“Preserving, restoring, and enjoying the natural world through education and action” since 1982, the last 20+ of those years have focused on providing impactful educational programs for youth...

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Pre-K – 5th graders participate in our state curriculum-aligned school programs, many of which include a visit to a PVAS preserve or nearby park. Thousands of children benefit from these programs each year thanks to volunteers, grants, sponsors, and donors.

“The watershed program helps spark ideas for action projects. This year, we created pollinator gardens. I love that it fosters a better understanding of how their actions can impact our environment. These projects help them realize they are able to change the world and make it a better place.”

– Jean Nedorostek, Blue Ridge Elementary

SUMMER CAMP

Over 21 years, Audubon Discovery Camp has provided over 6,000 children with hands-on experiences in nature and helped inspire campers to protect it. Campers have grown into educators, environmental advocates, and scientists.

“Camp gave me a connection to and appreciation for our planet and her resources that many people never get the chance to experience. It’s why I decided to become an environmental lawyer. I wanted to protect and preserve the joy and passion that I got from my experience for future generations to experience as well.”

– Maddie Hinkle, Past PVAS Camper

PRESERVE PROGRAMS

Outdoor School, Wee Naturalists, Trail of Bones, our Nature Playspace, and other experiences at PVAS-managed preserves are a great way to engage children in a less formal way. Learning through games, hikes, exploration and play, these programs are a great introduction to the natural world.

“The conversations they have when they come home from Outdoor School are so engaging! They are so interested in what they learned during the day, that they want to continue the learning at home. They even wanted to tap our maple tree in the front yard after learning about it at Outdoor School.”

– Maggie Smith, Outdoor School Parent
FUTURE EDUCATORS
PVAS's AmeriCorps service members gain invaluable experience teaching in classrooms, schoolyards, and nature preserves. PVAS mentors help them become the next generation of environmental educators. Our AmeriCorps are now teachers, naturalists, freshwater ecologists, and founders of conservation non-profits.

“My AmeriCorps experience with PVAS was the perfect transition from academia into environmental education and nonprofit work - a pivotal decision that eventually led to my forming an organization to help landowners coexist with beavers. I simply would not be where I am today without the mentorship of the wonderful folks at PVAS.”

– Alison Zak, Founder, Human-Beaver Coexistence Fund and Author of Animal Asana

PREERVES AS CLASSROOMS
Learning comes to life in the natural world. The forests, fields, wetlands, and streams PVAS manages provide learning spaces for rich, hands-on, real-world experiences for kids, many of whom engage with the natural world for the first time on a school field trip with PVAS.

“I’ve never been in a forest before.”
“This is the best day of my life!”
– 3rd graders, Ranson Elementary School

OUTREACH
When kids can’t come to us, we go to them. Our goal is to be accessible to children and families wherever they live in our service area. Partnerships with local youth organizations ensure urban youth have hands-on, educational experiences.

EXTRAORDINARY STAFF
With the growth of youth programs over the years, staffing has increased as well. We now have three full-time program staff including an Associate Director of Education. This new role will strategically guide PVAS programs in the next phase of growth to ensure quality, relevant, impactful programs for area children.

IMPACT
PVAS’s youth programs fulfill a critical need in our region - increased knowledge and passion for the natural world, access to nature for all, and the mental and physical health benefits nature provides.