The McDuffie Environmental Education Center (MEEC) provides a unique site for teachers to bring students for hands-on outdoor and indoor learning experiences. These experiences teach students about the ecology of our wildlife, water, soils, and forests, and the stewardship of these important natural resources. Lessons address the dimensions of the Georgia Standards of Excellence in a diverse biologically rich area, with activities available for PreK through Seventh Grade.

The McDuffie Environmental Education Center is open by reservation only. It is recommended that dates be booked well in advance in order to secure desired dates.  Reservations for up to 3 classes for a total of 75 students can be made.

Fees: $5 per student

We also offer accommodations and adaptations of Performance Standards for students with disabilities, based on information provided when reservations are made.

**Third Grade – Beavers and Wetlands**

**Wetland Beaver Trail**

PE3.3, PE3.5, S3E1c, S3L1, S3L2

Students will walk around the hatchery ponds to the Blackwater Swamp. During the first part of the hike students are challenged to observe the contrast between a sand-hill habitat and a wetland habitat as well as compare the public fishing ponds to the hatchery ponds. Animal sightings and student observations often spark additional discussion. Once on the board-walked trail, students experience the wetland environment, learn its important contribution to a healthy eco-system and look for evidence of beaver activity. Characteristics of beavers and their reputations as both master-builders and nuisances are discussed.

**Beaver Tracks and Adaptations**

S3E2, S3L1b

The instructor will discuss fossil formation and fossil evidence as well as how we use more recent animal evidence to make observations about the life within an ecosystem. Students will make a plaster cast of a beaver track to take home.  In addition, one student volunteer will be dressed as a beaver during an inquiry session about the many unique adaptations of the species.

**Discovery Room**

S2L1, ELAGSE2RI1, ELAGSE2RI2

Students rotate through centers and displays which emphasize wildlife characteristics and habitat. Students begin with a scavenger hunt for facts using the expository texts located in the display cases. Additional stations may include making leaf rubbings, creating animal tracks, identifying animal furs, using magnifying instruments, and using scales.

**Wheel of Nature**

Students participate in a game-style two-team activity. When it is his or her turn, a team member spins a wheel to determine how much a question is worth. To obtain the points for his side, the student answers the given question. Questions are based on the MEEC curriculum and include habitat features, wildlife adaptations, and identification of animal pictures, pelts, sounds, skins etc. to bring questions to life. Teamwork is encouraged as rules allow students to confer on difficult questions.

**Fishing**

ESS3.A, ESS3.C, LS4.C, PE3.4, PE3.5

Following an orientation on how fish depend on their surroundings, adaptations, reason for the hatchery, what humans need fish for, what the sport of fishing is and does for us and the safety and proper use of equipment the students will participate in the sport of angling.Students will be supervised by the instructor, staff, teachers, and chaperones. Students will learn to bait a hook, cast, reel and hopefully catch a fish. If fish are caught measurements will be taken and depending on grade level

**Customized sessions**

Depending on fish production, a tour of the hatchery building may be available upon request. A Kids Fishing Event may also be arranged as part of the MEEC experience.