Students Granted Access to Nature
Grant Award Provides 7,200 Students Science Education Programming

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

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

BOOK A FIELD TRIP: elachee.org/school-programs

Meet Elachee’s 2020 Annual Sponsors
Special Thanks to These Community Partners

Elachee Nature Academy
Now Enrolling for 2020-2021
PRESCHOOL and KINDERGARTEN
www.ElacheeNatureAcademy.org
Offering Parents an Innovative ‘Nature School’ Choice for Their Young Children

Key Advantages

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

Call 770-535-1976 to schedule a tour.
Rick Boyd Named an Elachee Trustee

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

“Rick’s business experience is a welcome addition to Elachee’s Board of Trustees,” says Emily Bagwell, Chair of Elachee Board of Trustees.

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

Elachee’s 2020 Board of Trustees
Emily Bagwell (Chair), Jason Everett (Vice-Chair), Anna Guzman (Secretary), Nick Bruner (Treasurer), Kevin Bales, Beth Bell, Phil Bonelli, Rick Boyd, Maria Calkins, Will Cobb, Lance Gardner, Jay Kilroy, Gale McKibben, Martha Nesbitt, Richard Oates, Rob Robinson, Al Trembley, Dixie Truelove, Kelvin Whisenhunt and Trey Wood.


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

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

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

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

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

How You Can Protect the Nature Preserve While Hiking
This hiking trail system has been purposefully built to a relatively narrow path to limit degradation of the surrounding environment. Lee encourages hikers to travel the trails single file and stay on the official trails. Keep dogs leashed Saturday and Sunday. No dogs Monday through Friday.

TRAIL MAPS: elachee.org/hiking-trails
Georgia Master Naturalist Program

**Now enrolling.** The 2020 spring semester series is 1-5:30 p.m., primarily on Thursdays, from April 2 through June 4, 2020. Elachee tailors the Georgia Master Naturalist course for the local environment, within the framework developed by The University of Georgia (UGA) Cooperative Extension Service and the UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. Explore local habitats and ecosystems in this interactive 11-program course. Elachee has lined up guest ecology experts to facilitate combined indoor lectures with outdoor field experiences. **ENROLL ONLINE** [https://bit.ly/2U1Xnfv](https://bit.ly/2U1Xnfv)

**2020 SPRING SEMESTER COURSE TOPICS**
- Intro to Ecology and Natural Communities of the Piedmont
- Geology of North Georgia
- Spring Ephemeral Wildflowers
- Spring Bird Migration
- Watershed Analysis & Stream Ecology
- Blue Ridge Mountain Ecology Field Trip
- Lake Lanier and the Upper Chattahoochee Watershed
- Trees of Georgia
- Introduction to Mushrooms
- Plant & Insect Interactive Ecology
- Snakes of Georgia

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

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Science Nights: New Venue, New Format

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

**Spring 2020 Schedule: Upcoming Elachee Science Nights**
- **Black Bass Speciation** with guest speaker Dr. Bud Freeman, University of Georgia **May 12, 2020** – **REGISTRATION ONLINE** [https://bit.ly/36QthC](https://bit.ly/36QthC)

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Call for Elachee Volunteers

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

**BECOME A VOLUNTEER:** [elachee.org/volunteer](http://elachee.org/volunteer)

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

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Trillium Trek
Trail Run & Walk
Run Wild at Elachee!
April 18, 2020
HALF-MARATHON • 5K RUN/WALK
[elachee.org/trillium-trek](http://elachee.org/trillium-trek)

Which Tree Will You Be?
Join us at Elachee for the outdoor party of the year. Secure your sponsorship today!

20th Annual
Flights of Fancy
BENEFIT & AUCTION
Saturday Evening • April 25, 2020
[elachee.org/flights-of-fancy](http://elachee.org/flights-of-fancy)

$2,500 Oak Sponsor
Premium Table for 6, Tier 1 Maximum Recognition Package

$1,500 Dogwood Sponsor
Premium Seating for 4, Tier 1 Maximum Recognition Package

$750 Maple Sponsor
Reserved Seating for 4, Tier 2 Recognition Package
Camp Elachee Gets Children Unplugged and Outdoors During School Breaks

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

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

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

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

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**CAMP ELACHEE 2020**

*Elachee Nature Science Center in the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve*

**REGISTER ONLINE**

elachee.org/camp-elachee

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**FEES ▶**

- **PRE-K NON-MEMBER FEE**: $165 per camp week, per camper
- **PRE-K ELACHEE MEMBER FEE**: $145
- **ELEMENTARY NON-MEMBER FEE**: $195
- **ELEMENTARY ELACHEE MEMBER FEE**: $175
- **MIDDLE NON-MEMBER FEE**: $265
- **MIDDLE ELACHEE MEMBER FEE**: $245

**OPTIONAL: AFTER CAMP CHILD CARE**

- **ELEMENTARY and MIDDLE SCHOOL Only • M-F • 3:30-5:30 p.m.**

- **PER CAMPER, PER WEEK FEE**: $50

**COUNSELORS-IN-TRAINING (CIT)**

- **Leadership Program for High School Students**

- **ONE-TIME FEE, PER CIT**: $100
- **2-WEEK COMMITMENT**

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