

Volunteer Spotlight: Dr. Maurice Snook

Have you attended Super Science Day or Scary, Oozy, Slimy Day at Sandy Creek Nature Center? Have you visited Sandy Creek Park for a Star Watch? Then you probably have encountered long time volunteer Dr. Maurice Snook. Dr. Snook can't remember when he began volunteering with Sandy Creek but as staff and long time visitors can attest Dr. Snook has donated countless hours of sharing the wonder and beauty of science with the community. In fact, that is how it all began...

After completing his PhD at Penn State, Dr. Snook moved to Athens to work as a chemist for the USDA at the Russell Research Center. In 1974, he asked for permission to hold a public viewing of the comet Kawokact on the Russell Research Center Grounds. The event brought the Athens astronomy community together and very well may have marked the beginnings of the Athens Astronomical Association. For over 20 years, the Athens Astronomical Association has hosted activities, events and the popular Star Watch programs at Sandy Creek Park. The largest Star Watch at Sandy Creek Park was held the summer of 1992 with over 700 people in attendance to observe the Perseid meteor shower. Dr. Snook remembers cars lining the length of Bob Holman Rd. This summer's Perseid meteor shower will be dimmed by a full moon but all is not lost. Dr. Snook points out the opportunity to "shoot the moon." You can join Dr. Snook and the Athens Astronomical Association on August 12th at Sandy Creek Park to learn how to take photographs of the moon.

"A scientist never gets tired of looking at moon craters" say Dr. Snook. Just like Rachel Carson sparking an indestructible sense of wonder is what it is all about for Dr. Snook. From organizing extensive opportunities for the public to have a chance to view Halley's comet in 1986, to chemistry shows for large and small groups, the Athens community is blessed to have such a tremendous and gracious resource to explore the wonders of earth and sky with.



Tracking volunteer opportunities and news from Sandy Creek Nature Center, Sandy Creek Park, Memorial Park and the Greenway and Riverside Parks.

Box Turtles Sometimes Need "Volunteer Rescues"

By Liz Conroy - local freelance writer and longtime SCNC volunteer

The Eastern Box Turtle is a slow-moving mound of beauty. The carapace—the upper part of its shell—is high-domed and patterned with colors of fall. The shell markings may be various shades of oranges and browns or yellows and tans. It also has a sturdy ridge or keel along the top to help protect it from the strong jaws of predators.

The plastron—the part of the shell underneath the turtle—is hinged. When threatened the turtle will pull its head in and close the front door. It brings in its legs and looks like a rounded rock from the distance. Such a wonderfully protected animal! At least, it has done well over the past 200 million years or so. Unfortunately, this beautiful suit of armor doesn't stand a chance in modern times against rolling, crushing vehicles.

One of the saddest sights for any nature lover is to see a box turtle attempting to cross a road with oncoming traffic. As a vehicle approaches, this gentle creature gets scared and stops to hide within its shell. But no matter how tightly it pulls inside, those tires simply smash the turtle, often beyond hope. Some drivers aim for these animals, as if smashing them is a sort of a game.

Even if one could somehow communicate to this chelonian to hurry, the box turtle rarely can move fast enough to get out of the way of an oncoming vehicle. Their shell was meant to be their major form of defense and not their stubby legs.

Fortunately, there are also drivers who carefully pull off to the side of the road when they see a box turtle trying to cross and carry it to the side that it is trying to reach. Bike riders and pedestrians may perform this "volunteer rescue" service, too. After all, it takes a village to protect our beautiful box turtles. It also takes strong public input to help protect the natural green spaces in which these turtles need to live. Please pass the word to others to help protect this precious form of life. Let's give these little guys a break. Ask friends to brake for box turtles..

Trivia Time: Bigfoot in Georgia?

When was the only reported sighting of bigfoot in Clarke county? (Month, Date, Year)

The first 10 volunteers to submit a correct answer will receive a cool prize. Submit your answer via e-mail to Janice. janicedenney@clarke.co.ga.us

*For help finding the answer check out the new bigfoot exhibit at Sandy Creek Nature Center.



Volunteer Pathways

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Volunteer Opportunities

June 2008

Family Fishing

Saturday, June 5, 6-7:30 pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, Walker Hall

Naturalists will need your help assisting the public with poles, lines, bait, and releasing fish for this family program at Claypit Pond.

30th Annual Snake Day

Saturday, June 7, noon - 4 pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, ENSAT building

One of our biggest days of the year! Visitors will see and learn all about the all-too-often misunderstood snake. Volunteers can assist with activity & craft stations, staff the concessions booth and ticket sales or assist with parking.

National Trails Day

Saturday, June 7, 9am - noon

Sandy Creek Park, Cook's Trailhead

Please see page 3 for more information.

Mini-Camp: "Those Dam Animals: Animal Engineers"

Wed-Fri, June 11 - 13, 9:30am - 12:30pm

ENSAT, Sandy Creek Nature Center

Come assist our naturalists and intern with kids ages 4 - 6 as they explore the ways animals use their adaptations to find food, shelter, and protect themselves. Volunteers assist with crafts activities and hikes.

Hands on with Dad - Natural Resources Workday

Saturday, June 14, 9:30 - 11:30pm

Greenway, Dudley Park

Join us for a day of service in honor of Father's Day. Geared for kids of all ages to spend time with their Dad and family while helping the community.

Mini-Camp: "Earth, Wind and Water"

Wed-Fri, June 25 - 27, 9:30am - 12:30pm

ENSAT, Sandy Creek Nature Center

Come assist our naturalists and intern with kids ages 4 - 6 as they explore the soil, sky, and water through games, crafts, hikes, and more!

Sunset Serenade

Friday, June 20, 6:30-8:00pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, ENSAT

Experience the sounds of sunset as you assist staff with games and activities for children ages 4-12. Dinner will be provided.

June 2008

Family Fishing

Saturday, June 26, 6-7:30 pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, Walker Hall

Naturalists will need your help assisting the public with poles, lines, bait, and releasing fish for this family program at Claypit Pond.

Archery for Beginners

Saturday, June 28, 10am- Noon

Sandy Creek Park

Volunteers are needed to assist participants with materials, safety procedures and general crowd control.

JULY 2008

Mini-Camp: "Ain't no Mountain High Enough"

Wed-Fri, July 9 - 11, 9:30am - 12:30pm

ENSAT, Sandy Creek Nature Center

Come assist our naturalists and intern with kids ages 4 - 6 as they explore mountains to the sea. Volunteers will assist with games, crafts, hikes, and more!

Family Fishing

Friday, July 10, 6 - 7:30pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, Walker Hall

See June's Family Fishing for more details.

Open House "Wetland Wonders"

Saturday, July 19, 1 - 3 pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, Walker Hall

Come assist the naturalists as they help the public explore the wet and wild wonders of wetlands. Be dressed for the dirty fun.

New Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, July 26, 11am - 12pm

ENSAT, Sandy Creek Nature Center

This is a great chance to come and check out all of the volunteer opportunities the Nature Center, Park, and Greenway have to offer. Please tell your family and friends who may be interested in volunteering with us!

Mini-Camp: "Animal Olympians"

Wed - Fri, July 23 - July 25, 9:30am - 12:30pm

ENSAT, Sandy Creek Nature Center

Come assist our naturalists and interns with kids ages 4 - 6 as they learn about the record holders of the animal world through hands-on activities, crafts, and live animal encounters!

Volunteer Opportunities

August 2008

Star Watch: Shoot the Moon

Wednesday, August 12, 9pm- 11pm

Sandy Creek Park

A couple of volunteers are needed to assist with set-up, clean-up and crowd control. Please join us for a night under the stars.

Open House "Astronomical Adventures"

Saturday, August 23, 1 - 3pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, Walker Hall

Beat the summer heat with the stories of the sky. Volunteers will assist with STARLAB planetarium, crafts and astronomical activities.

Trail Guide Training

Saturday, August 23, Thursday, August 28, Friday, August 29.

9:30am-12:30pm

Sandy Creek Nature Center, ENSAT

Attend one day of training to be a trail guide this fall. Guide school aged children on nature hikes. Please spread the word if you know anyone that would be a great trail guide.

Zoo Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, August 23, 1 - 3pm

Memorial Park, Zoo Operations Building

Tour the school grounds, learn about volunteer opportunities, and meet staff during this 2-hour orientation program. Must willing to volunteer at least twice a month or a minimum of 4 hours.



Cook's Trail
National Trails Day
Saturday, June 7
9 am - 12 noon

Join us on the trail! Trail volunteers all around the country will help clear their favorite trails. For our local trail celebration where we will be working on Cook's Trail beginning at Sandy Creek Park. Trail and maintenance issues will be discussed and utilized.

Please wear long pants and closed toe shoes, and bring a water bottle. Tools and gloves will be provided. Meet at 9am sharp at Sandy Creek Park Cook's Trailhead. Please call ahead to sign up!

Contact Janice Denney
(706) 613-3615 X 227

Monthly Volunteer Activities

Senior Stroll Patrol

Tuesday, June 10, July 8, August 12, 9:00am

Sandy Creek Park

Seniors are invited to join the Senior Stroll Patrol the 2nd Tuesday of each month to walk the park and pick up litter. Join new and old friends while increasing your health and giving back to the community. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Animal Appetites

Saturday, June 21 and August 16, 10 -noon

Sandy Creek Nature Center, ENSAT

Volunteers will assist a naturalist with this family program in which participants experience what it takes to feed and care for the animals that live at the Nature Center.

Open Classroom at Bear Hollow

Second and fourth Sunday of each month, 1-4pm

Memorial Park, Bear Hollow Wildlife Trail

Take a lead role in helping to make the reptile and amphibian building open to the public twice a month.

Choose a date that works for you and Memorial Park staff will train you to meet and greet visitors to enhance their experience to the exhibit hall.

Natural Resources Volunteer Work Day

Saturday, June 14, July 12, August 9, 9:30am

Do you have a group or organization that needs a project? Or do you just want to help keep Sandy Creek Park, Sandy Creek Nature Center, Memorial Park or the Greenway in great condition? If so, please join us for a work day. Workdays rotate between facilities, so please call to preregister. We'll provide the tools, you bring a water bottle and gloves if you have them.

SCP Disc Golf Volunteer Work Days

Saturday, June 21, July 19, August 16, 9:00am

Sandy Creek Park, Visitor's Center

Join us the 3rd Saturday of each month to help finish the 27-hole disc golf course, and earn hours towards a season pass and commemorative disc! Projects include privet and brush clearing, digging tee pad placements and post holes for signs, etc. Please wear long pants and closed toe shoes, bring gloves, if possible. All tools are provided.

For more information about volunteer opportunities or to sign-up, please contact Janice Denney at (706)613-3615 ext 227 or email janicedenney@co.clarke.ga.us