

Nature Mixed In

Quarterly News from Elachee Nature Science Center

September 2022



Sarah C. Bell
Elachee President/CEO
sarah@elachee.org
770-535-1976 x227

DISCOVER LEARN PLAY

Many Opportunities to Fall in Love with Elachee

Dear Friends,

Some 29 months ago, we could not foresee the long-term impact the Covid-19 pandemic would have on how we do business and interact with our visiting public. Just as the way we live our lives has undergone a transformation, so must our approach to promoting environmental understanding through education and conservation. At Elachee, we are squarely focused on ways to continue to serve as a valued community resource now and into the future.

Since April, our organization has slowly begun a public-facing reboot, of sorts, as people have become more comfortable getting out and about. Our team is phasing in enhancements now and in the coming months, driven by feedback the visiting public and faithful supporters provided earlier this year.

We have been working hard to find ways to encourage nature lovers of any age to DISCOVER, LEARN and PLAY at Elachee and adjusting our programming and offerings accordingly. That's where you – Elachee's treasured supporters and friends – come in! We are planning many opportunities for you to "FALL IN LOVE" with Elachee in the coming months, and we value your feedback on our direction. More importantly, we'd love the chance to connect and visit. I hope to see you soon at the newly reopened Visitor Center or on the trails!

Sarah C. Bell

Big Reveal on Dodd Loop

Interpretive Signage to Benefit Visiting Public

Hike the Dodd Loop and you will find new interpretive signage to help connect you with your surroundings, no matter the season. Dodd Loop is Elachee's primary 'teaching' trail for school children and others visiting on field trips. This trail takes you through a typical Northern Piedmont forest ecosystem and it boasts a diversity of plant and animal species. The Dodd Loop enhancement project was funded by our generous supporters to meet a priority need identified through visitor surveys.

Later in the fall, Elachee will rededicate this 0.64-mile hiking trail, named for renowned Gainesville outdoorsman and conservationist Ed Dodd, who was also the creator of the *Mark Trail* daily cartoon series. As this trail is close to the hearts of our treasured supporters, the rededication will honor the invaluable contributions and legacy of individuals who built Elachee and these hiking trails for all to enjoy.



In This Issue

- 1 ... Message from Elachee President/CEO Sarah Bell
- 1 ... Ed Dodd Trail Signage Update and Rededication
- 1 ... 2022 Wildlife Festival is September 10 at Elachee
- 2 ... Staff Spotlight: Elachee Nature Academy Teachers
- 2 ... Mommy and Me Program
- 2 ... Field Trips Return in Full Force
- 3 ... Are Your Oaks in Danger?
- 3 ... Backyard Biota
- 3 ... Elachee Happenings: Mark Your Calendar
- 4 ... New Trustees, Abernathy and Romberg
- 4 ... Enduring Legacy: A Son's Perspective



2022 Wildlife Festival

at Elachee Nature Science Center

10am to 3pm

SATURDAY • SEPTEMBER 10

Elachee has transformed its annual Snake Day festival *to also* celebrate other native and exotic wildlife.

During this family-friendly event you can touch a snake, enjoy exciting reptile and raptor demonstrations, and participate in related activities. Give plenty of hugs at a petting zoo and scale new heights with guided tree climbing. Meet herpetology, birding and ecology experts. Partake in sweet and savory festival fare, and more!

PAY AT THE GATE

– Ages 2 and up –

\$10 Per Person

ELACHEE MEMBERS \$5 EACH

Shuttles to/from Parking Areas

2022 WILDLIFE FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY

**NORTHSIDE
HOSPITAL**

2022 WILDLIFE FESTIVAL
EVENT SPONSORS





Field Trips Return in Full Force!

What's Old-Hat is New to Many Students (and Teachers)

In the wake of area school systems loosening restrictions on field trips last school year, Elachee served 21,000 PreK-12 students in 2021-2022!

School field trips are a rite of passage for children, yet the past two academic years have not followed a 'typical' path. Many of our youngest students are getting their first chance to board a bus for an adventure outside of their school, to explore and bring classroom concepts to life.

Overcoming student learning loss is a nationwide priority. The pandemic has also taken its toll with teacher attrition. Since 2019, we at Elachee have encountered many educators new to the North Georgia region who are unaware of Elachee's rich history of providing supplemental programming for their students. We are diligently working to reconnect with schools that have not recently booked field trips to learn how Elachee can be a resource.

Today, school is in full swing, as are Elachee's skilled naturalists who are welcoming bus loads of students visiting the Nature Center as part of environmental education field trips. If schools cannot travel here, our naturalists conduct *Elachee in Your Classroom* outreach programs.

For the 2022-23 school year, our team is poised to return to pre-pandemic schedules. Visit elachee.org/environmental-ed to view grade-level program topics and to submit an online field trip scheduling request.



Mommy and Me

Elachee is excited to announce the return of a program that helped lay the groundwork for Elachee Nature Academy. The monthly *Mommy and Me* ecology program is an ideal opportunity for families to participate in nature-based learning.

Held from 10:30-11:30 a.m. each first Wednesday, starting November 2, 2022 parents and children 18 months to 4-years-old are welcome to drop in for the cost of the \$10 per adult admission. Elachee members may participate for free.

Each one-hour program features a story time, a movement sequence and either a sensory or craft activity. While here, visit Elachee's live animal exhibits, read and stroll along the Storybook Trail or enjoy a picnic.

Visit elachee.org or call 770-535-1976 to learn more.

Staff Spotlight

Elachee Nature Academy Team

We are so excited to begin Elachee Nature Academy's 2022-2023 school year with such seasoned and accomplished teachers caring for our students!

We are delighted to introduce our new Nature Preschool staff, **Jen Kennedy** and **Arden Tritt**. Jen joins us as our Preschool Teacher. She has multiple degrees and holds an International Certification in Montessori pedagogy. Jen has worked in several private Montessori schools in the greater Atlanta area in both teaching and mentoring roles. In addition, she is a certified Occupational Therapy Assistant and has worked in private healthcare and public school settings. Jen also served as a Camp Elachee counselor this summer, where she got to know a few of her current students!



L-R: Jen Kennedy, Arden Tritt

Arden Tritt joins us as our Preschool Teacher Assistant. She has a Masters Degree in Special Education and has recently been working as a Behavior Therapist in the Atlanta area. We are thrilled she found a spot with us that we all think will combine her skills and passions!

Jen and Arden will complement the dynamic team educating, supporting and leading our Nature Academy students!



L-R: Rebecca Boone, Melissa Reid, Angie Pelletier

Melissa Reid is our Kindergarten Teacher and Nature Academy Director. **Rebecca Boone** is our 1st-2nd Grade Teacher and Teacher Assistant Angie Pelletier supports each class. Environmental Educator **Katie Wiese** provides supplemental instruction for our Nature Academy classes, as well as leading field trips and other public education programs, helping care for Elachee's resident animal ambassadors and more!



Katie Wiese

Learn why parents choose this nature school for their young children by visiting elachee.org/nature-academy or call us at 770-535-1976 to inquire about enrollment.

Elachee Happenings

VISITOR CENTER/EXHIBITS OPEN

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday
9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Science Saturdays
\$10 per person General Admission
AGES 2 AND OLDER Elachee Members FREE

September–November 2022

Mark your calendar for these scheduled programs and the many ways to engage with Elachee and fellow nature lovers. Visit www.elachee.org/events or use the QR code to find times, event details, program fees and registration requirements!



SEPTEMBER Happenings at Elachee

- SEP 3 **Stars Over Elachee**
Reserve a Telescope or Bring Your Own
- SEP 6 **Virtual Science Night**
Backyard Wildlife of Georgia
- SEP 10 **2022 Wildlife Festival**
Formerly Snake Day – Family-Friendly Fun!
- SEP 15 **Home School Day Programs**
- SEP 24 **Community Conservation Series**
Hispanic Heritage Month Event

OCTOBER Happenings at Elachee

- OCT 1 **Stars Over Elachee**
- OCT 4 **Liquid Learning Science Night**
at Liquid Nation Brewing (LNB)
- OCT 8 **DISCOVERY SATURDAY**
• Stream, Wetland & Forest Dynamics
with Eco-Addendum
• Live Animal Showcases
• Nocturnal Animal Hike
- OCT 11 **School Break & Adult Skip Day**
- OCT 20 **Home School Day Programs**
- OCT 22 **Flights of Fancy FUNdraiser**
4-9:30p.m. Adult Camp, Food Trucks, Raffle & Auction
>>> **BUY TICKETS** <http://bidpal.net/elacheeflights22>
- OCT 29 **Community Conservation Series**
Night Hike: Myths and Legends of the Appalachians

NOVEMBER Happenings at Elachee

- NOV 1 **Virtual Science Night**
Growing Food Communities, Not Islands
- NOV 2 **Mommy and Me Program**
- NOV 12 **DISCOVERY SATURDAY**
• Forest Intelligence with Eco-Addendum
• Ancient Ways of the Cherokee and
Through the Eyes of the Cherokee
Walk & Talk with Mark Warren
• Live Animal Showcases
- NOV 17 **Home School Day Programs**
- NOV 22 **School Break & Adult Skip Day**
- NOV 23 **School Break Day**
- NOV 26 **Stars Over Elachee**

Camp Elachee 2023

MEMBER-ONLY Early Registration opens February 1, 2023!

SECURE YOUR MEMBERSHIP



It's Not Leaf Rot

Your Native Oaks are Not in Danger

Elachee is no stranger to the increased phenomenon of what some are calling 'leaf rot' on the many oak tree species that call Chicopee Woods home. Discoloration is due to individual leaf miners which are the larvae of a moth. The *Cameraria hamadryadella* bores into the leaf, feeding on tissue between its upper and lower surfaces.

This year we seem to be experiencing a heavy infestation in Hall County, Georgia, however it's not necessarily a cause for worry. As the miner population grows, the number of beneficial insects that attack it increases as well.

Trees may drop heavily damaged leaves and replace them with new leaves this autumn. Forego pesticide treatments, but raking up and destroying leaf litter is an effective control measure to reduce populations in subsequent years. If the problem persists for longer than two years on a particular tree, we recommend reaching out to a certified arborist to determine your options.

If you have questions about leaf miner populations on your native Georgia oaks, visit <https://bit.ly/3Ayipvl> to connect with the UGA Extension Office, Hall County Natural Resources division.

Backyard Biota

Four Inhabitants You May Encounter

As summer wanes, your backyard bounty invites native wildlife. This passive greenspace provides much needed food, shelter and water to cute critters and their young. Many yards have four basic backyard tenants: the Gray Fox, the Northern Cardinal, the Eastern Mole and the Striped Skunk. Learn how each is helpful to their ecosystem. Visit the Elachee blog at elachee.org/news-center.



Turtle-y Awesome

Elachee shell-ebbrates the turtles that call the Chicopee Woods home as we find Eastern Box Turtles digging their nests and small Yellow-bellied Sliders in the creeks all over the 1,440-acre preserve. But did you know that while all tortoises are turtles, not all turtles are tortoises? This distinction may put our reptile friends in unintentional danger from well-meaning nature enthusiasts. READ WHY: <https://bit.ly/3PIgJ7Z>



A Year in the Life

at Chicopee Lake

In his monthly blog, Elachee Teaching Naturalist and retired environmental scientist **Don Lane** shares insight about different environs and species in and around Chicopee Lake each month. Visit elachee.org/news-center to read Don's blog posts.



Calling All

Citizen Scientists

When visiting Chicopee Lake, use the **Chronolog Photo Monitoring Station** to document the visual appearance of this wetland area. The compilation of images will aid future conservation efforts. Get details: elachee.org/conservation.



Wilbur R. Otey, Jr. and Helen Prosser Otey photographed March 1, 1991 in celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Enduring Legacy

A Son's Reflection

Elachee is the grateful recipient of a significant gift from *The Wilbur and Helen Otey Fund* at the North Georgia Community Foundation. Their son Rush Otey, a Gainesville High School Class of 1965 graduate and retired Presbyterian minister now living in Charlotte, NC, shared the following.

"My parents had a lifelong fascination with and even reverence for nature. My mother grew up on a farm near Milledgeville, Georgia, and my father in the mountains of Appalachia, in

southwestern Virginia. Looking at the stars, listening to the birds and streams and breezes, marveling at the biodiversity and beauty of all creation, were daily aspects of their lives. They spent a lot of time over the years camping in the mountains and actually all over the United States.

The connections with Elachee stem from my father's work at Chicopee Mills. We lived in the mill village until 1957. As a child, I played in the Chicopee Woods and recall numerous family and community picnics in the open field there. In my parents' den was a framed print of the deer in Walnut Creek, Chicopee Woods (1988, artist Tom Landreth), which is now in my home. We moved to the end of Enota Avenue, in 1957, where we had a pristine and direct pathway to Lake Lanier as it was in its early stages.

My parents supported several conservation nonprofits and public education, so Elachee is a clear and shining example of important priorities for them and their extended family. This recent gift is the result of our [family] closing out the Charitable Remainder Trust which my parents established in the early 1990s. We are happy and thankful to be able to send it to Elachee, and with it our hope that Elachee continues to flourish."

Planned Gifts Ensure Elachee's Future

Elachee Nature Science Center is a privately owned and operated 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. A trusted resource benefiting the North Georgia region, Elachee relies on earned income and fundraising initiatives to offer quality nature programs and ecology events for children and nature lovers.



Designate Elachee as a beneficiary of your enduring legacy. We would be honored to meet with you to learn more about your wishes. Please call 770-535-1976 to start the conversation, or visit elachee.org/support/#PlannedGifts to learn more.

Kudos Corner

Elachee Staff Leading in Our Community



Amy Bradford

Amy Bradford, Director of Operations, has received a Greater Hall Chamber 2021-2022 *Silver Shovel Award* in recognition of her Chamber volunteer efforts.

<<<<



Maranda McGaha

Maranda McGaha, Director of School and Public Programs has been selected to the Leadership Hall Class of 2023.

>>>>

Become a Member

New Elachee Membership Levels Available

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS	INDIVIDUAL EXPLORER	DUAL EXPLORER	FAMILY ADVENTURER	ELACHEE PATRON
Adults Ages 18+	1 Adult	2 Adults or 1 Adult + 1 Child	2 Adults and 4 Children	2 Adults and 4 Children
1-Year Membership* Fee	\$75	\$125	\$200	\$500**
FREE General Admission to Elachee	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿
DISCOUNTED Program Fees and Admission Select Elachee Happenings	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿
Member-Only Advance Notifications	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿
Annual Parking Pass Issued by the Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission	1 Pass	2 Passes	2 Passes	2 Passes
CAMP ELACHEE Member-Only Early Registration			🌿	🌿
CAMP ELACHEE Registration Discount			10%	10%
Guest Passes Single-Use for FREE Admission to Elachee and select Elachee Happenings			4 Passes	8 Passes
FREE or DISCOUNTED Admission to ANCA Member Nature Centers	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿

*Memberships are non-transferable, non-refundable and valid only for the adult(s) listed on card.

**NOTE: the amount of a contribution that is deductible for Federal income tax purposes is limited to the excess of the amount paid reduced by the value of any goods and services provided in return by Elachee Nature Science Center, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, TAX ID #58-1643768. Refer to IRS Publication 526 or consult your tax advisor for assistance determining what, if any portion of your payment may be tax deductible.

www.elachee.org/ecosystem/#Membership

Elachee Seats New Trustees

Elachee welcomes **Brad Abernathy** and **Chris Romberg** to its leadership team.

"I am beyond grateful to have been asked to serve Elachee Nature Science Center," shares Brad Abernathy. "I invite you to learn more about this incredible blessing we have here in our community. Access to nature is something near and dear to my heart. Being in the woods, on trails, in fields, near streams is the perfect place to live better. I strive to give that gift to myself and to family and friends. Elachee gives that gift to all of us."

"Chris is a sixth generation Gainesville native and a big supporter of the local community," states Jason Everett, Chair of Elachee's Board of Trustees. "His love for the outdoors, as well as business and board experience make him a great addition to Elachee's leadership team."



Brad Abernathy
Abernathy Cochran,
Principal Partner



Chris Romberg
City Garden Supply, Owner