Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary

Where children, nature, and learning come together in a safe and nurturing environment.

School Programs Guide

for Teachers and Educators


The mission of the Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary is to provide:

- engaging hands-on environmental and natural science education for all ages;
- biodiversity of native plants and animals through wise management of our natural resources;
- understanding that all Earth’s inhabitants are part of complex, interdependent ecosystems; and
- opportunities for quiet reflection and reconnection with the natural world.
Dressing for the weather is very important. Because the majority of our programs are outdoors, students and adults should dress for the conditions. **Shirts and closed toe shoes or boots ARE REQUIRED at the sanctuary. No sandals, Crocs™ or aqua socks are allowed.**

**Name Tags** that can be easily read by the naturalists are encouraged for students and teachers.

**Gift Shop:** Please include extra time to visit our gift shop as part of your field trip experience. We have nature-related items starting at 50¢. We ask that adult chaperones please stay with the children to monitor activity.

**Picnic Shelter** must be reserved prior to your visit to ensure it is reserved for your group (no fee). Four tables seat 40 adults/80 children along with 80 additional bench seats around the sides of the shelter. Please bring trash bags to carry out all trash. We do NOT supply trash cans. This reservation is free of charge with each reserved program.

**Exhibit Area** is open for your class to explore either prior to or following your program.

**Arriving Early** (10-15 minutes minimum before the program) is crucial for a successful program for line-up and restroom breaks prior to the start of your program. Please feel welcome to arrive earlier for free time or stay later for lunch, hiking and giftshop.

**Student Behavior and Discipline:**
Discipline is the responsibility of the teachers and adult leaders. Teachers may be asked to remove and monitor a child inside the center if his/her behavior distracts from the program. MLTNS staff will respond if teachers do not.

**Cell Phones:**
All cell phones should be silenced during the program. Adults needing to make or take a call should step away from the group or out of the classroom.

**Program Flexibility:**
If you see a program you would like to attend but is not offered at your grade level, please call the Sanctuary and speak with a Naturalist. We are capable of adapting most programs to fit other grade levels. 816-781-8598.
### Program Fees and Length

To ensure that each child has a meaningful hands-on experience and to assist in fulfilling state curriculum guidelines, your classroom may be divided into groups based on the needs of the program. Groups will typically be divided by your class size, however, we may need to make adjustments. Please discuss this during registration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Length (hours)</th>
<th>Minimum Fee</th>
<th>Fee Per Individual</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Time of Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pond or Creek Neighbors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>Pre-K - Kindergarten</td>
<td>April 15 - Sept. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold-blooded Critters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>Pre-K - Kindergarten</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensory Safari</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>Pre-K - Kindergarten</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insect Intrigue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>Pre-K - Kindergarten</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pond or Creek Neighbors</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>$120.00</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>1st - 3rd grades</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feathered Friends *</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>$140.00*</td>
<td>$7.00*</td>
<td>1st - 3rd grades</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Homes **</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>$120.00</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>1st - 3rd grades</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colossal Fossil *</td>
<td>1.5 / 2*</td>
<td>$120.00 / $160.00*</td>
<td>$6.00 / $8.00*</td>
<td>1st - 6th grades</td>
<td>April 15 - Sept. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds of a Feather *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$140.00*</td>
<td>$7.00*</td>
<td>4th - 6th grades</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecosystem Investigations</td>
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<td>$120.00</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>4th - 6th grades</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild About Wetlands</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$130.00</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>4th - 6th grades</td>
<td>April 15 - Sept. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Request Programs***</td>
<td>1/1.5/2</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td>$6/$7/$8</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Year - round</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* The program cost includes an additional charge to cover materials used in the craft project.
** Plan for 1 adult for every 5 children at no additional charge.
***Talk with a Naturalist to learn more about program customization options

Each school classroom may have teachers and classroom aides at no charge. Two (2) supervisory adults per classroom are also free. All other adults will pay the individual fee and will be counted as part of a “Group.”

**Important Note to Educators and Parents:**
Young children have an innate sense of wonder about the natural world that we as adults have the responsibility to nurture. We ask that you set aside any personal anxieties and biases regarding snakes, bugs, spiders, etc. It is important to us that children make up their own minds about what is good or not about the natural world.

We ask that the attending adults directly assist with the program to enrich the children’s experience. Adults attending programs that require creek access are asked to get in the water with the students to help us ensure each child’s safety. **Closed toe and heel shoes or boots are required footwear for children and adults. No sandals, Crocs™ or aqua socks are allowed.** We also ask that the adults answer questions when called upon and remove themselves from the group if needing to converse with others.

**Transportation Assistance**
A field trip transportation grant may be available from the Missouri Department of Conservation, to assist public, private, and home-school educators interested in taking students to field trips. Please visit www.mdc.mo.gov for more information.

**Need Help With Program Costs?**
Ask for our 10% discount on programs scheduled between September 1 and December 15th.

When monies are available, MLTNS program sponsorship may be applied for up to 50% of program costs. Ask for an application when reserving a program.
Suggested Programs for Pre-School and Kindergarten

Look at our expanded selection of off-site programs under “Wild in the Classroom.”

### Sensory Safari

During this popular program your students will have the opportunity to explore the natural world using their senses. They will discover the sounds, smells, sights and textures found outdoors through hands-on exploration. We'll also meet a live animal up close and personal to learn how it uses its senses to help it survive.

**Program Length:** 60 minutes  
**Cost Per Student:** $5  
**Time of Year:** Year - round

### Insect Intrigue

What young child isn’t fascinated by those creeping, crawling little bugs? From dragonflies and grasshoppers to butterflies and ants, insects truly do intrigue young children. During this special program, your youngsters will be introduced to the world of insects, from what makes an insect an insect to searching for them with nets in hand. We’ll release all our buggy friends at the end of the program.

**Program Length:** 60 minutes  
**Cost Per Student:** $5  
**Time of Year:** May - October

### Pond Neighbors or Creek Neighbors

Water is important to all of us, and no more so than to the critters that live in it. During this interactive program, your children will be introduced to the world of water using nets to look for water insects, frogs, and other inhabitants of the pond or creek.

**Program Length:** 60 minutes  
**Cost Per Student:** $5  
**Time of Year:** April 15 - September 30

**Note:** During the creek program, children and adults will wade in the water. During the pond program, children could be on muddy banks. Please be sure to have children and accompanying adults wear shoes that completely enclose the foot and that can get muddy and wet. **Closed toe and heel shoes or boots are required footwear for children and adults. No sandals, Crocs™ or aqua socks are allowed.**

### Cold-blooded Critters

Have your students discover the differences and similarities between reptiles and amphibians, and observe the characteristics of each group through hands-on interactions. Students will also enjoy a nature hike and explore the movement and behavior of these animals in their habitats.

**Program Length:** 60 minutes  
**Cost Per Student:** $5  
**Time of Year:** Year - round

“Thank you all so much. It was a great program and the kids loved it!” - Small Saints Learning Center.
Suggested Programs for 1st - 3rd Grades

Look at our expanded selection of off-site programs under “Wild in the Classroom.”

Feathered Friends
Students will soar to new heights as they learn about the world of birds. We’ll start with an indoor introduction to birds and then head outdoors in search of robins, cardinals, hawks and more. This program will conclude with the children making their very own bird feeder to take home.

Program Length: 90 minutes
Cost Per Student: $7*
Time of Year: Year - round

* The cost per student includes an additional $1 fee for bird seed.

Colossal Fossil
Dig this! Here’s an opportunity for your students to learn about fossils, from identification to how they were made. We’ll head down to Rush Creek in search of the real thing among the shale and limestone deposits and the students will work together to find the best fossil to take back to class for further study. Please note this program involves getting in the water. Tennis shoes or boots are required footwear for both, children and adults.

Program Length: 90 minutes / 2 hours*
Cost Per Student: $6 / $8*
Time of Year: March 1 - November 30

*Optional Activity: Your students can make a “fossil” using plaster and seashells. The extended program requires two hours and a total fee of $8 per student.

Habitat Homes
Students will be introduced to the importance of habitats and learn what all plants and animals need to survive. We’ll head to the trails and involve each student in the teaching process through the use of biofacts and natural items found within the prairie, forest, and wetland habitats. A live animal will also be introduced.

Program Length: 90 minutes
Cost Per Student: $6
Time of Year: Year - round

Note: This program is designed so that 1 adult is needed for every 5 students. Those adults will not be charged a fee.

Pond Neighbors or Creek Neighbors
We’re out to make a splash with this fun and educational program! Students are introduced to wetlands through a visit to either our man-made pond or Rush Creek. With nets in hand they will venture forth in search of tadpoles, fish and aquatic insects that call these important habitats home. We’ll also explore the importance of water quality and learn how each one of us can help keep our water clean. Please note this program involves getting in the water. Tennis shoes or boots are required footwear for everyone.

Program Length: 90 minutes
Cost Per Student: $6
Time of Year: March 15 - October 30

Note: During the creek and fossil programs, the children and accompanying adults will wade in the water. During the pond program, children could be on muddy banks. Closed toe and heel shoes or boots are required footwear for children and adults. No sandals, Crocs™ or aqua socks are allowed.
Suggested Programs for 4th - 6th Grades

Look at our expanded selection of off-site programs under “Wild in the Classroom.”

Birds of a Feather
Birds have long fascinated us, from their flight capabilities to their beauty and lyrical songs. During this program your students will come to know the characteristics and adaptations of birds, as well as learn how to identify common birds of this area through artifacts, mounts and a slide program. We'll then head outdoors for a walk with binoculars in hand in search of our feathered friends. This program will conclude with the children making their very own bird feeder to take home.

Program Length: 2 hours
Cost Per Student: $7
Time of Year: Year - round

* The cost per student includes an additional $1 fee for feeder materials and bird seed.

Wild About Wetlands
This program will literally immerse your students in the world of wetlands. They will learn through firsthand observation and investigation what organisms are found in our creek and pond environments. From water beetles and dragonfly larvae to tadpoles and fish, students will begin to understand both the importance of healthy wetlands and the organisms found in each system. Students will use nets, magnifiers for macro invertebrates, and equipment to test water quality including pH, turbidity, etc.

Please note this program involves getting in the water. Closed toe and heel shoes or boots are required footwear for children and adults. No sandals, Crocs™ or aqua socks are allowed.

Program Length: 2 hours
Cost Per Student: $6
Time of Year: April 15 - September 30

Colossal Fossil
Here’s an opportunity for your students to learn about fossils, from identification to how they were made. We will explore different types of rocks and why only certain types contain fossils. We’ll head down to Rush Creek in search of the real thing. The students will work together to find the best fossil to take back to class for further study.

Please note this program involves getting in the water. Closed toe and heel shoes or boots are required footwear for children and adults. No sandals, Crocs™ or aqua socks are allowed.

Program Length: 90 minutes / 2 hours*
Cost Per Student: $6 / $8*
Time of Year: March 15 - October 30

*Optional Activity: Your students can make a “fossil” using plaster and seashells. The extended program requires two hours and a total fee of $8 per student.

Ecosystem Investigations
Here is an opportunity for students to take an in-depth look at samples of different ecosystems found in Missouri. Students will explore and study forest, grassland and wetland habitats found at the Sanctuary. They will record plants and animals found in each ecosystem. The program will end with an understanding of the components of each ecosystem and their functions.

Program Length: 90 minutes
Cost Per Student: $6
Time of Year: Year—round

“We absolutely loved it! Excellent hands on experience! Ray Marsh Elementary.”

“We were so fortunate to have a great guide. She pointed out: the hawk’s nest-there was a hawk standing up & stretching; the jack in the pulpit; the snake on the trail & the stinging nettle. Wow! Franklin Elementary.”
Wild in the Classroom

**Wild Missouri**

What animals live in Missouri? Where do they live? How do they find food? Find out the answers to these questions and others, as this program explores the animals that call the habitats of Missouri home. We’ll look at the adaptations, and habitat needs of variety of Missouri species. Using a variety of natural artifacts and live animals, this program becomes an experience that everyone will remember.

**Feathered Frenzy**

In this program students will explore the diversity and adaptations of the avian world by hands-on examinations of different types of feathers, bones, and feet. Additionally, we’ll look at the species of birds that are common in our area.

For a dollar more per child, each student may make a tennis-ball container bird feeder to take home. Supplies are limited. Ask a naturalist for more details.

For older students, a discussion of bird life cycles may be included. Ask a naturalist for more details.

**Program Evaluations:**

Forms are provided to each teacher with a program. These evaluations allow us to continually review our program quality. Please be sure to complete the form and return it. For your convenience, the evaluations have been addressed and stamped. *Thank you!*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Students</th>
<th>Maximum Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K - 1st grade</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd grade - 6th grade</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Meet the Animals (Age 3-6)**

**Critters in the Classroom (Age 6 & up)**

In this program we bring the wild life indoors! Discover differences and similarities between the astounding groups of animals living on this planet today. You and your students will meet a variety of friendly animals as our naturalist describes what makes them unique. Hands-on interaction to compare and contrast the physical characteristics of each will make a fun and exciting educational experience for all.

Ask a naturalist about the inclusion of plant life in your program for an even more diverse look into nature!

**Help Us Help You!**

Don’t see exactly the program that is right for you and your class? Call the nature center, Tuesday–Saturday, 9am-5pm, to speak to a naturalist about creating a customized program. We’ll work with you to design a program to create a unique and engaging educational experience specifically for your group.

Call (816) 781-8598 to speak to schedule a custom program today!

**Middle Schools and High Schools**

Field trips for middle schools and high schools are tailored to the needs of the specific class. Modifications of the programs in this guide can be arranged for older ages, and we welcome requests for other topics. Teachers should call the Nature Center and speak to a Naturalist to discuss their options.
About the Sanctuary

Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary is a private, non-profit organization begun by its namesake as a place where native plants and animals could thrive and the public could learn about and appreciate the natural world. Each year, the Sanctuary hosts thousands of school children, as well as the general public, who attend a variety of programs.

Approximately, four miles of hiking trails provide access to the nearly 100 acres of land that includes the Missouri Department of Conservation’s Rush Creek Conservation Area.

We accept tax deductible donations and offer memberships to the general public.

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E-mail: info@NatureSanctuary.com