

After your mini-adventure, ask your budding naturalist some follow up questions to gauge their interest and takeaways. Then use those answers to plan your next adventure!

- What did you expect to see?
- How can you be more observant next time?
- Should we bring or wear anything special next time?
- What animal or plant did you like best?
- What would you like to see next time?
- What kinds of plants and animals might you see at different times of the year?
- Did you notice the front half of the park looks different than the back half?
- What is different about it?
- Why is geology important and how does it impact what lives there?
- Did you see any litter?
- Why is it bad to litter and what can we do to help prevent litter?
- Would you come prepared to help pick up litter on the next visit?
- Why is it important to keep and protect wild places?



Tiny Tidbits

The Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center is a conservation park and provides outstanding observatory experiences. Because we want to help preserve our wildlife for all to see, catching wildlife or picking plants would greatly hinder the experience for others. Leave it better than when you found it!

In order to make your journey as enjoyable as possible, we recommend bug spray, a reusable water bottle and weather appropriate clothes to start. Some other fun items to bring would be binoculars, a camera and a small notebook to record your findings.

The park is located at 10503 N. Oak Hills Parkway, Baton Rouge, LA 70810

225-757-8905

Tues-Sat: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday: noon - 5 p.m.

Kids \$2 admission, adults \$3

In addition to self-guided tours, the site also offers a wide variety of organized events, camps and shows, so check their website for information


A naturalist is someone who studies and observes fauna and flora in their natural habitat. Some of our great naturalists like John James Audubon, Charles Darwin and Rachel Carson are considered scientists but did you know some are photographers, painters, professors and even writers! With a love for nature and a passion to protect it, anyone can be a naturalist, even you!



THE BUDDING NATURALIST

How to get the most out of your visit
to Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center

A guide to help your youngster step away
from the screen and into the woods



Recent studies have shown that outdoor time for kids builds confidence, stimulates creativity, encourages exercise and reduces anxiety. It may even ignite a passion and awareness that can help shape their future. We are lucky to have Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, an awesome, one-of-a-kind place in the heart of Baton Rouge, where you can introduce your children to the wonders of nature.

Spark!: the Newbs



If you have small children, or are trying to foster a love of nature in an older child, make your first visit easy and rewarding, to light the fire of discovery. Focus on the fun fauna that are easily viewed at the site.

In the parking lot alone, there are at least 3 species of turtles that are accustomed to people, and love to be fed (commercial turtle food is the best option, but staff says dog food can do in a pinch).

From there it's a short walk to the gracefully designed visitor's center where kids can see live specimens and photos of the creatures that live at the site.



Explore: the Trekkers



For a second visit, or a visit with a more advanced agenda, take kids to explore the nearly 2 miles of trails and boardwalks, which lead from an upland hardwood forest to a cypress tupelo swamp.

Help your kids identify any interesting plants or trees they see. The Seek App is a kid-friendly identification tool to have on your smartphone.

Remind them to look down for ground dwelling creatures, like turtles and snakes, and look up for high-flying birds. Walking the trails is also a wonderful opportunity to explain to kids the importance of wild places, and the concepts of conservation and stewardship.

Focus: the Darwins



Once you've explored the visitor center and the trails, it's time to go back to look for the more elusive residents.

Sit with your children at the pollinator garden and see how many different insects flit in and out, and what plants they prefer.

Walk quietly and try to spot skinks, lizards and spiders. Bring your binoculars and stay a while at the boardwalk to spot the barred owl Barbara that is commonly seen in the swamp.

Guide your child to focus on a spot or feature that appeals to them, and have her watch it closely for details or movement.

