



# CUSCOWILLA UPDATE

# 2024



CUSCOWILLA  
NATURE & RETREAT CENTER



# Projects Completed

## Low Ropes Course

- 5 Elements were added to the area located behind the existing climbing wall to create a challenge course for both campers and rental groups to use.
- Grant provided by the Friends of Cuscowilla awarded from the Arie Foundation.



# Projects Completed

## Large Pavillion

- Completed early this summer and offers a huge asset for our summer camp programs and future events.



# Projects Completed

## Nature Center



# Projects Completed

## Nature Center

- **Our outdoor classroom is complete and is being used! Thanks to Duke Energy, the county and Friends of Cuscowilla for helping complete this project over the past few years to make it the ultimate outdoor education space.**
- **The Firepit with seating around was the last project completed as well as the ADA ramp and parking space.**

# Field Trips



# Field Trips

- **We are currently offering Life Science based field trips for grades K- 12 at Cuscowilla.**
- **Some options would be exploring the pond and swamp areas of the park and comparing water quality or studying life cycles of the plants and insects around the park.**

# Summer Camp





# Summer Camp

- Offered 8 weeks of Day Camp for ages 7– 12 years old. We averaged 75 campers per week and offered weekly scholarships thru the Alachua County Children’s Trust and the Friends of Cuscowilla.
- Swim lessons were offered by a licensed Swim instructor during camp swim time as well as on the weekends for ages 3–6 on Saturday mornings before the pool opened to the public.
- Campers took field trips once a week to places around Alachua County such as the Alachua County Sports and Events Center, The Hippodrome, Poe Springs, the Natural History Musuem, Cade Musuem and more!





# Summer Camp

- We partnered with UF IFAS again this year to provide a week of programming provided by the extension staff as well as off camp field trips to the Beef, Sheep and the Natural Area Lab.
- New this summer was our Cuscowilla “Chill Zone.” This was grant provided by the Friends of the Library thru the Friends of Cuscowilla. A classroom space was transformed to provide a cool down spot for campers to lounge with a book or quiet puzzle and take a moment to themselves.







# Summer Camp

- **New! Teen Week, Ages 10–14** were able to choose a tract for the week based on their interest such as **Outdoor Adventure, Art and Music and Leadership skills** in working with **Elish Cash** and her team in **HR** to create speakers on what attributes make a leader.
- **Accreditation visit from the American Camping Association** this summer as well and should hear the results of that soon.
- **Summer 2025 registration will open March 1, 2025**, and our theme next summer is **WILD** about **Nature!**

# Summer Camp Demographics

- 46 Campers received scholarships to be able to attend camp from the Friends of Cuscowilla and the Children's Trust of Alachua County.
- 536 Total Registrations with an average of 5-8 on a waitlist each week.
  - 28% African American
  - 46% Caucasian
  - 12% Hispanic
  - 6% Other
  - 66% Male
  - 45% Female





**WILD**

**ABOUT NATURE**

**Cuscowilla Day Camp 2025**

# Home School Program



# Homeschool Programming

- **Life Science based Homeschool programs once a month for grades K- 6.**
- **In September, we learned all about Butterflies and had a great turn out. This month is all about the wetlands at Cuscowilla alongside EPD, in November we'll inspect insects.**

# Events



# Events

- Hosted the **Observe the Moon** event partnering with the **UF astronomy department**. We had a great turn out of over **200 people** in attendance.
- The **Hogtown Beerfest** will return this coming **Spring** for the **3<sup>rd</sup>** year in a row.
- **North Florida Outdoor Expo** will also return this **February**.
- Offering events like **Archery Intro** classes quarterly.
- We are full most weekends this fall and winter for rentals and weddings as well as hosting scout groups for both overnight and Day Events.

# Marketing

Introduction to

# Archery

**NOVEMBER 2, 2024**  
**9 AM – 11 AM**

**PRICING:**

**\$25 ADULTS, \$15 AGES 10-17**

- New Cuscowilla Facebook Page with updates and events.
- Working with Communications department to create new marketing publications for events and rentals.



## SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS



We invite you to engage your students beyond worksheets and screens to unique hands on, inquiry based outdoor experience. Some stations or subjects will require teacher participation to help facilitate. Grades K – 8. Available September – April.

**\$4 resident / \$5 non-resident schools, per student**

### Pollution Solutions

This hands-on experience demonstrates the various types of pollution and their causes and effects. Students then discover some possible solutions and recognize ways to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

### Wildlife Discovery

A general introduction to nature and wildlife, students will explore the native plants and animals of the Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center through hands-on exploration and inquisitive observation.

### Nature Journaling and Field Sketching

This field-based experience combines science, writing, and art to help students develop a broader understanding of the natural history of their environment by using the wonderful natural setting at Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center.

### Wild Wetlands

Students hike our swamp wetlands boardwalk to learn about the unique relationships of this very fragile and important ecosystem.

### All about Butterflies

Investigate butterfly life cycle, anatomy, senses, defenses and host plants.

### Winged Wonder

This program will call Florida home conservation in on owl pellet c

### Pond Study 10

Using dip nets macroinvertebrates to make inferences health of the p

### Inspecta Insect

Observe insect cycles, anatomy on the trail for

### Cycles of Nature

Nature is full of cycles, all about cycles, animals and e



**Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center**  
**210 SE 134 Ave, Micco**

**More information email: [jbass@alachuacounty.us](mailto:jbass@alachuacounty.us)**



## HOMESCHOOL JUNIOR NATURALIST PROGRAM

# INSPECTA INSECTS

Homeschoolers can enjoy our Homeschool Naturalist program, a monthly educational series. Program is for ages K – 6th grade

**Cost: \$4 resident/ \$5 non-resident**  
**November 6, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Families are free to stay later and pack a picnic and stay after for free play on the court



**Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center**  
**210 SE 134 Ave, Micco**  
**Scan the QR code to register!**

**More information email: [jbass@alachuacounty.us](mailto:jbass@alachuacounty.us)**



# Financials

- In FY24, revenue increased 77% with its main contribution being camp and programs.
- Expenses decreased by 10%.