

The Environmental Education Center

at YMCA Camp Thunderbird



Teacher Planning Packet

Day Trip

www.campthunderbird.org

1-800-732-3855

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Environmental Education Center at YMCA Camp Thunderbird. We look forward to the experience that lies in store for you and your students as they explore their natural surroundings, and learn something about themselves, their classmates, and you. To better serve you we have developed this planning packet to help prepare for your trip to our center. At any time please feel free to call us if you have any questions regarding your trip. Can't wait to see you and your students!!



YMCA Mission:

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

**Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
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**Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Introduction to the Environmental Education Center**



Why do we do this?

-to provide an interdisciplinary environmental education program where your students acquire practical knowledge and awareness so they may better appreciate, respect, and make their own decisions concerning their role in the environment.
-to help your students develop cooperative and leadership abilities through personal achievement, self-expression, and teamwork.
-to promote positive attitudes towards the wise use of natural resources.
-to break out of the four walls of the classroom and supplement your schools curriculum with engaging hands-on sensory learning in the outdoors.
-to foster an atmosphere and experience where your students experience feelings of competence, confidence, and satisfaction in learning, being outdoors, and helping others.
-to have fun!

**Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
History**

Who are we and what's our story???

In the early thirties, "Life Magazine" was promoting Fresh Air Camps for children of New York Slums. Observer Charities, Inc., a subsidiary of the Charlotte Observer, organized the Observer Fresh Air Camp in 1936 founded by C.B. Johnson. The camp enjoyed popularity in its beginning days due to its press exposure and appeal with the public. After three years the Observer decided it didn't quite know how to effectively manage a camp setting. The camp was leased to the Salvation Army in 1940 with hopes of increasing its effectiveness; however this was not the case and there was little improvement. The Observer, still owners of the camp, were disappointed and rumor of selling the property and tearing it down were in the air. Three individuals interested in the YMCA approached Mr. Johnson with the intent of turning over full control of the camp to the YMCA of Charlotte. Over time the Observer Charities, through various sources, have provided several buildings to compliment the gift of the camp and endowment. The YMCA took control in 1946 and in 1963 the name was changed to Camp Thunderbird and has been going strong since.

In the early 80's a few visionary teachers in the Charlotte area noticed Thunderbird as a great "School in the Woods", not just a special place during the summer. The first teachers that came out saw Camp Thunderbird as a place where they could interact with the environment through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell which wasn't possible through their books or at their school. These were the pioneers of the environmental education program, and ever since, busses have been rolling through our gates ten months out of the year.

Today Camp Thunderbird is very dynamic with a variety of programs running throughout the year.

- **Environmental Education**
 - **Summer Day Camp**
 - **Summer Resident Camp**
 - **After-school Program**
- **Conference and Retreat/ Family Camp**

Camp Thunderbird Environmental Education Center Staff

Having a great site and great resources are one thing, but here at the Environmental Education Center we pride ourselves on our professional staff that will work with your students. Our staff is made up of adults that have received college degrees in areas such as; biology, conservation, forestry, education, and recreation to name a few. We also get a great opportunity each year to sponsor a few young adults from Europe and the United States that participate in an internship where they gain skills to take back to their countries or education. All in all, our staff is a very diverse group of instructors that enjoy working outside with children in a highly energetic and active environment that promote **respect, responsibility, caring, honesty** and **faith** for everybody and the environment.

Our staff must:

- As with many organizations that work with children, pass a mandatory drug and background test before they are officially hired.
- complete a 2 week initial training before working with the kids.
- Participate in ongoing in-services on safety, science, and teambuilding
- Be periodically evaluated
- Certified in CPR, First Aid, AED, and Lifeguarding



**Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Location**



Where are we?

Located in the heart of the Carolinas, our site is nestled on 106 acres along the banks of Lake Wylie. On the border of North and South Carolina just 17 miles from Charlotte, NC our site is very accessible from Interstates 77 and 85.

The Lake

The 12,455 acres of Lake Wylie is one of our greatest classrooms as your students may find themselves determining the pH of the lake, digging in the bottom of the lake for aquatic insects, or sharpening their skills in a canoe in one of our protected coves. Lake Wylie also offers a great backdrop to your evening campfire, dining experience, and walks around the site.

The Land

Our forest trails provide a path for discovery around each bend with many living and non-living components of the forest. Recreation fields provide ample space for group activities, as well as a place to recreate with your students.

Indoor Program Areas

Although most of our programming occurs outdoors, our center is equipped with heated indoor classrooms, cabins, recreational halls, and dining facility. Our center also has an outdoor amphitheatre, two outdoor pavilions, challenge course, climbing tower and high ropes elements, wildlife room, pioneer cabin, Native American site, aquatic lab, and "Star Lab" planetarium.

Cabins

Should your group choose to spend the night, you will enjoy the accommodations of your cabins and your cabin mates. Cabins have bunk-style beds, and are equipped with heat, restrooms, and showers.

Dining Hall

Overnight groups will also enjoy a full breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals in our spacious dining hall overlooking Lake Wylie.

**Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Classes Offered**

What can I do at Camp Thunderbird?

Camp Thunderbird offers you and your students many unique opportunities that can't be experienced in the classroom. Choose from the existing list of curriculum or give us a call for any special curriculum needs that you may have and we'll do our best to meet those needs.

Choose from:

- Advanced Aquatic Ecology Grades 5 and up -All Year
- Astronomy All Year
- Aquatic Ecology All Year
- Bird Study All Year
- Canoeing Grades 4 and up -All Year
- Challenge Course - Low Elements All Year
- Compass All Year
- Creepy Crawlies All Year
- Eco Challenge Grades 5 and up - All Year
- Eco Heroes All Year
- Environmental Debate Grades 5 and up - All Year
- Fish Seining & Dissection All Year
- Fishing & Fish ID All Year
- Forest Ecology All Year
- Garden Study Sept, Oct, April, May
- Group Dynamics All Year
- Living History All year (based on space available)
- Meelewing - Cultural Diversity Grades 5 and up - All Year
- Meteorology Grades 4-7 - All Year
- Native American Study All Year
- Nature Art All Year
- Nature Journaling &
 Wildlife Observation All Year
- Pioneer Study All Year
- Soil Study All Year
- Wildlife Ecology All Year

Class Descriptions

Advanced Aquatic Ecology

Your students will become "Lake Doctors" in this activity by giving Lake Wylie a "check-up". Your students will check a number of factors that affect the quality of the lake such as, temperature, pH, clarity, depth, plankton production, and other factors such as erosion. Upon reviewing their data the class will determine the health of the lake based on their observations and write a prescription for the lake.

Astronomy

In this activity your students will be out of this world as they explore the universe. Students will look at the planets in our solar system and demonstrate their relative distances between each other and their rotation. Students will also look at the relationships of the Sun, Earth, and Moon. Students will get the opportunity to learn stories and constellations when they enter our inflatable "Star Lab."



Aquatic Ecology

Roll up your sleeves as you and your students explore a cove or a pond. Many small discoveries await you as you explore a major component of the Lake Wylie food web. Upon exploring the water, students will define and discuss the different organisms found and look at the unique features that each of them have. Students will also define an adaptation, food web, and look at the importance of the water cycle.

Bird Study

Your students turn into "bird brains" in this activity as they have the opportunity to simulate some bird behaviors. Students will discuss and demonstrate why there are birds of different feathers, beaks, feet, color, shapes, and sounds. Students discuss what "tools" each bird needs to live in different habitats before heading out with binoculars and field guide in hand to find the birds of Camp Thunderbird.



Canoeing

Take to the lake in this activity as you and your students practice true teamwork as you navigate your canoe in one of our protected coves. After a brief introduction and history of canoeing, your students will discuss and demonstrate various paddling skills, safety techniques, and paddling terminology with one of our instructors before pushing off in the lake.

Challenge Course

Want to push your students physically, mentally, and emotionally? This class will do just that. Starting simple, our instructor will give your group a number of initiatives for them to complete working as a group. After the instructions are given, both you and the instructor will sit back and watch the dynamics of the group evolve. As each initiative is completed, the instructor will process it before increasing the difficulty for the next challenge. Students will build and progress to the low elements if initiatives are being met and if safety of the group is not compromised.

Compass

Which way do we go? Students in groups of 2-4 will be put to the test on one of our many compass courses that we have on site. After learning how and why a compass works and identifying the parts of a compass, students will take a bearing, find their pace and follow designated courses on camp.

Creepy Crawlies

Bugs: Creepy, crawly and scary? Not necessarily. In this dynamic class students will discover the amazing world of bugs and the important role they play in the environment through games, observation and everyone's favorite...the bug hunt!



Eco Challenge

Here's a new way to incorporate technology into your camp experience. Students will use handheld GPS units to navigate across camp. As a group they will work together and communicate to collect pieces and attempt a successful egg drop.

Eco Heroes

What can I do to save the planet? Students will explore and discover sustainable energy sources and learn where their energy comes from today. By learning alternatives, the 3Rs and conservation students can become the Earth's next Eco Heroes.

Environmental Debate

Students will role play a situation that is played out everyday in our country. Students will be given a scenario that will somehow affect the environment. Students will be broken into different players in the matter, from farmers, developers, environmentalists, community members, each expressing their values, beliefs, and feelings toward the scenario to a board made up of teachers and instructors. The board will make a decision based on each interest groups presentation and then debrief the experience.

Fish Seining and Dissection

Using minnow traps and seining nets, your students become biologists in this activity sampling Lake Wylie for the different species and diversity of fish in the lake. Students will examine the catch for variations in size, shape, color, and role of each fish in the lake. Students will also get to see the form and function of the internal anatomy of a fish as our instructor will dissect a fish for your group.

Fishing and Fish ID

Students become familiar with the external anatomy of a fish in this activity looking at the major identification characteristics of a fish. Students will be given a dichotomous key and a number of unmarked jars to identify some of the species of fish found in Lake Wylie. After this exercise, students will grab a cane pole, bait their hook, and test their skill and patience as they go after the "big one".

Forest Ecology

Students will hit the trail in this class awakening their senses of sight, sound, smell, and maybe even taste. Your students will look at the relationships between plants and animals, as well as, the different cycles, and niches in the forest habitat through observations and games. Students will get the opportunity to sit down next to a tree and participate in a solo journaling activity to increase their understanding and appreciation of the forest before exiting the canopy of the forest.



Garden Study

Where does that food you eat come from? The store, right? In this seasonal activity, students will trace where their food comes from as well as understanding which resources play a vital role in the production of crops. Students will get the chance to smell, feel, taste, and explore areas of our educational garden. This study area includes a vegetable garden, orchard, herb garden, butterfly garden, and composting station that the students will explore.

Group Dynamics

Students test their patience, attention to detail, and communication skills in this exciting teambuilding activity. Students are divided into small working groups and one person from each team is allowed to see the "Beast." The "Beast" is a creation made up of various objects ranging from paper plates, pipe cleaners, Legos, just about anything!! The object of this activity is for each team to build an exact replica of the beast. The problem is only one person from each team will see it. That same person will not be able to build it but rather pass on the information about the various colors, materials, placement of object to create the beast. This person who observes it will tell a runner who tells a buyer who actually picks out the material, who gives them to another runner who ultimately gives them to the builder who is the only one who can physically see the object being built. No one else on the team will see the object until it is completed and time is up. Following the activity, students will debrief the activity offering solutions to situations that arose during their building process.

High Ropes Challenge

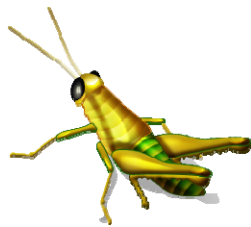
Want to give your students a chance to lift their self-esteem and self-confidence? We'll put them in a climbing harness and send them 40 feet in the air on the end of a rope. We offer a number of high rope initiative options for your school. From a climbing wall to a zip line. Want to do more? Talk to us about our Alpine Tower, Giant Swing, Charlie Chaplain and Stationary Log Traverse that students experience out of their comfort zone up in the air! These are challenge by choice activities where no student is made to do any of the elements. Each student, chooses his or her comfort level on each of these before attempting an element with certified staff. Our staff are there to assure the students safety, as well as encourage them to reach their goal. **There is an additional \$7 fee per student for this activity.**

Living History

Find out what life was like on the American frontier. Your students are in for a real treat as they travel back to 1805 to meet a settler and his wife, school teacher, a wild frontiersman, and a prospector out on Thunderbirds trails. Students will get the opportunity to interact with these characters in first person and maybe even help them do some of the daily chores such as, making shingles, using a two person saw, drying herbs, digging graves, or practicing arithmetic.

Meelewing

Pronounced (mia-lea-vung) this is our character development class examining the values of respect, caring, responsibility, and trust. The word comes from the Afrikaans language meaning "actively living together." In this activity, your group is split into two different cultures that will be role played. Each culture has its own language, set of social standards, government, and card game. Ambassadors are sent to each culture and this is where the fun starts. The ambassadors quickly find out that they are much different from the other culture and many feelings are quick to surface for the ambassadors. The lesson continues until students begin to compromise and communicate effectively until they feel that the group could actively live together. This lesson is wrapped up by tying in situations where this happens in everyday life. Maybe you moved to a new school, from a different country, lived in a culture where there was a major social, political, or religious problem. These are all examples that are tied into the lesson.



Native American Studies

In this activity, students discuss the Catawba Culture, play traditional native games, try their hand at some storytelling, and use clay to make an animal charm. Students will discuss and observe native artifacts and what it means to be sustainable at our Native American site as well as discuss the importance of nature in native cultures.



Meteorology

Prepare to be "blown away" by this hands-on class as your students become meteorologists and learn to make their own short-range weather forecast! Students will measure air temperature, atmospheric pressure, humidity, wind speed/direction and precipitation using a variety of tools including a thermometer, barometer, sling psychrometer, anemometer, wind vane and rain gauge. Students will also see how local observations from many places can be combined on a weather map to make longer-range forecasts, including the tracking of severe weather. Recommended for grades 4-7

Nature Art

Using objects of nature, students will individually create their own artwork. Students will interpret their pieces through the use of objects from the field and provided art supplies. Students will appreciate nature through art, and art in nature.



Nature Journaling & Wildlife Observation

"To see the world in a grain of sand" isn't just for poets -- keen observation is as vital in science as it is in art. This class offers students a change of pace, and a chance to slow down and observe the behaviors, adaptations and diversity of wild animals and plants that fill the ecosystems around us. Students will be encouraged to record their discoveries with field notes and sketches in their journals, just as field biologists (and artists) have for centuries. Whether you're watching cliff swallows building nests out of clay, a great blue heron stalking minnows in the shallows, or butterflies pollinating wildflowers while camouflaged crab spiders wait to catch the unwary, ecological concepts come to life all around us when we focus our senses on observing them.

Pioneer Study

Students get to experience a taste of pioneer life in this activity, understanding what it means to live on the frontier and be a pioneer. This activity may find your students grinding corn to cook cornbread over an open fire, making apple cider, dipping candles, making corn husk dolls, or making bracelets using some of the same techniques that were used to make rope. Students will also visit the Pioneer Cabin discussing different pioneer tools, as well as, "loading up their wagons" and role playing the Piedmont Trail. Like the "Oregon Trail" game this role play gives students a limited amount of money to purchase pioneer goods that they feel will help them travel a long distance in this case, the Carolinas along the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road.

Soil Study

It's time to get dirty in this activity! Students will investigate the importance of soil quality by analyzing soil properties through hands-on experiments. Students will determine some of the processes that form soil and find out why soil is important for human survival. Students will look at erosion, soil horizons, soil particle sizes, permeability and porosity; test the soil for temperature, pH, and moisture.

Wildlife Ecology

What is wildlife? Students examine the difference between wild and domesticated animals. Students will participate in activities that simulate the hardships and adaptations of predators and prey in the animal world. Concepts such as ecology, adaptation, camouflage, and habitat will be presented and discussed. Students will then enter the wildlife room where they will be able to handle a number of our snakes, turtles, skulls, furs, bones, salamanders, and our "touch me" table.

Is there something we can help you with??

Often schools will be focusing on a particular curriculum objective or subject area. We can tailor your trip to best fit your needs. Just give us a call and we'll be glad to help you build or create curriculum that we may not offer in one of our classes!!!

**YMCA Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Fundraising**



Where can I get money for our trip?

Although we find that our fees are very competitive with similar programs across our region, and the fee increases are simply a reflection of increases in operating costs, we know those increases can create a challenge for your students to attend the Center. Therefore, we've listed several suggestions for fund-raising efforts that many schools have success with.

Tell another School About Us: It's as easy as letting another school know about us. If that school signs a contract with us and comes out you'll receive a 10% discount on your student costs.

Trash-A-Thon: For a fun fundraiser and environmental project, collect trash along the roads or streams. Students can get pledges per bag or pound.

Community Garage Sales: Encourage the re-use of items by sponsoring a garage sale in your school parking lot. You can rent parking spots to the sellers and sell food to the buyers. This works particularly well in rural areas and can be a fun community-building event.

Local Businesses: Solicit from local businesses, especially those who directly benefit from the environment (ie. Duke Power, paper companies, chemical companies, etc.)

Krispy Kreme: These guys are very good about working with schools to perform fund raisers. This is probably the #1 fund raiser for the schools that we polled. Depending on where you are located, Krispy Kreme will deliver the donuts directly to the school to be sold at PTA meetings or Open House.

Create a Camp Thunderbird Fundraising Committee: Invite parents, chaperones to get together to brainstorm different fundraising ideas to do in and out of school.

Grants: Contact your state Office of Environmental Education, Science Coordinators, or search the web for grant opportunities that exist out there.

Lastly, if you would like to set up a presentation or request a video for a potential sponsor, just give us a call. We would love to come out and meet with any of your local leaders or give a presentation.

**YMCA Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Planning Your Trip**

Lead Teacher Planning Checklist

(The following is a "suggested" list of tasks to be completed prior to your trip to Camp Thunderbird.)

4-6 Months Before Trip

- Environmental Education Date confirmed. Date Attending: _____
- Submit contract and deposit to Camp Thunderbird.
- Inform students and parents of trip.
- Recruit chaperones - at least one for every 15 students.
- Arrange for transportation.
- Arrange for emergency transportation. **Your school will be responsible for providing emergency transportation if necessary.**
- Consult school administration regarding the need for a chaperone background check, policies related to student safety and abuse prevention, etc.

1-2 Months Before Trip:

- Send Parent Letter and Medical Form home with the students.
- Submit "Scheduling and Information Form" to Camp Thunderbird.
- Discuss trip goals and behavior with students
- Collect final payment from students.

1 Week to 1 Month Before Trip:

- Finalize number of students and chaperones attending. Update this information with Directors at camp.
- Organize students into groups of 12-15 for Learning Groups and fax or mail to Thunderbird. **Coordinate the group size with Directors at camp.**
- Assign chaperones to each learning group.
- Collect permission forms and medical forms from students.
- Remind students to bring sack lunch.
- Make name tags for every student, chaperone, and teacher. Place Name, Learning Group number on nametag.
- Review Tentative Schedule sent from Thunderbird. Contact Directors for any questions or changes that need to be made.
- Organize first aid kits for trip.

CONTINUE ON BACK

The Day of the Trip:

- Collect medicines.
- Take a head count.
- Call Thunderbird to verify time of departure from school. You may leave this information with the office. (1-800-732-3855)
- Confirm times with busses for return trip.
- Make schedules for ALL adults.
- Bring copy of Learning Groups for your usage.
- Bring medical forms to be turned into liaison upon arrival at camp.
- Bring map to Camp Thunderbird.
- SIT BACK, RELAX, AND HAVE A GREAT TIME!!!





"The Birds Nest"- Camp Store

Both day and overnight experiences are welcome to access the Birds Nest.

One Day Experience- If you are participating in a one day experience, we want you to be able to spend as much time as possible in the field, therefore, we will not schedule a time for your school to access the store. You are able to fill out a pre-order, in which your purchases will be prepared and packaged the day you arrive at camp. Give us a call at camp if you would like a pre-order form.

Overnight Experiences- If you are participating in an overnight experience, the store will be open from 4:30-5:30 during your stay. Please check your schedule that we send to you to see which day your school is scheduled. You also have the option of filling out a pre-order so the children can take full advantage of their recreation time. Please see our price list below for pre-order information. In the back of your folder you will find a T-Shirt pre-order form if you wish to order t-shirts or hats.

**YMCA Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Helpful Hints**

To make your first transitions smooth at camp please have students divided into their learning groups. Use of name tags will help out tremendously.

<p style="text-align: center;">Lake Wylie Middle School</p> <p style="text-align: center;">David Yuhaus Jr.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Trail Group # 3</p>
--

Also collecting lunches at school and placing them with your homeroom teacher can make lunch a smooth transition.

<p style="text-align: center;">Mrs. Krimminger - Lunches</p> <p>(example of label on box of lunches, could also break down Krimminger boys, Krimminger girls)</p>

YMCA Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Policies / Procedure

- The Environmental Education Center's Program is a "school experience" - learning is the main focus of all aspects of the program and students should be prepared for this. Please share these same goals with the chaperones.
- The school is responsible for supervision and discipline at all times, including meals and recreation time.
- Students are not allowed in or near the lodging of other schools.
- Pets may not be brought to or housed on camp grounds or in camp facilities.
- Alcohol or drugs in any form are not permitted on the premises unless prescribed by a licensed physician.
- Groups or individuals are not allowed on the docks at any time.
- Smoking is not allowed in any camp building. Please dispose of cigarette butts properly.
- Firearms, ammunition, flammable liquids, explosive and poisonous substances are not allowed on camp property.
- Groups must bring a first aid kit for minor medical problems. For emergency assistance dial 911 or refer to Emergency Numbers Page.
- Thunderbird does not provide accident or medical insurance for visiting groups.
- A minimum of one adult per 15 students is required on site.
- The school is responsible for bringing signed permission forms for every student.
- The school is responsible for breaking the students up into their learning groups before arrival at camp.
- It is very helpful to have each student wear a name tag with their name and learning group number.
- **User groups must provide certificate of insurance six weeks prior to visit.**

Camp Thunderbird Environmental Education Center Emergency Phone Numbers

Andy Kane Executive Director	Home Mobile	803-831-8947 704-309-0184
Maura Baker Environmental Education Director	Mobile	704 619-6795
Annie Gresko Assistant Environmental Director	Mobile	704-621-7175
York County Sheriff's Department		803-628-3056
Steele Creek Urgent Care		704-587-6700
Carolina Medical Center - Pineville		704-543-2262
Presbyterian Hospital - Charlotte		704-384-5160
Carolina Medical Center - Charlotte		704-355-2171
Poison Control Center		800-848-6946
River Hills Rescue		803-831-9888
Piedmont Medical Center - Rock Hill, SC		803-324-1234

**Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Scheduling and Information Form**

This form must be completed and faxed/mailed to Camp Thunderbird no less than **6 weeks** prior to your confirmed date.

Name of school _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School Phone _____ Fax # _____

Trip Leader _____ Home Phone _____

E-mail address _____

What is the best time of day to contact the trip leader? _____

Will the trip leader be at Camp Thunderbird? Yes _____ No _____ If not, who will be the lead person on the trip? _____

School's arrival time at camp? day _____, date _____, time _____

Departure time from camp? time _____

Will your students be bringing a bag lunch for the first day?) Yes ___ No ___ **(please make arrangements with director if your students are not planning on bag lunches)**

No. of boys attending _____

No. of men _____

No. of girls attending _____

No. of women _____

Grade / Age _____

Grand total attending (students + adults) _____

Please list the names and conditions of any students in your group with special needs including physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities of which our instructors should be made aware.

(please include instructional group # that child will be placed in)

Name / instructional group #: _____

Nature of disability: _____

We would like to help you celebrate important anniversaries. Please give the number of years your school has attended The Environmental Education Center at Camp Thunderbird. _____

To help us better prepare for your school's visit, please list the goals you would like for your students to achieve from the Camp Thunderbird experience. _____

Choices for Classes and Evening Programs:

Please select the activities that most closely compliment your curriculum and goals. **(Please select three activities and one alternate activity.)**

Class Choices for Daytime Programming

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ Astronomy | _____ Aquatic Ecology |
| _____ Bird Study | _____ Wildlife Ecology |
| _____ Compass | _____ Forest Ecology |
| _____ Fish Seining / Dissection | _____ Living History |
| _____ Group Dynamics | _____ Nature Art |
| _____ Native American Studies | _____ Soil Study |
| _____ Pioneer Study | _____ Low Challenge Course |
| _____ Advanced Aquatic Ecology (Grades 5 and older) | _____ Canoeing (grades 4 and older) |
| _____ Environmental Debate (Grades 5 and older) | _____ Garden Study (Sept, Oct, April, May) |
| _____ Creepy Crawlies | _____ Eco Heroes |
| _____ Eco Challenge (Grades 5 and older) | |
| _____ Meelewing – Character Development / Diversity Awareness (Grades 5 and older) | |

Class descriptions are found on page 9 -13.

**YMCA Camp Thunderbird
Environmental Education Center
Learning Group List**

Use this list to assign adults and students to the learning groups. You are required to have at least one adult with each learning group. A representative from camp will contact you regarding how many groups your school will be broken into. Please fax / send a list prior to your scheduled date.

Group	Group	Group	Group
Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.	10.
11.	11.	11.	11.
12.	12.	12.	12.
13.	13.	13.	13.
14.	14.	14.	14.
15.	15.	15.	15.
(16.)	(16.)	(16.)	(16.)
(17.)	(17.)	(17.)	(17.)
(18.)	(18.)	(18.)	(18.)

YMCA Camp Thunderbird Environmental Education Center Parent Forms

Dear Parent,

It is with excitement and enthusiasm that we await the arrival of your child's school! Very soon your child will have the opportunity to experience hands-on learning in our outdoor school. It is our goal to be an extension of the classroom by applying tangible experiences to knowledge gained in the classroom.

Whether the "classroom" at the Environmental Education Center is located along the banks of Lake Wylie, on a forest trail, or in the open fields, we believe that your child may participate in one of the most memorable days of their school career!

The Environmental Education Center at Camp Thunderbird is located approximately 17 miles south of Charlotte, NC off of highway 49. The Education Center has been in existence since 1985, while the camp itself began in 1936. Last year the Environmental Education Center hosted close to 12,000 students from North and South Carolina as well as Georgia.

However, we take pride in the fact that each school and each child is treated as an individual and with great courtesy and respect.

Most instructors at Camp Thunderbird have a college degree or are working toward a degree and are trained in an experiential approach to environmental education. A 1:15 instructor to student ratio ensures plenty of personal interaction as well as a safe teaching environment. In addition to our instructors, instructional groups will also have a minimum of one adult chaperone assigned from your child's school. With this in mind, know that the health and safety of your child is of utmost importance to us.

During their stay, the students are immersed in the environment with most classes being held outdoors. Rain or shine, the fun continues. However, if inclement weather does cause need for indoor teaching, Camp Thunderbird has ample indoor spaces including lodges, classrooms, dining hall, and labs.

Speaking of dining halls, ours is located on the shore of Lake Wylie with a beautiful view of the water. Students will bring a sack lunch to be eaten in the dining hall.

To ensure your child's well being, please complete the Student Medical Form and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. **Any student without a completed and signed medical form may not participate in the program.** Please communicate any needs that your child may have with their teacher. A designated teacher from your school will dispense all medications. Medications sent with your child, must be in the original container, clearly labeled with your child's name, the name of the medicine, and the directions for use. All medications, prescription or non prescription, will be kept by a teacher from your school.

Finally, we are looking forward to an incredible experience with your school! If you have any questions regarding the program, personnel or facilities, or participating as a chaperone, please contact your child's teacher or feel free to call us at the Environmental Education Center.

Best Regards,

Maura Baker, Director
704-716-4124

Camp Thunderbird

Environmental Education Center

Chaperone Guidelines

Thank you for being part of our Residential Environmental Education experience. We welcome you to our team and hope you will find your role as a chaperone enjoyable and rewarding. Please read this letter carefully before your trip. If you have questions feel free to call Camp Thunderbird or speak to the lead teacher from your school.

The Environmental Education Center is an exciting place to learn. We strive to provide students with a unique environment where they can gain skills in cooperation and critical thinking and develop a sense of appreciation for the natural world. It is a great place for students to get to know each other in new ways and build stronger relationships. It is also a great place for students to have positive interactions with adults. As a parent or teacher, chaperones have extremely worthwhile backgrounds and life experiences for helping children to grow and learn. Take this opportunity to use your skills and wisdom and make this a truly rewarding experience for all involved.

Your primary role as a chaperone is supervision. As a supervisor it is important that safety is always in the forefront of your mind and that you are available to the students in case any problems come up. You can also expand your role and make it more meaningful by getting as involved as possible with the students and the program. Supervision responsibilities for the various times of the day are outlined below along with suggestions for ways to make the most of your role.

Classes: The Camp Thunderbird staff will lead all the classes and activities, but a second adult must be present with each teaching group. Please be available at the start of classes to join a group and stay with your group for the entire class period.

Your role during class is as follows:

- Encourage participation and enthusiasm by being a positive role model. Enthusiasm is contagious, and students who often know you better than the instructor, will follow your example.
- Adhere to and help enforce any rules, guidelines or safety measures set down by the instructor.
- Assist with discipline as requested by the instructor. If one student is being particularly disruptive, take him or her aside so the class may continue uninterrupted.

Here are some suggestions to make class times as beneficial as possible for all involved:

- Allow the instructor of the group to be in charge. If you disagree with the instructor about something, speak to him or her privately or bring your concerns to the lead teacher or program coordinator. Please do not contradict the instructor in front of the students.
- Participate and get involved in the activity. Enjoy yourself, but keep in mind that the classes are designed to provide learning experiences for the students-try to not be overbearing or dominating during an activity. The students need leadership, but often one of the goals of an activity is for the students to find their own leadership within the group. Allow them to do this. If you are unsure what is best, please communicate with the instructor.
- We value and welcome your contribution to classes. Let us know if there are certain topics you would like to see discussed. We will try to honor your requests but it is not always possible. Feel free to keep the group together after class to continue debriefing the experience or discuss related topics.
- Please refrain from smoking, using cell phones, or having personal conversations during classtimes.

Meals: Supervision during meals is very important to maintain a smooth and pleasant dining hall experience. There should be one adult at each table who actively supervises the table. Please

support the rules and procedures of the dining hall by enforcing and role-modeling them. Mealtimes can be a learning experience for students as well. Cooperation, responsibility, courtesy, food appreciation and resource recovery are all valuable lessons that are emphasized in the dining hall. You can help to facilitate the learning experience by acting as the leader of the table and involving yourself in all aspects of the meal.

Follow these guidelines to keep mealtimes pleasant for all:

- Make sure that all students stay seated until the meal is completely over (table is clean and announcements have been made.)
- Encourage students to take pride in their eating space by keeping the table in order throughout the meal.
- Only one student is allowed to get up from the table at a time.

The job of a chaperone is a challenging one, but also a rewarding one. It requires a great deal of effort and energy, but when you realize how much you've done for the students it will definitely seem worthwhile. After reading this letter, you may feel overwhelmed. Try to remember that you have lots of support. You are not the only chaperone, there are others to share responsibilities. Communicate with other chaperones and the leader of the trip and build a team together. Work as a group to help create the best possible Thunderbird experience.

Thanks for all your help!!!!