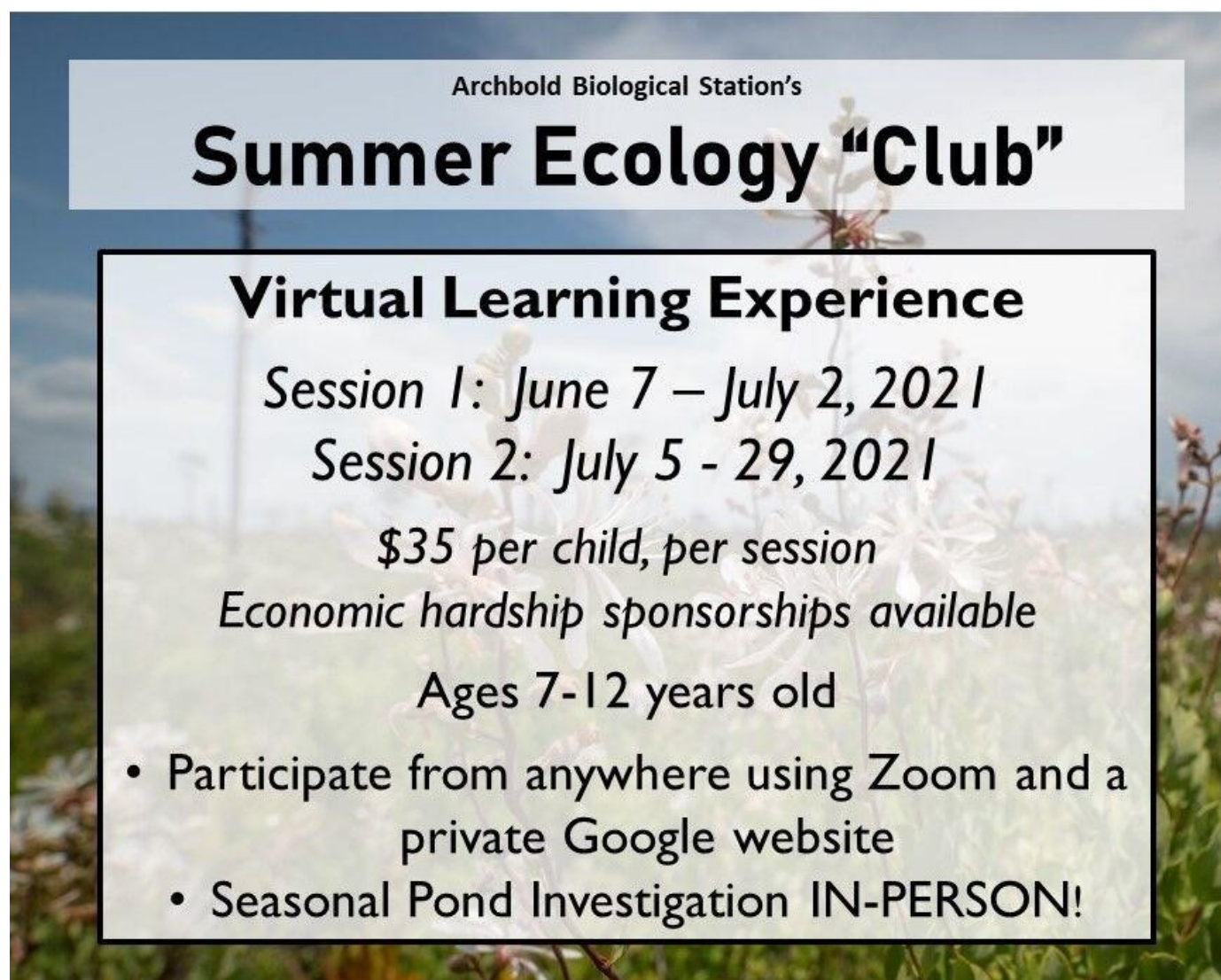


https://www.midfloridanewspapers.com/highlands_news-sun/archbold-s-virtual-summer-camp-returns-for-2021/article_e9c23558-b74e-11eb-b4be-a7fef6bc3152.html

Archbold's Virtual Summer Camp returns for 2021

Special to the Highlands News-Sun Provided by Archbold Biological Station
May 19, 2021

A promotional poster for Archbold Biological Station's Summer Ecology "Club". The poster features a background image of a field with green plants and a blue sky. The text is centered and presented in a clean, sans-serif font. The main title is in a large, bold font, and the details are in a smaller font. The text is enclosed in a white box with a black border.

Archbold Biological Station's

Summer Ecology "Club"

Virtual Learning Experience

Session 1: June 7 – July 2, 2021
Session 2: July 5 - 29, 2021

\$35 per child, per session
Economic hardship sponsorships available

Ages 7-12 years old

- Participate from anywhere using Zoom and a private Google website
- Seasonal Pond Investigation IN-PERSON!

It's that time of year again! Archbold Biological Station is gearing up for the 30th year of Ecology Summer Camp and again the camp has evolved.

Last year, Archbold offered virtual week-long science camps. This summer, as the country reopens, the Archbold Education Program presents a hybrid experience called the 'Summer Ecology Club.'

This is not a membership club, but a new format for camp: For just \$35, campers ages 7-12 can register for four weeks of activities either June or July and participate from anywhere. While most activities are virtual, campers are invited to an in-person Seasonal Pond Investigation event, as well.

Thanks to donors, families can apply for financial hardship sponsorships that cover the camp's registration fee. There is no limit per family, and many sponsorships are available.

The online component of camp includes a variety of activities, such as: multi-week at-home projects, book clubs, science demonstrations, and nature film viewings. Meetings usually happen twice a day over Zoom and campers are welcome to pick which programs they would like to attend.

"We wanted to create an educational experience that works with campers getting back into their regular summer fun," said Margaret Davenport, Archbold's Jill Abrahamson Memorial Environmental Education intern. "Have plans to spend your afternoon swimming with friends? No problem, just hop onto our morning virtual nature walk! Busy in the mornings? Book club is at 1 p.m. for 7- to 9-year-olds and 3 p.m. for 10- to 12-year-olds! Our hope is to get students involved in science without forcing them to sit at a screen all day or ruining their summer plans."

Virtual programs are also a great way to try something new. Archbold's Director of Education Dustin Angell explains, "Research has shown how important time in nature is for physical and emotional health, but many children don't have the chance to receive those benefits. Maybe they or their family members worry about bugs or bad weather, snakes and alligators, or that they don't belong. Virtual is the chance for them to give it a try without leaving their comfort zone."

Angell is also proud of the improvements to the program. He said, "If you attended Archbold's virtual camp last year, this summer's program is the 2.0 version: new and improved. We have staff members from all different departments creating fun activities to teach about Florida Scrub-jays, gopher tortoises, Florida panthers, and local history. Plus, we are using immersive 360° imagery that campers can interact with on a mobile device, computer, or virtual reality headsets!"



The most exciting improvement of the '2.0 version' of virtual camp: The 'Summer Ecology Club' is not completely virtual this year. Our campers will be the first groups to visit Archbold for a guided tour since March 2020. These events will be limited to 10 campers at a time, with multiple opportunities to get as many campers involved as possible. Participation is included at no extra cost.

Angell believes the Summer Ecology Club continues the spirit of Archbold's three decades of camp.

"Our summer programs have always been a VIP experience of our organization, and this year is no different. The children receive a behind-the-scenes look at research and conservation in Florida and make connections with the plants and wildlife that make it such a special place," he said.

To register for Summer Ecology Club, visit the Archbold Education website here at www.archbold-station.org/html/education/scrubecol.html

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