





Learning Happens Here

DNCR's Impact on K–12 Education

DNCR

North Carolina Department of
Natural & Cultural Resources

"...the sites and initiatives under the DNCR umbrella are not just willing, but *eager* to partner with teachers to support North Carolina students. I was consistently impressed with the quality, sincerity, and depth of expertise among all of the DNCR site managers, interpreters, and staff."

– Sarah Walls, 2025 DNCR Teacher Ambassador (Durham County)

What's on the cover?

A Cumberland County student examines samples from the Neuse River with the **NC Museum of Natural Sciences.**

Students visit DNCR for an **America 250 NC** event and engage with costumed interpreters and artifacts from **Historic Sites** and the **State Archives**.

Students explore fossils along the coast with **NC Aquariums.**

Table of Contents

Welcome to DNCR: Learning Happens Here 4

Learning Happens Here Field Trip Fund 5

DNCR Teacher Ambassadors 6

America 250 NC 7

Aquariums 8

Office of State Archaeology 10

State Archives 11

Museum of Art Raleigh & Winston-Salem 12

Arts Council/A+ Schools 13

Battleship North Carolina 14

Capital Area Visitors Services 15

African American Heritage Commission 16

American Indian Heritage Commission 17

Historic Sites 18

NC History Day 20

Museum of History 22

Regional Museums of History 24

Internships 28

Library of North Carolina 29

Museum of Natural Sciences 30

State Parks 32

North Carolina Symphony 34

Tryon Palace 35

North Carolina Zoo 36

All Across North Carolina ... Learning Happens *Here*

Education has long been a cornerstone of the **North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR)**. For over 50 years, DNCR has sparked curiosity and a lifelong love of learning through a rich network of museums, parks, historic sites, aquariums, libraries, archives, the zoo, and other cultural institutions and programs.



Secretary Pam Cashwell delivers school supplies to Pitt County Public Schools students and Superintendent Dr. Steve M. Lassiter Jr. during the annual Governor's School Supply Drive.

That commitment continues today through our statewide **Learning Happens Here** initiative, which highlights and strengthens the educational impact of more than 100 DNCR sites and programs. In each of North Carolina's 100 counties, DNCR staff deliver high-quality K–12 programming that supports educators and expands access to meaningful learning experiences for students. Through their efforts, DNCR:

- Supports educators with year-round, content-rich professional development that empowers K–12 teachers with place-based learning and interdisciplinary classroom strategies.
- Enhances classroom learning through in-person field trips, outreach visits, and ready-to-use instructional materials that bring North Carolina's history, culture, and natural wonders to life.
- Expands access for rural students. With over one-third of North Carolina's students living in rural communities, DNCR serves all 100 counties through field trip funding, educator support, classroom visits, and virtual learning.
- Extends educational impact through digital exhibits, online collections, career exploration, and public programming, nurturing a love for North Carolina and strengthening a shared sense of identity.

"We invite teachers, schools, & community partners to join us in this journey, as we empower the next generation of North Carolinians to thrive in a future shaped by innovative learning, place-based discovery, & meaningful connections to our shared history & culture."

– Pamela B. Cashwell, Secretary

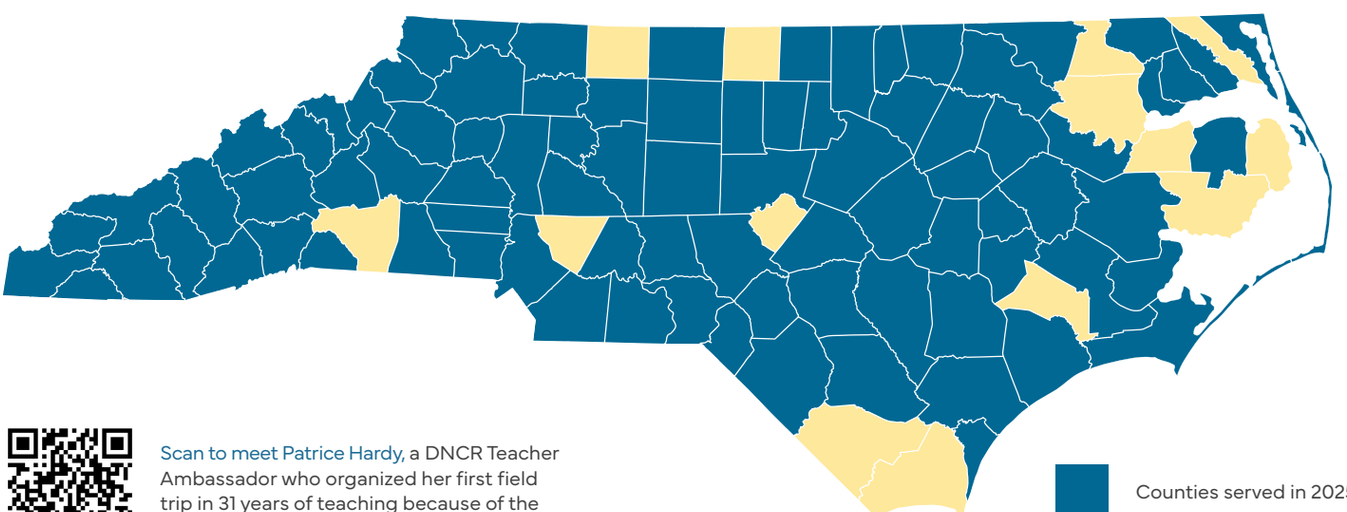
View educator resources and information about Learning Happens Here.

Field Trip Fund

Helping ensure students from every corner of the state, regardless of geography or financial barriers, can experience NC's most cherished spaces.

Launched in November of 2024, the Learning Happens Here Field Trip Fund reimburses public and charter schools for educational field trips to all DNCR-managed sites, as well as the General Assembly. These visits deepen students' understanding of our state's history, culture, and environment, while fostering a lifelong connection to what it means to live in, and love, North Carolina.

The Field Trip Fund's Impact in Year One:
304 Schools · 21,418 Students · $691,558 Awarded · 86 Counties Served



Counties served in 2025

Scan to meet Patrice Hardy, a DNCR Teacher Ambassador who organized her first field trip in 31 years of teaching because of the Learning Happens Here Field Trip Fund.





"Our students are from rural NC & don't always know what exists outside of our small community. This funding allows us to take students places without placing a financial burden on families."

– Greene Early College

▲ Ansonville Elementary (Anson County) pans for gold at Reed Gold Mine.

▲ Candler Elementary School (Buncombe County) explores Vance Birthplace.

Teacher Ambassadors

DNCR's Learning Happens Here Teacher Ambassadors program, launched in 2025, empowers outstanding K–12 educators from each region of the state to explore, experience, and promote North Carolina's rich cultural, historical and natural resources. Ambassadors participate in immersive, hands-on learning at DNCR sites—from archaeological digs and behind-the-scenes museum tours to symphony rehearsals and explorations of historic sites—gaining firsthand knowledge they bring back to their classrooms, school districts, and local communities.

Serving as liaisons between DNCR and their regions, Ambassadors help expand access to high-quality, place-based learning and strengthen the connection between classroom instruction and state-managed sites. By investing in teacher leadership and professional development, the program supports educator retention, enriches student learning, and fosters a deeper appreciation for the people, places, and stories that define North Carolina.

As 2025 Ambassador Pauline Merritt (Cleveland County) summarized the experience: "DNCR Teacher Ambassadors is a program where you will feel deeply respected as an educator, find like-minded colleagues, and explore meaningful historical and cultural resources dedicated to preparing students for the future."



18 teachers from 14 school districts comprised the inaugural cohort, dedicating over **1,800 hours** to DNCR.

6,600

estimated students impacted annually by the program

24

DNCR sites & programs explored

"The Ambassadors' Program has opened an entirely new world of possibilities for me, my students, and my school staff. It has deepened my appreciation for North Carolina and all it has to offer, from its rich cultural heritage to its natural resources. This experience has been truly life-changing, broadening my perspective and inspiring me to introduce my students to opportunities they never knew existed. I now see DNCR not just as a department, but as a gateway to exploration, education, and discovery across our state."

– Patrice Wade, Guilford Preparatory Academy

Learn more about DNCR Teacher Ambassadors.

America 250 NC

In 2026, the United States will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, a milestone that invites reflection on America's founding ideals and North Carolina's role in shaping them. America 250 NC, led by DNCR, is the state's official commemoration, featuring statewide events, traveling and digital exhibits, community projects, and educational resources serving all 100 counties. To ensure students are part of this historic moment, DNCR is providing educators with innovative resources, professional development, and place-based experiences that connect past and present while exploring the enduring promise of the American story.

5,120

students engaged annually by the Fellows, bringing the themes of America 250 NC to life in classrooms across 22 districts

America 250 NC Teacher Fellows

Launched in 2024, DNCR's America 250 NC Teacher Fellows program empowers exceptional K–12 educators from every region of North Carolina to bring the nation's founding ideals to life in their classrooms and communities. Through a six-month fellowship of immersive experiences, place-based learning, and project-development, Fellows learn how to foster historical understanding, civic engagement, and a deeper connection to our state.



Inspiring Teachers & Students Through Untold Stories

As part of the America 250 NC commemoration, DNCR produced "The Ongoing Fight for Freedom" to connect teachers and students with the untold stories of North Carolina's Black veterans. This powerful one-man performance by Dr. Sonny Kelly honors their contributions and inspires students to see themselves as part of America's ongoing journey. 24 performances in each region of the state reached **2,469 students** and **2,209 educators** in the 2024-2025 school year.

Scan to read how 2024 Fellow Valencia Abbott (Rockingham County) continues to benefit from the Fellowship.



▲ In May 2025, over 200 students and teachers from six public schools previewed Ken Burns's The American Revolution at DNCR, with students taking center stage as moderators in conversations with Burns and co-producer David Schmidt.

Aquariums

The North Carolina Aquariums—at **Fort Fisher**, **Jennette's Pier**, **Pine Knoll Shores**, and **Roanoke Island**—play a vital role in K–12 education statewide, offering immersive science experiences that reach thousands of North Carolinians each year. From home school scavenger hunts and behind-the-scenes tours to large-group programs, students engage in hands-on labs and outdoor adventures guided by passionate educators, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the sea.

Beyond the aquarium walls, traveling outreach programs bring marine science directly to schools, libraries, and community events across North Carolina. Featuring live animals, costumes, props, and interactive demonstrations, these programs spark curiosity and inspire conservation, whether through freshwater turtles and amphibians, dramatizations, or experiments.

Discovering Oceans of Wonder at Jennette's Pier

Jennette's Pier in Nags Head is more than a favorite fishing spot. It's a statewide science education resource that connects teachers and students to the wonders of the ocean, no matter where they live, with:

- Immersive on-site field trips, outreach programs, and virtual experiences that explore marine science, renewable energy, and North Carolina's coastal ecosystems
- Programs that provide STEM career exposure and inspiration, especially in under-served and rural communities
- Hands-on, curriculum-aligned science learning that supports state education standards
- Awareness and appreciation of North Carolina's unique coastal heritage

In the past school year, the Pier hosted 127 field trips and conducted 16 outreach programs, exposing **11,250 students** to the marvels of our state's marine life.



Aquarium Scholars: Expanding Access to STEM

To expand access for under-served schools, the **Aquarium Scholars** program, a partnership between the NC Aquariums and the NC Aquarium Society, provides up to $1,250 for field trips, in-class outreach, or virtual learning. In the 2024–2025 school year alone, Aquarium Scholars enabled **14,906 students** to engage in interactive STEM learning that connects classroom concepts to real-world careers.

"So many of our students were able to see themselves in fields of study they had never considered available to them before...."

– Aquarium Scholar



> **"25 students in our group had never been to the beach in North Carolina before. They got to touch sand and sea creatures that they had never seen or heard about."**
>
> — 5th grade teacher from North Chatham Elementary School, whose students visited Fort Fisher Aquarium

12,156

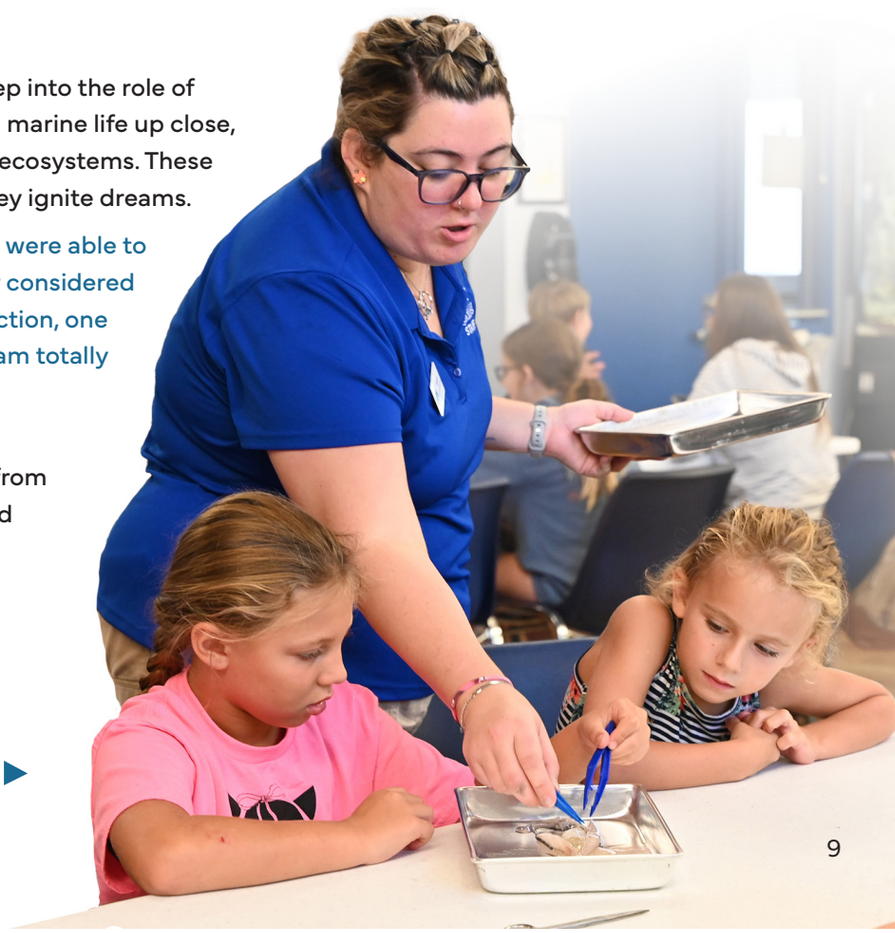
students from 37 counties visited Pine Knoll Shores in the 2024–2025 school year

Inspiring Conservation Through Discovery at Pine Knoll Shores Aquarium

At Pine Knoll Shores, students of all ages can step into the role of scientists, conducting hands-on labs, observing marine life up close, and discovering the delicate balance of coastal ecosystems. These experiences often spark more than curiosity; they ignite dreams.

As one teacher noted: "So many of our students were able to see themselves in fields of study they had never considered available to them before.... After the squid dissection, one of my students said, 'Oh my gosh, I LOVE this! I am totally going to do this when I grow up!'"

In the 2024–2025 school year, Pine Knoll Shores hosted 221 field trips, reaching **12,156 students** from 37 counties, opening doors to STEM learning and inspiring the next generation of scientists.



Students become scientists & dissect squid at the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores.

Office of State **Archaeology**

Can You Dig It?

The **North Carolina Office of State Archaeology** opens a window into more than 14,000 years of human history, both on land and underwater. It offers teachers and students opportunities to explore the past through hands-on discovery and scientific inquiry, while fostering a deeper appreciation for North Carolina's cultural heritage.



Teachers participate in an archaeological dig at DNCR's Historic Bath site as part of a workshop exploring the state's colonial origins. ▶

At the **Office of State Archaeology Conservation Lab** in Greenville, students engage with real artifacts, from Blackbeard's shipwreck to indigenous canoes over 2000 years old, while discovering how archaeology and STEM work together to preserve the past. Through lab tours and school outreach, more than **3,500 students** from **26 counties** have experienced the excitement of uncovering history and exploring careers in archaeology and conservation.

"You all have really cool jobs! We loved the cannons and hearing about the process each item has to go through. This was such an amazing way to learn about Blackbeard; it was 100 times better than a worksheet!"

- Student from Martin Innovative Middle School (Martin County)

▼ Students from The Expedition School (Orange County) explore the Office of State Archaeology Research Center in downtown Raleigh, captivated by artifacts dating back as far as 12,000 years.







Find out more about our State Archaeology.

State **Archives**

Preserving the Past, Powering the Future

The **State Archives of North Carolina** connects students and teachers with over 100 million historic records, including documents, photos, film, and audio that tell the story of our state. With locations in Raleigh, Asheville, and Manteo, the Archives offers field trips, outreach programs, and customized classroom support, bringing history to life.

In 2024–2025, the Archives served **387 students** through 26 field trips and welcomed **112 summer campers** with hands-on programs exploring topics from shipwrecks to family history. Teachers from around the state also benefited from professional development and customized tours focused on integrating primary sources into the classroom.

The Archives recently released **DocsBox**, a classroom-ready kit filled with primary source reproductions, engaging activities, and 17 standards-aligned lessons on North Carolina's Revolutionary era. Over 200 physical kits have already been provided to teachers, delivering history directly into the hands of hundreds students and educators across the state.



▲ Teachers receive a special tour of state treasures in the Archives' vault as part of a DNCR workshop.

Green Hope High's (Wake County) Asian American Studies students explore primary sources related to Asian Americas in North Carolina during an Archives field trip. ▼



Museum of **Art**

North Carolina Museum of Art

The **North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA)** in Raleigh believes in the transformative power of art to inspire, connect, and educate. Through its vast collection, 164-acre park, field trips, and virtual programs, NCMA serves students across all 100 counties in North Carolina.



NCMA LEARN offers educators access to more than 100 arts-integrated, standards-based lesson plans, student activities, and virtual field trips. These resources weave art into every subject area, making learning more creative and meaningful. In the 2024–2025 school year, **153,000 learners** of all ages experienced artwork virtually through the NCMA Learn website.

NCMA supports teachers of all disciplines year-round with professional development that empowers them to integrate art across the curriculum in dynamic, engaging ways. Each summer, the museum hosts its annual **Educator Expo**, where hundreds of teachers enjoy after-hours gallery access, featured artist talks, and hands-on activities. During the 2024–2025 school year, **997 educators** participated in **29 professional development programs**.

Learn about NCMA Learn.

NCMA Winston Salem

NCMA Winston-Salem is a dynamic cultural institution that champions contemporary art and fosters community engagement through a wide range of programs. Believing that learning is a lifelong practice, NCMA Winston-Salem encourages and facilitates learning through onsite visits and outreach.



The **Portable Gallery** is a free outreach program that brings original works by North Carolina artists into Pre K–12 classrooms, transforming them into spaces for curiosity, creativity, and expression. Grounded in the belief that all students deserve meaningful access to the arts, each experience is co-designed with educators and aligned to North Carolina's Standard Course of Study. Whether exploring visual storytelling to build literacy skills, connecting art to history, or discovering how creativity intersects with math and science, **2,380 students** participated in active, interdisciplinary, and unforgettable learning during the 2024-2025 school year.

Plan your visit to NCMA Winston Salem.

Plan your visit to NC Museum of Art.

Arts Council/A+ Schools



Arts Council/A+ Schools

A+ Schools of North Carolina is the nation's longest-running arts-based school reform initiative, established in 1995. This whole-school transformation model places the arts at the heart of teaching and learning, creating vibrant, creative cultures where collaboration and interdisciplinary integration thrive. In A+ Schools, the state's mandated curriculum is delivered with the arts woven into every student's daily experience, demonstrating the lasting impact of arts-rich education on engagement and achievement.

56

Active In-State
A+ Schools in Fall 2025

"I love teaching at an A+ school. It's changed my classroom for the better and keeps students engaged."

◀ Students from TC Roberson High School (Buncombe County) prove that life, does indeed, imitate art while on a field trip to NCMA Raleigh.

▼ Teachers and administrators from A+ Schools across North Carolina come together for high-quality A+ professional development, networking with other A+ educators and sharing best practices.





Explore educator resources from the Arts Council.

Battleship North Carolina



Anchored In Learning

Step aboard a living classroom where history, science, and storytelling converge. As North Carolina's official World War II Memorial and a National Historic Landmark, the **Battleship North Carolina** honors the more than 11,000 North Carolinians who gave their lives in service and inspires the next generation through immersive education.

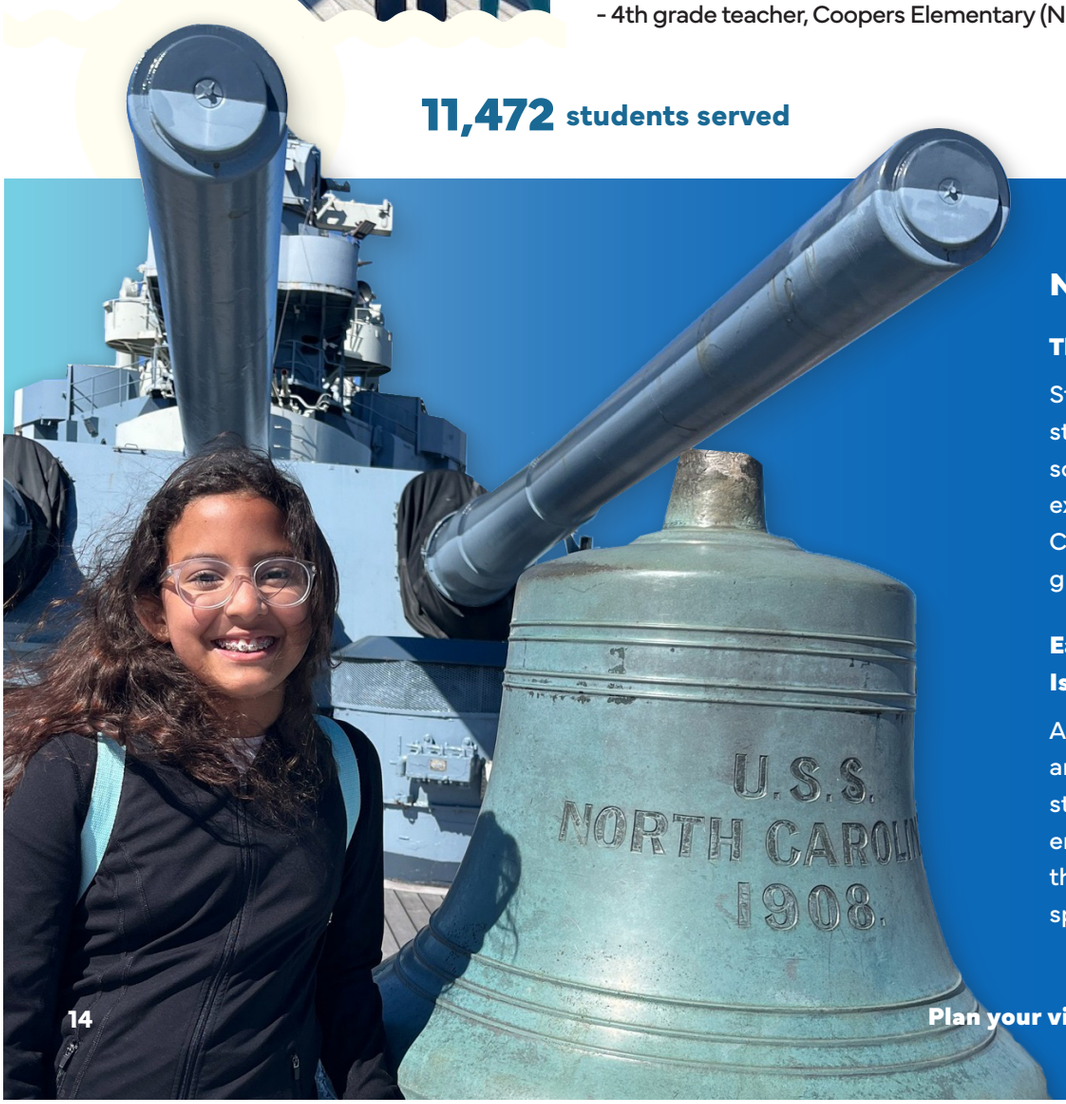
Educators receive pre-visit materials tailored to grade levels, including vocabulary lists, primary source activities, and even a custom Birds of the Battleship ID Guide for science integration. From the roar of history to the quiet reflection of sacrifice, the Battleship North Carolina offers unforgettable learning experiences that align with state standards.

"Students explored the ship's decks, learned about its history, and began to understand the realities of naval life during wartime. This trip offered an invaluable opportunity to connect classroom learning with real world experiences. Exploring the Battleship created lasting memories and a deeper understanding that traditional classroom learning alone cannot replicate."

- 4th grade teacher, Coopers Elementary (Nash County)

11,472 students served

50 counties represented



New Hands-On Programs:

The Price of Freedom

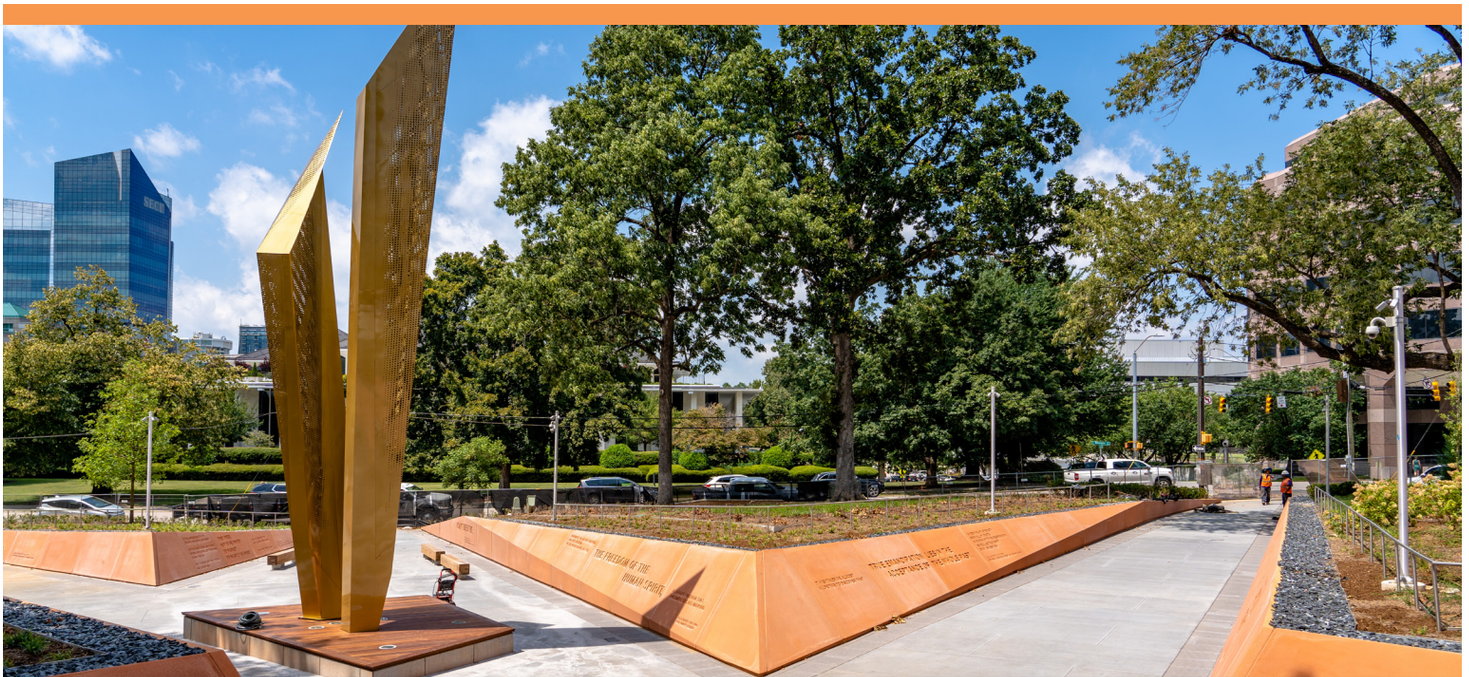
Students explore the human stories of WWII through primary sources, artifacts, and shipboard exploration—connecting North Carolina's role in the war to broader global events.

Eagles Island Immersion: Island in the Stream

A hands-on, outdoor science and history experience where students investigate the dynamic environment of Eagles Island through mapping, modeling, and species identification.

Plan your visit and view resources at Battleship NC

Capital Area Visitor Services



- **NC Executive Mansion**
- **NC Freedom Park**
- **NC Legislative Building**
- **NC Museum of History**
- **NC Museum of Natural Sciences**
- **NC State Capitol**

If you've ever seen the lines of school buses unloading in downtown Raleigh or watched hundreds of excited students exploring the city's most prominent state landmarks, you've witnessed the work of DNCR's **Capital Area Visitor Services** (CAVS)!

Since 1976, CAVS has been the central hub for coordinating group visits to Raleigh's premier sites, including the NC Museum of History, NC Museum of Natural Sciences, NC State Capitol, NC Legislative Building, NC Executive Mansion, and NC Freedom Park. Each year, they manage memorable visits for nearly **300,000 visitors** and provide an essential function, helping schools maximize their time while visiting multiple sites. CAVS's oversight of site-specific protocols, capacity limits, timing logistics, and bus traffic ensures a seamless and enriching experience for every group.



"I had so many kids who came to school that morning and said they were so excited to visit Raleigh they could barely sleep. After visiting the General Assembly, students can now connect very abstract concepts like the three branches of government to people and places"

- 4th grade teacher, Mount Ulla Elementary (Rowan County)

Book your field trip with CAVS.

Commissions

African American Heritage Commission

Whether through classroom toolkits, public art, teacher professional development, or field trips for students, the **African American Heritage Commission (AAHC)** is building bridges between history and culture, ensuring that every student in our state sees themselves reflected and celebrated in the incredible story of North Carolina.

Through innovative projects like **Africa to Carolina**, the **Green Book Project**, **A Tale of Two Ships**, and the **African American Music Trail**, the AAHC supports K–12 educators to bring North Carolina's shared history into classrooms in meaningful and inspirational ways.

The AAHC also manages **North Carolina Freedom Park**, a one-acre public space in downtown Raleigh that honors the African American struggle for freedom. Freedom Park invites students and educators to reflect on the past while imagining a hopeful future.

As part of the AAHC's Africa to Carolina workshop, **22 K–12 educators** explored North Carolina ports and the lives of enslaved Africans who arrived there, uncovering their enduring cultural legacy. This experience combines place-based learning at historic sites with historian-led discussions and classroom resources aligned to state standards. Representing 11 counties, these teachers will bring this history to more than **3,000 students** each year.



▲ Students participating in the AAHC's "Sowing Seeds of Freedom."

30,833

students from **653 school groups** and **31 counties** visited North Carolina Freedom Park in the last year



"Thank you for empowering me to cultivate joy and excellence in my classroom. To see history in person, to stand on the land where these stories unfolded, made the learning tangible. It's in moments like this that the threads of environment, place, and people are woven together with purpose, clarity, and heart."

– Yamile Uceda, Teacher & Africa to Carolina participant (Cabarrus County)

◀ **Africa to Carolina** participants explore **Historic Edenton.**

Find educational resources and more from the African American Heritage Commission.

American Indian Heritage Commission

The **American Indian Heritage Commission (AIHC)** is dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the history, arts, customs, and culture of American Indian communities across the state. Each year, the AIHC produces the American Indian Heritage Month Toolkit, offering educators ready-to-use information, book lists, music playlists, and links to cultural organizations and sites. Guided by its 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, the AIHC is expanding its impact on teachers and students through culturally responsive curriculum and workshops, statewide partnerships, and immersive programming.

Exploring the Past, Present & Future of North Carolina Tribal Communities

In partnership with the **State Advisory Council on Indian Education** and a team of tribal affiliated educators, the AIHC is leading the development of a standards-aligned curriculum for K–12 classrooms that focuses on the state's eight recognized tribes and four Urban Indian Organizations. The project emphasizes contemporary and recent history to help students understand tribal life as a living, evolving presence across North Carolina. The first set of middle school lesson plans will be released in 2026 and will be accompanied by professional development for teachers.

Each November, the NC Museum of History, along with an advisory board and community partners, including members of the AIHC and the NC Commission of Indian Affairs, host the **American Indian Heritage Celebration**, the culminating event in honor of American Indian Heritage Month. The celebration highlights traditional and contemporary artistic, historical, and cultural contributions of American Indian communities in North Carolina. The consistent theme and message of the celebration, as expressed by its advisory board, is visibility: Indigenous people are still here.

25,146

students and educators reached across 55 counties by the 2024 AIHC Virtual Education Day



Find educational resources and more from American Indian Heritage Commission.

Historic Sites

North Carolina State Historic Sites transform the past into powerful learning experiences for K–12 students at 27 unique locations across the state. From Revolutionary War battlefields and Civil War forts to gold mines, colonial towns, and civil rights landmarks, these sites serve as immersive classrooms where students engage in hands-on, place-based history. In 2025, Historic Sites welcomed **54,420 students** from 1,198 schools and home-school groups representing 82 counties. From custom programs designed to meet teachers' needs to hundreds of public events held statewide each year, Historic Sites proudly connects young learners with North Carolina's rich history and fosters a lasting bond with our state today.

Bennett Place

Bennett Place, the site of the largest Confederate surrender of the Civil War, piloted a project-based learning program with Durham County middle schoolers. Researching the Unity Monument and related primary sources, students re-imagined a 2025 monument based on their learnings and participated in an on-site dedication ceremony.

CSS Neuse Museum

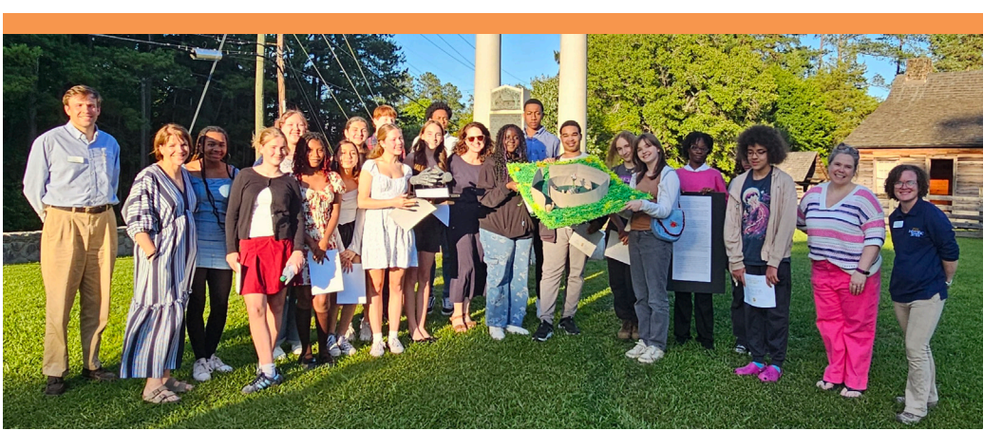
At the CSS Neuse Civil War Museum, visitors can step back in time to explore exhibits on local history and the Civil War, including the remnants of an ironclad ship. As a KultureCity-certified sensory-inclusive site, **CSS Neuse** offers touch tours and art activities for groups with special needs. It also supports youth development through partnerships with organizations like Scouts, Trail Life USA, and American Heritage Girls. Additionally, the museum supports home-school families with monthly programs and events such as prom and graduation.

- Alamance Battleground
- Bennett Place
- Bentonville Battlefield
- Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson
- Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum
- CSS Neuse/Gov. Caswell Memorial
- Duke Homestead
- Fort Dobbs
- Fort Fisher
- Gov. Charles B Aycock Birthplace
- Historic Bath
- Historic Edenton
- Historic Halifax
- Historic Stagville
- Horne Creek Farm
- House in the Horseshoe
- NC Transportation Museum
- President James K Polk
- Reed Gold Mine
- Roanoke Island Festival Park
- Shallow Ford
- Somerset Place
- Thomas Day
- Thomas Wolfe Memorial
- Town Creek Indian Mound
- Vance Birthplace

▼ Students get creative at the CSS Neuse Museum.



▼ Students from Durham Public Schools dedicate their re-envisioned Unity monument at Bennett Place in Durham County.



Plan your visit and explore resources from Historic Sites.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum

The Museum honors the legacy of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the Palmer Memorial Institute, an influential boarding school founded in 1902 to educate Black students during the Jim Crow era. In a symposium for over 100 teachers, participants learned about the rich history of Black education and left flowers on Dr. Brown's gravesite.



Historic Halifax

Historic Halifax preserves a Revolutionary-era town where the Halifax Resolves, the first official call for American independence, were adopted in 1776. Each April, the site welcomes hundreds of visitors for Halifax Days, a commemoration of this historic event. The celebration features living-history demonstrations, reenactments, and educational programs, including school sessions, lectures on American Indian and African American patriots, and a traditional ceremony led by the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe at Magazine Spring.

Roanoke Island Festival Park

Roanoke Island Festival Park brings North Carolina's early history to life through immersive, curriculum-aligned experiences that captivate students of all ages. Visitors can explore the American Indian Town to learn about traditional indigenous life ways, canoe-making, and cultural exchange; step aboard the Elizabeth II ship to practice 16th-century navigation, swab the deck, and raise the anchor; and try their hand at blacksmithing and woodworking at the English Settlement Site. Inside the Adventure Museum, hands-on exhibits highlight Outer Banks history, navigation, and local culture. The Park hosted 76 field trips in 2024-2025, serving **5,498 students** from 17 counties.

▼ Members of the Haliwa-Saponi welcome teachers to a workshop at Historic Halifax.



▼ Students explore the decks of the Elizabeth II at Roanoke Island Festival Park.



54,420

students from **82 counties** and **1,198 schools** visited Historic Sites in the 2024-2025 school year

Plan your visit and explore resources from Historic Sites.

Historic Sites

The North Carolina Transportation Museum

Once home to Southern Railway's largest steam locomotive repair facility, the **North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM)** celebrates the rich history of transportation and industry in our state. The 60-acre museum offers immersive, hands-on experiences with trains, cars, aviation, and more.

K-12 Learning at "the Museum that Moves You"

At NCTM, students don't just learn history; they feel it in motion. Whether exploring North America's largest roundhouse, viewing a Wright Flyer replica, engaging with interactive exhibits, or taking a train ride, NCTM is where history rolls, flies, and drives into the hearts of visitors of all ages. During the 2024-2025 school year, NCTM hosted 148 field trips, serving 26 counties and **4,789 students**. Signature education highlights include:

- **Wind and Wings**: The Science of Flight: In March 2025, 647 students immersed themselves in the fascinating world of aviation history and STEM, rotating through interactive stations where they built model aircraft, experimented with flight principles, and explored exhibits showcasing the evolution of aviation.
- **Tractors and Trains**: In April 2025, 560 students discovered the evolution of farming in NC through interactive stations and demonstrations like blacksmithing, sawmill operations, corn shelling, and apple cider pressing.
- **Community Connections**: In 2024, the Margaret C. Woodson Foundation funded visits for 310 Title I students and teachers from Rowan and Davie counties, ensuring hundreds more students could experience immersive field trips that combine hands-on learning, historic exhibits, and unforgettable moments aboard vintage trains.

"It's not just a static exhibit—it's history unfolding. Feeling the rumble of the 1924-powered turntable beneath their feet captured students' imagination in a way photos never could. This dynamic experience connects history and mechanics, igniting awe and grounding learning in real space."

— 2nd Grade Teacher, Rockwell Elementary (Rowan County)

▼ Students engage in the NCTM's "Wind and Wings" program, exploring the history of aviation at interactive stations.





Plan your visit and explore resources from Historic Sites.

NC **History Day**

North Carolina History Day, managed by DNCR since 1996, inspires middle and high school students to investigate the past through rigorous research and creative expression. Acting as historians, students create original documentaries, exhibits, papers, performances, and websites, developing critical thinking, communication, and civic literacy skills. DNCR staff support this work statewide through classroom visits, educator training, and resources that connect students with museums, archives, historic sites, and primary sources.

Each year, students advance from school-level participation to eight regional contests and, finally, the State Contest - organized and hosted by DNCR - where top projects earn the chance to represent North Carolina at the National History Day® contest in Maryland.

The 2025 season emphasized the talent of North Carolina's young historians. Students earned national awards, top ten finishes, and prestigious showcase selections at national institutions including Smithsonian Museums and the White House Historical Association. North Carolina educators were also recognized nationally for excellence in teaching. Despite challenges in western counties following Hurricane Helene, regional participation rebounded, reflecting the program's continued momentum.

Through DNCR's leadership, North Carolina History Day continues to expand access to high quality learning experiences that enrich classrooms, empower teachers, and strengthen history education statewide.

6,934

students participated from **109 schools** and **48 counties,** cumulating over **277,360 hours** of hands-on activity



▲ Performance is one of five project categories students can explore through NC History Day.



▲ Students from Holly Shelter Middle School (New Hanover County) discuss their project at the 2025 National History Day® competition.

North Carolina History Day in Western NC

Recognizing the significant needs of Western NC after Helene, NC History Day successfully advocated for the region to be selected as one of only four nationwide participants in a pilot program funded by the Bezos Family Foundation through National History Day®. This initiative provided direct support to teachers across Swain, Buncombe, Henderson, Yancey, Madison, Cherokee, and Watauga counties. Participants received a series of in-person professional development workshops, yearlong one-on-one mentoring, classroom supply funding, and teacher stipends to implement high-quality, project-based historical research.

Learn more about participating in NC History Day.

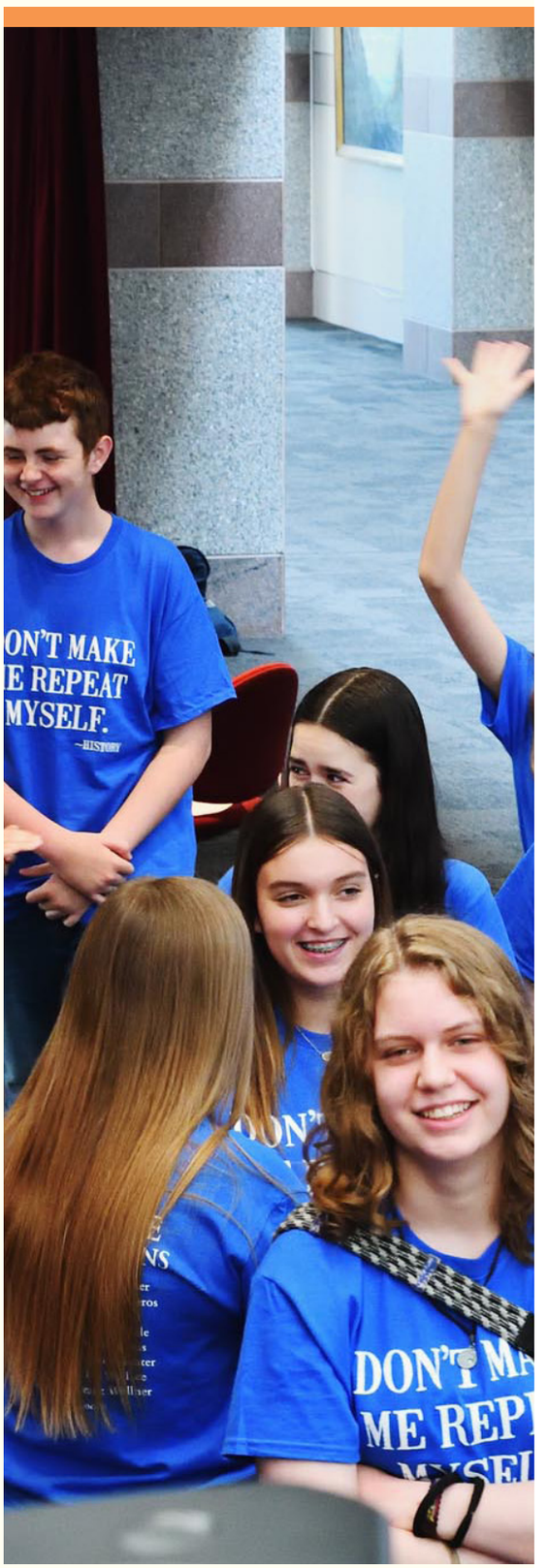
NC Museum of **History**

Ongoing Statewide Impact Despite Renovation

In October 2024, the **North Carolina Museum of History** began a major renovation and expansion that will add 40,000 square feet to its Raleigh facility. While closed untill fall of 2028, the Museum remains active statewide through K–12 outreach, traveling exhibits, and public programs, illuminating North Carolina's rich history and heritage.

Beyond The Exhibits, the Museum's K-12 Outreach Branch, develops programs and resources for teachers, students, and families across the state, no matter the zip code. Highlights include:

- **Carolina Cover to Cover** promotes literacy and social studies for K–3 through quarterly story guides. In October 2024, 100 books and guides of DNCR's *Within Our Power: The Story of the Edenton Ladies' Tea Party* were distributed to media centers. Digital guides reached teachers representing **84,095 students** in 57 counties.
- Three themed **Educator Notebooks** (including one in Spanish) provided lessons and primary sources on African American Life and Culture, Women Making History, and Crafting Carolina. Through 158 downloads, teachers served **9,937 students** in 44 counties.
- **History-in-a-Box**, multidisciplinary kits (digital and physical) that include reproduction artifacts, background information and activities, reached **393,675 students** in 84 counties with topics spanning NC history and culture.
- The ***Tar Heel Junior Historian Association*** boasts 129 clubs in 46 counties, involving over **9,347 students** in hands-on history through magazines, contests, and an annual convention.
- The immersive **Story of North Carolina 360° Tour** provides a virtual gallery experience and accompanying educational resources accessed by **8,082 students i**n 41 counties.
- **It's Revolutionary!** is a multi-year initiative supported by the NC Society of the Cincinnati focused on exploring North Carolina's revolutionary past leading up to the 250th commemoration. Two special Tar Heel Junior Historian issues have been published (with Educator Notebooks in development) and 20 short films are in production for 2026. Free online teacher workshops have offered 40 contact hours for **59 teachers** in 28 counties.
- **Videos on Demand**, including short films and recorded events, reached **19,791 students** in 64 counties in the 2024-2025 school year.



Students at the NC Museum of History prepare to kick off the annual Tar Heel Junior Historian Convention in Raleigh.



Bringing Culture to Classrooms Across NC

Each year, the Museum reaches thousands through two vibrant statewide events: the American Indian Heritage Celebration and the African American Cultural Celebration. Hosted in partnership with DNCR's Commissions and community advisory groups, the festivals honor the history, contributions, and resilience of North Carolina's American Indian and African American communities through music, dance, storytelling, and hands-on activities. The Museum hosts a virtual Education Day the Friday before each festival, live-streaming performances and interactive sessions that bring culture, history, and storytelling directly into classrooms across the state.

- The **American Indian Heritage Celebration** Virtual Education Day (November 22, 2024) reached **25,146 students and educators** with participants from 55 counties and 10 additional states.
- The **African American Cultural Celebration** Virtual Education Day (January 24, 2025) reached **16,123 students and educators** with participants from 57 counties and 6 other states.

▼ Students participate in a workshop at the NC Museum of History where they connect stories of North Carolina's past through hands-on arts and crafts activities.



Learn about the NC Museum of History and their educator resources.

Regional Museums of **History**

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum



Located in Hatteras Village on the Outer Banks, the **Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum** is dedicated to preserving and presenting the state's rich coastal and shipwreck history. Named for the thousands of vessels lost off the treacherous coast, the museum offers a compelling look into maritime heritage through exhibits, artifacts, and programming that honor the region's seafaring legacy.

Following a major renovation from December 2022 to May 2024, the museum has reemerged as a vibrant field trip destination for K–12 students. The museum is also a trusted partner in inclusive education, welcoming multiple visits from Cape Hatteras Secondary School's Occupational Course of Study students. These experiences demonstrate the museum's commitment to serving learners of all ages and abilities. Looking ahead, the museum aims to strengthen its role as a local educational hub and a statewide destination for school groups

Find out more about the Graveyard of the Atlantic museum.

Maritime Museum at Southport



The **Maritime Museum at Southport** welcomed over 3,300 visitors, many of them K–12 students participating in immersive, hands-on learning. From decoding signal flags to exploring the science of indigo dyeing, these programs connect students to North Carolina's rich maritime and cultural history. On-site activities offer elementary and middle schoolers fun experiences like 18th-century games, paper marbling, wax seal making, and painting miniature figures.

Additionally, three outreach programs bring history to life for 8th graders as they explore the roles of women, African Americans, and children in North Carolina during the American Revolution, Civil War, and World War II.

Find out more about the Mar time Museum at Southport.

Mountain Gateway Museum & Heritage Center

The **Mountain Gateway Museum & Heritage Center**, located in Old Fort, collects and preserves artifacts and other historical materials relating to the history and heritage of the region, assisting students in understanding how the past influences the present.

While the Museum endured devastating damage from Hurricane Helene, dedicated staff salvaged artifacts, relocated exhibits, and have continued telling the stories of western North Carolina from a temporary location across the street. The work of Mountain Gateway shows that even in the face of disaster, history finds a way to be shared.

Find out more about the Mountain Gateway Museum & Heritage Center.



▲ The 2025 DNCR Teacher Ambassadors examine a reconstructed whale jaw at Bonehenge Whale Center.

◀ A costumed interpreter presents information at a teacher workshop about the burning of Fort Johnston in Southport.

Maritime Museum at Beaufort

Since 1985, the **Maritime Museum in Beaufort** has connected students to the maritime history, culture, and environment of coastal North Carolina. Each year, thousands of K–12 learners dive into hands-on programs - from boat building and ocean navigation to marine science and coastal heritage - delivered on-site, in the field, and through classroom outreach.

Even during construction closures in 2024–2025, the museum kept the tide rolling with 94 outreach programs and 57 field trips, serving **3,400 students**. Staff expanded outreach efforts to ensure students could still discover the wonders of the North Carolina coast, wherever they were.

Bonehenge Whale Center in Beaufort, an extension of the Maritime Museum, is dedicated to the education, conservation, and research of North Carolina's native whales, dolphins, and porpoises. Through specimen collection, public outreach, and collaborative programs, the center brings marine mammal science to life for students, educators, and visitors alike.

Through a dynamic partnership with SciREN Coast, the North Carolina Maritime Museum and Bonehenge Whale Center exposed students in Carteret, Craven, and Onslow counties to marine mammal science in "Mystery Marine Mammals." In this new, hands-on curriculum, students use real whale bones and dolphin skeletons to investigate and explore anatomy, ecology, and conservation, while also discovering related careers along the North Carolina coast.

Learn about the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort.



Regional Museums of **History**

Museum of the Albemarle

With onsite and outreach programs, the **Museum of the Albemarle** in Elizabeth City connects students and teachers to the rich history and vibrant communities of northeastern North Carolina and the Albemarle Sound with immersive learning. Whether analyzing historical documents, simulating archaeological digs, or stepping into colonial life at the 1755 Jackson House, thesmuseum makes the past tangible and unforgettable.

Outreach programs extend this experience into classrooms across the region, allowing students to discover Algonquian traditions, experience the daily routines of 19th-century children, and enjoy colonial-era games and toys. Through these efforts, the Museum empowers educators and students to explore history beyond the textbook, making it personal and relevant.

Learn more and find resources from the Museum of the Albemarle.

6,539

students from 13 counties visited Museum of the Albemarle across 300 field trips

1,150

engaged via 23 outreach programs

Museum of the Cape Fear

The **Museum of the Cape Fear** in Fayetteville offers an immersive look at over 400 years of regional history through unique exhibits, the 1897 Poe House, and the historic Civil War-era Arsenal Park.

In addition to welcoming students and teachers for field trips, in 2025 the Museum hosted "Decoding the Past," a week-long camp for ages 9–12 in which students explored fields like archaeology, public history, archival studies, and storytelling. The camp culminated in student-created exhibits showcasing their learning.

The museum also maintains a monthly "History To-Go" program, distributing 30 themed kits each month to children ages 6–12. These free boxes explore topics ranging from Rosenwald Schools to labor history, making history accessible for young learners across the state.

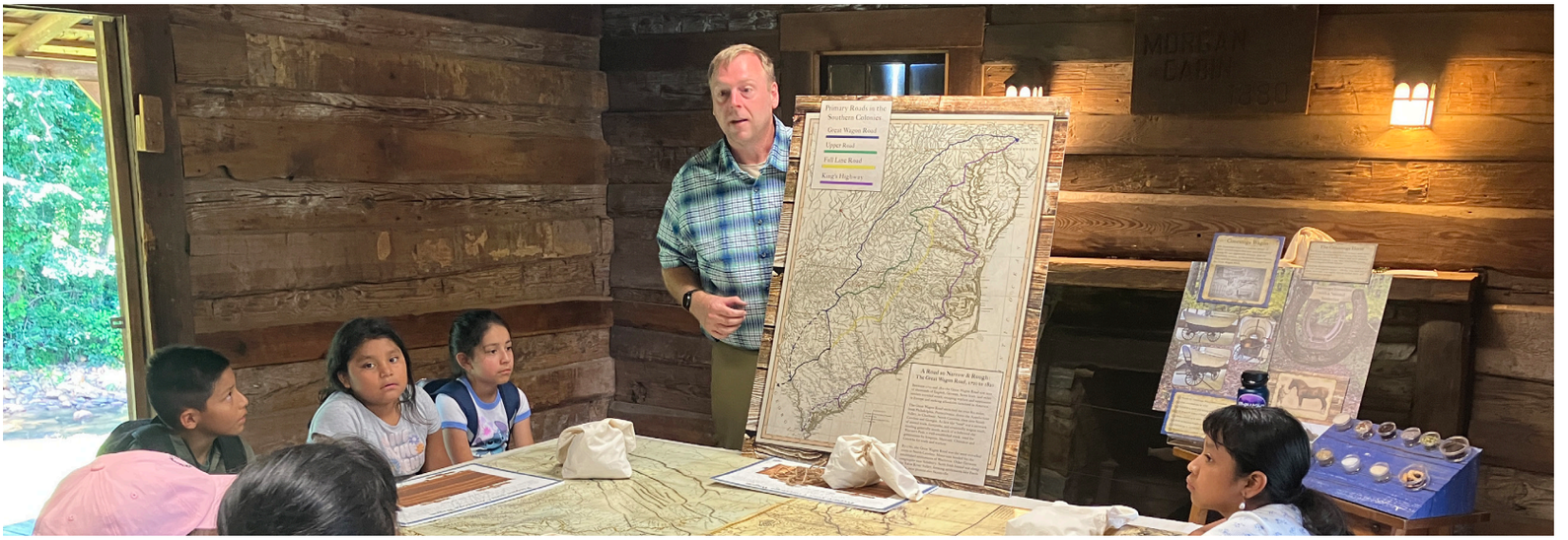
Learn more about Museum of the Cape Fear.



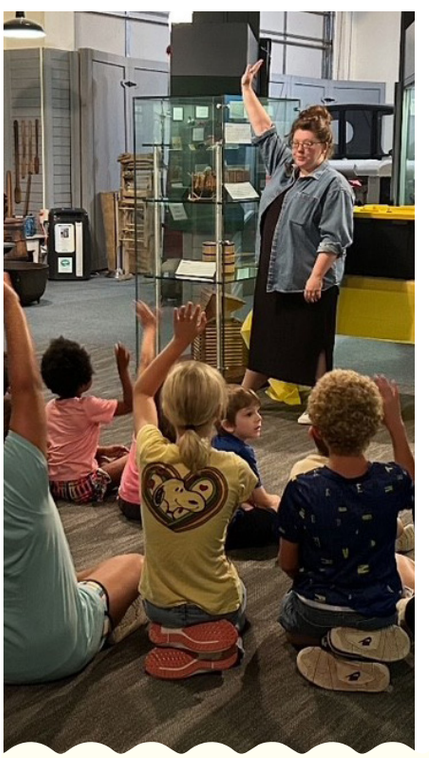
"As educators, we all are inundated with a never-ending to-do list and doused with information that we can't possibly grasp all at once, but I can personally attest that DNCR offers a goldmine of classroom-ready tools, free field trip opportunities, and meaningful professional development, all just a click away."

— Robert Summerell, Freedom High School (Burke County)

◀ **The Maritime Museum at Beaufort and Bonehenge share their marine mammal curriculum with teachers at the annual SciREN Coast event**



Henderson County students simulate a trip along the Great Wagon Road at Mountain Gateway Museum. ▲



Students learn about NC agriculture and the importance of crops to the economy at the Tobacco Farm Life Museum. ▶

Tobacco Farm Life Museum

Reopened to the public on July 1, 2025 under DNCR, the **Tobacco Farm Life Museum** in Kenly immerses visitors in the agricultural heritage that shaped life in Eastern North Carolina. Through programs integrating history, science, math, and language arts, students explore farming traditions and rural life from 1900–1950. Themes such as labor history, sharecropping, the Great Depression, and soil conservation connect classroom learning to the lived experiences of their communities, helping students build pride in the resilience, skills, and contributions of rural farming families.

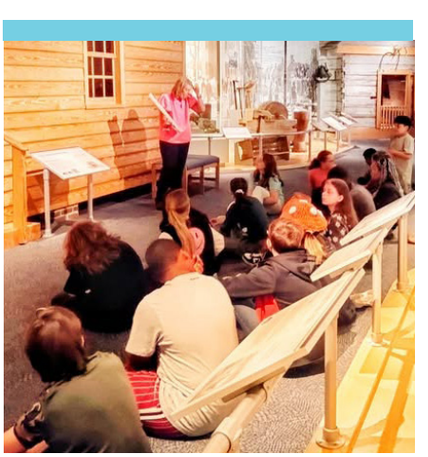
Learn more about Tobacco Farm Life Museum and their educational resources.



▲ The NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort builds excitement about marine mammals.



▲ Henderson County students explore WNC heritage at the Mountain Gateway Museum.



▲ Students experience eastern NC colonial life at Museum of the Albemarle.

Internships

Cultivating Future State Stewards with DNCR Internships

Multiple DNCR divisions offer career-connected experiences to nurture the next generation of leaders, the future stewards of North Carolina's natural and cultural resources. In partnership with the NC Department of Administration (DOA), these internships provide workforce development, leadership cultivation, and exposure to state government careers, embedding students in meaningful projects across museums, historic sites, archives, parks, and more. Interns gain practical skills, professional mentorship, and insight into public service, while actively contributing to DNCR's mission to preserve and promote the state's rich heritage.

One standout example, the **DOA Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program**, connects high school girls with women leaders in state government for a STEM-focused summer experience that blends professional development, real-world project work, and meantinful mentorship, inspiring students to explore pathways in public service and STEM careers.

49 students were hosted as 2025 interns or mentees across DNCR divisions

From engaging field trips to internships that open new worlds, DNCR is creating resources and experiences that make a real impact in our schools.

— Rody J. Huertas, Music Teacher (Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools) & 2025 DNCR Teacher Ambassador

Scan to hear 2025 summer intern Gillian Grimmick share how her experience at DNCR's Museum of Natural Sciences made an impact.

▼ A 2025 Lady Cardinal mentee from Wake County Public Schools, with DNCR Sec. Pamela Cashwell & DNCR Director of Program Outreach & Engagement, Tamara Holmes Brothers, Ph.D.



Library of North Carolina

The **Library of North Carolina's Government and Heritage Library** continues to serve as a cornerstone for educational support across the state. Located in downtown Raleigh, the library welcomes visitors and field trips while also providing robust digital access to users throughout North Carolina and beyond.

Through platforms such as **NCpedia**, **ANCHOR**, the **North Carolina Digital Collections**, and more than 160 online databases and resources, the library ensures that educators, students, and learners of all ages have access to high-quality, vetted information. Librarians offer research assistance via email, phone, and online chat, and provide instructional support and professional development opportunities for educators.

Accessible Books and Library Services (ABLS)

Did you know the Library of NC includes Accessible Books and Library Services (ABLS), North Carolina's free public library for all ages with print disabilities, including students who are blind or have low vision, physical disabilities that make it difficult to hold a book, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia? ABLS serves the entire state online or by mail, offering accessible resources like talking books, braille and large print books, and descriptive movies.

From 2023-2026, ABLS hosted a Regional Braille Challenge, where students in grades 1–12 demonstrate their skills in Braille reading, writing, and comprehension. More than a competition, it's a celebration of Braille literacy, bringing together blind and visually impaired students from across the state to showcase their talent, determination, and love of learning.

"As educators, we know the value of bringing learning to life for our students. Our field trip to the Library and State Archives of North Carolina offered a rich array of resources that sparked curiosity, ignited creativity, and deepened our understanding of North Carolina."

— 3rd grade teacher, Exploris School (Wake County)



View educator resources from the Library of North Carolina.

Museum of **Natural Sciences**

Museum of Natural Sciences (NCMNS) in Raleigh is the Southeast's largest natural history museum and a leader in science education. Home to the world-famous **Dueling Dinosaurs**, a groundbreaking fossil discovery featuring two dinosaurs preserved together in extraordinary detail, the museum offers visitors a rare glimpse into prehistoric life and cutting-edge paleontological research. Beyond this remarkable exhibit, guests can explore immersive displays of North Carolina's biodiversity, observe scientists at work in the **Nature Research Center**, and engage in hands-on learning in the **Investigate Labs**, where curiosity comes alive.

NCMNS's outdoor extension, **Prairie Ridge Ecostation**, boasts a green Outdoor Classroom, a Nature PlaySpace, a native plant garden and arboretum, a trail system, and more.

NCMNS also operates a **Whiteville** location, an important science education resource for K-12 students and teachers in Columbus County, and a community anchor for science activities and STEM career exploration throughout eastern NC.

Student Experiences

From exploring real research labs and meeting live animals to investigating ecosystems across North Carolina, NCMNS offers field trips, outreach programs, and outdoor adventures that ignite curiosity and connect classroom learning to the natural world. For teens, intensive STEM career programs, such as **Junior Curators** and **Junior Interpreters**, provide practical experience and mentorship, inspiring the next generation of scientists and museum professionals.

87,200

students from 80 counties visited NCMNS in the 2024-2025 school year



▲ Fuller Elementary students (Wake County) acclimate juvenile fish to Walnut Creek as part of an NCMNS program.



▲ At NCMNS in downtown Raleigh, students discover the wonder of scientific phenomena and the natural world.



▲ 2025 Educators of Excellence participants on safari in Kruger National Park, South Africa.

Educator Support

NCMNS empowers K–12 educators statewide with classroom-ready tools and experiences. Through field-based **Educator Treks**, teachers explore North Carolina's natural landscapes to refresh teaching practices and better integrate science across the curriculum. **Educators of Excellence Institutes** offer immersive week-long learning experiences in extraordinary environments globally. **School Grounds Workshops** help transform schoolyards into dynamic outdoor classrooms through citizen science, journaling, and nature observation, fostering engagement with the natural world. Through these and other programs, NCMNS delivered **631 hours of professional development** to **704 teachers** from 48 counties in the 2024-2025 school year.

Educators of Excellence: Transformative Field-Based Learning

Since 1987, the Educators of Excellence program, operated by NCMNS Raleigh, has empowered outstanding teachers with immersive, field-based professional development experiences in some of the world's most remarkable natural environments, including Yellowstone, South Africa, Mexico, and our own Blue Ridge Mountains. These transformative journeys deepen educators' scientific knowledge, foster global connections, and inspire innovative teaching that brings the natural world into classrooms across North Carolina.



"This has reignited my purpose to instill curiosity and a love of learning in my students, and to foster their appreciation of nature through actions and activities."

— Lydia Hyer, Teacher (Cumberland County) & 2024 Blue Ridge Institute Participant

View educator resources from the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.

State Parks

The **North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation** doesn't just protect nature, it teaches through it. With a mission to inspire all through conservation, recreation, and education, state parks proudly serve as "nature's classrooms." From fishing tournaments and backpacking lessons to camping demonstrations, interpretive and educational programs are designed to spark a love for the outdoors while modeling responsible stewardship of North Carolina's natural treasures. Whether casting a line or pitching a tent, every experience is a chance to learn, grow, and connect with the beauty of North Carolina.

In addition to hosting approximatly **20,000 students** in parks around the state, staff also provided 181 outreach programs, engaging **15,310 students** through school programs, classroom read-alouds, science festival activities, and more.

19,668

students visited NC State Parks during a field trip or school program

66

counties represented by visiting North Carolina students

Environmental Education Center at Haw River State Park

The Summit Environmental Education Center at Haw River State Park offers day, overnight, and two-night/three-day field trips to students from across the state, immersing them in the beauty of a piedmont forest. Field trips focus on small-group, experiential learning that is aligned to state teaching standards. In 2025, families celebrated the 17th annual "Grand-Camp" at Haw River, where children and their grandparents enjoyed an intergenerational summer camp experience.

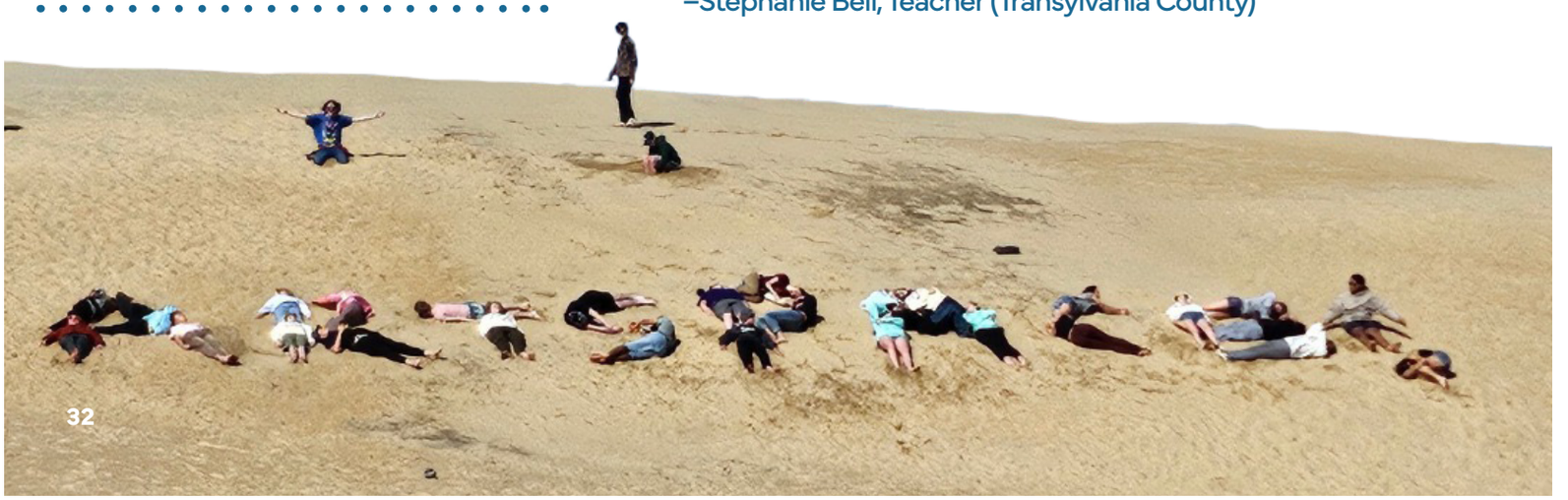
2,838 Students participated in Summit programs at Haw River in 2025; **58% came from a Title I school.**



Scan to learn how Gorges State Park engaged over 300 students in a special program for WNC, "Rooted in Resilience."

"Our time at Gorges State Park took learning out of the classroom and into the beautiful mountains around us. The experiences and environment gave students of all learning levels and backgrounds a time to shine."

–Stephanie Bell, Teacher (Transylvania County)





▲ Third graders from Merrick Moore Elementary (Durham County) explore Jordan Lake in the State Parks' signature "Big Canoes."

Schools in Parks Program

The Schools in Parks initiative helps ensure every public-school student in North Carolina experiences meaningful learning in a state park before graduation. The program offers year-long professional development for teachers and resources to integrate outdoor learning into classrooms. Through collaboration between educators and park rangers, students engage in activities and field trips that connect classroom lessons with real-world experiences in nature.

In the 2024-2025 school year, 25 teachers from 14 counties benefitted from the year-long program. Participating teachers have since brought 1,492 students to State Parks for hands-on learning.



▲ Youth survey wildlife at Lake Waccamaw State Park.



▲ Students learn how American Indian tribes built dugout canoes.

"The chance to go somewhere in our own county and learn about our own local area is very cool. It was also all very real science that students will interact with regularly in their lives!"

- 3rd grade Schools in Parks Teacher

◀ Students from Artspace Charter School (Buncombe County) visited Jockey's Ridge State Park thanks to the Learning Happens Here Field Trip Fund.

North Carolina **Symphony**

The **North Carolina Symphony** delivers one of the most extensive symphony education programs in the nation, reaching students in all 100 counties. Through concerts, outreach, and teacher support, the Symphony brings music to life for over **150,000 students** annually.

Special Programs

- **Education Concerts:** One-hour, curriculum-aligned concert for grades 3–5, with accompanying teacher workshops and lesson plans. **43,000 students** from 33 counties attended concerts in Raleigh and around the state.
- **Ensembles in the Schools:** Symphony musicians visit schools, providing interactive performances which reinforce standards-aligned musical fundamentals. 24 visits engaged **4,000 students** in 12 counties.
- **Music Discovery:** This early childhood education program combines music and storytelling to introduce young learners to fundamental music concepts. 55 programs served **1,200 students** in 41 counties.
- **Master Classes:** Older students work in concert with Symphony artists, participating in masterclasses designed to deepen musical understanding and skills, with opportunities to perform. Nine workshops engaged **350 students** in six counties.
- **Annual Summer Workshop for Teachers:** Each summer, the Symphony's workshop equips teachers with practical strategies to integrate music into their curriculum through interactive sessions, lesson plans, and live demonstrations. **158 teachers** were trained from 27 counties in 2025.
- **Music Educator Awards:** Each year, **three educators** are recognized for helping reach and inspire future musicians and audiences across North Carolina.





▲ As part of the NC Symphony's outreach, students learn from professional musicians in the "Music Discovery" program.

View educator resources for the NC Symphony.

Tryon Palace

Tryon Palace, North Carolina's first permanent colonial and state capitol, offers students an unforgettable journey into 18th-century America. Each year, more than **10,000 students, teachers, and parents** experience history firsthand through guided tours, costumed interpreters, and hands-on activities. From exploring the Governor's Palace and historic homes to interactive exhibits at the North Carolina History Center, students witness hearth cooking, imagine the lives of Continental Line soldiers, and take part in colonial games and military drills - just a sampling of the many activities available. These programs align with North Carolina Essential Standards, ensuring every visit reinforces classroom learning while sparking curiosity and a lasting passion for history.



"Students were able to tour Tryon Palace, learn about their local community's history and participate in hands-on learning activities such as making food, exploring an interactive pirate ship, and completing a scavenger hunt to find modern items as they would have been hundreds of years ago."
- Principal, Riverside Leadership Academy (Craven County)

Beyond the Palace Walls

Thanks to generous support from the Anonymous Trust, the **Palace Scholars Outreach Program** brings the magic of Tryon Palace directly into Title I classrooms across the state. Through tactile experiences such as weaving demonstrations and "touch and tell" artifact sessions, students gain a richer understanding of North Carolina's history, no bus ride required. **1,518 students in 15 counties** were served in the 2024-2025 school year.



▲ The 35th United States Colored Troops interpretive unit at Tryon Palace presents to teachers during a workshop. The unit brings to life the stories of African American soldiers who fought for freedom for all people during the Civil War.

View educator resources from Tryon Palace.

North Carolina **Zoo**

Ranked among the best zoos in the world, the **North Carolina Zoo** spans more than 500 acres, making it the largest natural-habitat zoo in the United States. The North Carolina Zoo provides immersive educational experiences that engage students in meaningful, standards-aligned learning while fostering a deeper understanding of wildlife and conservation.

Field Trips

Visiting school groups participate in dynamic STEM programs that extend far beyond observation. Students actively explore real-world conservation concepts through collaborative learning and discover practical ways to protect natural resources. The experiences transform a day at the Zoo into an educational adventure that inspires curiosity and a lasting appreciation for biodiversity.

68,142

students participated in on-site learning at the North Carolina Zoo

EDventures

For schools unable to visit, the Zoo offers EDventures, outreach programs that bring the experience directly to classrooms. Zoo educators travel up to 90 miles to deliver in-person programs, turning classrooms into interactive learning environments where students can explore life cycles and ecosystems, participate in hands-on habitat activities, or meet an Animal Ambassador.

3,685

students served in 68 outreach programs across the state





"One of the most meaningful parts of the trip was seeing students' excitement and curiosity come to life as they observed animals in real-world settings. For many students, this was their first visit to a zoo, and the experience helped broaden their understanding of the importance of protecting wildlife and natural environments."

– Cornelius Elementary School (Mecklenburg County)

"After experiencing a great impact of destruction, devastation and loss during Hurricane Helene this trip allowed students to experience something free of charge that they would otherwise not be able to enjoy. For many this was the first time seeing a different area of our state and some had never even visited a Zoo before"

– Freedom Trail Elementary (Avery County)



▲ Claremont Elementary students (Catawba County) admire the Zoo's Arctic Fox.



▲ Fall Creek Elementary students (Yadkin County) treat giraffes. to snacks.



▲ East Rockingham Elementary students (Rockingham County) measure their wingspans.

View educator resources from the NC Zoo.



NCMNS Educators of Excellence explore Yellowstone



DNCR's teacher workshop to accompany the "Biscuits & Banjos" festival.

Wilkes County students participate in activities at Stone Mountain State Park.





The NC Symphony brings small groups of musicians directly into classrooms.



DNCR hosts a post-Helene WNC educator retreat in Hot Springs



DNCR's 2025 Teacher Ambassadors in a NCMA workshop.

"DNCR is a 'one-stop shop,' sharing North Carolina's vast history and culture from Murphy to Manteo, providing teachers with essential resources and students with invaluable experiences. Even as a NC native, I discovered so much I didn't know, and DNCR has reinvigorated me to bring even more about our great state into my classes"

– Heather Butler, Art Teacher (Pitt County) & 2025 DNCR Teacher Ambassador

What's on the back cover?

Students get up close with North Carolina's state treasures during their visit to the **Archives**.

Young historians represent North Carolina at the **National History Day®** competition in Maryland.

Students from West End Elementary (Moore County) visit the **NC Legislative Building** to learn more about state government.







Learning Happens Here connects K–12 students and educators with programs and resources from DNCR's 100+ historic, cultural, and natural sites across North Carolina.

*Programs & impact numbers within this brochure are from the 2024-2025 school year.

Questions about this report or DNCR's educational programs?
Contact the Office of K–12 Education & Outreach at **educationoutreach@dncr.nc.gov**

Search educator resources from Office of K-12 Education & Outreach.

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