

Community Service Projects for Young Children on the Rivanna Trail

Goal: Children will appreciate the benefits of the natural habitat surrounding the Rivanna Trail

Intended audience: Children ages 5 – 12, with the help of an adult friend.

Supervision and responsibility: The Rivanna Trails Foundation (RTF) trusts that children will visit the Rivanna Trail and undertake these projects in the company of a responsible adult (parent, primary caregiver, teacher, group leader, scout leader). RTF volunteers are happy to answer questions via email or telephone before and after project execution, but they typically cannot provide supervision for on-the-trail experiences.

RTF's gratitude: RTF is a volunteer-based organization and depends upon volunteers of all ages to love our community trails, treat them kindly, and help take care of them. Thank you in advance.

RTF's mission is to build and maintain trails. Assumed in this mission is the preservation and protection of the forests and waterways near them. Fun activities such as the projects described below can help us achieve our goals, protect both forests and water quality, and help children understand the value of our community's natural habitats.

Projects:

1. Take a hike with the children on the Rivanna Trail. You can find trail guides on our website (www.rivannatrails.org / 434-923-9022) or at Blue Ridge Mountain Sports outdoor store (www.brms.com / 434-977-4400). Allow the children to help plan the hike. Follow all safety precautions. Set a realistic hiking distance, based on children's ages and abilities. Preview the trail without children if you have any concerns.
2. Take a garbage bag on your hike. Collect and carry away any loose trash you find.
3. Take digital photos of the children hiking, cleaning, and having fun on the trail. They usually love to help stage shots. We always have a need for pictures of children on the trail for publications and grant requests. Please compile parental permission for use of the photos. Prepare images on a CD for us or email them to us along with parental permissions.
4. Produce artwork or writing by the children that reflects their impressions of the trail or their hike, or demonstrates their understanding of one of the following science concepts. We are looking for KID-done work: line drawings or hand written, not done on a computer. The fun, dirt, water, kid-energy, and general busy-ness of the hike may make it difficult to accomplish this on the same day you're outside. You may want to do this as a follow-up activity at a following meeting. Regular sized paper (8 ½ X 11 or smaller) is easiest for us to work with. Again, we use these kinds of things for publications and grant requests. Please ask the children to write their names on the backs of the works. Contact us about giving us the works.

Science concepts -

Trees and other plants along the river

- provide food for birds (and other animals)
- provide shelter (homes, cover, hiding places, nesting spots) for birds (and other animals)
- protect water quality in the river when their roots hold onto the soil (and it can't wash into the river, erosion)
- protect water quality in the river when their leaves and branches reduce the force of raindrops
- protect water quality in the river when their stems and fallen leaves slow down the flow of surface water
- protect fish in the river by keeping soil out of the water (soil particles clog fish gills)