

Program Descriptions

RECREATIONAL:

Air Riflery (1.5 hr) – Learn the importance of firearm safety and how to properly shoot air rifles. A certified instructor leads the group through the safety procedures of a standard shooting range and oversees target practice. Activity groups limited to 12 people. Must be at least 8 years old.

Archery (1.5 hr) - Archery provides an opportunity for participants to challenge themselves both mentally and physically. Participants learn the importance that archery served in times gone by and its use today. At the archery range, our focus is on safety and personal growth. Students will find that success with a recurve bow is measured by improvement, not by bulls-eyes. NADA certified instructors ensure safe and controlled instruction during this program.

Court Sports (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Let our fun-loving staff teach you the basics and lead your group in some friendly competition at our tennis/basketball courts. Tennis, basketball, and volleyball are all possible court-sport options. Equipment can be made available for self-facilitation as well.

Field Sports (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Burn off some energy and break a sweat on one of our two athletic fields. Soccer, softball, kickball, and Ultimate Frisbee are just some of the sports that our enthusiastic staff can organize. Equipment can be made available for self-facilitation as well.

Fishing (Martin Property - 1.5 hr) – Learn to bait a hook or attach a lure, try simple casting techniques and, hopefully, experience the thrill of the catch at our beautiful pond which is located down the road from the main camp. ‘Catch and release’ fishing teaches patience as well as a life skill. Youth under the age of 16 do not need a fishing license.

Mountainboarding (45 min) – Mountainboarding is a well established all-terrain extreme sport. Using a cross between a snowboard and a mountain bike, participants navigate camp’s grassy hills. Our staff members demonstrate proper use of safety equipment (including elbow-, wrist-, knee-pads and helmets). We start off slow on a gentle slope that everyone can try then move to a more challenging incline for the adventurers in the group. Must be at least 10 years old.

Arts & Crafts (45 min OR 1.5 hrs) - We will provide the materials and instruction for a variety of simple do-it-yourself craft projects that range from beading to candle-making.

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RECREATIONAL (cont'd):

Hayride (45 min) – Relax in our classic haywagon on a relaxed ride through the camp villages and our woodland trails. This is a real hayride, with real hay. Can be combined with 'Hike to the Peak' for a 1.5 hour program.

Hike to the Peak* (1.5 hr) – Let us take you on a vigorous hike through our heavily wooded property on well maintained trails to the summit where a stunning overlook of the valley below awaits. Can be combine with 'Hayride' for a shorter, less strenuous walk.

Nature Fine Arts (1.5 hr) – Unlock your creativity with watercolors, charcoal, pastels & pencils. Inspired by the colors and shapes of nature, learn classic techniques using common drawing exercises.

Compass Basics (1.5 hr) – What happens if the GPS runs out of battery power? Will you be able to find your way in the woods using a simple compass? In this program participants learn the basic parts of a compass and how to use it. Their new knowledge will be put to the test using various games and having them navigate through a simple course.

Map Quest (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Solve the clues to figure out where your group is headed next! Participants will learn how to orient themselves using a map and enjoy roaming camp on this fast-paced scavenger hunt. Adaptations for the shorter class or younger ages encourage friendly competition as groups of participants use maps to complete a word puzzle.

Orienteering* (1.5 hr) – Apply math concepts and teamwork in a real-life situation. Participants will learn basic orienteering skills (topographical maps, compass use, and pacing) and put their skills to the test to locate various waypoints deep in the woods.

Outdoor Living Skills (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – How can you be sure you have the right gear, proper clothing or enough food for your camping trip? Know how to prepare for an outdoor experience before venturing out. This will be a chance to learn the basics of camping craft and will include hands-on instruction in topics such as fire-building, gear-packing, stocking first aid supplies, tent-pitching, Leave-No-Trace and more.

Outdoor Cooking (1.5 hr) – Cooking al-fresco...no electricity, no running water, no problem! Participants experience cooking tasty treats using a variety of techniques from sticks over an open fire to a classic cast iron Dutch Oven to a cardboard box oven. Best for ages 10 and up.

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SCIENCE-BASED:

All About Trees* (1.5 hr) – Learn fun facts about common trees of our region, play interactive games that demonstrate tree structure and forest competition, and learn about key concepts of forest succession and dynamics while hiking our extensive trail system. With over 500 acres of pristine woodlands on our mountaintop property, there's never been a better place to 'take a hike.' Participants should be prepared for moderate to strenuous walking.

Avian Adventures (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Spend some time getting to know the beautiful inhabitants of our skies. These amazing animals have incredible adaptations to make them successful fliers, predators, mate-finders, nest builders, migrators, and much more. Touchable artifacts and interactive games make this program a hands-on, minds-on experience.

Creepy Crawly Creatures* (45 min) – Are they bugs or insects or maybe...neither? Invertebrates, the largest group of organisms in the Animal Kingdom, is often the most misunderstood. Discover how important these creatures are to all life on earth. Participants use nets, collecting jars, and magnifying equipment to get up close and personal with small critters in their natural setting.

Down to Earth* (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Geology, soils, and rocks...oh my! Become a rock detective to learn about the processes that shape the face of the earth and the geologic history of our area.

Equine Science (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Can you tell if a horse is happy or mad? Much like humans, you can see it in their face. Our camp is home to a herd of horses who work for our equestrian program April through November. Learn how to brush, clean, and care for a horse as well as details about tack and horse characteristics.

Fabulous Fungus* (45 min) – What did the mushroom say to the lichen? Go beyond the classic corny jokes and spend some time delving into the fantastic world of fungi. Did you know that Pennsylvania is the leading commercial producer of mushrooms in the country AND that mushrooms are Pennsylvania's largest cash crop!

Happenin' Herps (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Observe, touch, and learn about live and preserved reptile and amphibian specimens. Many of the misconceptions about the often misunderstood animals will be dispelled when participants discover their special behaviors and adaptations.

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SCIENCE-BASED (cont'd):

Habitat Basics* (1.5 hr) – This basic ecology program teaches participants about the interconnections that bind plants, animals, and their non-living surroundings together. Participants will also learn to identify the four essential habitat elements that make a habitat suitable for various animals.

Mammals (1.5 hr) –Take a scientific look at the anatomy, habitat, and life cycles of local mammals by comparing and contrasting their basic characteristics through the examination of furs and skulls. Participants could be challenged with the task of putting together a deer skeleton, creating a food web, or playing interactive predator/prey games.

Pond Study (Martin Property-1.5 hr) – Even the smallest pond is often teeming with life; however, it's not always obvious to the naked eye. The presence or lack of aquatic invertebrates is an indicator of the environmental health of a pond or stream. Collect, identify, and study these fascinating and wonderful creatures up close and personal.

Tracks & Traces* (45 min) – For thousands of years, human survival depended upon the ability to be efficient and successful hunters. In order to do that, people had to be able to successfully track their prey. Participants will learn how to track and investigate signs that animals leave behind (tracks, scat, feathers, nests, bones) while they search the woods for signs of wildlife. Participants should be prepared for moderate to strenuous walking.

Watershed Wonders (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Investigate how watersheds work and why it's so important to understand this. The topics of erosion, the water cycle, and water pollution will be explored during a 3-D watershed model demonstration that brings to light how human actions affect water quality.

TEAMBUILDING:

Challenge I: Field Initiatives (1.5 hr) – Begin a progressive experience aimed at building a group’s ability to communicate and function together toward common goals. Field initiatives will be fun and challenging activities that encourage teamwork and camaraderie. Best for ages 8 and up.

Challenge II: Team Elements (*Challenge I* required pre-requisite – 1.5 hr) – Take the next step toward building communication and problem-solving through a series of physical and mental challenges. Participants must use critical thinking and leadership skills to solve problems as a group and develop a more cohesive unit. Best for ages 10 and up.

Challenge Course (*Challenge I* required pre-requisite – 1.5 hr) – Groups build trust and confidence in one another on our Low Ropes Course. A variety of physical elements, ranging in height from inches to feet, prompt participants to think of the safety of others as well as setting and accomplish common goals. Staff members trained in safety and debriefing facilitate low ropes elements. Best for ages 12 and up.

Survival Scenario (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – By working together, participants navigate through various challenges in a mock survival situation. They will rely on one another to complete tasks such as negotiating an imaginary river, erecting a shelter and prioritizing the group’s needs. This is a team-building program that also teaches the essentials of back-country survival.

Climbing Tower (1.5 hr) – The tower of power! In this ‘Challenge by Choice’ activity participants decide how high they will aim for on our three-sided climbing tower. Self esteem increases and fears are overcome as group members encourage each other to climb to their goals and beyond. Participants wear protective gear; facilitators are trained in belaying and climbing safety equipment.

CULTURAL/HISTORICAL:

Archeological Dig (1.5 hr) – The Cushion Peak area has a rich history of farming, elite resorts and summer homes. Evidence of this past can be found and interpreted using the science of archaeology. Participants are given the basic understanding of the study of archeology and are able to practice their newfound knowledge in our dig area. Many interesting artifacts are sure to capture the imaginations of the young and old as they learn of this valuable cultural science.

Living History (1.5 hr) – Step back in time to experience a different way of life. Participants experience pioneer living by participating in hands-on activities such as apple-pressing, Dutch-oven cooking, pioneer games, or candle-making. Activities vary depending on season and material availability.

Literary Escapades (1.5 hr) – Inspired by the smells, sounds, textures and tapestry of nature...participants learn to express themselves articulately through nature journaling. Sensory awareness and observation activities help participants hone their writing skills and style. Surrounded by wilderness, even the most reluctant writer finds that words come easily.

Native American Studies (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Participants increase their awareness and appreciation of Native American culture including the 'caretaker approach' for the natural world their culture instilled. Topics covered may include: stories, crafts, trades, games, and traditions of the Lenape people.

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EVENING PROGRAMS:

Alpha Beta Societies (45 min) – This activity is great for exploring simulated cultural diversity. Using two opposing societies a group visits the ‘other’ side to understand what it’s like to be a stranger in a strange land. This activity is debriefed so that participants understand how this experience can be reflected into real life. This program is designed for high school to adult groups.

Campfire Skits & Songs (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Enjoy an evening relaxing around a roaring fire at one of our campfire rings or indoor firesides. Our instructors will enthusiastically lead participants in songs and entertain them with stories and skits. Everyone gets the opportunity to socialize, display their theatrical talents, and be entertained! Groups can choose to lead their own campfires as well. S’mores can be added for a small fee.

Capture the Flag (1.5 hr) – A little friendly competition gets the whole gang involved in this fast-paced, physical game where teams compete to capture their opponents’ flag while defending their own. Playing while the daylight fades away provides interesting opportunities and challenges as it adds a sense of urgency to the game.

Dutch Auction (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Participants draw on their creativity and work in small teams to spontaneously find or construct an item specified by the “auctioneer” (such as the tallest tower, strongest bridge, stinkiest shoe) using random personal items they’ve brought.

Large Indoor Group Games (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Get everybody up and on their feet. Large group initiatives engage your entire group in fun, and sometimes silly, activities aimed at increasing communication, teambuilding and just plain having fun!

MapQuest (1.5 hr) – See ‘Recreational’ class description for details. At night, participants use flashlights to navigate through the checkpoints around camp.

Mock Town Meeting (1.5 hr) – Participants are divided into small groups that role-play a group of stakeholders during a mock Town Meeting to decide whether and how to develop a plot of land. At the end of the night, each group will present their proposal for how the land should be utilized. Group members are then responsible for defending their proposal to a mock county commission. Participants practice group decision-making and debating skills.

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EVENING PROGRAMS (cont'd):

Drive-In Movie Night (1.5 hr) – Bring a pillow or blanket and relax in front of our “Big Screen.” The young and the young-at-heart will enjoy spending time together while watching a PG-rated movie at our outdoor stage. Indoor spaces are available during inclement weather or by request.

Night Sky (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – Since ancient times, people have been fascinated by the night sky. Different cultures assigned various names and images to the stars and stories were told to explain the awe-inspiring sights. This program is filled with astronomy lessons, stargazing, and stories.

Night Walk* (45 min OR 1.5 hr) – During a walk through the night-time forest, without a flashlight, participants learn to rely on senses other than sight. Topics such as night-vision, sensory awareness, nocturnal wildlife, and comfort with the darkness are explored during this very popular activity.

Talent Show/Skit Night (1.5 hr) – Who’s line is it anyway? Use your group’s creativity and our props to come up with crazy on-the-spot skits. Anything from rock band parodies to random scenes from popular books. Imaginations run wild and the laughs keep coming.

Underground Railroad Simulation (1.5 hr) – See ‘Special Programs’ for description

Quiz Show (1.5 hr) – Watch students shine in a fun, Jeopardy-like contest that puts their knowledge to the test. Groups compete to answer questions from the classes they’ve taken. You will be surprised at how much they remember!

SPECIAL PROGRAMS (additional equipment charges apply):

Arena Lessons (1.5 hr) – Arena lessons combine a short lesson on horse grooming and tack with time in the saddle inside one of our riding rings. Depending on the participant’s experience and level of comfort, they may ride alone or have someone lead their horse. This is an ideal experience for first-time riders or anyone considering further lessons. Participants must be at least 8 years of age for arena rides. Limit 8 participants per session. Additional fee: \$10/person

Trail Rides (1.5 hr) –Once riders mount their assigned horses, our riding staff ensures that they can safely maneuver inside our riding ring before setting out on the trail. Trail rides take participants to the top of Cushion Peak for a breath-taking view of the surrounding area. Participants must be at least 10 years of age for trail rides. Limit 8 participants per session. Additional fee: \$10/person

Trap Shooting (3 hrs) – A certified and experienced instructor leads the group through standard firearm safety procedures before introducing the age-old sport of trap shooting where participants use shotguns to shoot clay targets. Whether a beginner or ‘old hand’, participants practice gun safety, personal responsibility and sportsmanship while enjoying their time at the range. Group size limitations apply, call for availability. Additional fee: \$5/person.

High Ropes (1.5 hr OR 3 hrs) – High ropes elements aim to take participants out of their comfort zone and let them face physical and emotional challenges at tree-top level. Some elements require participants to ‘go it alone’ while others are designed to be completed in pairs. Participants wear protective gear and must be at least 12 years of age. Facilitators are trained in belaying and climbing safety equipment. Group size limitations apply, call for availability. Additional fee: \$20/person

Underground Railroad Simulation (evening program only – 1.5 hr) – Participants will develop an appreciation and understanding for the trials and tribulations slaves encountered as they risked their lives for freedom by participating in a simulated night-time journey through the woods and roads of camp. Students take on the roles of escaping slaves led by the adults in their group who become ‘conductors’. They will encounter abolitionists as well as slave hunters during their journey northward. Students should research the experience in the classroom with participation in this simulation as the culmination of their learning. Group size limitations apply, call for availability. Additional fee: \$220.

Additional Activities

Outside vendors can be contracted to provide these programs for an additional fee while your group is onsite at South Mountain YMCA. Our staff will coordinate times, spaces, reservations and payment for you at no additional cost. Please call Audrey for additional information.

Baskets In The Woods – Debra Zvanut, life-long Girl Scout and talented basket-weaver, teaches the art of basket-making to folks of all ages. Everyone walks away with a take-home craft. Age and group size limitations apply. Fees vary, discounts for Girl Scout groups.

Bob the Critter Guy – The Critter Guy brings various reptiles, birds, arachnids and other invertebrates for an exciting and informative presentation. An hour presentation averages \$150.

Critter Caravans – A college educator with over 20 years experience handling reptiles employs a hands-on approach to deliver information about these wondrous creatures, their habitats, habits, and conservation. Formerly known as 'Snakes on Board!' Fee for an hour presentation averages \$225.

Real Live Reptiles – A quality natural history program featuring live snakes, alligators, lizards and turtles that introduces audiences of all ages to the fascinating world of reptiles. James McKeon has experience as a reptile keeper at the Philadelphia Zoological Garden and more than 40 years in the field observing reptiles in their natural habitat. Fee for an hour presentation averages \$500.

Red Creek Wildlife Center Raptor Programs – Bird of Prey programs featuring awe-inspiring live animals and conservation themes. Fees for 1 hour programs start at \$225 + travel.

Search and Rescue Dog Demos – Local handlers and their K9 companions will discuss their important work, how they train for search and rescue missions, and do a small-scale demonstration if possible. No additional cost, availability varies.

Square Dance – A square dance caller provides a fun evening program. Even if they've never square danced before, participants will have a great time with this program. Caller availability varies and prices range from \$150-\$275 a night.

Yoga for Kids, Adults, and Families – A trained yoga instructor teaches basic yoga poses for relaxation, exercise and flexibility.