

Greeting Trees & Trails Docents and Supporters!

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year! My name is Sarah Rayner, and I am the Youth Education Coordinator for Trees and Trails. Some of you already know me through volunteering with the Master Gardeners for which I have been a member since 2011. I am a retired biology teacher, having taught classes in the biological sciences for 25 years. My love of nature has existed since early childhood experiences, when I would spend hours outside catching and observing fireflies, and bees, and a variety of wildlife from ditches and ponds.

Though we have been experiencing some very cold days, Spring is not far off. The teachers at the schools in East Baton Rouge and the surrounding parishes have begun to book dates for their classes to participate in the Trees & Trails Programs. Trees and Trails field trips begin the first week of March. Volunteer Docents are greatly needed to go forward with this program. Without your continued dedication and support, many students may not have the opportunity to experience the fun of learning in this outdoor interactive field trip. So many thanks to our Volunteer Docents. You are the "heartbeat" of Trees & Trails. Also, volunteer hours with Trees & Trails can be used towards your Master Gardener or Master Naturalist required service hours.

We will hold our Spring Docent Orientation on Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, from 9:00am-11:30am in the Burden Conference Center. **(Please see attached flyer)**. If the weather permits, we will spend a portion of the orientation walking the trails and discussing the stations. Coffee, snacks and refreshments will be provided. We encourage all current Trees & Trails Docents to attend. While no new information will be presented at the meeting, you will have the opportunity to meet and greet individuals who are interested in becoming Docents. Your input is vital for the success of Trees & Trails.

If you already have a Docent Kit, please bring it with you to the orientation. Any suggestions or materials that you would like to share would be most welcomed. If you know of any individuals who have a passion for nature and enjoy working with children, or who would like to learn more about becoming a Trees & Trails Volunteer Docent, we would very much welcome them to join us on Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> as well.

**Please let me know if you are planning on attending the Orientation on Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. My email address is [SR@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:SR@agcenter.lsu.edu). I can also be reached at: (225)763-3990, ext.3.** If you have not received a Docent Kit, or if you are interested in becoming a Trees & Trails Docent, please contact me so that a Docent Kit will be ready for you to pick up at the Orientation. If you are interested in becoming a Docent but are unable to attend the orientation, please let me know so that I can arrange a time to meet with you.

As soon as the Trees & Trails field trips dates are confirmed, I will let you know the dates, what program(s), and the number of students so that you can volunteer to make

the field trip a fun time for you and the children. So far, the following field trips have been booked:

February 28<sup>th</sup> – “Forester’s” Program-approximately 37 students (9:00am-1:30pm).

March 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> - “Dragonflies” Program- approximately 100, first grade students each of the dates listed. (9:00-12:30).

March 21<sup>st</sup>- “Explorers” Program- approximately 74, fourth grade students. (9:00am-11:15am).

April 12<sup>th</sup>-Modified “Dragonflies” Program-6 students with severe disabilities.

Nature continues to inspire me. It is through programs like Trees & Trails that allows us who are so passionate about nature to share that love with the children.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the Spring Docent Orientation on Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>!

Sincerely,

**Sarah Rayner**  
**Youth Education Coordinator**  
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