

SCHOOL PROGRAMS



ABOUT OUR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

WHAT TO EXPECT

At South Platte Park, students engage with Colorado's ecosystems through hands-on, nature-based programs that encourage curiosity, collaboration, and connection. From rivers and wetlands to wildlife and plant adaptations, students observe, experiment, and think critically about the natural world around them.

Through guided investigation and meaningful interaction with their surroundings, students build confidence, ecological awareness, and a sense of responsibility. Each program fosters curiosity, strengthens community, and provides educators with a restorative, supportive field trip experience.

With 12 program options—ranging from studying freshwater habitats and local wildlife to outdoor problem-solving and exploring human impacts on the environment—students integrate science, observation, and creativity to make real-world connections.

Every program at South Platte Park is more than a field trip—it's an opportunity to discover, learn, and grow alongside peers and educators in a vibrant natural setting - join us today!

PROGRAMS COST

Resident & Nonresident Rates

Half-day Program (10 am-12 pm):
\$9R / \$12NR per student

Full-day Program (10 am-1:30 pm):
\$11R / \$14NR per student

Scholarships Available

Scholarship opportunities are available! Please reach out to learn if your school qualifies for financial assistance.



WE CAN COME TO YOU!

South Platte Express - Mobile River Table

This mobile field trip brings live crawdads and our mobile a river table directly to your school. Students rotate through fast-paced stations, exploring ecosystems, adaptations, and conservation in a hands-on, engaging way.

River table setup is an additional \$135.

South Platte Express - Roadtrip

Take a mobile adventure with live animals, animal artifacts, and keystone species paintings! Students rotate through hands-on stations to investigate adaptations, roles in the ecosystem, and conservation, all in a fast-paced, engaging format.



HOW TO BOOK WITH US

Reach out to School Programs Coordinator
Kevin O'Brien // KPOBrien@ssprd.org // 720.618.4507

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS

LIFE UNDERWATER

Catch crawdads, meet live animals, and explore the watery worlds of the South Platte River and nearby pond. Students investigate aquatic life, experiment at the river table, and discover how water shapes habitats and supports biodiversity.

NATURE DETECTIVES

Become a nature sleuth and uncover clues like tracks, feathers, and nests left behind by Colorado wildlife. Young learners use their senses and curiosity to investigate the world around them through guided hikes and interactive discovery.

ECOADVENTURES

Explore the river's edge, hike through cottonwood groves, and investigate the communities that make up a riparian ecosystem. Students examine plants and animals, trace food webs, experiment with river models, and discover how water, erosion, and deposition shape habitats and support biodiversity.



WILD DEFENDERS - ANIMAL EXPLORATION

Explore the wild ways animals stay safe—camouflage, mimicry, armor, and more. Students examine real artifacts and engage in role-play to discover how defense mechanisms help animals survive in the wild.

LEAVES & LIFE - PLANT EXPLORATION

Discover how plants survive, thrive, and support life along the South Platte River. Students investigate plant parts, adaptations, and ecological roles through games, guided observation, and hands-on discovery.

BUG OUT! - INSECT EXPLORATION

Buzz into the fascinating world of bugs as students catch, observe, and learn about the role of insects in our ecosystems. This up-close exploration highlights adaptations, pollination, and insect diversity in Colorado's wild spaces.



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PROGRAM CURRICULUM

PROGRAMS CONTINUED

GOLD PANNING

Pan for real minerals and uncover the story of Colorado's gold rush history in this hands-on field experience. Students explore geology, local history, and the environmental impacts of mining in our region.

WILD PLACES IN URBAN SPACES

Even in the heart of the city, nature is all around us—if you know where to look. Students explore South Platte Park's trails to discover how wildlife thrives in urban environments and how humans can help.

ECOSTEWARDS - LEAVE NO TRACE EXPLORATION

Learn how to enjoy nature without leaving a mark through fun, hands-on challenges in outdoor ethics. Students build stewardship skills and discover how small choices can protect wild places for future generations.



NATURE MYSTERY

Step into the role of an outdoor detective and solve a nature mystery using evidence found in the field. Students hone observation and inference skills while uncovering the secrets of the natural world.

SURVIVOR IN THE WEST

This team-based adventure challenges students with real-world scenarios and outdoor problem-solving. Build shelters, practice wilderness first aid, and collaborate to "survive" in the Colorado wild.

EROSION EXPLORERS

Through mini-rivers, soil experiments, and on-trail observations, learners see erosion in action, test solutions, and discover ways to protect Colorado's ecosystems. Students explore the changing landscape while building observation and problem-solving skills.



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PRAISE FOR SOUTH PLATTE PARK

WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO SAY

"Thank you all so much for the time you poured into our group, this was such a fun field trip that the students are still raving about. We so appreciate your time, care, and effort you gave us. We will most definitely be back next year!"

"The students really enjoyed the hike and the river stimulation. All of it was great! The students and chaperones had a great time and learned so much!"

"This was a phenomenal field trip! All of the students' loved it and thoroughly enjoyed their time in the park and nature center. I was particularly impressed with all the guides/leaders' knowledge of the area and enthusiasm they had for talking about the center/South Platte River. Already planning another one for later in the school year, and thank you for a great time!"

"Thank you for providing an engaging, hands on activity for our students that matches our science standards!"

"We really thought the programming supported third grade science standards in a hands on and engaging way that promoted students to think about the unique Colorado environment. Thank you Carson Nature Center, we will be back!"

"I learned a lot as a parent and really enjoyed being outside with the kiddos. The water table really got the kiddos excited!"

"Students each shared a different part of the day as their favorite. While some enjoyed the sand table, others loved the chance to explore in the river or pond. As a teacher, my favorite was watching how each group leader engaged students in a fun and kid friendly way."

"Our students loved all three stations. They asked thoughtful questions and enjoyed the hands on activities. Thank you!"



RENT-A- NATURALIST

Looking for something beyond our standard programs?

If you have a curriculum-specific topic, special project, or unique learning theme, our naturalists can work with you to create a customized experience—within reason and aligned with our mission.

Perfect for microschools, homeschool networks, learning pods, nature-based schools, and inquiry-driven classrooms.

Email Kevin with any Rent-a-Naturalist inquiries!



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