



# Planning Your Visit

## REQUEST A FIELD TRIP

The Ruth Patrick Science Education Center offers more than 50 different hands-on, inquiry based K-12 student programs that are aligned to state standards. Different programs are offered each month. A calendar of offerings, program descriptions, and reservation request forms can be found on our website at: <http://rpsec.usca.edu/student/>. Offerings for the upcoming school year are posted online in mid-April. The deadline to submit reservation requests is mid-June. Reservation requests for student programs may be e-mailed to [RPSEC@usca.edu](mailto:RPSEC@usca.edu) or mailed to the RPSEC at USC Aiken, 471 University Parkway, Box 3, Aiken, South Carolina 29801, or faxed to (803) 641-3615. Requests received after the deadline will be placed on a waiting list. No reservations will be accepted by telephone.

## CONFIRM YOUR FIELD TRIP

All scheduling for the upcoming school year is done in the summer. You will be notified via e-mail that your request has been received. Once your visit has been scheduled, you will be mailed a confirmation contract letter. Confirmation contract letters **MUST** be signed and returned to the RPSEC by the date specified, or your scheduled program(s) will be cancelled and filled from the waiting list.

## RESCHEDULING A VISIT

Because we receive many more requests than we can serve, it is highly unlikely that we will be able to reschedule a visit unless we have a cancellation.

## CANCELLATIONS

If you need to cancel a visit, we must receive written notification at least **FOUR** weeks in advance so we can fill it from our wait list. Written notification of a cancellation **MUST** be received at least 4 weeks prior to the reserved date or a **\$25.00** cancellation fee **PER PROGRAM** will be assessed. Groups from that school will not be permitted to visit the RPSEC until the fee has been paid. \*NOTE: An additional **\$10.00 PER PROGRAM** will be assessed if your group misses your scheduled visit without contacting the RPSEC prior to the start time.

## SCHEDULING RESTRICTIONS

- There is a **minimum** of 10 students to schedule any program.
- There is a **maximum** of 30 students per Discovery Program.
- There is a **maximum** of 60 students per visit for a Double Group (students rotate through 2 programs).
- There is a **maximum** of 90 students for a Triple Group (students rotate through 3 programs).
- Please **do not bring more than 90** students on the same day unless special arrangements have been made in advance and confirmed in writing.

## SINGLE, DOUBLE, and TRIPLE GROUPS

- **Teachers bringing 10 to 30 students** may select one, two, or three programs per visit. A group of this size is considered a "Single Group" whether attending one or multiple programs.
- **Teachers bringing 31 to 60 students** must select at least two (2) programs for a "Double Program" visit. Students will rotate through two programs, with a visit of approximately 3 hours (includes a 30 minute lunch). Choose programs that are offered in the same month, only one of which may be a planetarium program.
- **Teachers bringing 61 to 90 students** should schedule three (3) programs for a "Triple Program" visit. Students will rotate through three programs, with a visit of approximately 4 hours (includes a 30 minute lunch).
- When choosing multiple programs, please select programs that are offered in the **same month**. Only one of the programs can be a planetarium program.
- EcoHikes in the woods and STEP classes at Audubon or SRS cannot be combined with RPSEC programs on the same day. However, teachers may request RPSEC programs and STEP visits during the same year.
- We may be able to accommodate larger groups in a shorter time frame if special arrangements are made in advance. Instructions for larger groups can be found at: <http://rpsec.usca.edu/student/ExpandedDoubleTriple.pdf>

## PROGRAM REQUEST GUIDELINES

- Each class may attend up to four programs over the course of the year. Please prioritize your program requests. We will schedule your programs, subject to availability, in the order in which you list them on your reservation request form.
- We recommend that one teacher make a reservation request for the entire grade level. We can accommodate up to 90 students per day (typically 9:15 AM – 1:15 PM) unless special arrangements are made in advance.
- Programs are 60 minutes each unless stated otherwise. Please allow for transition time between programs.
- Due to the anticipated volume of program requests, it is highly unlikely that late requests will be filled.

## PROGRAM START TIMES

Programs begin at 9:15 AM, 10:30 AM, 12:00 noon, and 1:15 PM. Most groups eat lunch from 11:30 – 12:00. Program start times can be adjusted in advance upon request.

## ARRIVALS and DEPARTURES

Please take a headcount before you enter the RPSEC. The group leader should report to the main office upon arrival with the total number of students and adults. Groups should enter through the double door entrance. Line up your students in one, two or three even groups in the gallery (maximum of 30 students per group). Please make checks payable to USCA, or let us know that you need to be invoiced. Please notify us as soon as possible if you will not be able to arrive at your assigned time or if you will need to leave early (803-641-3313).

## LUNCH FACILITIES

Lunch facilities at the RPSEC can accommodate up to 90 students, but you must reserve the lunchroom, extra classrooms or picnic tables prior to your visit on a first come, first served basis. Participants should bring bag lunches and drinks. The RPSEC does not have food available. **IMPORTANT:** Double and triple groups should pre-divide their lunches to eat in two or three separate rooms.

## CHAPERONES

Adult chaperones are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please note:

- **ONE** adult per 8 students will be given free admission to planetarium programs. Adults exceeding this maximum will be charged a special admission price of \$3.50 each. All teachers, school staff, bus drivers and parents are considered as part of the "adult" count.
- There is no charge for adults attending discovery programs (non-planetarium).
- To limit distractions to learning, children under the age of 4 are not permitted to attend any student programs at the RPSEC, including the planetarium.
- All visitors should turn off cell phones and audible personal electronic devices during their visit.

## STUDENT PROGRAM FEES

### Discovery Programs

Aiken County Public Schools..... Prepaid by the district (non-planetarium)  
All Other Schools..... \$3.50 per student, per program

### Planetarium Programs

All Students ..... \$3.50 per student, per program  
Adults: One adult per eight students is admitted free. Additional adults pay \$3.50 each. (Adults = teachers, school staff, bus drivers and chaperones)

### All Programs

Cancellation Fee (less than 4 weeks written notice), **PER PROGRAM**.....\$25.00  
No-Show Fee, **PER PROGRAM** .....\$35.00

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

All student programs are aligned with South Carolina and Georgia academic standards. Each lesson is designed to actively engage students in hands-on, inquiry-based learning, and many of our programs are interdisciplinary. South Carolina and Georgia academic standards correlations are available on our website: <http://rpsec.usca.edu/student/>.

## ADA STATEMENT

Please indicate if you need any special services, assistance, or accommodations to participate in our programs by contacting us in advance at [RPSEC@usca.edu](mailto:RPSEC@usca.edu) or (803) 641-3313.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Ruth Patrick Science Education Center  
University of South Carolina Aiken, 471 University Parkway, Box 3, Aiken, SC 29801  
Telephone: 803-641-3313  
Fax: 803-641-3615  
E-mail: [RPSEC@usca.edu](mailto:RPSEC@usca.edu)