

**Providing Hands-on  
Environmental Education**



# Our Mission

The mission of the Trumbull Nature & Arts Center is to provide nature-rich experiences to the members of our community.



# Our History

- 2005-2010 Town of Trumbull Town Council establishes Nature Commission to provide nature, art and science programs to the community. Town Council dedicates the property at 7115 Main Street to the Trumbull Nature Commission in perpetuity. “Full Circle” playground is donated by Sun Products and installed on TNAC grounds.
- 2011 The Patrons of TNAC, Inc. is established as a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization to provide fundraising and develop programming.
- 2012 - 2020 Field trip and children and family programs expanded; trail signage installed; butterfly garden certified as a monarch waystation; increased community and corporate partnerships.



# Fulfilling Our Mission

The Trumbull Nature & Arts Center fulfills its mission by offering STEM-based environmental education programs to students and families. Teaching children the value of nature is at the core of TNAC's vision. Nature education leads to an understanding of the environment which in turn fosters a life-long commitment to environmental conservation. The ways we reach our audience include:

- Curriculum-based field trips and in-school visits
- Virtual STEM lessons
- Summer fun field trips
- Family programs
- Volunteer opportunities



# TNAC's Role in Environmental Science Education

The Trumbull Nature & Arts Center is a provider of informal science education focusing on environmental education.

- Informal science education (ISE) is lifelong learning in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) that takes place across a multitude of designed settings and experiences outside of the formal classroom. Informal learning experiences play a crucial role in fostering a scientifically literate citizenry\*
- Environmental education (EE) is a process that helps individuals, communities, and organizations learn more about the environment, and develop skills and understanding about how to address global challenges\*\*



A group of children are sitting around a wooden table outdoors, engaged in a craft activity. In the center of the table is a white plate with a colorful floral pattern, holding a small blue and yellow stuffed animal and a red string. To the right, a child in a purple jacket is holding a red string. In the foreground, a long, narrow piece of pink and red knitted fabric lies on the table. A pink and blue bag with a cartoon character is visible in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

# Field Trips and In-School Visits

# Field Trip Program Development

We work with teachers and administrators to develop grade-level programs that enhance and build upon classroom curriculum lessons through **immersive experiential learning.**

TNAC's school-year programs align with district curricula and Next Generation Science Standards.



# Field Trips: Kindergarten

TNAC has provided thousands of Kindergarten students with in-school classroom visits.

- Animal Homes and Structures
- Weather and Seasonal Changes
- Seed Planting
- Egg Hatching (as a supplemental program for schools that incubate eggs as part of their science curriculum)

Kindergarten students also visit TNAC for on-site nature exploration field trips.

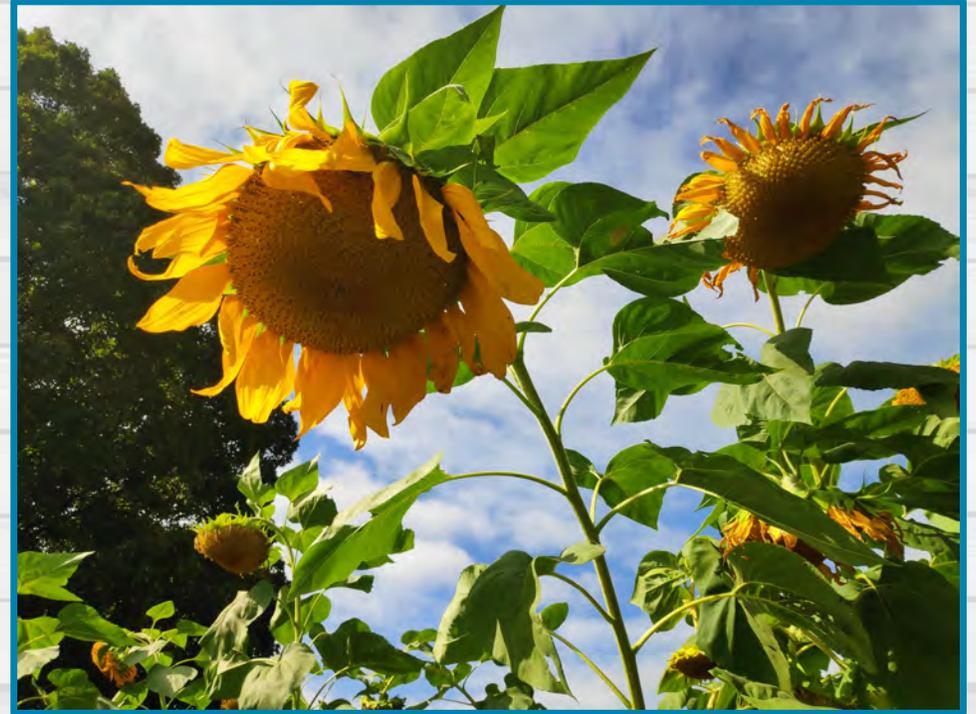


# Field Trips: First Grade

In 2019, TNAC began offering in-school programs to First Graders.

## Plants and Insects:

- Plant dissection and flower flow experiment
- Beekeeping & pollination
- Seed Planting
- Insect safari and cricket habitat



# Field Trips: Second Grade

TNAC worked with Trumbull school teachers and administrators to align our programs with Next Generation Science Standards. Activities include:

- Seed dispersal
- Erosion mountains
- Biodiversity walk
- Ecosystem experiments
- Beaver habitat simulation



Schools across the region have brought their students to TNAC for our second grade programs.

# Field Trips: Third Grade

Exploring the habitats on the TNAC grounds leads to the discovery of biodiverse native plants and animals. Students also learn the impact of humans to their environment.

- Pond exploration
- Meadow and forest hike
- Clay creature adaptation activity



# Field Trips: Fourth Grade

TNAC offers new team-based programs for Fourth Graders. Students assess an environmental situation and inventory the available resources. Then they engineer changes to the environment to improve the situation.

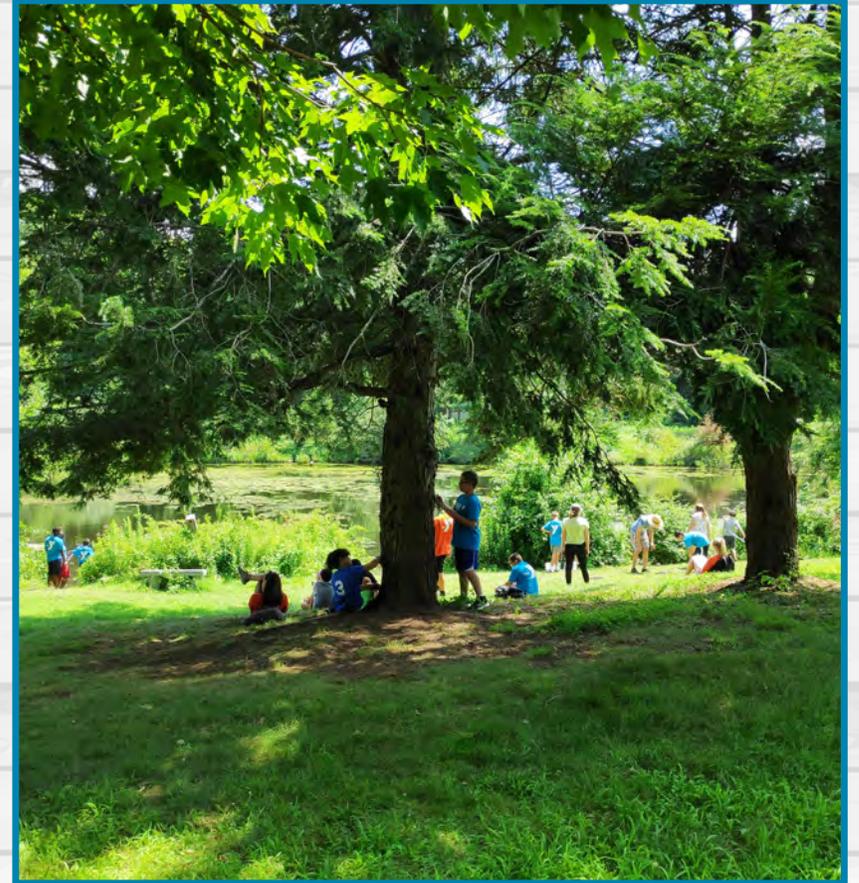
- Flower and seed dissection
- Erosion mountains and mountainside village
- Biogeology and changes over time
- Biogeology and beaver dams
- Save our town from rising sea levels!



# Field Trips: Summer Fun

At TNAC, summer means nature fun! Regional camps send their campers to TNAC for outdoor exploration and creative learning.

- Pond exploration, including viewing macroinvertebrates through a microscope
- Meadow and forest hike
- A craft such as rainsticks and nature journals



A group of five people are engaged in an outdoor activity on a grassy bank next to a river. The scene is set in autumn, with trees showing vibrant orange and red foliage. One person in a blue jacket is bent over, another in a pink jacket is standing nearby, and others are crouching or kneeling on the grass. A white bucket and some equipment are scattered on the ground. The text 'Scholarship-funded Programs' is overlaid in large white font across the middle of the image.

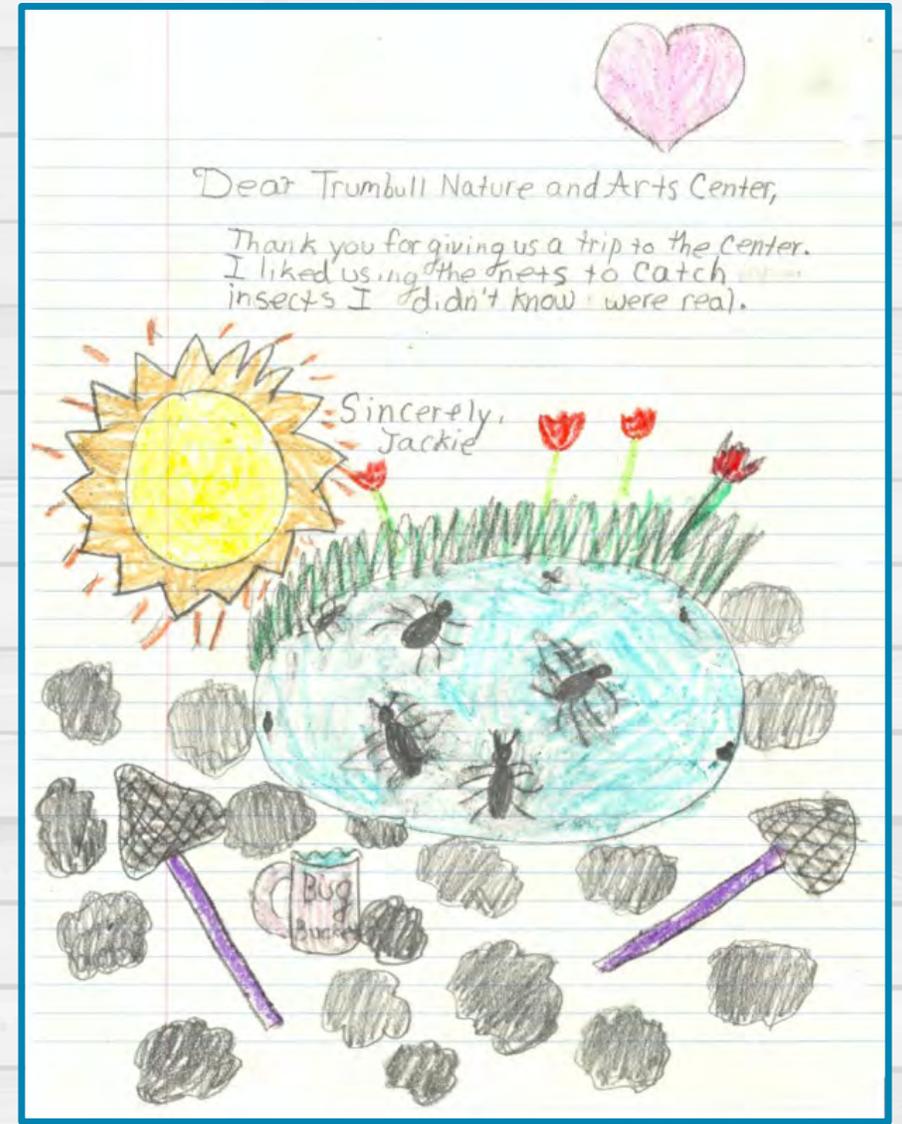
# Scholarship-funded Programs

# Scholarship Program

We believe that all students should have the opportunity to benefit from nature education. TNAC's scholarship program has provided thousands of children from underserved communities with field trips and in-school visits at no cost.

Our scholarship program has been funded from various sources including:

- Corporate donations
- Foundation grants
- State of Connecticut Youth Services Prevention funding



# Scholarship Program

This video was created by a Bridgeport, CT elementary school teacher in appreciation of their field trip funded through the TNAC Scholarship Program.

Click on image at right to play.  
Internet access required.



A vibrant photograph of several large sunflowers in full bloom. The sunflowers have bright yellow petals and dark brown, textured centers. They are set against a background of lush green trees and a clear blue sky. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**Programs for Families,  
the Community, and  
Corporate Partners**

# Children & Family Programs

TNAC offers programs throughout the year. Examples include:

- Winter
  - Wreath-making
  - Maple sugaring demo
  - Groundhog Day
- Spring
  - Fishing 101
  - Earth Day Celebration
- Summer
  - Animal tracking
  - Intro to Archery
- Fall
  - Sunflower harvesting
  - Native American Storytelling
  - Birdfeeder decorating



# Community Programs

TNAC partners with the Town of Trumbull and community groups to broaden our outreach to the wider community.

- Participation in annual Trumbull Day event
- Partnership with the Trumbull Health Department, Trumbull Historical Society, Trumbull Library, Trumbull Community Women, and Long Hill Garden Club
- Opportunities for meaningful volunteer work by Kennedy Center adult clients
- Projects for Eagle Scout candidates



# Corporate Partnerships

TNAC has built a solid relationship with Fairfield County businesses. Their volunteers and financial support have been essential to our success.

- Henkel
  - Under previous ownership as Sun Products, funded our Full Circle Playground in 2009. Since then, was a major contributor to our Outdoor Nature's Classroom Pavilion and has participated in employee volunteer days for over 10 years.
- Unilever
  - Long-time partner, with a long-term employee volunteer effort.
- Pitney Bowes
  - First volunteered in 2019, with hopes to continue in the future.
- People's United Bank
  - Employee volunteers to participate once grounds are reopened.



# Community Impact

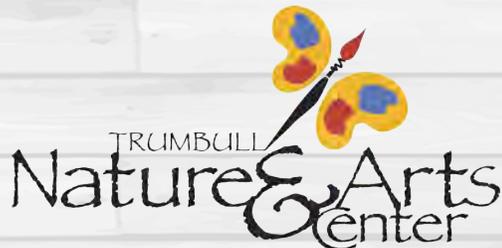


# Commitment to Conservation

As stewards of the Nature Center, the Patrons of TNAC educate the public on benefits of local plant and animal species, and the damage that can be caused by invasives.

## Projects include:

- Meadow habitat renewal: Meadow habitat are a diminishing asset across the state, and TNAC is helping this important resource by removing invasive plants and replacing them with native varieties.
- Plants and animals education: Educating the public helps to create citizen scientists that protect our natural environment.



# Effective Outcomes

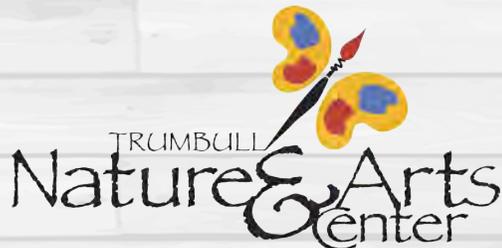
Our policy is to have an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of our programs.

Our goals are to:

- Spark interest and excitement in science
- Help visitors to understand scientific content & knowledge
- Allow our visitors to engage in scientific reasoning
- Provide the tools and language of science
- Develop critically important interest in science

We measure these goals through:

- Internal evaluation
- Post-program questionnaires to educators
- Feedback from educators, school administrators, students, and visitors



Q1  
Please provide your name and your school's name.  
Theresa Welch Beardsley School

Q2  
What percentage of your students had some knowledge of the topics covered during your field trip BEFORE the field trip date?  
0-25 percent

Q3  
What percentage of your students had some knowledge of the topics covered during your field trip AFTER the field trip date?  
76 - 100 percent

Q4  
Please rate the educational value of the three stations your classes visited.

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Meadow and Forest Exploration   | Excellent |
| Pond Exploration                | Excellent |
| Adaptive Clay Creature Building | Excellent |

Q5  
Using the scale below, please indicate the value that TNAC's hands-on activities added to the lessons learned in your classroom.  
100

Q6  
What do you consider to be the most valuable part(s) of the field trip?  
The hands on component of getting kids outdoors to truly experience nature is of immeasurable benefit!

Q7  
Is there anything that you would like us to do differently?  
Would love to track habitats across seasons - maybe a visit in fall, winter and spring to see how it changes.

Q8  
How likely is it that you would recommend this field trip to a friend or colleague?  
Extremely likely - 10 (Promoter)

# TNAC's COVID-19 Response

In mid-March 2020, TNAC's building and grounds were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So that we could continue to provide environmental education to our community, we implemented distance learning programs.

We created a 5-part Life Cycles Egg Hatching video series. This series was produced in cooperation with the Trumbull Public Schools system for their Kindergarten classes. We have produced more videos, and we post activities on our website and social media in order to keep children learning about nature.

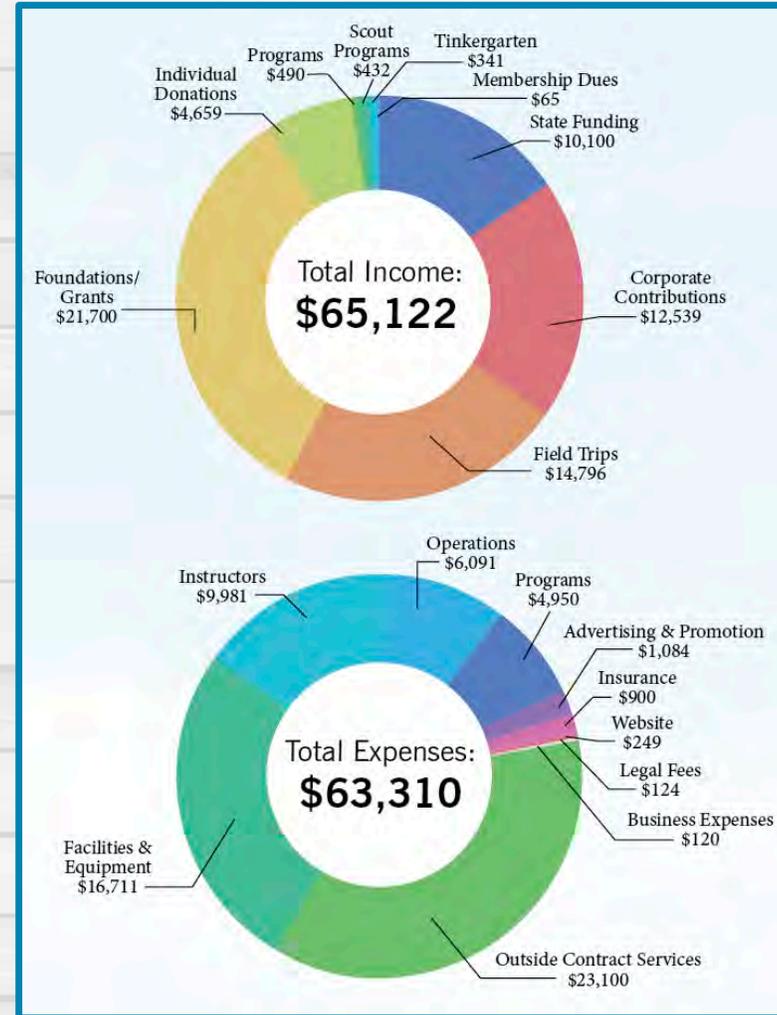
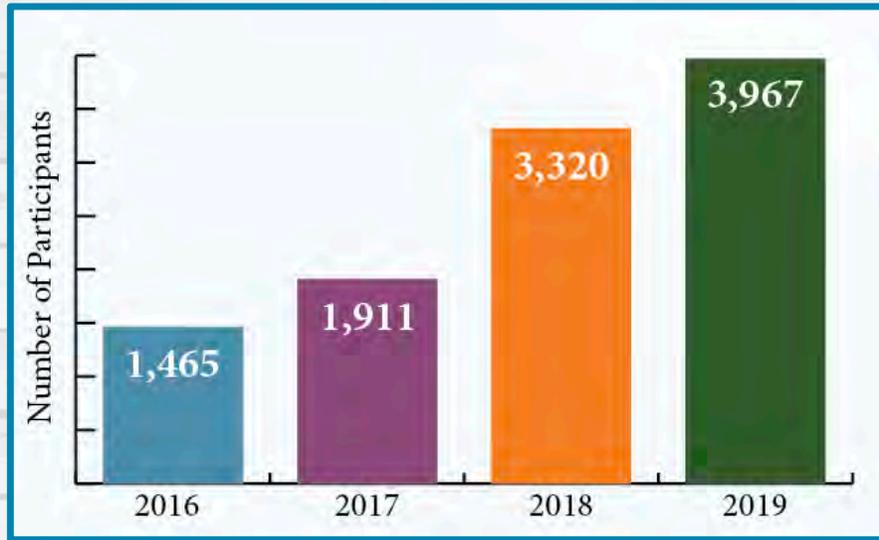
This summer, we'll be teaming up with teens from regional high schools to create fun science videos for kids.



Click on the video above to view "Signs of Spring Forest & Wetlands".  
Internet access is required.

# Financials and Program Participation Rates

In 2019, TNAC showed its largest growth ever, both in income and program participation.



# Looking Forward

The COVID-19 global pandemic, and the resulting quarantine, has temporarily disrupted usual TNAC operations. Ordered to close in mid-March, TNAC pivoted to distance learning programs. These programs are being offered free of charge so that all students will have access to nature education.

Now, more than ever, Corporate and Foundation grants are critical for sustaining TNAC's operations and programs so that we may continue to provide students and families with crucial environmental education.

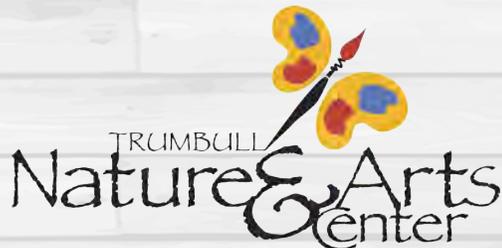
Our Strategic Plan outlines the ways that TNAC will be providing environmental education to our community as we move through the reopening process.



# Strategic Plan

In these challenging times, we have had the opportunity to step back and envision our future. Our three-prong approach includes:

- **If schools do not allow field trips or in-class visits in the 2020-21 school year:**
  - Continue to provide distance learning opportunities
- **Once small groups of visitors are allowed at TNAC:**
  - Provide programs for a limited number of visitors, with staggered visitation times
- **Long Term Sustainability**
  - Expanded field trips and in-classroom visits; including addressing diversity and inclusion
  - Continue to be an essential driving force in Trumbull's sustainability efforts
  - Refurbished/new building facilities that would allow us to provide programs in colder/inclement weather

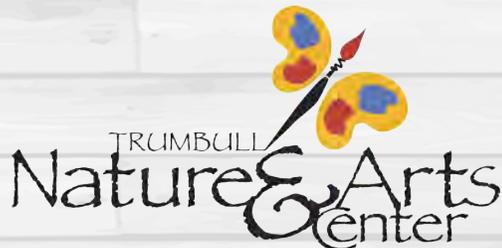


# Summary and Contact Info

We are a small but impactful Nature Center that has provided environmental education to thousands of students throughout lower Connecticut. We love what we do and would love for you to become a part of our growing mission.

For more information, please contact us:

- Website: [www.trumbullnatureandartscenter.org](http://www.trumbullnatureandartscenter.org)
- Email: [patronsoftnac@gmail.com](mailto:patronsoftnac@gmail.com)
- Phone: 203-452-4421



Dear Trumbull Nature  
Center,

Thank you for  
your generosity in  
coming to present the  
Animal Habitats talk to  
our students. The  
presentation was engaging  
and informative!

We look forward to  
visiting your center in  
the spring.

Sincerely,  
Cheryl Halehak - Bryant  
School Bpt.