



SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Official Newsletter of Sunny Southeast Region

Director's Update:

We've talked before about trying different things, finding new paths, and making changes. Change can come in many forms and with it, growth. But this doesn't always mean finding a completely new job or moving to a different state or even a different country! Growth can happen in small ways too.

I work for Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, which is made up of many smaller divisions. My division, Nature Preserves & Natural Resources, has until recently handled the majority of nature related programs. It's been that way for a while now, simply because our nature center locations and professional experience have given us an advantage. Having your base of operations located in a 1400-acre nature preserve certainly makes it easier to facilitate nature-based programming! But this doesn't mean that no one else in the entire department can lead such programs. In addition to the nature centers, our department is home to 26 recreation and senior centers; these centers have Recreation Specialists who are willing and able to lead outdoor programming, if only they had the opportunity. Enter an initiative we call CC2N, Connecting Communities to Nature. Nature Center interpreters provide opportunities for Recreation Specialists to forge personal connections with nature through canoeing, animal encounters, nature hikes, and other activities. Our interpreters also help the recreation center teams develop nature-based lesson plans and incorporate nature into existing center activities by exploring what outdoor space is available at each site.

With this in mind, I would challenge each of you to find some way to grow this season, be it small or large. Try a different skill or method of delivery in your programs. Consider working with seniors rather than elementary school kids. Incorporate a new program prop or phase an older one out. You might be surprised by the results you get and, regardless of those results, you will grow as an interpreter.

The National Conference is rapidly approaching, with options to attend virtually or in-person. Whatever way you choose to attend, conferences like these are excellent opportunities for growth, both professionally and personally. Events like this offer the chance to learn different techniques, to hash out new ideas with knowledgeable experts, and to forge life-long connections with other interpreters. I hope you will consider attending in one form or another and I look forward to seeing as many of you as I can!

Until next time,

Christine



Transmissions from the South:

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources launched two new programs this summer to help kids explore their natural surroundings and enjoy screen-free learning! Connected to the larger NC PATH (Parks and Trails for Health) initiative, it has created the NC Kids' Exploration Journal and NC PATH Outdoor Exploration Kits in use now at many DNCR locations across the state.

Printed copies of the NC Kids' Exploration Journal are available for free at these locations. They contain several self-guided activities to discover nature just outside the front door, as well as blank pages for kids to write and draw about their outdoor experiences.

To learn more, contact karen.ipock@ncdcr.gov about NC Kids' Exploration Journal and sonya.laney@ncdcr.gov for the NC PATH Outdoor Exploration Kits.

Sonya Laney
Outreach Coordinator
Education and Outreach
NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

STEVENS CREEK NATURE CENTER, NC

Hi there!

My name is Corinne Rizzo and I have taken over the task of editing our regional newsletter.

With the last two years being wonky and Rhana retiring from the position of Newsletter Editor, our publishing cycle has been a bit rough. However, I am here to let my lovely Sunny Southerners know that we are back and publishing on a seasonal cycle again. If you have updates you would like to share with the region or if you have shout-outs or award-winning news, I want the whole region to know about it!

To submit to the Southern Exposure, just send your items in an attached Word file to Corinne.Rizzo@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov and I will make sure your news makes it into the next newsletter.

Sites to See:

Stevens Creek Nature Center



Officially open as of September 2021, Stevens Creek Nature Center protects over 230 acres of southern piedmont forest and two miles of newly restored creek habitat. Together with federal, state, and local agencies, Stevens Creek Nature Center hopes to welcome back the endangered Carolina Heelsplitter to the aquatic ecosystem it once thrived in.



Want to Feature Your Site?

Email a description and your best photos to:

Corinne.Rizzo@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov

Save the Date:

JUNIOR WOLF HOWL



WNC Nature Center, Asheville, North Carolina
October 8, 15, & 29
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
\$15.00 – \$20.00

Join us for an exciting, family-friendly night of learning about wolf ecology and howling with the wolves!

WOLF HOWL

WNC Nature Center, Asheville, North Carolina
October 22 and November 5
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
\$20.00 - \$30.00

Join us for an exciting night of learning about wolf ecology and howling with the wolves!

NATURE AT NIGHT FESTIVAL

McDowell Nature Center
15222 South York Road, Charlotte, North Carolina
October 11 - 16

Annual family friendly celebration of all things nocturnal, but with a new format. Visit just one nature center or all four for exciting opportunities to discover woodland nightlife!
Program topics and times vary.
Please visit www.parkandrec.com to register.

Cameral Roll:

Recreation Specialists work together with Educators and Interpreters to help create a more interpretation focused Park and Recreation division in Mecklenburg County.



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