



FAMILIES IN NATURE™

Media Kit



familiesinnature.org

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Families in Nature

Families in Nature (FIN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2008 to connect children, their families, and communities to nature through hands-on outdoor learning, service, and play.

FIN serves families, educators, parks, and libraries through open-enrollment programs, school partnerships, and guide development that blend field science with family fun. Programming includes nature walks, campouts, service projects, and STEAM activities led by trained guides and partner scientists.

FIN's mission is simple: to nurture environmentally literate young people and build community around environmental education that is welcoming, practical, and fun.

-ANNUAL SNAPSHOT-



34,500+
hours in nature

3,800+
event participants

55+
outdoor adventures

-AWARDS-

2024 Conservation Wrangler, Texas by Nature

2019 Finalist, Texas Environmental Excellence Awards

2019 Finalist, SHiFT Award for Youth Engagement

2017 Shoal Creek Conservancy People's Choice Award

Ecologist School

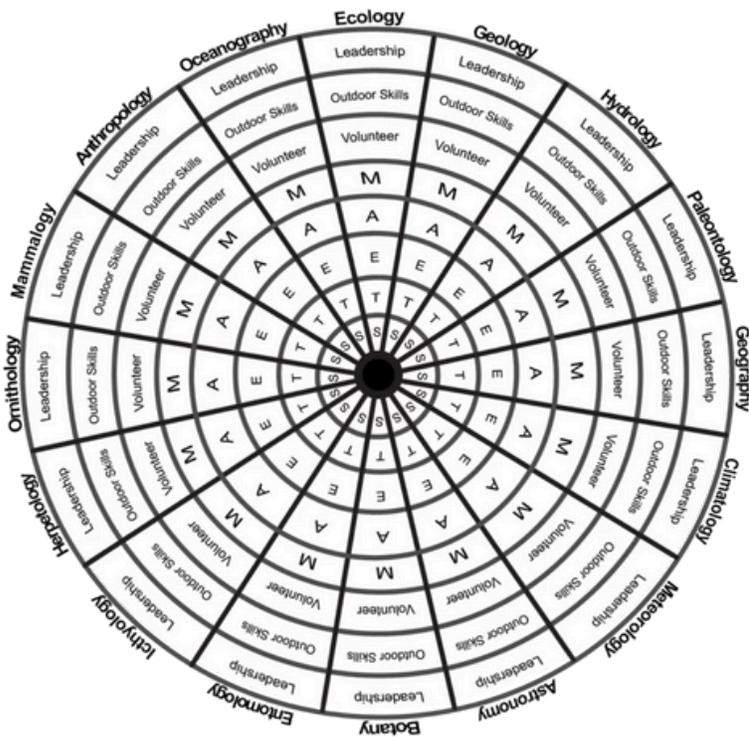


Ecologist School is FIN's foundational science programming, offering more than a 1,000+ family-friendly lessons that can be done at home or at an outdoor space nearby.

The programming is built across 16 science categories and emphasizes STEAM education, outdoor skills, leadership, and service.

Guide Book
to Come!

2026



Junior Ecologist Certification

Fully engaged participants earn badges in each of the 16 science categories. Those who earn 10 badges and complete the leadership and service capstone, the Humboldt Project, earn a **Junior Ecologist Certification**.

Humboldt Project

Humbolt Projects are student-led, service-oriented projects emphasizing self-led exploration into any chosen ecological issue the student is passionate about.

Project participants receive one-on-one mentorship from FIN staff or community leaders experienced in the topic.

Guide Development Program

Those interested in taking their friends or family outdoors to explore and learn in nature are encouraged to become a **Certified Nature Guide** through FIN's online or in-person training. Certified guides have the opportunity to participate in FIN's Gear Lending library and to lead FIN Nature communities and events.



Families in Nature

Programming

Place-based Environmental Education (PEEP)

Customized Place-based Environmental Education Projects (PEEP) for schools, parks, preserves, nature centers, and green spaces across Texas, the U.S., or anywhere in the world



Nature RX

Guided walks and nature exploration to support mental health and belonging, including the Nature Rx guides for students and Shinrin-yoku (“forest bathing”) events



Nature Communities

Community cohorts from schools, neighborhoods, and organizations who spend time together learning, playing and volunteering outdoors

Hope Nature Travel

Partnership Nature Immersion trips offering ecology-driven field science experiences for people of all ages



Gear Lending Library

Like a book library, school and communities with Certified Nature Guides can borrow camping and environmental education gear at little or no cost

Campus Campouts

Hands-on tools, training, and support for schools, organizations, and corporations sponsoring campouts on their campuses and in state parks



Events

Dozens of opportunities to connect with other families and nature every month, including camping trips, ecology workshops, tours and more

Heather Kuhlken

FIN Founder and Executive Director



Expertise:

ECOLOGY // CONSERVATION // SCIENCE EDUCATION // NON-PROFIT LEADERSHIP

Awards:

2025 ROBERT W. CRAWFORD ACHIEVEMENT PRIZE, NATIONAL RECREATION FOUNDATION

Publications:

ADVENTURES IN ECOLOGY: A GUIDE TO INSPIRE ECOLOGICAL LITERACY, OUTDOOR EXPLORATION, AND NATURE CONNECTION FOR ALL, *COMING 2026*



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kuhlkenphotography.com

Heather Kuhlken is a biologist, educator, and the founder and executive director of Families in Nature (FIN) and Ecologist School, a hands-on program that trains guides and youth towards becoming community conservation leaders and Junior Ecologists. Her work focuses on equitable, evidence-based nature engagement that strengthens family and community ties and builds environmental literacy at scale.

Kuhlken's programs and perspective have been featured in the Children & Nature Network, Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine, and the global #NatureForAll movement. Her Place-based Environmental Education Project (PEEP) was awarded by the Texan by Nature Wrangler program, which accelerates high-impact, science-based conservation projects across the state.

Her public work also spans marine and climate education; she has contributed to youth-led reef research exchanges in the Bay of Tela, Honduras and been interviewed about cultivating conservation pathways from childhood through community leadership. Kuhlken regularly speaks with educators, civic leaders, and youth at regional and international venues—including the IUCN World Conservation Congress—on scaling inclusive, place-based science education and guide development. She holds a B.A. in ecology and and M.A. in education from Rice University.

Media Assets

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- *"Photo by Kuhlken Photography."*

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Media Clips

"Using science and play to connect families with nature,"

Children and Nature Network, April 2023

[READ NOW](#)

"Families in Nature,"

Marine Lab, September 2023

[READ NOW](#)

"The leading ladies of Families in Nature,"

IUCN, 2021

[READ NOW](#)

"The rise of gear-lending libraries,"

Outside Magazine, February 27, 2021

[READ NOW](#)

"Texas Trailblazers"

Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine, February 2021

[READ NOW](#)

"How to make school safe? Let's take it outside,"

The Shield, November 7, 2020

[READ NOW](#)

"Group tries 'forest bathing' to deal with stress,"

Spectrum News, November 29, 2018

[READ NOW](#)

"In defense of the much-maligned grackle"

Austin American-Statesman, July 10, 2018

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