2017 Eco-Camp Handbook

Berks Nature
25 N. 11th St., Reading, PA 19601
610-372-4992 (phone) • 610-372-2917 (fax)
www.berksnature.org
**Message from the Camp Staff:**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We believe that nature is essential to our quality of life. Thank you for sharing that value with your children and for choosing Berks Nature’s Eco-Camp for your child’s summer camp experience! We would like to officially welcome you and your child to the eighth year of our camp and the sixth summer at Angelica Park. We plan to build upon the great memories that we created from last year’s camp session. We have a very exciting summer planned that is packed with engaging, fun and educational adventures. We have created this handbook to provide you with all the information you should need regarding your child’s upcoming camp experience. Please read over all of the enclosed information about the camp policies and procedures. Feel free to contact us at 610-372-4992 x 100 with any questions you may have or if you need further assistance.

Sincerely,

The Eco-Camp Staff

**Berks Nature’s Mission**

Berks Nature is the leading agent for the conservation of the environment in Berks County.

**Purpose of the Camp**

Eco-Campers will have fun and learn more about how they can live “green” and protect our environment and will grow their understanding of and commitment to the stewardship of our earth.

**About the Camp**

This day-camp experience is being offered at The Nature Place at Angelica Park (formerly Environmental Exploration Center). The Nature Place is a cooperative effort managed by Berks Nature in partnership with Alvernia University and the City of Reading. Our camp has a variety of offerings to reach children and young adults who already love the outdoors and those who prefer more technological or creative activities.
Parent-Staff Communication
We are interested in hearing your suggestions and appreciate your calls! Please let us know of any questions, suggestions and difficulties so we can provide you and your child with a successful camp experience. You can contact The Nature Place directly during camp hours at 610-898-4600 or call Berks Nature at 610-372-4992 x 100.

We will provide you with the cell phone number for the Camp Directors in case you need to get in touch with the camp staff during camp hours.

Staff Leadership
Our staff leadership is a carefully selected and well-trained group of men and women. All staff members have been chosen for their experience, special talents, creativity and sensitivity. They have been thoroughly screened through a complete background and criminal history check.

The camp counselors, who must be 18 years of age, are responsible for the health, safety, engagement and well-being of the campers. They work closely with the Activity Directors and lead activities when appropriate. The counselor to camper ratio is approximately 1:5.

The activity directors are professionals and college students who are responsible for the development and delivery of activities within their subject area that are safe, fun and age-appropriate. The activities reflect the camp’s commitment to stewardship of the natural environment.

The camp directors provide the primary leadership, along with the President of Berks Nature, for the Eco-Camp. The directors are working professionals who have had extensive experience in formal and/or informal education. They are responsible for the health, safety and engagement of campers and camp employees through the safe operation of the Eco-Camp.
Hours of Operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular camp hours</th>
<th>Morning camp hours</th>
<th>Afternoon camp hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM – 4:00 PM</td>
<td>9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon</td>
<td>1:00 PM – 4:00 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drop off for full day and morning camp hours is between 8:45-9:00 AM. Pick up for morning only camp hours is 12:00 Noon – 12:15 PM. Drop off for afternoon only camp hours is 12:45 PM – 1:00 PM. Pick up for afternoon and full day camp hours is between 4:00-4:15 PM.

Late pick-up charges
Pick-up after 4:15 PM for families that have not registered for the extended care program or for campers in the morning only program who pick up after 12:15 PM will result in a $5.00 late charge for every 15-minute increment. If you feel you will need extended care, we recommend you register for it in advance so that we may plan accordingly and guarantee that a staff person will be available to cover the extended care time period that is requested.

Extended Care / Pre-Post Camp
We are pleased to offer extended care hours to fit caregivers’ work schedules. Before care is available from 7:30-8:45 AM in the morning and after care is available from 4:15-5:30 PM in the afternoon. The cost for extended care is $25/week for morning and $25/week for afternoon or extended care for the entire week is $50. If you will be using the extended care program, please register on our website and let us know at least one week before the start of the camp week that your child will be attending.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures

Regular Camp Hours
When dropping off or picking up your child during regular drop off and pick up hours, please proceed to the entrance to the Angelica Park parking lot (see map on p 8). A camp staff person will be there to greet you and will escort your child to and from the car. Family name signs will be available at camp to keep in your car. The signs can be placed on the dashboard with the child’s name prominently displayed in the window. This will help camp staff to expedite the dismissal process and create an atmosphere where every staff member gets to know each camper and their family members.
**Extended Camp Hours**
Before and after care activities will take place in and around The Nature Place at Angelica Park, the **home base** for Eco-Camp. When dropping off and/or picking up your child during these times (7:30-8:45 AM and 4:15-5:30PM), please park in the Angelica Park parking lot and proceed to The Nature Place. A **camp staff person** will be present to assist you with the sign-in/sign-out process. Please bring a photo ID with you to help us ensure the safety of all campers during the dismissal process.

**Lunch**
Full day campers bring their lunches and lunch drinks every day, which will be stored in an air-conditioned location. Limited refrigeration is available; campers can bring their lunch in an insulated lunch box. Please do not pack any items that need to be microwaved. We do have limited access to a microwave in the case of special situations. Water bottles can be refilled at The Nature Place.

**Snacks**
A camp snack is provided every morning and afternoon to all campers.

**What to Bring to Camp:**
- **PLEASE CLEARLY MARK YOUR CHILD’S NAME ON ALL ITEMS THAT HE OR SHE BRINGS TO CAMP**
- Backpack with child’s name on it.
- Lunch with a drink kept in an insulated lunch box.
- A water bottle (very important).
- Closed-toed shoes and socks are strongly recommended, as campers will be doing a lot of walking and hiking around the park.
- Sunscreen.
- Water Shoes.
- Lightweight jacket or raincoat if it looks like rain or it is an unseasonably cool day.
- Extra clothes. Please dress your children in clothes that you do not mind getting dirty, as camp will be held outdoors for most of the time.
- A “ready to have lots of fun” attitude
Please do not bring the following items to camp:
We would appreciate it if children would please leave the following items at home:

- Money (except for designated days)
- iPods, MP3 players
- Trading cards, video games, or any other toys
- Cell phones are permitted but should remain in the child’s backpack during camp hours)

The Eco-Camp is not responsible for any items that are misplaced, damaged, and/or stolen. We do have a lost and found box.

Camper Illnesses
If your child is sick, please keep him/her home for his/her own sake and for the sake of the other campers and staff members. In the event that your child becomes ill during camp, we will contact the parent/guardian listed on the HEALTH/PERMISSION FORM (completed as part of camp registration) followed by those listed as emergency contacts.

Medications from Home
Medication that needs to be administered to a child should:

- Be brought directly to the camp directors by the parent or caregiver in the original medicine container and with specific directions for dispensing the medication
- Be accompanied by a written note containing permission for the staff to administer the medication, dosage information, time, and dates to be given to the child, parent’s name, phone number, and physician’s name and phone number for reference.

Emergency Information
In the event of an emergency, every effort will be made to reach you or other contacts on the camper’s registration form. If we are unable to reach any of the persons listed, we will take the necessary actions for the health of your child. Should there be any changes in the emergency contact information, please notify Berks Nature in writing so that we may update your child’s file.
Rainy / Heat Days
The camp will be held rain, shine, and on sweltering summer days. The Nature Place is air-conditioned which will provide us with enough indoor space to keep the campers engaged, happy, and cool.

Absences
If your child will not be attending camp on a specific day due to illness or for other reasons, please contact the camp at 610-372-4992 x 100. If you get the voicemail system, please leave a message and one of our staff members will make sure the camp directors receive the message.

Registration
A registration form and health form must be completed for each child before the start of camp. **The registration tuition balance is due one week before the start of camp.** Payment plans are available for campers attending more than one week. Please contact 610-372-4992 for more information.

Refunds
No refunds will be made for late arrivals or early departures.

Cancellations
If a cancellation occurs for a physician-documented medical reason, all fees (MINUS an administration fee) will be refunded. If during a session a camper needs to go home for medical reasons, the remaining portion of the session will be refunded.

In the case of dismissal or voluntary withdrawal, there will be NO refund of any fees.
Map of Angelica Park and features of Eco-Camp

Convenient Drop off & Pick up at Angelica Park Parking Lot “Traffic Loop”. Pull into lot off of St. Bernardine Street; Campers will be met by Counselors & Camp staff. Continue to end of lot and exit.
Directions to Camp Headquarters at The Nature Place at Angelica Park  
(575 St. Bernardine Street; Reading PA 19607)  
Local Directions (via Routes 422, 222 and 61)

**From the North (Schuylkill County, Lehigh Valley):**
Follow Routes 61 or 222 South to Reading/Lancaster until you reach Rt. 422 East.  
Follow Rt. 422 East (towards Pottstown) until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a right onto Lancaster Ave.  
*Continued below*

**From the West (Lebanon):**
Follow Rt. 422 East to Reading until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a right onto Lancaster Ave.  
*Continued below*

**From the East (Pottstown, Norristown):**
Follow Rt. 422 West to Reading until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a left onto Lancaster Ave.  
*Continued below*

**From the South (Lancaster):**
Follow Rt. 222 North to Reading. Take Rt. 422 East towards Pottstown until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a right onto Lancaster Ave.  
*Continued below*

*From Lancaster Ave.* Make a left onto Rt.10 and proceed for roughly 1 mile and make a right onto St. Bernardine Street, the entrance to Angelica Park and Alvernia University. Proceed approximately 1/8 mile and turn right into parking lot entrance. Campers will be met by staff during regular pick up/drop off hours. Parents may proceed through the parking lot and exit onto St. Bernardine Street.

**During Regular Camp Hours:**
Follow St. Bernardine Street to the parking lot for Angelica Park. A camp staff person will be waiting to assist you with drop off and pick up.

**During Extended Camp Hours:**
Please park in the Angelica Park parking lot off of St. Bernardine Street and proceed to The Nature Place to drop off or pick up your child.
Themes

Eco-Camp Themes 2017
Half Day and Full Day Sessions Available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>June 12 - 16</td>
<td>Eco-Camp Then and Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>(Half Day only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>June 19 - 23</td>
<td>The Secrets of Water and Soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>June 26 – 30</td>
<td>Fur, Scales, Wings and Bats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>July 10 - 14</td>
<td>Cycle-mania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>July 17 - 21</td>
<td>Raptor Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>July 24 - 28</td>
<td>The Wetlands Through the Eye of a Camera Lens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>July 31 – Aug. 4</td>
<td>Critters Underground &amp; Camouflage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>August 7 – 11 (Preschool: Half Day only)</td>
<td>Wild Things Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-2, 3-5, 6+</td>
<td>August 14 – 18</td>
<td>Reduce, Reuse, Recycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Full Day Schedule

7:30-8:45 AM  | Before care available
8:45-9:00 AM  | Drop off for regular camp hours
9:00 AM       | Camp begins
9:15 AM       | Technology
10:15 AM      | Snack
10:30 AM      | Arts & Crafts
11:30 AM      | Sustainable Agriculture
12:30 PM      | Lunch
1:00 PM       | Creative Energy
2:00 PM       | Science & Nature
3:00 PM       | Snack/Free Play
3:45-4:00 PM  | Closing and Prepare for Dismissal
4:00-4:15 PM  | Pick up for regular camp hours
4:15-5:30 PM  | After care available

Students are divided into age appropriate groups and rotate among the various activities throughout the day.
Parent Visiting Days
You are always welcome to visit Eco-Camp! Please give the directors a call at the Center at 610-898-4600 or on their cell phone (number to be provided at start of camp) upon your arrival so that we can meet you and point you in the right direction of where your child is located at that time.

Camp Rules Discipline Policy
Camp is the perfect environment to promote social skills and self-esteem in children. To achieve this, we include age specific groups and activities, low camper-staff ratios, positive reinforcement, group and individual decision-making, and attention to the individual needs of each child. You are your child’s own best advocate and so we encourage you to share any special information about your child that you feel will help ensure that he or she has a successful camp experience.

All campers are expected to follow basic rules of behavior. These rules will be explained at the beginning of each camp week. Camp counselors will be constantly supervising campers over the course of the day, along with assistance from camp directors and activity directors as needed.

Camp Rules:
1. All campers must be with a staff member at all times.
2. Campers should be respectful of self, peers, and staff at all times.
3. Play safely and fairly (no fighting or threatening behavior will be tolerated).

Discipline Policy
We believe children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use discipline techniques such as the following:
1. Guiding children by setting clear consistent limits for group behavior. In the case of older children, helping them set their own limits.
2. Visualizing mistakes as learning opportunities.
3. Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity.
4. Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
5. Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help them solve their own problems.
If rules are broken at camp, counselors ask campers to identify the rule that was broken and counselors give a verbal warning. If the rule is broken a second time, the counselor will supervise a 30-second to 5-minute “break” near the activity. The next step will be to see the camp director. Parents are called when physical contact or repeat infractions are involved.

**Special Needs**
We strive to meet the needs of all children. In order for us to be able to help your child have an enjoyable experience at camp, we ask that you notify us of your child’s special needs prior to your child’s first day of camp. This may include information on allergies, accessibility concerns, behavioral, psychological or emotional conditions or other special needs. While we offer our camps to as wide a range of children as possible, it is not possible for us to offer one-on-one care. Campers requiring more attention than the prescribed camper-to-counselor ratio provided (1:5) must be accompanied by a parent-provided Therapeutic Staff Support at all times at camp. If your child has special issues or requires a TSS, please contact Berks Nature at 610-372-4992 to provide additional information to help us meet your child’s individual needs.

**Thank you! We look forward to a Safe, Fun-Filled and Educational Camp season!**