
 - Presenters: Paula Barnes and Staff, Workforce Solutions Central Texas
 - Room: Coleman I
 - Description: In this session, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas Child Care Quality Program staff will review the last 10 years of work and highlight a few projects that resulted in the certification of Nature Explore Certified Outdoor Classrooms in the Central Texas area. Participants will be able to ask questions and discuss strategies as well as view before and after photos of these programs' outdoor transformations and the challenges and successes they have encountered. Additionally, statistics will be shared that will show the effectiveness of these outdoor classroom transformations on children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.
 - Strands: Education, Health, Community, Access
- **Keeping Nature and Outdoor Programming a Priority in Seguin ISD - Achievements and Challenges**
 - Presenters: Pete Silvius and Elizabeth Moore, Seguin ISD
 - Room: Coleman II
 - Description: Seguin ISD has a proud history that includes decades of outdoor programming for students, families, and community members. This presentation will highlight their efforts to provide students with daily access to nature, show how to build support and appreciation for nature based programming and successful collaborations with universities, nonprofits, and government agencies. Presenters will discuss specific programs they have successfully implemented and are currently implementing and share and discuss some of the obstacles and challenges encountered along the way.
 - Strands: Education, Health, Community, Nature for All, Access, Greenspace



Thursday, Dec 7 - 2:30-3:30

- **Birdbrain Power**

- Presenter: Sebastian Casarez, The Texas Blue Jay Project
- Room: Wilson
- Description: This session introduces bird mentality to all youth and the positive benefits of learning how to birdwatch at an early age. Sebastian Casarez will share his birding experiences and how birding at an early age helped him overcome several challenges he faced with Autism. Sebastian will explain the life skills and opportunities that birding has provided in his life in hopes of helping others. Attendees will learn ways to teach birdwatching to all age levels with a focus on the maturity level of each child. Participants will also learn Birdbrain Power tips and tools on birdwatching hospitality for the youth and families.
- Strands: Nature for All, Health, Education, Community, Access, Greenspace

- **Unearthing Adventure: The Educational Power of Letterboxing**

- Presenters: Asuncion Sanchez and Daniela Putzeys, Healthy Outdoor Communities Youth Leadership Council and Jennifer Boley, Nature & Eclectic Outdoors (NEO) and Healthy Outdoor Communities (HOC)
- Room: Sam Houston Park (Meet in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to walk to park with volunteer. Less than a 5 minute walk to the park.)
- Description: Grab your metaphorical magnifying glass, channel your inner Sherlock Holmes, and join us in the wonderful world of letterboxing, a fast-growing and fun educational experience that lies somewhere between old-fashioned scavenger hunts and modern high-tech geocaching. The versatility and excitement of letterboxing submerges participants into endless worlds of discovery following clues to uncover treasure and knowledge. Great for all ages and backgrounds, letterboxing can be utilized to teach and improve problem solving, communication, and leadership skills. It can also encourage teamwork and help young people practice patience and empathy. All this while getting kids outside and sparking their love of nature. This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Strands: Access, Education

- **Nature Play: Practical Solutions for Children's Physical and Mental Health**

- Presenters: Adam and Jill Bienenstock, Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds
- Room: Sam Houston Park (Meet in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to walk to park with volunteer. Less than a 5 minute walk to the park.)
- Description: Join the dynamic duo, Adam and Jill Bienenstock, nature play veterans, to highlight the physical and health benefits that can be attained through our connection to nature. Dive into the immunological benefits and current research that showcase how a well planned, sensory rich outdoor environment provides opportunities for optimal child development as well as a time to develop a strong immune system. Adam will review this research through the lens of his father, the world's leading mucosal immunologist, and how it shaped his 3000+ playgrounds around the globe. While Jill will provide practical ideas on setting up your playground for success by streamlining loose parts and tools to take advantage of these benefits. Come find out about leading research and simple ideas to make outdoor nature play a reality for your playground. This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Strands: Health, Access, Education, Nature for All



Thursday, Dec 7 - 4:00-5:00

- **Growing Confidence in Teaching Outdoors: The Potential of Learning Cohorts & Intentional Child-Friendly Design of Spaces**

- Presenters: Karen Bishop, Kate Unger, and Abigail Cano Perez, National Wildlife Federation
- Room: Dezavala I
- Description: Come hear lessons learned and discuss the outcomes of National Wildlife Federation's Outdoor Learning Cohort and Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO) programs. Both programs will share their current structure and the feedback received from educators, partners, and students. Come ready to share your current efforts and brainstorm ideas for implementing similar concepts in your local community. Participants can expect to learn how to communicate best practices for utilizing spaces where wildlife and children co-exist as well as support and build educator knowledge and confidence in engaging children in outdoor learning.
- Strand: Education

- **Utilizing Nature in a Community Care Model to Increase Community Resilience**

- Presenters: Stephanie Konvicka, Amelia Cleveland, and Luther Lathon, Hesed House of Wharton
- Room: Dezavala II
- Description: This session will look at ways communities can increase access to nature for vulnerable community members, including children, to strengthen connection to self, place, and others through a community care model. Presenters will discuss the ways one community, impacted by multiple flooding disasters, has begun to reimagine a built environment that fosters connection, curiosity, and creativity to heal the impact of multiple community disasters and the compounding social and ecological vulnerabilities. Group discussion time will focus on shifting from a deficit-based approach to community development in the wake of disasters, to an asset-based approach, centering nature in built environments as a community asset, rather than adversary.
- Strands: Community, Health, Education, Nature for All, Access, Greenspace



Thursday, Dec 7 - 4:00-5:00

- **Growing Happy, Healthy Kids: How Green Playgrounds Can Support Outcomes**
 - Presenters: Kathryn Lusk, Vice President of Regional Programs, KABOOM!, Angel Harvey-Program Officer at the Powell Foundation, Michelle Spencer Chief Executive Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Walker County, Falon Mihalic, Landscape Architect and Public Artist, Falon Land Studio
 - Room: Dezavala III
 - Description: Kids today spend about half as much time outside as their parents' generation. Racial and economic disparities in access to nature also mean that communities of color and low-income communities often miss out on the profound benefits of outdoor recreation. In this panel, leaders from national nonprofit KABOOM! and local partners in Huntsville, Texas (Boys & Girls Club of Walker County; Falon Land Studio) will share insights from their efforts to improve health outcomes of children through environmentally resilient playspaces.
 - Strands: Health, Community, Nature for All, Access
- **Eco-Art Residencies in Underserved, Underrepresented and Economically Disadvantaged Communities**
 - Presenters: Amy Neblett and Kristen Keane, Artist Boat
 - Room: Coleman I
 - Description: The Artist Boat partnered with two local community partners, The Children's Center Inc and Urban Strategies Inc, to provide Eco-Art programs to the underserved, underrepresented and economically disadvantaged youth and families in Galveston. This program combined high quality educational enrichment in the fine arts and sciences, experiential learning in the field and in labs, and engagement through beautification of their neighborhood's public space. Learn about the collaboration within this community to increase the student's science and art literacy skills and motivation to succeed in science and nature through school programming, summer camps, after school enrichment, and family days. Participants will also tap into their inner artists with a hands-on water coloring activity during the session
 - Strands: Community, Education, Access
- **Centering Racial Equity in Nature, Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) Austin's Journey**
 - Presenters: Yasmine Anderson, City of Austin - Parks and Recreation Department, Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) and Kerstin Johansson, City of Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC), Ashleigh Cibelli-Pettus, City of Austin Community Tree Preservation Division, and Laura Tadena, Austin Public Library
 - Room: Coleman II
 - Description: How do racial inequities impact equitable access to nature? CCCN Austin has been actively participating in undoing racism workshops since fall of 2022. Through personal and professional learning and unlearning about white organizational culture and racism, staff are taking a new approach to CCCN Austin work. In this panel-based session, participants will learn about CCCN Austin's journey to center racial equity, normalize conversations on race, hear about getting comfortable with being uncomfortable, and how good intentions and bias have caused harm and continue to cause harm.
 - Strands: Nature for All, Access



Thursday, Dec 7 - 4:00-5:00

- **Libraries as Gateways to Nature**

- Presenters: Dianne Connery and Noah Lenstra, Pottsboro Area Public Library
- Room: Wilson
- Description: Librarians are participating in the growing movement to connect children with the environment. In this session, participants will explore the ways in which libraries incorporate nature-themed programs to engage and educate children in their communities. From outdoor story times to gardening workshops, there are numerous opportunities for libraries to connect people with the natural world. The presenters will discuss why libraries are providing nature programming, share successful case studies, and provide practical tips for implementing such programs. Join the Pottsboro Area Public Library in this session to discover how libraries are hubs for nature exploration and environmental education.
- Strands: Community, Access

- **Toward a Common Humanity: How Single Stories Impact Access to Nature for All**

- Presenters: Chioma Onyewuchi, Heart and Heritage Center
- Room: Field - C. Baldwin Hotel Grounds (Meet presenter in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to session)
- Description: Join a conversation around the single stories, stereotypes, and an often unacknowledged reason for the lower numbers of Black people/people of African descent in natural/wild environments. In this session Chioma Onyewuchi will also offer an invitation to the audience to welcome the sounds, "wildness", and exuberance of children as citizens of our neighborhoods, communities, and world. This is ultimately an invitation to the audience to engage with each other beyond stories and stereotypes - toward a common humanity. This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Strands: Nature for All, Health, Community, Access

- **Using Agents of Discovery to "Connect" with Nature and Each Other**

- Presenters: Chanelle Frazier, Linda Carper, and Lisa Hernandez, Houston Parks Board and Anna Scheck, Agents of Discovery
- Room: Field: C. Baldwin Hotel Grounds (Meet presenter in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to session)
- Description: The COVID-19 pandemic caused many organizations to adapt and find new ways to reach people. Houston Parks Board (HPB) used this disruption to find innovative solutions to encourage people to connect with the outdoors and each other through a program called Agents of Discovery. This program, downloaded through a free app, allows educators, parents, and children to grasp and understand the importance of nature and playtime on their own time. HPB continues to use this as an important tool in our engagement toolkit and will use this session to show others how they can do the same. Session participants will engage in a live mission of Agents of Discovery using their smart devices outdoors next to the Summit hotel. After attending this session, participants will see how digital platforms can expand the impact of community outreach and education related to parks and greenspaces and learn how Agents of Discovery can be used to engage with people in multiple languages, creating more inclusive park spaces. This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Strands: Nature for All, Health, Education



Thursday, Dec 8 - 5:00-6:00

- **Poster Sessions and Happy Hour**

- Location: B. Jordan Prefunction

- Posters:

- **A Nature-Based Scope & Sequence for Preschoolers- What does that actually look like?** Presenter: Deb Tamez, The Eagle's Nest Play to Learn Center
- **Arboles for All: Creating Urban Forest Equity with Youth Led Projects** - Presenter: Britney Huynh, City of Austin
- **Bug Safari** - Presenter: Marcia Beckford, The Bug Safari Lady
- **Creating Community in your Community Garden: Sustainability Secrets from Sunsine Community Gardens** -Presenter: Jennifer Boley, Austin Sunsine Community Gardens and Nature & Ecentric Outdoors (NEO)
- **Creating Connection, Collaboration and Support for our North Texas School Garden Education Community** - Presenter: Mary Jo Greene, North Texas School Garden Network
- **Earth Tomorrow** - Presenters: Marya Fowler and Peer Mentors, National Wildlife Federation
- **Mental Health in Nature** - Presenter: Ken Baum, State Of Texas Department of State Health Services
- **Nature-Based Education in the Higher Education Classroom: Planting the Seed for Early Childhood Educator Preparation** - Presenter: Dr. Catherine O'Brien, Texas A&M University-San Antonio
- **Open Door on the Coastal Prairie** - Presenters: Shirley Hunter, Bethany Foshee, Coastal Prairie Conservancy
- **Picnics en el Arroyo: Connecting Hispanic Families with Nature** - Presenter: Veronica Godoy, A Rocha USA
- **Planning Outdoor Programming for Kids Who Don't Like to be Outside** - Presenter: Mark Broughton, Dallas ISD
- **The Staircase to Stewardship - a Framework for Nature Experiences and Services** - Presenter: Ky Harkey, The Visitor Experience
- **The Katy High School Tiger Prairie: How Schoolyard Ecology Engages Student Learners** - Presenters: Dr. Rhonda Burrough, Elizabeth McFaddin, Daisey Nguyen, Elyse Neves, Katy High School
- **The Katy High School Tiger Prairie: Its Flourishing Impact on our Community** - Presenters: Marie Easley, Jackson Peltier, Tiffany Miranda, Katy High School
- **Tools for Change** - Presenter: Megan Roiz, Houston ToolBank





Camping in the Davis Mountains

Photo Credit: © Ian Shive



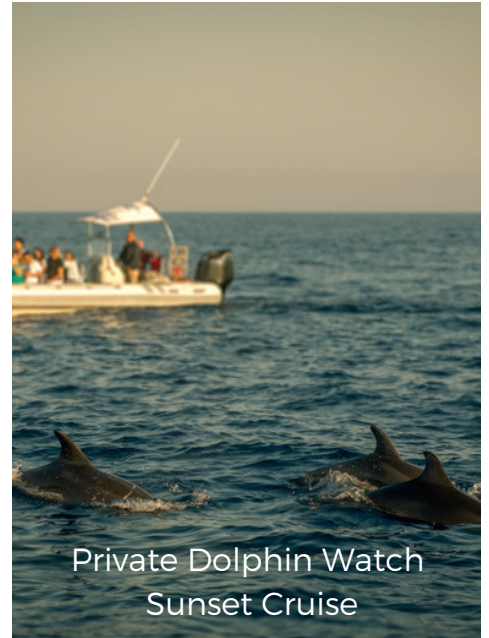
Rio Grande Valley
Birding Festival



Fossil Rim Wildlife Center
Private Evening Event



Guided Central Texas
River Fishing Trip for 2



Private Dolphin Watch
Sunset Cruise

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Friday, Dec 8 - 8:30-9:30

- **Building Safe and Inclusive Environments for Students to Flourish and Embrace Nature**
 - Presenters: Mariah Waters and Megan Sambilay, Galveston Bay Foundation
 - Room: B. Jordan Ballroom
 - Participants will explore, through a guided imagery activity, how to create safe and inclusive environments for students in nature settings! This activity provides an opportunity to pinpoint our childhood joys and barriers with others and with nature. Using this method of reflection has the power to cultivate understanding and compassion for students with different backgrounds who experience similar emotions in nature. The group will brainstorm how to foster responsive practices, trust-building, student agency, and adapt programs. Come get your mind and heart flowing in this inspiring session that aims to reaffirm our roles as educators.
 - Strand: Nature for All
- **Amazing Arthropods! Creating a Bug Summer Camp**
 - Presenter: Sara Ramirez, Dallas ISD
 - Dezavala I
 - Description: The Dallas ISD STEM Environmental Education Center hosts a Summer Science Enrichment camp for incoming 5th graders. This presentation will showcase how to incorporate entomology into your camps and classroom lessons. Entomology is a great way to connect students with nature through outdoor exploration and bug collecting. This session will review program logistics and lesson activities. Bugs are all around us both inside and outside; this is a great topic to get students hooked on the fascinating world of insects and other arthropods!
 - Strand: Education
- **Don't Poke the Frog: A Nature Educator Primer for Engaging and Managing Students**
 - Presenter: Melissa Kyle, Houston Arboretum
 - Room: Dezavala II
 - Description: A common issue facing nature educators is the lack of formal training in managing challenging and disruptive student behaviors. What behaviors mean, how to prevent them, and when to address them can stop any instructor cold. This session will take a look at creating a learning environment that keeps students of any age and ability curious, engaged, and motivated from the beginning.
 - Strands: Education, Nature for All
- **"Be the Change": Becoming a Catalyst for Community Nature Play**
 - Presenter: Michelle Medina, Wild+Free RGV, Texas Master Naturalists
 - Room: Dezavala III
 - Description: Let's talk about nature play! Our children learn by playing, and nature is the ideal environment for them to flourish. We also grow as a community when we spend time together in natural spaces. This session will include a discussion about the necessary strategies for creating, promoting, and sustaining a community based nature play community.
 - Strands: Community, Nature for All



Friday, Dec 8 - 8:30-9:30

- **Out on a Limb: Risk and Conflict in Play**

- Presenters: Jill Wood, Adventure Play at The Parish School and Bayou City Play and Brett Sillers, Free Play Houston
- Room: Coleman I
- Children have a drive towards novelty and will take on social and physical challenges when the environment is conducive. In play this can look like jumping from heights, moving at great speed, starting a conversation, or anything new and a bit scary. How do we strike a balance between inviting risk-taking and maintaining overall safety? How do we support children and their caregivers through the physical and emotional bumps and bruises that accompany child-directed play? Brett Sillers and Jill Wood will provide stories, examples, resources and tools to help you hold space for play that empowers.
- Strands: Access, Health, Education

- **Ten Tips for Hosting Your Own Outdoor Art Show**

- Presenter: Laura Delgado, The Montessori Tree
- Coleman II
- Description: If you are an early childhood professional, you are likely aware of the benefits of incorporating nature and art in your learning environment, but have you ever considered hosting your very own art show outdoors? In this session, Laura Delgado will share tips and strategies for creating an art curriculum inspired by nature and leave you feeling inspired to host your very own outdoor art show featuring your children's work. With planning and thoughtfulness, outdoor art shows can be wonderful opportunities for raising awareness about the benefits of incorporating nature and art into your curriculum, in addition to being wonderful community-building events!
- Strand: Education

- **Conservation and Environmental Education Strategies Utilized by The City of Houston to Improve Nature Connections in Urban Greenspaces**

- Presenters: Kelli Ondracek and Lauren Hollenbeck, City of Houston PARD
- Room: Wilson
- Description: The City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department is implementing numerous strategies to integrate conservation, land preservation, green infrastructure, and habitat restoration throughout the city utilizing innovative policy and on-the-ground initiatives. Connecting children and community members to these sites and work is vital to the future of conservation. The presentation will include examples of projects that have been implemented within the City of Houston and the various resilience objectives that these projects support. It will also address the importance of environmental education and showcase how Lake Houston Wilderness Park staff is using the natural landscape to spark passion and curiosity in visitors.
- Strands: Access, Community, Greenspace



Friday, Dec 8 - 8:30-9:30

- **Birds of a Feather Flocking Together for Community Action**

- Presenters: Katie Lynn Doyle, Flour Bluff Intermediate School, Dara Orbach, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, Larisa Ford, Friends of Redhead Pond and Environmental Stewardship Association
- Room: Field: Sam Houston Park (Meet in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to walk to park with volunteer. Less than a 5 minute walk to the park.)
- Description: Learn about creative and integrative place-based conservation collaborations that can be developed and widely applied by partnering with diverse organizations. This session will showcase a partnership between a public school district, university, and an environmental stewardship organization to highlight the potential for broadly applicable, community-wide actionable stewardship initiatives. Presenters will discuss ways to engage varied community stakeholders in taking ownership of local environmental stewardship to ensure sustainability of natural resources. They will also incorporate details about the Flour Bluff ISD district wide integration of the Oceans Program and partnership. This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Strands: Greenspace, Education, Community, Nature for All

- **Breaking Play Barriers: Get Out of Your Own Way and Start to PLAY!**

- Presenter: Ade Hoffman, Nature Play All Day/Diringo Learning
- Field: Sam Houston Park (Meet in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to walk to park with volunteer. Less than a 5 minute walk to the park.)
- Description: Play Barriers: Get out of your own way and start to PLAY! Here's the truth - we get in our own way when it comes to facilitating play. We all carry our own experiences that dictate how we embrace or resist various play scenarios. Fear of heights? No climbing. Negative interactions with peers? No weapon play or social conflict. Play barriers are the single thing that keeps us from saying YES in our early childhood programs. Many caregivers are overwhelmed by messy situations (glue, glitter, paper shreds...) so we shy away from process art because it's just TOO MUCH. Ade Hoffman has been there...Walk with her as you discover your own personal play barriers when it comes to risky, messy, and open-ended play. Walk away feeling like a brand new human; refreshed, energized and ready to change the face of early childhood care for GOOD. Are you ready to say YES? This is a rain or shine session. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Strands: Education, Community, Nature for All, Access



Friday, Dec 8 - 10:00-11:00

- **Keynote Speaker - Dr. Melissa Lem - Vancouver family physician, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia and Founding Director of the British Columbia (BC) Parks Foundation's PaRx program**
 - Room: B. Jordan Ballroom
 - PaRx: A Prescription for Patient and Planetary Health
 - Description: Nature prescriptions are being written from Scotland to Japan to the United States. And rightly so: from better immune function to reduced ADHD symptoms, the evidence is growing about the health benefits of green time across the lifespan. In November 2020, the BC Parks Foundation launched PaRx, Canada's national nature prescription program, within British Columbia. Less than two years later it had spread to every province. Dr. Lem will discuss nature and health research highlights, present an overview of PaRx, including its significant national and international influence, and reveal how prescribing nature can improve both patient and planetary health.

Friday, Dec 9 - 11:00-12:00

- **Listening to the Voices of Children**
 - Presenter: Beth Edwards, Green Space Learning
 - Room: B. Jordan Ballroom
 - Description: As educators, we don't often listen to the children in our care. We impart knowledge, but we don't always offer them a voice or involve them when creating curriculum and programming. What if we took their perspectives into account? How can we create a program where children's ideas and experiences directly influence the creation of outdoor spaces and curriculum? Through real-time experiential learning, workshop participants will analyze videotaped experiences and interviews of children at play in a natural outdoor setting to gain an understanding of children's feelings and perspectives at play. After each video, participants will have an opportunity for small and large group content analysis. Participants will discuss how to apply their observations in their work with children in nature.
 - Strands: Nature for All, Education
- **Making a PEEP! - Activating Green Spaces Through Self Led Education for All Ages**
 - Presenter: Jordan Joly, Families in Nature (FIN)
 - Room: Dezavala I
 - Description: Join Families in Nature to discover how it activates green spaces through ready-to-teach environmental education. Pocket-sized Park Environmental Education Projects (PEEP) guides, based on the Ecologist School Guidebook, offer 64 lessons in 16 science branches, tailored to your location for engaging learning. Experience a hands-on "choose your own adventure" workshop, exploring Ecologist School PEEP activities to earn an Ecologist School Botany or Geology badge. Immerse yourself in STEAM stations, sensory exploration, nature journaling, and more to ignite inspiration in your green space! Limited to 40 attendees, each receives a FIN nature journal and badge.
 - Strands: Greenspace, Education, Community, Nature for All, Access



Friday, Dec 8 - 11:00-12:00

- **Nature Smart Libraries in Action**

- Presenters: Marisa Oliva, TCiNN Rio Grande Valley Health and Nature Liaison, Marisol Vidales, Dr. Hector P. Garcia Memorial Library, Alfred Molina, Driscoll Health Plan, and Cheryl Potemkin, Fort Worth Botanic Garden
- Room: Dezavala III
- Description: During this panel session, learn about two Nature Smart Library programs taking place in different areas of the state. LEAP (Library Explorer Adventure Pack) are adventure backpacks located in libraries across two counties in deep South Texas. Hear from Library Director Marisol Vidales and sponsor, Alfred Molina, about the development of the program, the different aspects involved, and the impact it is making on the region. Cheryl Potemkin will discuss the StoryWalk® program at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden and how it is used to connect literacy to nature, how it brings together community organizations, and how to create one of your own.
- Strands: Community, Education, Nature for All

- **School Pocket Prairies: Living Labs for Ecology, History, Science, and Climate Readiness**

- Presenters: Della Barbato, Native Prairies Association of Texas and Jaime Gonzalez, The Nature Conservancy of Texas
- Coleman I (Hybrid Session - Indoors & Outdoors)
- Description: In the past 10 years, Houston has experienced a prairie renaissance, including the building of dozens of prominent pocket prairies on school and university campuses. These native plantings are used as both teaching tools and for climate resilience and mitigation including reducing extreme heat, reducing air pollution, and better absorbing stormwater. Join Della Barbato of the Native Prairies Association of Texas and Jaime González of The Nature Conservancy of Texas as they share pro tips on building, interpreting, teaching, and maintaining schoolyard prairies.
- Strands: Education, Health, Nature for All, Access, Greenspace

- **Putting Nature into Practice**

- Presenters: LeAnne Pollock, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Glenna Pollock, Cleburne ISD
- Coleman II
- Description: Introducing nature activities into schools, counseling, and after school programs can be difficult, with multiple obstacles in the way. In this session you will hear the research on the positive mental health benefits of connecting youth with nature in schools, counseling, and after school programs and learn different ways to introduce these activities into your professions. You will practice the activities and brainstorm different ways to adapt them to fit your profession or school's needs.
- Strands: Health, Education



Friday, Dec 8 - 11:00-12:00

- **From the Alamo to the Capitol: A Legacy Project for All of Texas**
 - Presenters: Garry Merritt, Great Springs Project
 - Room: Wilson
 - Description: Great Springs Project is working to create a greenway of contiguous protected lands between San Antonio and Austin over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. This green corridor will be connected by a 100-mile network of spring-to-spring trails, linking four of Texas' iconic springs: Barton Springs, San Marcos Springs, Comal Springs, and San Antonio Springs. Through collaboration with our many partners, the Great Springs Project unifies and supports existing local efforts and catalyzes new efforts to address the most critical water, land, wildlife, and public health and equity challenges facing the Central Texas region.
 - Strands: Greenspace, Community, Health, Nature for All, Access
- **Shifting the Mindset: The Key to Creating Confident Outdoor Guides**
 - Presenters: Tessa Baden, ESC-20 and Amanda McMickle, Cibolo Center for Conservation
 - Field: Sam Houston Park (Meet in hotel lobby 5 minutes prior to walk to park with volunteer. Less than a 5 minute walk to the park.)
 - Description: Bridging the gap between formal and informal education is what many of us work towards in our organization and exactly what teachers and students need to thrive as 21st century thinkers, learners, and doers. But quality outdoor learning has its obstacles, the most challenging being the disconnect many educators feel between nature and academic learning. Increase your capacity to produce sustained commitment to learning with the natural world and ensure mastery of TEKS. Join us for rich dialogue and immersive experiences on how to design professional development for teachers and spark the fire in their hearts for getting students outside.
 - Strand: Education

Friday, Dec 8 - 12:15-12:30

- **Summit Closing**
 - Room: B. Jordan Ballroom





Thank You to Our 2023 Texas Children in Nature Network Board Members

- Chair - Dr. April Torres Conkey, PhD
- Past Chair - Hayden Brooks
- Vice Chair - Ryan Spencer
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- Rolando Balli
- Ted Stevens

If you are interested in serving on the Texas Children in Nature Network Board contact Sarah Coles for more information



Thank You to Our Founder's Circle Members

Organizations

- Fossil Rim
- San Antonio River Authority
- Asakura Robinson

Individuals

- Annette Renaud
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- Hayden Brooks
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*The Texas Children
in Nature
Founder's Circle is
made of friends who
have made the
commitment to give
\$1000/year to
TCiNN for three
years*

**Become a
Founder's
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today**





BECOME A TEXAS CHILDREN IN NATURE NETWORK PARTNER TODAY

Texas Children in Nature Network is a collaborative of over 800 partner organizations that are dedicated to connecting children and families with nature to be healthier, happier, and perform better in school.

To become an official partner of Texas Children in Nature Network we are asking for organizations to read our strategic plan and sign on to support our mission, no fees involved. As a partner organization you will be eligible to attend partner networking events, share resources, your logo will be displayed on our website, and more!

We hope your organization will become a partner of Texas Children in Nature Network. We are looking forward to an amazing next three years and can't wait to get started!

