

STATE OF INNOVATION





FESTIVAL SUMMARY

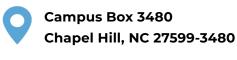
NCSciFest is the first statewide celebration of its kind in the nation. This April, our theme State of Innovation acknowledged both the history of advancements in North Carolina as well as our continued innovations and progress in STEM all around the state.

Community-based events are hosted by museums, science centers, colleges, universities, businesses, parks, libraries, and hundreds of K-12 schools around North Carolina. Founded in 2010 by Morehead Planetarium and Science Center. NCSciFest has served more than 3.5 milion participants of all ages from all 100 counties since its inception.

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The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill







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Dear NCSciFest Partners,

The 2024 North Carolina Science Festival was an incredible celebration thanks to you - our event hosts, teachers, scientists, sponsors, volunteers, and the thousands of North Carolinians who participated in events.

This year featured events for the public in more counties than ever before, highlighting how much science is woven into the fabric of our state's culture. From major expos on college and university campuses to STEM workshops at libraries, there was something for everyone to enjoy this year.

Our school initiatives continue to grow in an attempt to meet the demand from educators across our state. We shipped 250 activity kits to elementary schools to host science nights for their school communities, and we paired 75 scientists with middle school teachers to facilitate classroom takeovers.

As we look towards our 15th year, we're excited to continue to build the proud tradition of celebrating science as a state each April and continuing to expand access to science for all.

See you in 2025!

Best wishes and Science for All, Todd & Erik

Took Boythe

Todd Boyette, NCSciFest Co-Founder



Eil montose

Erik MacIntosh, NCSciFest Manager

44 At RTI International, we believe when it comes to science, North Carolina is a state of innovation. We're excited to see how our partnership with **NCSciFest inspires the** scientists of tomorrow.

- Tim J. Gabel, RTI President and CEO



STATE OF INNOVATION

Our 2024 Festival theme inspired our partners to celebrate the ways North Carolina leads the way with innovation: making technological breakthroughs, developing cutting-edge manufacturing techniques, and making new scientific discoveries.

"One big win: we overheard a child say, in regard to the experiments, 'I thought I knew how the eclipse worked, but it didn't make sense until now!" Samantha Martin, Asheboro Public Library

PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

This year's solar eclipse sparked curiosity and wonder as thousands of people across North Carolina joined together to witness the awe-inspiring sight of the moon passing in front of the sun.

STATEWIDE STAR PARTY

Thanks to support from NC Space Grant, this year's Statewide Star Party provided opportunities for people to learn with hands-on sun and moon themed activities and safely observe the eclipse at 37 sites across our state.

SCIENCE EXPOS

The UNC Science Expo, UNC Charlotte STEAM Innovation Expo, UNC Greensboro's Science Everywhere, and a dozen other official expos brought together thousands of people to celebrate STEM in large-scale community events.

"It is hard to put the excitement for science we witnessed into words."

Anna Harris, Inspiring Innovation at CMoW



"I had several parents comment on our event board which highlights free events in North Carolina. They were saying that when you have a family you can't always afford to go to many events due to the cover charge. And having so many free events was great."

> - Vickie Sealock NC Dept of Commerce

NCSCIFEST SUPER FAN

FOR THE LOVE OF SCIENCE

Huntersville parent Peter Chisolm first learned about the North Carolina Science Festival several years ago while searching for STEM programs to engage his son, Essey Paul, in robotics. Chisolm had heard somewhere that it was

- STEM Education Month in North Carolina, and, after a bit of internet searching, stumbled upon the Festival's website.
- Since then, from the Gravity Games in Lenoir to events closer to home around the Charlotte area, the Festival has become
- an annual family tradition, creating cherished memories and sparking a love for science.

For the 2024 Festival, Chisolm and his family attended at least six events by their estimation, including a memorable visit to the Schiele Museum in Gastonia for the solar eclipse, as well as visits to the UNC Charlotte Expo, Charlotte Motor Speedway, the Asheville Maker Faire, and the safety fair in Burlington. It was at the Piedmont STEM Festival at North Carolina A&T, though, where Chisolm and family caught the eye of Festival staff member Nikitta Grillo, who spotted a plush Kelvin doll in the back of their car. "My son won Kelvin at a Festival event before COVID, so every time we're going to a Festival event, we put Kelvin in the car."

Chisolm's daughter, Millen, has also picked up the Festival bug, finding joy in the diverse activities available at events.



It was most evident this past year at UNC Charlotte's STEM Expo where arts and crafts and interactive demos were available for attendees. "At UNC Charlotte, there was so much to do — books, arts and crafts, healthcare activities. It was great to have something for everyone," she added.

Reflecting on the importance of the Festival, Chisolm noted, "For me, it's about sharing my love for STEM with my kids and seeing if they pick up the passion I have. These events make learning fun and accessible, and the excitement continues long after we leave." Chisolm and family are already looking forward to the 15th Festival next year, where they hope to continue to make more memories together.

EXPANDING ACCESS



SCIENCE FOR ALL

Now in its 14th year, the 2024 Festival featured public events in 78 counties across the state of North Carolina, expanding into 15 more counties than last year, thanks to our amazing partners. With the help of our partners, events expanded to several rural counties across the state.

Partners such as Person Early College for Innovation and Leadership exposed middle school students in Roxboro, NC to STEM by planning a campus wide STEM Expo led by Early College students.

For the first time, access to STEM by a private HBCU, Johnson C. Smith University, exposed students to careers in E-Sports. NCSSM-Morganton planned an engaging, cross curricular event for all 5th graders in Burke County as well as students from the NC School of Deaf. The passion, dedication and commitment of our partners to STEM education was displayed in every event throughout April.

SCHOOL INITIATIVES



SCIENTISTS TAKE OVER MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

SciMatch is a signature K-12 program of the North Carolina Science Festival that connects STEM professionals with

middle school classrooms across North Carolina throughout the month of April. Scientists are paired with teachers and spend a day taking over the classroom to lead hands-on activities and provide students an opportunity to meet and interact with people who use STEM in their careers.



"My favorite quote from a student was: 'Wow! I am so glad that I came to school today instead of skipping. This was so cool!'"

- SciMatch STEM Professional





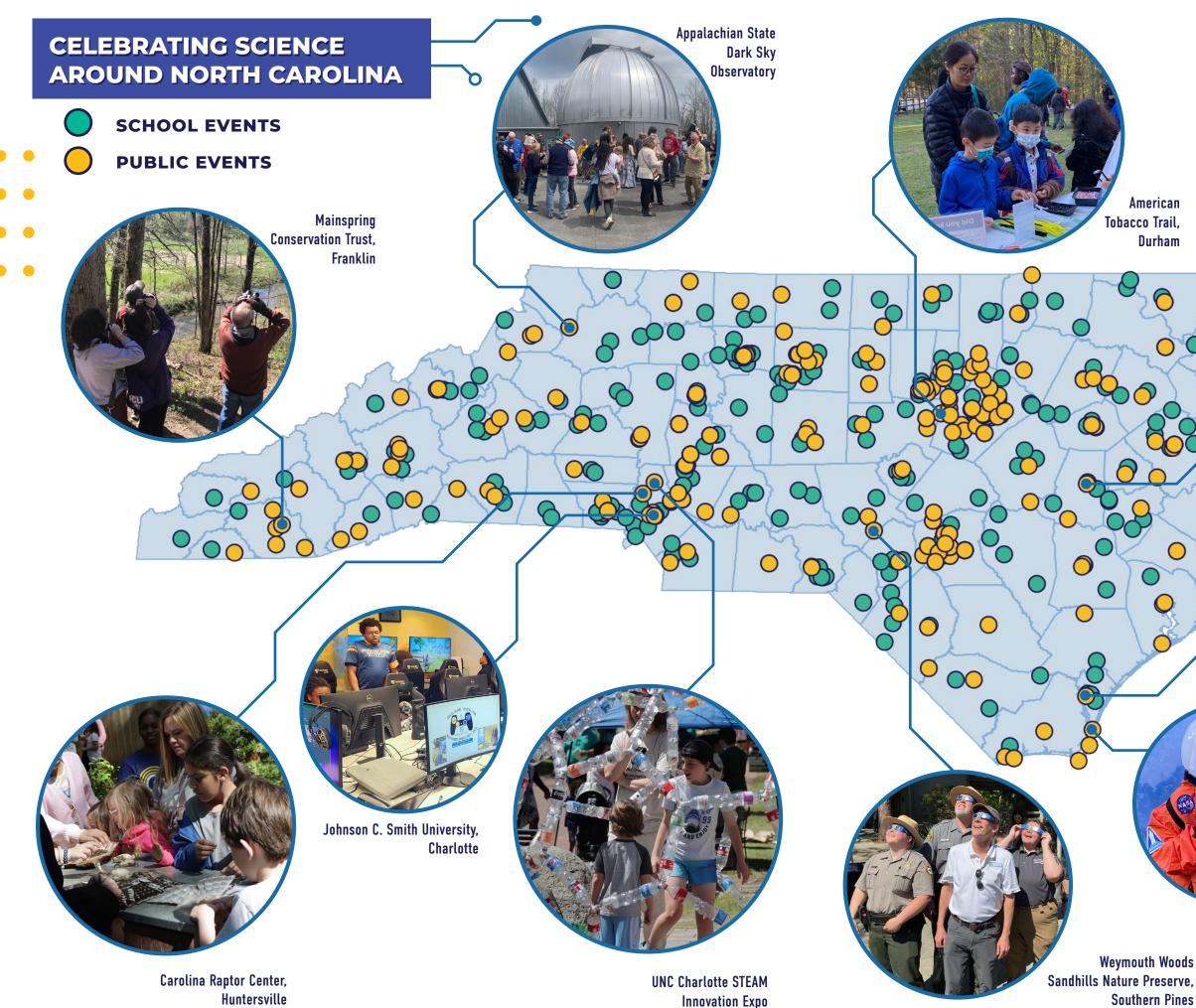
A DECADE OF DUKE ENERGY SCIENCE NIGHTS

The Duke Energy Science Night program is designed to help elementary schools host a fun science event for their students and families by providing a kit that includes all the materials for hands-on activities plus instructions (in English and Spanish), a planning guide, and several other support resources. This year marked a decade of Duke Energy Foundation sponsorship of the program and set a new record with more than 260 participating schools throughout 97 NC counties.

"Days later and our students are already asking about science night for next year. The love of science definitely blossomed from that night!" - Duke Energy Science Night host









"It's always so much fun to watch younger kids try on the cleanroom suits and excitedly shout 'I'm a scientist!""

- Emily Snell (Discover the Unseen: Exploring Science's Tiny Marvels)

Wayne Community College, Goldsboro

Children's Museum of Wilmington

Cape Fear Museum, Carolina Beach State Park

I JUST NEED

INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS

Created as a collaboration between Camden County Schools and Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), the Exploring STEM Careers event held on April 9 was an opportunity to engage local 5th graders in STEM experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Professor Shatoya Covert, Lecturer of Mathematics at ECSU, coordinated with key Camden County Schools professionals to immerse students in hands-on STEM learning activities. These included robotics, solar and hydrogen energy projects, critical thinking, and design challenges. "We developed a plan to engage students with several hands-on learning STEM concepts," reflected Covert. "The 5th graders were able to engage with ECSU faculty, staff, and students who were instrumental in showcasing their knowledge in the activities."

From Covert's perspective, the event's most impactful moment was witnessing the interaction between students with ECSU's Department of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Engineering Technology and the 5th graders. "To witness college students take on the task of instructing and engaging with 5th graders was most definitely the event's highlight. In moments like these, both populations of students were afforded opportunities not normally provided in the traditional classroom setting," Covert shared. This interplay provided younger students with unique learning opportunities while allowing college students a place to develop teaching and mentorship skills.

After the event, feedback received from Camden Intermediate was overwhelmingly positive. "The 5th graders were provided with a survey, and approximately 70% of respondents indicated the event made STEM learning fun, bringing them an awareness of STEM in daily life while teaching them about STEM careers," Covert reported.

The Exploring STEM Careers event demonstrates how early involvement in STEM can inspire and empower the next generation of scientists, engineers, and beyond.

"STEM is a pertinent lifeline to the development of the future. We, as educators, are obligated to ensure students have awareness and access to make their imprint on the world as meaningful as possible," remarked Covert. "It is through these events where their minds can be challenged and channeled to incite innovations that will benefit society in the long run," she stated.



NC SCIENCE TRAIL/NC STATE PARKS

REACHING RURAL AREAS

This year, the NC Science Trail hosted four impactful Science Festival events to expand STEM programming to rural areas of North Carolina. "Both the NC Science Trail and the NC Science Festival aim to reach more rural parts of the state that have less STEM programming in general," said Dr. April C. Smith, Executive Director. "The Science Trail partners with all of the NC State Parks, which are often located in rural areas, so we thought that would be the most suitable location for our rural NCSciFest events."

The NC Science Trail and NC State Parks events focused on the theme "Nature's Innovation," which illustrates how nature adapts and thrives. Grandfather Mountain State Park teamed up with Appalachian State University's Department of Botany to showcase native plants and wildflowers, emphasizing their ecological importance and their role in supporting native pollinators. Lumber River State Park hosted an event centered around the native Bowfin fish and the invasive snakehead species to raise awareness about the ecological threats posed by invasive species.

Hanging Rock State Park celebrated its 88th birthday with educational sessions and interactive activities focusing on its geological features. Meanwhile, Goose Creek State Park highlighted the vital role of bees in our ecosystem, featuring live demonstrations and seed bomb-making activities using native seeds.

Despite the success of these events, the experience underscored for the NC Science Trail team the challenges of delivering educational programming in rural areas. Engaging local groups and leveraging social media





"We were extremely pleased, as always, to host our friends from the NC Autism Society who are so helpful and supportive about providing options for neurodivergent learners."

- April Smith (Lumber River: Native or Invasive)

platforms specific to the community, such as homeschool parent Facebook groups, proved essential in spreading the word effectively. "Parents are willing to bring their kids longer distances for educational events if they know they are worth it," reflected Smith. "So, I think the main takeaway from holding four rural events is that you have to find interested local groups and get them to help with advertising within their social circles."

Since its launch in April 2023, the NC Science Trail has worked together with Festival staff to help to inspire the next generation of scientists and provide reliable resources to the public. "The public knows that the NC Science Festival has done great work around the state for many years," remarked Smith. "They know that wherever the NCSciFest brand appears, there will be quality STEM education. That's a great reputation that we're thrilled to be able to partner with."

"I would say that the NC Science Festival no longer fits into STEM educational opportunities; NCSciFest creates STEM educational opportunities for our state."





PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

THE NORTH CAROLINA SCIENCE FESTIVAL WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP IN SHARING STEM WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES:

4th Aura Club A.C. Reynolds Middle School Ackland Art Museum Acme Delco Elementary School After School Brilliance Aggie Academy Alamance Community College Alamance County Public Library: North Park Branch Alpha Academy Animal Park at the Conservators Center Appalachian State University Aquarium & Shark Lab by Team ECCO Asheboro Public Library Asheville Makers Asheville Museum of Science Astronomy on Tap in the Triangle **Aulander Elementary School** Aurora Fossil Museum **B.O. Barnes Elementary School Badin Elementary School Bailey Elementary School** Bald Head Island Conservancy Banoak Elementary School Battleground Elementary School **Bearfield Primary School Beaufort Elementary School Belmont Elementary School Belmont Middle School** Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site **Berewick Elementary School Bertie County Public Library** Bethel Middle School **Bethel School** Bethesda Elementary School **Beverly Hills STEM Elementary School BF Grady Elementary School Bill Hefner Elementary School** Biogen Bladen County Public Library Blue Jay Point County Park

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Cherokee County Schools: 21st Century Community Learning Center

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Blythe Elementary School



Gaston STEM Leadership Academy

- **Great Opportunities and Boundless**
- **Guilford Technical Community College:**
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Zebulon Gifted & **Talented Magnet Elementary School**

Zebulon Gifted & **Talented Magnet** Middle School



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