

Brookside Adventures

Thank you participating in this citizen science project with the East Quabbin Land Trust! This program is intended to provide a background on the aquatic ecosystems of the area to local families and organizations. While participating, you will learn about the various animals that can be found in the nearby waterways, such as crayfishes and freshwater mussels. We will train our eyes to find these organisms and understand their habitat needs. We will discuss freshwater conservation, and you'll learn how to use iNaturalist/Seek to become a citizen scientist!

Before you leap like a frog into the water, here are **some things to bring** when participating in Brookside Adventures.

- **Appropriate Clothing:** Be prepared to get wet and dirty! A t-shirt and shorts are recommended, as well as an old pair of shoes that you're okay with getting wet. Muck boots can be used, but you will likely top them with water as we go into depths around knee height. While not required, closed-toe footwear is recommended to better protect your feet from rocks.
- **Towels:** Bring some towels to dry off; bonus points for helping keep your vehicle clean!
- **Snacks and Water:** Snacks and drinks are not provided, so be sure to bring your own.
- **Ziploc/Sealed Bag:** If you plan on bringing your phone into or near the stream, we recommend putting it in a Ziploc bag or some other sealed bag that may keep it dry. Pictures will be taken for willing participants using a waterproof camera and provided in a follow-up email afterwards. Phones and equipment can also be placed on the shoreline, where we can bring our catch for photos and to use iNaturalist/Seek. **We are not responsible for damages to your electronics.**
- **iNaturalist/Seek:** These are two apps you can download on your smart phone. The iNaturalist app allows you to take photographs of plants and animals you encounter and upload them into a massive database used by scientists all around the world! Seek is another app from the creators of iNaturalist that turns your phone's camera into a personal identification tool: simply use your camera from the app to look at an organism and Seek will try to identify it for you! If you do not have a smart phone, iNaturalist is also available in an online website format. **It is optional to download these apps, but it is encouraged as part of the program!**



We are also taking precautions with **COVID-19** and keeping the current limit to **one family per session**. Please bring your masks: we will work around these hurdles to the best of our abilities and provide the best education experience we can! **Sessions generally last one hour, but may extend longer if time permits and families want to stay out longer!**

Because there are numerous brooks and streams in the area, **we base the location of our adventures near the families that are interested in the program**. This provides them a place to visit in the future so they may continue to enjoy the wonders of their local freshwater ecosystem! This program is very new, and we are still in the process of finalizing these localities. We may not have this exact detail until closer to the day we enter the water; we apologize in advance if this is the situation! **If you also have a preferred spot that your family likes to visit and want to learn more about that area, please let us know: we may be able to visit that spot instead!**

Please write to Pat at youtheducation@eqlt.org to set up a time to discover nature's treasures in your local waterway or if you have any additional questions!



Useful Links

Video Tutorials on How to Use iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/video+tutorials>

Seek User Guide: http://static.inaturalist.org/wiki_page_attachments/SeekUserGuide2020.pdf

East Quabbin Land Trust's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EastQuabbinLandTrust>