



**Texas Children in Nature Network
Summit Workshops
December 6, 2023**

You will be asked to choose a workshop upon registration, all workshop registration changes must be given prior approval and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please note all workshops will be held rain or shine.

1. Bike Share and Urban Greenways to Promote Access to Nature

Texas A&M University

Presenters: Drs. Jay Maddock & Deb Kellstedt & Houston BCycle, Laura Knutson & Tony Banks

Location: Buffalo Bayou Greenways, 1-4pm

Maximum #: 15

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, Drs. Jay Maddock and 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. ADA accommodations can be made with Summit organizers if necessary.**

***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.**

2. Cultural Tapestry: Weaving Community Connections through Identity, Nature, and Art

Student Conservation Association (SCA)

Presenters: SCA Youth, SCA Program Staff & Buffalo Bayou Partnership

Location: Buffalo Bayou Park – 105-B Sabine Street, Houston, 77007

Maximum #: 30

Our cultures and identities shape the way we perceive and connect with the outside world, influencing our sense of place within it. Join us for an immersive workshop that combines art, mindfulness, cultural exploration, and storytelling. In collaboration with Buffalo Bayou Partnership, we invite you 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.

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3. Engaging New Audiences through Camping Adventures

Texas Parks and Wildlife - Texas State Parks

Presenter: Lisa Reznicek

Location: Sam Houston Park, 1-4pm

1000 Bagby St, Houston, 77002

Maximum #: 45

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.)

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***The park is located about a 5-10 minute walk from the hotel. ADA accommodations can be made with Summit organizers if necessary.**

4. Engaging Your Community in Walking Programs: Wellness Walk and Walkshop in Buffalo Bayou Park

Urban Paths

Presenter: Laura Conely

Location: Buffalo Bayou Park, 1-4pm

400 Dallas St, Houston, 77002

Maximum #: 45

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 with Summit organizers if necessary.**

***For the best experience participants should wear comfortable walking shoes and clothing compatible with the weather.**

5. Fishing for the Next Generation of Conservationists - The Benefits of Fishing and Angler Education

Texas Parks and Wildlife – R3 Program

Presenters: Jason Mercer & Adam Comer

Location: Sam Houston Park, 1-4pm

1000 Bagby St, Houston, 77002

Maximum #: 30

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 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.

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6. Health and Wildlife Out Your Back Door: Optimizing health for people and ecosystems

Memorial Park Conservancy

Presenters: Liz Jordan, Memorial Park Conservancy & Staff

Location: Memorial Park – Kinder Land Bridge and Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Prairie, 1-4pm

Parking Lot at 7575 N Picnic Lane, Houston, 77077

Maximum #: 30

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.

***Public Transportation: C. Baldwin Hotel - #85 Bus from Louisiana St @ Lamar St to Louisiana St @ Prairie. #20 Bus from Smith St @ Prairie to Memorial Drive @ Picnic Lane (Google maps does not show accurately where this is, it is at the entrance to the parking lot where workshop attendees will meet. Address: 7575 North Picnic Lane). Please check the Houston METRO website to verify bus stops:**

<https://planyourtrip.ridemetro.org/#/>

***Houston BCycle docking station located at the parking lot if workshop attendees would prefer to cycle.**

Several [Houston BCycle](#) docking stations are located near the C. Baldwin Hotel.

***Paid parking lot, and free parking lot based on availability.**

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

Location: The Fay School, 1-4pm

Presenters: Melissa Sherman, Ozden Ozkanoglu & Bienenstock Playgrounds Staff

105 N. Post Oak Ln.

Maximum #: 30

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 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 Playgrounds.

***Public Transportation: C. Baldwin Hotel: #20 Bus from Smith St. @ Prairie St. to Woodway Dr. @ N. Post Oak Lane. (approximately 30 minutes). Please check the Houston METRO website to verify bus stops:**

<https://planyourtrip.ridemetro.org/#/>

***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.**

8. Inspiring Community Science through Wildlife Gardening

Houston Museum of Natural Science

Presenters: Laura Davidson & Melissa Hudnall

Location: Houston Museum of Natural Science, 1-4pm

5555 Hermann Park Dr, Houston, 77030

Maximum #: 30

The 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.

***Public Transportation is highly recommended due to high parking garage fees: Participants can ride the [Red METRORail Line](#) and get off at the Museum District or Hermann Park/Rice U stops. The museum is in between those two stops. The [Houston METRO \(Bus\)](#) is also an option. Please check METRO websites to verify stops.**

***The HMNS parking garage is at the corner of Caroline St. and Hermann Dr. Parking is \$30 for non-members and \$10 for HMNS members.**

9. Interpretation on the Go

Texas Parks and Wildlife – Texas State Parks

Presenter: Danielle Bradley-Okay

Location: Sam Houston Park, 1-4pm

1000 Bagby St, Houston, 77002

Maximum #: 30

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 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.

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***The park is located about a 5-10 minute walk from the hotel. ADA accommodations can be made with Summit organizers if necessary.**

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

Houston Zoo

Presenters: Houston Zoo Staff & Community Partners

Location: Houston Zoo, 1-4pm

6200 Hermann Park Drive, Houston, 77030

Maximum #: 100

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).

Organizations Hosting:

Galveston Bay Foundation

Galveston Bay Estuary Program

Houston Zoo

Houston Botanic Garden

Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center

Texas Association of Environmental Educators

*** Houston Zoo does not have its own parking lot; free parking is available in Hermann Park. [Parking information.](#)**

***If using the [METRORail](#) from the C. Baldwin Hotel, you will walk 5 blocks southeast on Dallas Street to Main Street. Once on Main, take the METRORail Red Line to the Hermann Park. Your stop will be:**

Hermann Park/Rice U - Stop Number: 25013. From there you will walk across Hermann Park to the Zoo.

The [Houston METRO \(Bus\)](#) is also an option. Please check METRO websites to verify stops.

11. Nature Smart Libraries: Connecting Nature and Literacy

San Antonio Public Library and Austin Parks & Recreation Department

Presenters: Cresencia Huff, San Antonio Public Library & Melody Alcazar, City of Austin PARD-Cities Connecting Children to Nature Program

Location: 500 McKinney St, Houston, 77002

Maximum #: 30

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 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 with Summit organizers if necessary.**

12. School of the Future: Building a Wildly Healthy, Climate Ready School and Campus

The Nature Conservancy & PBK Architects

Presenters: Jaime Gonzalez, The Nature Conservancy & Melissa Turnbaugh, PBK Architects

Meet-up Location: C. Baldwin Hotel Lobby

400 Dallas St, Houston, 77002

Workshop Location: Jefferson Early Learning Center, 14061 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, 77083

1-4pm (approximate return to hotel at 4:45pm)

Maximum #: 30

**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.*

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.

What to Wear: Wear comfortable clothing, including sneakers or hiking boots. We will be outdoors for part of this workshop, hiking and conducting a short tree planting exercise. Also, please bring a reusable bottle and consider downloading the iNaturalist and/or Merlin apps if possible.

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

13. SPARK School Park Tour – Exploring Two Green Schoolyards

SPARK School Park Program & Partners

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

Meet-up Location: C. Baldwin Hotel Lobby

400 Dallas St, Houston, 77002

Tour: 12-3pm (approximate return to hotel at 3:30pm)

Maximum #: 45

**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.*

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.**