

# Essex County Environmental Center ~ Public Programs

## WINTER 2023/2024



The Essex County Environmental Center is located at 621-B Eagle Rock Avenue in Roseland in Essex County West Essex Park and is a facility of the Essex County Parks System. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm and Saturday from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Essex County West Essex Park is open to the public every day from dawn until dusk. Pre-registration is required for all programs unless otherwise noted. **All programs require a minimum number of participants to run.** For more information, please call 973.228.8776.

The Essex County Environmental Center continues to offer a variety of seasonal environmental education programming for groups and families. While mask wearing and social distancing requirements have been lifted, we remain cautious and ask our patrons to please be responsible, keeping the health and safety of everyone in mind.

Thank you for your continued support, cooperation, and participation!

### **FIELD TRIP OFFERINGS FOR ORGANIZED GROUPS** **(Schools, Scouts, Church/Community Organizations, Home Schools, Etc.)**

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).



#### **VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS**

**\$75 per program, 45 minutes**

***Choose from the Following Virtual Field Trip Topics***

Seasonal Discovery Nature Tour / Backyard Birding / Animal Tracking / Lenape Learning Area Tour & Lenape Skills/ Camping 101 Swamp Tromp-Wetland Biodiversity/ Wild about Wildlife Recycling (*grant funded and free for Essex County institutions while funds last*) / Green Building Tour...and more!

#### **IN-PERSON FIELD TRIPS**

##### **Organized Group Bookings**

**(Institutions, Scouts, Municipal Recreation Programs, Homeschoolers, Etc.)**

**All ages.** Program length is 1.5 hours. Choose from a variety of topics offered by the Essex County Environmental Center. Inquire by calling the Center at 973.228.8776. Minimum of 10 person booking requirement (if less booked, minimum booking fee will be applied). **Fee: \$10 per participant (including leaders/chaperones)**

##### **Small Groups/Pods and Families**

**All ages.** Winter selections include Seasonal Nature Adventure, Lenape Village Tours, Backyard Birding, Animal Tracking, Owls the Night Hunter, Swamp Tromp/Wetland Biodiversity, \*Fire Making and Hot Chocolate, \*Camping 101 and MORE! One group at a time with a limit of 6 people. Schedule your 45-minute time slot by calling the center at 973.228.8776. \*Where noted, additional fees apply. Schedule your 45-minute time slot by calling the center at 973.228.8776. **Fee: \$10 child, \$12 adult or \$30 per family (2 adults, 2 children).**

## CLUBS FOR CHILDREN

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).

### LITTLE EXPLORERS

**Mondays—December 4, 18; January 8, 22; February 5, 26**  
**For Ages 2 and 3 from 10am to 11am AND For Ages 2 to 5 from 3pm to 4pm**

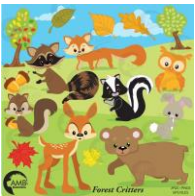


Join us for explorations of nature as we study plants and animals and observe the colors, shapes, textures, and sounds in the Environmental Center's forest habitat. Please come dressed for the weather; all classes include an outdoor adventure. All children must be walking and accompanied by an adult. Paths cannot accommodate strollers. Please be prepared for all weather conditions. Maximum of two children per adult. All sessions are limited to 10 children.

This is not a drop off class; adults must accompany children. **Fee: \$15 per child per session**

### FOREST FRIENDS CLUB

**Thursdays—December 14; January 18; February 15**  
**4pm to 5pm**



**For children ages 5 through 10.** We'll explore the forest using nets, binoculars, magnifiers, and microscopes to investigate nature in our wooded wetland habitat. Together we hope to foster an ethic of stewardship and offer an opportunity to take part in hands-on conservation projects. This is a drop-off and pick-up class (children only). **Fee: \$10 per child per session**

**ESSEX COUNTY 4-H** – Essex County 4-H invites Essex County youth to participate in programming for all ages. For more information, visit <http://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h>.

The Essex County 4-H Healthy Small Animals Club is recruiting new members. Youth in grades 4-8 meet to share their passion about animals, learn about small pet care and participate in State and County small animal events. Meetings occur on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month from 4pm to 5pm. For more information or to register, contact [Essex4h@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:Essex4h@njaes.rutgers.edu).



## MONTHLY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

### NEW JERSEY WOODTURNERS

**Meets Monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday**

**7pm to 9:30pm**



**For all ages.** Learn to turn with the NJ Woodturners. Discover the wonders of creating art from found pieces of wood. Topics vary by the month. For details, please email Bob Amarant at [bobamarant@gmail.com](mailto:bobamarant@gmail.com) and, to learn more about the organization, visit <https://www.njwoodturners.com>. Meet in Garibaldi Hall.

**Fee: \$10 per child, \$12 per adult; free for NJWA members**

## MONTHLY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

### ESSEX COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

**Meets Monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday**

**7pm to 9pm**

**For adults and children ages 12 and up.** The Essex County Beekeepers' Society (ECBS), a chapter of the NJ Beekeepers Association, is dedicated to teaching new beekeepers how to manage their bees and helping experienced beekeepers to do it better. If you are interested in keeping honeybees and would like to explore what's involved, you're welcome to join. ECBS meets at Garibaldi Hall. For more details on monthly programs, visit [www.njbeekeepers.org](http://www.njbeekeepers.org) and [www.ecbs.squarespace.com](http://www.ecbs.squarespace.com). **Fee: \$10 per child, \$12 per adult, free for ECBS and NJBA members**



### GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

**Meets Monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday**

**6pm to 9:30pm**

**For adults and children ages 12 and up.** Attendees bring trees, pots, and tools for display, discussion, and problem-solving. Each meeting will focus on a different topic related to the care, maintenance, and the art of bonsai. Open to the public, all are welcome. Join our Facebook group (Greatswampbonsaisociety) for up-to-date information relating to each month's topics and other club news. Meet in the Main Center classroom. For more information, email John Michalski at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com) or join our Facebook page, greatswampbonsaisociety. **Fee: \$10 per child, \$12 per adult, free for GSBS Members**



## December 2023 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

### HOLIDAY HERBAL SCRUB-MAKING

**Tuesday, December 12**

**6pm to 7:30pm**



**For families.** Make and take a homemade herbal scrub. Visit our geodome to harvest Lemon balm and lavender. Learn about the power of scent, care for your skin and how to use nature to promote self-care. We will select our favorite scents using herbs and essential oils and add them to either a sugar or salt scrub of our choice. Please come dressed for the weather; this class includes an outdoor component. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).**

**Fee: \$30 per family (up to two adults and two children) or \$10 per child, \$12 per adult**

**Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).**

## December 2023 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).

### FOREST FRIENDS FEEDER CONTEST



**Registration Deadline: Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Project Drop-off: Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup> by 5pm**

**For all ages.** Create an edible, festive and unique wetland wildlife feeder for our outdoor exhibit. The purpose of this contest is to provide participants with a fun and educational experience, engaging creativity to make natural edible treats for the center's backyard forest friends. Add to a winter's bounty by registering for this contest and submitting a forest feeder for our forest friends to enjoy! All contest entries will be displayed for one week (or for as long as the wildlife will allow) during the winter holiday and will be voted on by a panel of eco-experts! Grand prizes are awarded to entries that place 1st in all categories; 2nd and 3rd place entries will be recognized with a plaque, certificate, and a small gift from the Environmental Center. For contest rules and to register, please contact the Essex County Environmental Center at 973.228.8776 or email [mrobinson@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:mrobinson@parks.essexcountynj.org). **FREE**

### FOREST FRIENDS FEEDER WORKSHOP

**Thursday, December 14**

**For families.** Join the Center staff to create an edible, festive and unique wetland wildlife feeder to be on display in an outdoor exhibit on ECEC's forest trail. Some materials will be provided, and it is encouraged to bring your own items, most especially – your creativity! All participants will have their project entered into our Forest Friends Feeder Contest. Prizes awarded. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$30 per family (up to two adults and two children) or \$10 per child, \$12 per adult**

**4pm to 6pm**



### WINTER CAMPFIRE AND S'MORES



**Saturday, December 16**

**For families.** Join us for a hike around the Environmental Center forest, build a winter campfire, sip hot cocoa and make S'mores. Dress warmly. Meet at Garibaldi Hall. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$30 per family (up to two adults and two children) or \$10 per child, \$12 per adult**

**11am to 12:30pm**

### COOKIES WITH SANTA AND YOUR PETS 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

**Saturday, December 16**

Join ECEC partners, the Rutgers 4-H Youth Development Program, as they welcome families and their pets for Cookies with Santa! Families and their pets will enjoy a sweet treat and refreshments with an opportunity to take a picture with Santa! Meet in Garibaldi Hall. Register at <https://go.rutgers.edu/x6h5b7zi>. Once registered, payments can be sent via Zelle to [essex4hleader@gmail.com](mailto:essex4hleader@gmail.com) or checks can be made out to Essex 4-H Leaders Association and mailed to 621-A Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland, NJ 07068. **Fee: \$15/per family in advance or \$20/per family at the door (includes a picture, cookies, and hot cocoa).**

**1pm to 3:30pm**





## December 2023 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

### WINTER WILDLIFE EXPLORERS CAMP

Tuesday, Dec. 26; Wednesday, Dec. 27 & Thursday, Dec. 28  
9:30am to 3:30pm



**For children ages 6-10.** Campers enjoy stories, crafts, campfires, and forest adventures exploring our wooded wetland forests in wintertime. For more information, call 973.228.8776. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$210 per child for all three days OR \$85 per child per day**

## January 2024 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

### OUTDOOR SKILLS FAMILY DAY

Saturday, January 6

10am to 1pm

**For families.** Come together and challenge yourselves in winter outdoor skills. We'll explore animal tracks, plants that make cordage, practice fire skills, make a winter campfire and enjoy our own campfire cooked treats! We'll also collect perfect wood sticks and char them into a tool of art magic! Be prepared to do some walking, smell like woodsmoke, make new friends, feel confident in your outdoor skills, and get back to nature. Please dress for the weather and pack a lunch! Meet in Garibaldi. **Fee: \$25 per person**



### MLK DAY: FOREST ANIMALS WINTER SURVIVAL – ONE DAY CAMP

Monday, January 15

9:30am to 3:30pm



**For ages 6-10.** Campers enjoy stories, crafts, campfires, and forest adventures exploring our wooded wetland forests in wintertime. They will also participate in stewardship activities on our outdoor campus like making wildflower seed balls for the pollinators, removing invasive vines to make winter wreaths, and caring for our bird feeders and bird houses. **Fee: \$85 per child**

### OWL PELLET DISSECTION

Monday, January 22

6pm to 7:30 pm

**For ages 7-12.** Learn about our beautiful and mysterious silent hunters of the night. Discover what they're eating as we discuss predators and prey and food chain dynamics. Carefully reconstruct the bones found inside owl pellets! Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required.

**Fee: \$10 per child**



**Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).**

## February 2024 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

### ESSEX COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY: BASIC BEEKEEPING

8:30am to 4pm

**3-DAY SHORT COURSE: Saturdays, February 10 & 17; Snow day March 2; Field Day TBA**

**For adults and children ages 12 and older.** This short course is appropriate for new beekeepers, as well as those who need a refresher. It is offered by the Essex County Beekeepers Society, <http://ecbs.njbeekeepers.org/index.htm>, a branch of the New Jersey Beekeepers Association, and overseen by EAS Certified Master Beekeeper Landi Simone. Successful completion of this class fulfills the education requirement necessary to legally keep bees in NJ. Classroom topics covered include: Honeybee Biology, Beekeeping Equipment, Getting Started with Bees, Keeping Bees in Populated Areas, Bee Plants, Seasonal Management, Honey Bee Pests and Diseases, Harvesting Your Honey Crop, Queens, Queen Problems and Re-Queening. Day 3, Field Day, takes place in apiaries in Montville Township and provides students with an introduction to working with the bees. Students will have the experience of opening and inspecting a beehive themselves and obtaining hands-on lessons in recognizing the various components of a hive and colony as well as inspection basics such as smoker lighting, protective gear, and correct use of the hive tool.



For more information, contact registrar Justin Luna at [Justin@GalacticGold.org](mailto:Justin@GalacticGold.org). Online registration available at <https://njbeekeepers.org/Education.htm>. **Fee: \$130, which includes all class materials, continental breakfast, and afternoon snack.**

### VALENTINES FAMILY WALK & CAMPFIRE

Tuesday, February 13

6pm to 7:30pm



**All ages.** Join an ECEC naturalist for a short walk on the trails to experience forest life at night and make birch bark hearts and necklaces that double as fire-starters. We'll build a campfire and enjoy fire-popped popcorn and mint tea. Dress for the weather. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$30 per family (up to two adults and two children) or \$10 per child, \$12 per adult**

### BUILD-A-BIRD HOUSE

Saturday, February 17

10:30am to 12pm

**For families.** Join us to build a home that encourages breeding birds and other wildlife to take residence. Putting out your bird house now creates a good chance of having a nesting pair of songbirds in your garden by spring. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$20 per birdhouse (2 people max per birdhouse)**



### WINTER CAMPFIRE AND S'MORES

Monday, February 26

5:30pm to 7pm



**For families.** Join us for a hike around the Environmental Center forest, build a winter campfire, sip hot cocoa and make S'mores. Dress warmly. Meet at Garibaldi Hall. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$30 per family (up to two adults and two children) or \$10 per child, \$12 per adult**

**Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).**

## LOOKING AHEAD

### SPRING FOREST EGG HUNT

Saturday, March 23



**9:30am to 10:30am OR 11am to 12pm**  
For families with children ages 1 to 6. Celebrate the beginning of spring with a reading of the "Little White Rabbit" and an egg hunt within the forest grounds of the Environmental Center. Children can bring their favorite basket to collect eggs and earn surprises! In the spirit of being "green," participants will exchange eggs for small prizes and meet a live rabbit from the Rutgers 4-H Small Animals Club. The eggs are sanitized and reused for future events and programs. Refreshments and a spring craft giveaway per child included. Limited space available. **Fee: \$15 per child**

### SPRING CAMP

Tuesday, April 2; Wednesday, April 3; Thursday, April 4

9:30am to 3:30pm

For children ages 6-10. Restore the bond between children and nature. Children will have the opportunity to explore nature right here at the Essex County Environmental Center's varied habitats-forest, wetland, pond, and river. For details, call the Center at 973.228.8776. Advanced registration and payment are required. **Fees: \$210 per child for all 3 days OR \$85 per child/per day**



### gARTbage Art Workshop

Saturday, April 6



Join the Center staff to create an entry for our contest! Some materials will be provided; however, it is encouraged to bring personal items to add a unique artistic flair. The g'ART'bage Art Contest takes a creative approach to protecting our planet from plastic pollution by pulling non-recyclable plastics out of the waste-stream and transforming them into works of public art. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. For more information, call 973-228-8776.

**Fee: \$30 per family (up to two adults and two children) or \$10 per child, \$12 per adult**

11am to 1pm

**gARTbage ART CONTEST**  
**Register by Wednesday, April 10**  
**Project Drop-Off, Saturday, April 13**  
**11am-2pm**

This g'ART'bage contest takes a creative approach to protecting our planet from plastic pollution by pulling plastics out of the waste-stream and transforming them into works of public art. Contest participants are challenged to be thoughtful and creative in crafting art made from single-use plastic garbage (non-recyclable plastics). Team and individual projects are welcome. Projects must be crafted to withstand the elements, as they will be showcased in an outdoor setting on the grounds of the Essex County Environmental Center. Prizes awarded. Pre-registration required, contact 973.228.8776 or email [tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org).



### EARTH DAY 2024

Saturday, April 20



**11am to 3pm**  
**All ages.** Yay, it's EARTH DAY! Bring your family, friends, and neighbors to our annual outdoor festival honoring beautiful planet EARTH, the sustainer of all life! On this special day, the Essex County Environmental Center will make extra efforts to share its wonder and appreciation of the natural world with patrons, partners, and friends. Enjoy a day filled with crafts, games, and recreational opportunities, such as canoeing and hiking. Enjoy demonstrations, information, and a local eco-vendors' sale. Environmental Center staff and partner groups will be on hand to guide you throughout this exciting Earth-centric day! Seeking eco-vendors with a sustainable mission. For more information, call 973-228-8776. **FREE EVENT (items may be for sale)**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**—Meetings are held virtually on the first Monday of each month at 6pm. Some dates may change. This Board has openings, if interested to serve please email a letter of interest and resume to [tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org). For an up-to-date listing of meeting dates or for more information, please contact Essex County Environmental Affairs Coordinator Tara M. Casella at 973.228.8776 or visit <https://www.essexcountyparks.org/facilities/environmental-center/partners>.

**GARDENING**—Do you have garden-related questions? Contact the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County and a Master Gardener will gladly assist you on their FREE helpline service. Helpline hours are Monday through Friday from 10am to 2pm. Call 973.228.2210 or e-mail [mastergardenerec@gmail.com](mailto:mastergardenerec@gmail.com).

## OTHER OFFERINGS



### EXTRA! EXTRA! Calling all Nature Enthusiasts....

**Grades Pre-K through 7.** Youth Eco-Activity Boxes are Available for Purchase! Looking for enrichment ideas? The Environmental Center educational staff has custom made boxes designed to excite and engage youth in nature exploration and active learning. The boxes are intended to keep children in pre-K through seventh grades excited and engaged in environmental science related outdoor activities.

**Box themes include: Seasonal Discovery—Winter/Spring/Summer/Fall, Butterfly Safari, Buzz Box (Bees), Flying Friends (Birds), Hop, Walk & Slither, Junior Naturalist, Wilderness Skills and more!**

**Fee: \$40/Box**

**The boxes include crafts, projects, activities and outdoor fun opportunities!  
Boxes available for pick-up only at the Essex County Environmental Center  
Limited Availability! For more information, please call 973.228.8776.**

*The Essex County Environmental Center staff wishes everyone a very  
Happy & Healthy Holiday Season!  
~Thank you for supporting our 2023 programs and all the best in 2024~*



## ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER PARTNER AGENCIES

New Jersey Audubon Society (NJAS)

Scott Barnes, 908.396.6506

Essex County Beekeepers Society (ECBS)

John DeBenedett, johndebenedett@yahoo.com

West Essex Park Conservancy (WEPC)

Ron Pate, 973.669.8030

Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County (MGEC)

Amy Rowe, 973.287.6360

New Jersey Woodturners Association (NJWA)

Bob Amarant, 908.442.4729

Essex County 4-H Youth Development Program (4-H)

Marissa Blodnik, 973.353.1337

Essex County Environmental Commission

Tara M Casella 973.228.8776

Great Swamp Bonsai Society (GSBS)

John Michalski, [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com)

### ATTENTION:

*If you are not already on our e-mail list and you would like to receive an electronic file of our brochure as well as other e-notices and alerts, please call the Center (973.228.8776) at your earliest convenience or e-mail [tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org) with an e-mail address. Thank you!*



Our Environmental Center has become the premiere location for environmental education and nature appreciation. With the help of our partner groups, our dynamic schedule of events and activities will captivate all ages. Walk in our woods, discover habitats, get pointers on gardening, learn about nature photography and much more. It's all about nature and it's all at our Environmental Center.

**Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive**

## **ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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**Carlos M. Pomares, Vice President, Commissioner District 5**



**Brendan W. Gill, Commissioner-At-Large**

**Romaine Graham, Commissioner-At-Large**

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**Tyshammie L. Cooper, Commissioner District 3**

**Leonard M. Luciano, Commissioner District 4**



**COUNTY OF ESSEX**

**Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs**

**ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER**

**621-B Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland, NJ 07068**

**973.228.8776 / [www.essexcountyparks.org](http://www.essexcountyparks.org)**

*Putting Essex County First*