



FAMILIES IN NATURE™

Media Kit



[familiesinnature.org](http://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

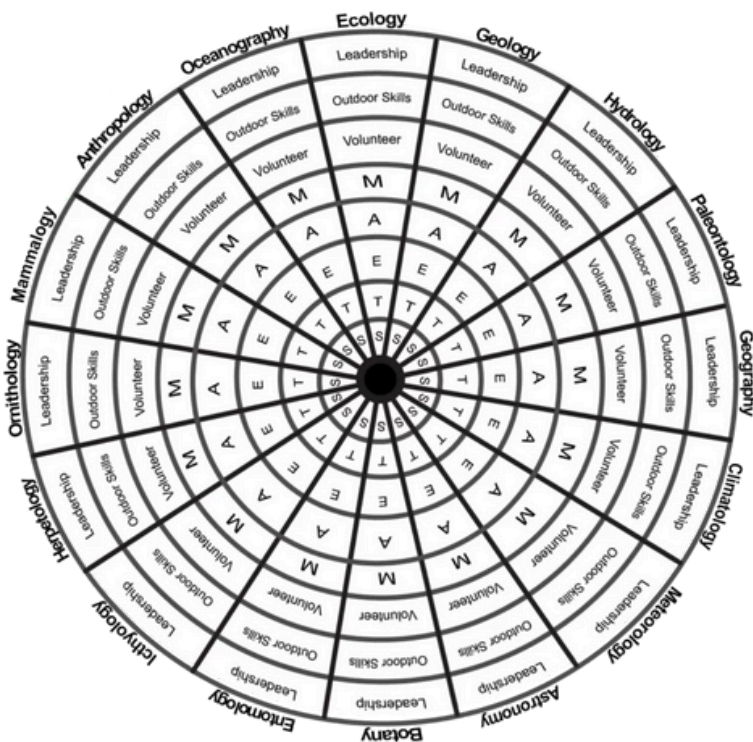


**Ecologist School** is FIN's foundational science programming, offering more than a 1,000+ family-friendly lessons that can be done at home or at an outdoor space nearby.

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](https://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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