Georgia Urban Ecologists (GUE) 2024-25: Athens Cohort

This drop-off program for youth in grades 7 through 12 provides opportunities for hands-on field experiences and fun with peers. Perfect for students interested in pursuing careers in science or conservation or those who just enjoy being outside in nature--learn alongside experts in the field and establish a network of environmental professionals while enjoying the outdoors! **Sessions occur one Saturday a month from 10 AM-1 PM** unless otherwise noted. Athens Cohort is open to students in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Banks, Oconee, Jackson, Madison, Oglethorpe, and Walton counties.

**Calendar:**

**September 15** Orientation with Birds Georgia via Zoom, 4:00-5:00 PM

**October 12** (no rain date) **Stream Survey**
Sandy Creek Nature Center
Discover how to tell if a stream is clean through stream monitoring. Learn what kinds of organisms can be found in freshwater streams through macroinvertebrate sampling, complete a visual survey, and conduct chemical testing.

**November 9** (rain date November 10) **Invertebrates in the Winter**
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Changes in the weather can affect wildlife in many ways, and insects and other invertebrates are no exception. In this session, we will explore how some insects prepare for their overwintering stage. We will also talk about other invertebrates, by learning how to categorize spider webs and conduct some research in the garden.

**December 14** (rain date December 15) **Art and Nature**
State Botanical Garden of Georgia
By looking at how different artists perceive the natural environment through various mediums and throughout history, and creating their own artwork based on what they have discovered, students will explore how the intersection of art and nature can be beneficial in fostering environmental advocacy.

**January 11** (rain date January 12) **Wonders of Water**
Athens-Clarke County Water Conservation Office
See first-hand how drinking water treatment and delivery, an invaluable service, is made possible by the Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department.

**February 8** (rain date February 9) **Georgia’s Ecological Diversity**
UGA Museum of Natural History
Deep dive into Georgia’s natural history and new migration exhibit through the main gallery. Students will also get to meet with the museum’s curators who will share their expertise on the ornithology collection.

**March 8** (rain date March 9) **Animal Husbandry**
Bear Hollow Zoo
Students will tour Bear Hollow Zoo, which is home to native, non-releasable wildlife, and learn about our mission. Students will also meet our ambassador animals up close and learn about their husbandry, training, and care. We’ll also do a hands-on enrichment activity!
April 12 (rain date April 13) Spring Migration
Oconee Rivers Audubon Society
Bird banding is a vital part of bird research. In this session, students will observe the process of “banding”, which involves using mist-nets to safely capture birds in order to attach a metal leg band. Through this process, important data is collected and used to inform conservation efforts. Students will get to see a variety of birds up close and learn about their incredible migration journeys. All birds will be captured and handled in accordance with strict protocols and under state and federal permitting requirements.

May 10 (rain date May 11) Park Clean-up and Picnic
Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful
Fight litter and contribute to local conservation through a park clean-up and entering data into UGA’s Debris Tracker. We’ll also celebrate the end of a great year with a picnic!

Thank you to our partners who make this program possible:
Georgia Department of Natural Resources, UGA Museum of Natural History, Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services, Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Oconee Rivers Audubon Society, and Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful