All About Oysters

Discover the power of the oyster! Sometimes referred to as “nature’s engineers” or “vacuums of the bay,” oysters play a critical role in keeping our bays clean. They also provide structural support for reefs for additional marine life. Participants will get a closer look at these bivalves in action, watching as they filter water. People will also explore the beach, where they will catch and observe other filter feeding organisms.

Bay Builders

After an immersive exploration of the beach, Center staff will engage participants in a simulation as key members of a coastal community as they work together to responsibly “build” a waterfront property. Focusing on the importance of estuaries and all that they do to contribute to a clean and healthy environment, this program highlights the importance of all of us working together to keep our watershed clean.

Birding in the Inland Bays

Learn the basics of birding techniques and how studying birds can help us understand the health of the environment. Use your newfound skills to find and identify local avian species and hear more about each bird group as you move through each of the seven habitats at the James Farm Ecological Preserve!

Creature Feature: Horseshoe Crabs

Discover the life of this prehistoric creature up close and personal at the James Farm Ecological Preserve. Learn about horseshoe crabs, why they make their way onto the beaches of the Inland Bays, and participate in a demonstration
survey. This program dives into the ecology, anatomy, and benefits of horseshoe crabs using a lifelike model (and hopefully a living organism!). *Held in May and June spawning season.*

**Discovery Bay: Seining**

Participants in this program get closer to the bays than ever before as they either assist or watch as Center staff seine the shallow waters of the Indian River Bay for aquatic life. As a group, we identify and discuss different fish, crabs, and other plants and animals that we can find here at the James Farm Ecological Preserve! *This program is dependent upon tides.*

**Discovery Swap**

This hands-on exploration of the Inland Bays allows children to engage with the intertidal habitat in the best way possible! Participants will gently collect and view organisms in an observation tank. Center staff will facilitate inquiry-based thinking by allowing young learners to apply their observations to make explanations and explore this habitat in their own way.

**Gardening with Native Plants**

Walk along the trails of the James Farm Ecological Preserve and learn how to incorporate native plant species into your own backyard. Discover how native plants not only add beauty to your home, but also benefit the Inland Bays.

**Hiding In Plain Sight**

Participate in a short program to learn about the different ways animals use camouflage techniques for survival. Focusing on patterns and colors, participants spend time observing the landscape while learning about categories of color and pattern adaptations for organism survival: camouflage, mimicry, warning, and attraction. Students apply these concepts as they participate in a hide and seek simulation. Then, participants will embark on a search for real critters in the area, using their new skills to discover how patterns and coloration might help the organisms survive in their habitat.
Mammal Mania

Mammals are over here, under there, they are practically everywhere! Discover different mammals found around the world and here at the James Farm Ecological Preserve. This is a chance to see replica skulls, learn about animals’ different teeth types, and learn what these adaptations mean for each organism.

Nature Journaling

There is no better way to get close to nature than to journal about it! Learn the steps to tactile nature journaling and how the power of observations can expand your understanding of the world around us. This program will then put those skills into practice at the James Farm Ecological Preserve with a fun activity that will challenge your perspective. Participants need to bring their own journals and writing utensils.

Nature's Recyclers

Did you know there are built-in recyclers within the environment? Join us for a hike through the James Farm Ecological Preserve as we explore the trails and learn about some of the local decomposers and scavengers.

Powerful Pollinators

Focusing on bees, butterflies and birds, students will examine special aspects of these creatures’ anatomies and life cycles, identify their needs for species survival, and engage in an interactive experience, which highlights how these tiny organisms play a critical role in creating and maintaining our current food supply.

Sunset Stroll through the Preserve

Unwind after a long day by enjoying a leisurely stroll through the James Farm Ecological Preserve at sunset! This event is your chance to explore the James Farm Ecological Preserve at dusk and to learn about all of the organisms that call this place home.

Thankful For Nature

Connect with nature by creating your own art project using materials found in the environment. Participants will create multiple simple crafts, such as bark owls and leaf rubbings. People will also learn about many of the inhabitants of the James Farm Ecological Preserve.
**Tons of Turtles**

Did you know that the Inland Bays watershed is home to both land and water-dwelling turtles? Join Center staff and learn about the diverse species that can be found here, their importance, adaptations, and engage in a turtle search through the James Farm Ecological Preserve.

**Winter Walk through the Preserve**

Ever wonder why trees lose their leaves or why some animals hibernate? Join us for a hike through James Farm Ecological Preserve as we look for local wildlife. Learn about the different adaptations plants and animals have that help them survive through the chilly winter months.

*All programs are approximately 1-2 hours in length*