2024 FIELD TRIP GUIDE

JEFFERSON COUNTY GREENWAYS COALITION
The Jefferson County Greenways Coalition is a conservation education organization that oversees the operations and programs of Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, Red Mountain Park, and Turkey Creek Nature Preserve. These parks encompass over 3,000 acres of protected forests and waterways and receive more than 320,000 visitors annually. These natural areas are crucial in teaching youth about the natural and cultural history of our area.

Before you book your Field Trip, please review the following information:

Field Trip capacity is three (3) classes maximum per day
There is a maximum of six (6) chaperones per class
Waivers are required for all participants
Be prepared to spend most of the field trip hiking on trails or in the creek with moderate inclines and varied terrain with rocks and tree roots.

The following are recommended:

- Water bottle
- Suitable clothing for the outdoors and weather
- Sturdy, closed-toe shoes/shoes you don’t mind getting wet for Turkey Creek Programs
- Bag lunches (optional)

TO SCHEDULE YOUR FIELD TRIP, PLEASE VISIT RUFFNERMOUNTAIN.ORG/FIELDTRIPS, EMAIL PROGRAMS@JEFFFCOGREENWAYS.ORG OR CALL 205.833.8264
SENSE IT
Grades: Pre-k - K
Duration: 1.5 - 2 hours
~ Mileage: 0.5 miles
What fungus resembles a turkey? While hiking, students can appreciate the tiny treasures of nature by comparing the textures of moss and limestone, listening to the sounds of birds in the forest, smelling the freshness of mountain mint, and observing the different colors and patterns in nature.

HABITAT EXPLORERS
Grades: 1 - 3
Duration: 2 - 2.5 hours
~ Mileage: 0.5 miles
How do animals survive in the forest? Hike into the deciduous forest habitat and discover the resources native wildlife use for food, water, and shelter. Whether it’s acorns, shagbark hickory trees, the nectar of flowers, or a trickling spring, animals rely on their habitat's basic needs to survive.

FOREST ECOLOGY
Grades: 4 - 5
Duration: 2.5 - 3 hours
~ Mileage: 1.5 - 2 miles
How are plants and wildlife interdependent? Students will study the basics of forest ecology by examining how biotic and abiotic components work together as a healthy ecosystem. Explore the eco-services that plants provide, and learn to identify non-native/invasive plant species that have a negative impact on ecosystem health.

GEOLOGIC TIME
Grades: 6 - 8
Duration: 2.5 - 3 hours
~ Mileage: 2.5 miles
How old is Ruffner Mountain? Hike to the limestone quarry and discover the geological formations created, including fossils such as brachiopods and crinoids. Compare and contrast today’s glade-like and forest canopy ecosystems within the preserve.

TURKEY CREEK FIELD TRIP OPTIONS
All field trips at Turkey Creek start at our outdoor teaching pavilion and include a hike within the Nature Preserve and an activity within the creek. All students and chaperones must be prepared to get wet!

LIFE OF A STREAM
Grades: 3 - 8
Duration: 2 - 2.5 hours
~ Mileage: 0.5 miles
For our Life of a Stream program, we introduce concepts associated with stream ecology, freshwater biodiversity, and conservation. We go on a short hike to learn about watersheds and explore how scientists monitor our aquatic systems by conducting a biological survey (i.e. searching for aquatic macroinvertebrates).

CREEK & WATER QUALITY
Grades: 9 - 12
Duration: 2 - 2.5 hours
~ Mileage: 0.5 miles
What is a water cycle? What is an indicator species? What is the difference between point-source/nonpoint-source pollution? Students will observe the creek’s health by conducting a stream assessment, monitoring for stream pH, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen, and identifying aquatic macroinvertebrates using a dichotomous key.
RED MOUNTAIN FIELD TRIP OPTIONS

All field trips at Red Mountain Park include an interactive hike within the park.
*Please note - at this time, there are no restrooms available, only porta-potties.
Address: 2011 Frankfurt Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35211

BIRMINGHAM’S INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

Grades: 9 - 12
Duration: 2.0 - 2.5 hours
~ Mileage: 1.5 miles
How did Birmingham’s natural resources help shape our city? See first-hand the environmental impact that mining industries had on the forests of Birmingham, including air quality and forest succession. Look back in time to learn the beginnings of the “Magic City” and how miners once lived and worked as we hike to mine #13 of Red Mountain.

SERVICE LEARNING - FOREST RECLAMATION

Grades: 6-12
Duration: 2.5 - 3 hours
~ Mileage: 2 miles
What happens after a mountain has been mined? What plants and animals return and what can we do as stewards of the land to preserve biodiversity? Students will have a hands-on experience looking at Red Mountain’s second-growth forest. Students will participate in invasive species removal and learn how to identify invasive and native plants.

OFFSITE PROGRAMS

Offsite programs can be requested for library groups, booth events, and up to 30 students. For multiple class visits, a $100 charge will be added. The limit is three classes per day.

Grades: 1 - 12 | Cost: $250 | Duration: 45 - 60 minutes

ALABAMA ANIMALS

Discover Alabama’s amazing wildlife and biodiversity by meeting three of JCGC’s Animal Ambassadors. During this program, we will examine their different roles in the forest ecosystem by discussing unique adaptations, diets, and habitats. Our special team of animals (typically a raptor, turtle, snake, and bugs) will teach the value of conservation and the importance of protecting our environment.

ALABAMA SNAKES

Alabama is home to more than 40 species of snakes, 6 of which are venomous! Although often perceived as dangerous, snakes play a critical role in the health of our ecosystems. Learn how to properly identify snakes found in central Alabama by seeing up close three live nonvenomous snakes (species tbd) and six venomous snake models.

MISSION: TO PRESERVE AND CARE FOR JEFFERSON COUNTY’S PARKS AND PRESERVES AS SANCTUARIES FOR OUR NEIGHBORS, NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS.