



Outdoor Family Weekend

Hands-on outdoor skills and experiences for the entire family

Friday, September 5 – Sunday, September 7, 2025
Stillwater State Park, Groton State Forest
Groton, Vermont

Join us for our 27th year offering outdoor educational experiences for the whole family! This program is a collaboration between University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Departments of Fish and Wildlife, and Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Outdoor Family Weekend aims to inspire a better understanding of environmental conservation, safety, and fun in the outdoors among the general public.

Families will arrive and make camp on Friday. Classes are scheduled for Saturday and Sunday morning. Expert instructors begin each class with the basics, providing hands-on experience and encouraging participants to ask questions. Topics range from outdoor cooking, orienteering, and firecrafting to fishing, archery, canoeing, and basic firearm safety.

If you have questions after reading this program book, please contact us as follows:

Program Information: Holly Ferris, Outdoor Family Weekend Coordinator, (802) 656-7562 or holly.ferris@uvm.edu

Registration: Kirsten Waskuch, (802) 656-7566 or 866-260-5603 (toll-free in Vt.), or Kirsten.Waskuch@uvm.edu

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OutdoorFamilyWeekendVT/>



go.uvm.edu/outdoor-family

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2025 Daily Schedule

Friday, September 5

- 2:00 – 8:00 p.m.** Check in at registration tent (next to the ranger station).
Every family, including instructors, needs to check in.
- Dinner on your own.
- 7:30 p.m.** Ice cream meet and greet at the registration tent — especially for first-time attendees.
- Late Arrival** If you're arriving after 8:00 p.m. on Friday night, pick up your camping car tags at the ranger station, then on Saturday morning check in at the registration tent.
- 2:00 – 8:00 p.m.** Join us for a Camping Gear Swap during our Outdoor Family Weekend! Bring your gently used camping gear and exchange it for something new-to-you, perfect for your next outdoor adventure. From tents to cookware, sleeping bags to hiking gear, our swap will offer a sustainable way to refresh your outdoor essentials.

Saturday, September 6

- All day** Check out the Gear Swap at the registration tent
- 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.** Breakfast on your own. Friday late arrivals should check in at the registration tent.
- 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.** **Class Session 1**
- 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch on your own and leisure time.
- 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.** **Class Session 2**
- 3:00 – 6:30 p.m.** Leisure time & dinner on your own
- 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.** **Beyond the Trail: Non-Traditional Outdoor Careers with Keith Sampietro**
(This session is geared toward youth interested in exploring career paths in the outdoors.)
Join Keith Sampietro as he shares his journey into the world of non-traditional outdoor careers — from living on a glacier in Alaska to leading tourists on epic expeditions. Teens will hear firsthand stories of adventure, challenge, and creativity in carving out a unique path in the outdoor industry. Bring your curiosity and questions for this inspiring session!
- 6:30 p.m.** **Evening Performance: Keepers of the Earth**
A captivating performance featuring song, chants, native instruments, dance, and stories selected from diverse North American indigenous cultures. Michael J. Caduto, renowned for his engaging storytelling and musical talents, brings to life humorous and dramatic characters who impart wisdom on environmental stewardship. Explore the indigenous concept of the great circles of life, promoting a balanced, sustainable existence with the Earth.
- 7:30 p.m.** The evening continues with s'mores and a campfire. Bring a good story to tell or musical instrument if you'd like!

Sunday, September 7

- 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.** Class Session 3
- 11:30 a.m. – Sunset** Enjoy the park for the rest of the day.
- 9:00 a.m. – Noon** Please collect any items that haven't been taken after the swap, ensuring nothing goes to waste.

Before you hit the road, swing by the registration tent to pick up a tasty grab-and-go meal to fuel you for the ride home.

Saturday Evening

Keepers of the Earth: Completing the Circles of Life

with special guest Michael J. Caduto

Michael J. Caduto, a celebrated artist with the Vermont Arts Council and the New Hampshire Council on the Arts, has enchanted audiences worldwide with his stories and music. Co-author of the best-selling "Keepers of the Earth" series and numerous children's books, his work reflects a deep connection to nature and indigenous wisdom.

New Classes This Year

1G, 2E – Nature Inspired Needle Felting – Tamra Higgins

1N, 2L – STEM in the Outdoors – Allison Crimm

1O, 2Q – Connecting in Nature with HAM radio – Ron Rossi

1Q, 3L – Critter Conflicts: Peaceful Solutions for Wild Encounters – Stillwater Park Staff

2P – Intro to Stand-Up Paddle Boarding (SUP) – Lauren Traister

2H – Crafts, Games and Teen-led Fun – 4-H Teens and Green Mountain Conservation Camp JCs

2N – Fiddleheads, Lamb's Quarters, Nettles & Nuts: Wild Edible, Medicinal and Poisonous Plants – Michael Caduto

3N – Introduction to Shotgun

1R, 2S – Backcountry Cooking and Nutrition

Refer-A-Family Prize Drawing

Refer a new family to this year's Outdoor Family Weekend and you will be entered in a drawing for a free weekend stay for a family at any Vermont state park, courtesy of Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Here's how to enter:

1. Find families that have never been to Outdoor Family Weekend and encourage them to register.
2. Tell the new family that when they register they should enter your name where the registration form asks "Were you referred by someone who has been to Outdoor Family Weekend before?" If they enter your name on their registration form you will be entered in the drawing for a free weekend at any Vermont state park.

General Information

Registration and Campsites

The registration link will be posted on our website at [go.uvm.edu/ outdoor-family](https://go.uvm.edu/outdoor-family) and will open on June 9, 2025. If you need assistance or to register over the phone, please contact UVM Office of Non-Credit Registration 800-639-3210.

The cost is \$175 per family group (up to 8 individuals). The fee covers your campsite for the weekend, instruction (3 classes per camper), most class materials and equipment, and costs associated with organizing and putting this program together.

The registration deadline is August 18, 2025. Campsites and classes are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with limited space in each class. Prime waterfront campsites will be assigned by lottery.

Confirmation packets are emailed after August 1, or you can ask to be sent a paper copy by mail. This will contain the class registrations for your entire family, your campsite assignment, and any changes that may have occurred. Please read the contents of your confirmation packet as soon as it arrives and contact us with any questions.

To request a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Kirsten Waskuch at (802) 656-7566 or 866-260-5603 (toll-free in Vt.), or Kirsten.Waskuch@uvm.edu

Age Limits

Children age 11 and younger must be accompanied by an adult **throughout the entire weekend at all classes and activities**. Participants 12 years of age and older may participate in classes without an accompanying adult, unless otherwise indicated in the class description.

Class Age Ranges: Many classes are recommended for certain ages. Shooting sports and boating classes have ***firm age limits***, and we cannot make exceptions to these for safety reasons.

NOTE: For purposes of this program, age is determined by a person's age ***as of January 1, 2025***.

Cancellation Policy

If you cancel on or before August 18, you will receive a full refund less an administrative fee of \$50.00. Any cancellation after August 18 receives no refund, although you may substitute another family in your place. You must provide the substitute family information at the time of your cancellation. The substituting family will replace your family in the classes you signed up for, although some changes may be possible depending on class space availability.

Extended Family

One family of up to eight (8) people will be assigned to each campsite. If you have more than eight family members attending, you must register and pay for an additional, separate family campsite. You may request adjoining campsites on your registration form. We will do our best to accommodate your request, but can make no guarantee about your campsite request. Campsite assignments are made on a first-come, first-served basis as are class assignments.

Fishing Licenses

Anyone age 15 or older must hold a current Vermont Fishing License to fish during leisure time. No license is required for campers age 14 or younger. The Let's Go Fishing clinic does not require a license. If you want a license, we encourage you to purchase it in advance (<https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/licenses-and-lotteries/license-center>), or you may purchase one at the Stillwater Ranger Station. Trout, bass, perch and sunfish are plentiful in the park, so bring a fishing rod and tackle.

About the Park and Campsites

Stillwater State Park is located in Groton State Forest in Groton, Vt. (between Montpelier and St. Johnsbury). Visit the website at <https://vtstateparks.com/stillwater.html> for information and directions.

Stillwater State Park is a developed campground with flush toilets and hot showers. You will need quarters for the showers. Cell phone service is spotty to nonexistent in Groton State Forest. A pay phone, which uses only phone cards, is available at the ranger station. The phone number at the Stillwater Ranger Station is (802) 584-3822.

Each campsite has a fire ring and picnic table. Although a few lean-to sites are available, always assume you will be given a tent site and plan accordingly.

RVs: Be sure to fill out your RV length during registration so we can match your campsite to your RV size. We do the best we can in advance, but please understand that some adjustments may be necessary at check-in. There are no water, sewer or electrical hookups for RVs. There is a dump station near the park entrance.

Choice of Additional Night Stay

Participants can add a Sunday night stay at your campsite at no additional charge! To stay Sunday night, visit the ranger station when you check in for the weekend to let them know you will be extending your stay (this is separate from your regular family registration).

Canoes

Canoe rental equipment at the park is available at no charge to Outdoor Family Weekend participants. Visit the ranger station to sign up to use the equipment. Canoes must be returned at the time specified when checking them out.

Dogs

So that you can participate fully in classes, and as a courtesy to other campers, we recommend that you leave your dogs at home (except service dogs). If you choose to bring your dog, please see the pet guidelines at <https://vtstateparks.com/camping.html#campingWithPet>.



What to Bring

- Camping gear and food supplies sufficient for three days (See the *What to Bring Camping* link at end of this list.)
- Hand sanitizer and soap
- Clothes for both warm and cool weather; September in Northern Vermont can have warm days and cool nights.
- Hiking boots or walking/tennis shoes
- Waders/sneakers that can get wet
- Water bottle
- Sun and/or baseball hat
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Rain gear, extra towels
- Quarters for showers
- Phone cards for the pay phone at the ranger station (cell phone service is spotty to nonexistent in the park.)
- Bicycles are encouraged, to limit driving within and around the park.
- Leisure gear (optional): Field glasses, binoculars, swim wear, cameras, fishing gear, canoes or kayaks, musical instrument

More Camping Information and Checklists (especially for families new to camping)

Camping Activities for Kids:

<https://vtstateparks.com/assets/pdf/kids-activities.pdf>

Camp Cooking Tips

<https://vtstateparks.com/assets/pdf/cooking-tips.pdf>

What to Bring Camping

<https://vtstateparks.com/assets/pdf/what-to-bring.pdf>

Class Equipment Notes

Equipment and materials will be provided for all classes unless otherwise noted in the class description.

Classes are held outside, rain or shine, so dress comfortably for these conditions and bring any personal gear you will need.

Shooting Sports and Basic Firearm Safety: Eye & ear protection will be provided, but please bring your own if you have it. Eye protection must be worn at all times on the range for air pistol, .22 rifle, and shotgun. Ear protection must be worn on the range for .22 rifle at all times.

Canoe Lake Groton: Participants are encouraged to wear a swimsuit or clothes that can get wet.

Let's Go Fishing: Participants encouraged to bring their own pole and tackle.

Painting in the Great Outdoors: \$8 supply fee per participant.

Aquatic Exploration: Wear water shoes or old sneakers that you don't mind getting wet and wear a bathing suit. Bring a bandana or dip net if you have one.

Firecraft: Optional: Bring your favorite pocket knife; cotton or wool clothes are recommended. Recommended that participants wear non-synthetic clothes (i.e. Goretex or swimsuits) as there will be handling of smoldering material that may damage those types of clothing.

Herbs+Pasta =Magic: \$3 supply fee per participant

Youth 11 and younger must be accompanied by adults throughout the weekend; an adult should sign up for classes with these young participants.

Class Descriptions



Class sizes are limited. Please register early for best selection.
**Youth age 11 and younger must be accompanied in classes
by adults. The adult should be registered for the class
along with the youth(s).**

SESSION 1: Saturday, September 6, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

1A — Canoe Lake Groton

Suggested age: 8 to adult, youth must be accompanied by an adult

Develop a life-long enjoyment of canoeing by learning the parts of a canoe (of any boat), proper etiquette, and effective paddle strokes. With this class you'll minimize the chances of getting wet while canoeing (when you want to stay dry), and increase the ease and efficiency by which you move across your favorite body of water.

Instructor: Dean M. Menke, Canoeing and Outdoor Enthusiast

1B — Intro to Archery

Required age: 8 to adult

Using lightweight bows on the range, participants will learn proper form, technique, and safety.

Instructors: VT 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors (Linwood Smith, Karon Given, and Josh Smith)

1C — Let's Go Fishing

Suggested age: 5 to adult

Families will learn the basics of fishing such as casting, ecology, tackle, and regulations while getting a chance to try to catch a fish. Course is a combination of hands-on lessons and fishing. Gear will be provided but participants are encouraged to bring their own.

Instructor: Corey Hart, Education Specialist Vermont Fish and Wildlife

1D — Tracking Nature's Clues

Appropriate for all ages

Join retired game warden Eric Nuse on a bushwack looking for evidence of wildlife. Learn to look closely to figure out who is in the area, what they eat and who eats them. Long pants, boots, bug dope and a curious mind required.

Instructor: Eric Nuse, Retired Vermont Fish and Wildlife Game Warden

1E — Painting in the Great Outdoors

Ages 6+. *Participants younger than 6 can attend but work collaboratively with an adult*

Join teaching artist, Natasha Bogar, in a painting on canvas workshop. Bring the arts outside with this guided adventure in acrylic painting. Experience the joy and stress relieving benefits of creating art while surrounded by the sights and sounds of nature. Learn different brushstrokes to create dynamic effects on your canvas. All participants will take home their own painting. \$8 Supply fee per participant.

Instructor: Natasha Bogar, Painter and Teaching Artist

1F — Outside the Lines and Walls: A Nature-Inspired Art Adventure

Suggested age: 3-10

Explore the wonders of nature through creative expression! Join us for an inspiring workshop where young explorers can unleash their creativity with nature-inspired art activities. Discover the beauty around us and create masterpieces with natural materials. A perfect blend of fun and learning awaits!

Instructor: TBD

1G — Nature-Inspired Needle Felting

Appropriate for ages 7 and up

Needle felt an ornament or combine several into a whimsical garland! Participants learn the basics of needle felting using cookie cutters and wool roving. Already a felter? Join us for a relaxing and fun activity where the only limit is your imagination. Appropriate for ages 7 and up and requires fine motor skills to use a sharp needle for poking.

Instructor: Tamra Higgins, Fiber Artist and Owner of Two Sisters Mercantile

1H — Log Tricks and Tree Climbing

Appropriate for all ages with adult

Discover what it is like to be a professional Arborist. Including tree identification, assessment, pruning, removals, climbing and rigging. Receive demonstrations and hands on experience in the areas of knot tying, setting pull ropes, felling and climbing while getting an overview of what it's like to have a career in the outdoors.

Instructor: Dan Gibson

1I — Dog-Powered Sports

Appropriate for all ages

During this workshop we will be discussing how you can pursue dog powered sports with your dog(s). Some of these activities include Skijoring, Bikejoring, Scootering, Rig running, Cani cross, Dog Sledding and many other vehicles that roll or slide. The workshop will include presentations of the equipment used in these sports: Harnesses, lines, belts, scooters, bike set-ups, rigs and sleds. You will also learn training tips, goals, and expectations for your dogs. This workshop is comprised of hands-on activities, demonstration and meeting the friendly Siberian Huskies.

Instructors: Rob Farley and Dimitrios Kapoukranidis, October Siberian Dogsled Adventures

1J — Rope Tricks and Low Angle Repel

Appropriate for all ages

Learn the basic skills to conquer rugged terrain with confidence. Immerse yourself in the fundamentals of rope techniques. Learn the art of safe and efficient maneuvering as you experience the thrill of rappelling and ascending. Through hands-on practice, learn the skills of lifting, lowering, tying, and anchoring. Come and share your experience working with ropes.

Instructor: Milan Kubala, Outdoor Enthusiast deeply involved in national and international ski mountaineering (Skimo)

1K — Firecraft

Suggested for ages 8 to adult

Participants get a chance to learn how to start a fire-by-friction using a bow drill – and try it themselves! We'll review common fire-starting techniques for wilderness preparedness, create tinder boxes, and make char cloth used for tinder. Everyone will get a chance to try their hand at creating fire-by-friction. Parental guidance is advised, participants will handle knives & fire. Instruction based on the writings of Mors Kochanski – survival instructor, naturalist, and author.

Instructor: Doug Smith, Backcountry camping and canoeing enthusiast

1L — Shooting Sports — Beginner .22 Rifle

Required age: 8 to adult

This workshop is for anyone 8 years of age and older who does not have their Hunters Education Certification or is not a current member of a 4-H Shooting Sports Club. This entry level workshop will begin with an introduction to safe firearm handling procedures. Participants will then practice handling rifles, shooting techniques and positions. Time on the range will be spent shooting .22 caliber rifles. (Bringing your own eye and ear protection is encouraged, but not required.)

Instructors: VT 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors (Steve Haupt, Bill Barney, Derek Williams)

1M — Wilderness Survival and First Aid

Appropriate for all ages

This hands-on workshop combines essential first aid skills with fundamental wilderness survival techniques to prepare you for outdoor adventures. Participants will learn what to carry in a first aid and survival kit, how to assess and treat injuries with splints and pressure bandages, and how to safely assist an injured person. The session will also cover key survival skills, including fire starting, safe drinking water practices, dressing for the weather, lean-to building, and strategies for staying safe in the wilderness. Whether you're a seasoned explorer or new to outdoor adventures, this workshop will equip you with the knowledge to handle unexpected situations with confidence.

Instructor: Keith Sampietro, Hunter Education Instructor & Environmental Educator

1N — STEM in the Outdoors

Appropriate for all ages

Join Allison in exploring engineering and science concepts through hands-on problem solving in the outdoors. Work collaboratively to investigate real world challenges such as building structures, exploring natural forces, or designing basic systems using natural and provided materials. This activity will encourage observation, experimentation, and creativity while helping children understand scientific principles and the engineering design process in a fun and engaging way.

Instructor: Allison Crimm, Engineer and Backcountry Hunter and Angler

1O — Ham Radio for the Outdoors

Curious about amateur radio? This workshop offers an introduction to the world of ham radio and how it can be a valuable tool for outdoor adventures. Learn what ham radio is, how to get licensed, and the basics of setting up a portable station in the field. Discover how amateur radio can help you connect with others across the country – or even around the world – whether you're deep in the backwoods or just looking for a new hobby that combines technology, communication, and the great outdoors.

Instructor: Ron Rossi, KK1L

1P — Turkey Calling & Hunting

Suggested for ages 8 to adult

Have you ever called in a wild bird? Hear and try the basic calls of wild turkeys. We will cover the mouth call, pot call, and box call. Basic turkey hunting safety and tactics will also be offered.

Instructors: Ron Lafreniere and members of the VT Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

1Q — Critter Conflicts: Peaceful Solutions for Wild Encounters

Appropriate for all ages

Join Stillwater State Park staff for an insightful workshop on managing wildlife encounters peacefully. Learn practical strategies and ethical approaches to coexisting with local wildlife, ensuring harmony between humans and nature.

Instructors: Stillwater Park Staff

1R — Backcountry Cooking and Nutrition

Appropriate for all ages

Backcountry cooking doesn't have to be daunting—or limited to bland, store bought, freeze-dried meals. In this hands-on workshop, we'll explore two practical meal planning strategies suitable for both weekend warrior or for extended multi-week expeditions. Learn essential backcountry kitchen safety, simple cooking techniques, and enjoy preparing (and tasting!) a delicious trail-ready meal.

Instructor: Derek Gevalis. Derek has a background that includes serving as an Outward Bound instructor, EMS climbing guide, director of the Green Mountain College Adventure Program, and 16 years in the food industry.

1S — Free Time: Unwind, Recharge, or Find Your Adventure

Discover tranquility in Groton State Forest: Whether you're splashing in the water, losing yourself in a book under a tree, or reveling in birdsong, this free time is yours to embrace the beauty of nature however you need.



SESSION 2: Saturday, September 6, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

2A — Let's Go Fishing

Suggested age: 5 to adult

Families will learn the basics of fishing such as casting, ecology, tackle, and regulations while getting a chance to try to catch a fish. Course is a combination of hands-on lessons and fishing. Gear will be provided but participants are encouraged to bring their own.

Instructor: Corey Hart, Education Specialist Vermont Fish and Wildlife

2B — Introductory to Archery

Required age: 8 to adult

Using lightweight bows on the range, participants will learn proper form, technique, and safety.

Instructor: VT 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors (Linwood Smith, Karon Given, and Josh Smith) *Repeat of Session 1B*

2C — Intermediate Archery

Required age: 8 to adult

This session is for those who have attended the beginner archery session in the past and want a deeper dive or for those who regularly practice archery outside of OFW. Participants are **required** to bring their own bow to use upon inspection and approval by the instructors. 3-D targets will also be used.

Instructors: Linwood Smith, Karon Given, and Josh Smith

2D — Herbs + Pasta = Magic

Appropriate for all ages

What happens when you add medicinal herbs to pasta dough? Come find out at this introductory workshop to the art of medicinal comfort food. We will learn to identify three wild edible and medicinal plants, then get our hands dirty making pasta dough with our foraged finds. Enjoy a simple and nutritious pasta meal. You will learn the basics of making pasta by hand without any costly ingredients or equipment, how to identify and use common edible and medicinal weeds, and how to make medicinal pasta and pesto. Make herbal pasta for the joy of it, the divine taste of it, and reap the health rewards as a delicious side effect. \$3 registration fee per participant, bring your own cup, bowl, and fork.

Instructor: Melissa Laurita Kohl, Herbalist and Educator

2E — Nature-Inspired Needle Felting

Appropriate for ages 7 and up

Needle felt an ornament or combine several into a whimsical garland! Participants learn the basics of needle felting using cookie cutters and wool roving. Already a felter? Join us for a relaxing and fun activity where the only limit is your imagination. Appropriate for ages 7 and up and requires fine motor skills to use a sharp needle for poking.

Instructor: Tamra Higgins, Fiber Artist and Owner of Two Sisters Mercantile

2F — Compass Orienteering

Suggested ages: 8 to adult

Orienteering is a sport in which orienteers use an accurate, detailed map and a compass to find points in the landscape. We will instruct participants on how to use a compass and how to read different kinds of maps. There will be fun games to play while you learn how to use these tools. The workshop will conclude with a final challenge course.

Instructors: Adrienne Card, 4-H Leader of Sunset Hill 4-H Club; Jessica Paxton, 4-H Leader

2G — Shooting Sports — Intermediate .22 Rifle

Required age: 8 to adult

Prerequisite: This workshop is for anyone 8 years of age and older who currently holds their Hunters Education

Certification or is a current member of a 4-H Shooting Sports Club. Participants will practice intermediate techniques and positions when handling rifles and shooting. Advanced targets will be used, including rotating targets, a shooting tree, and other challenges. Time on the range will be spent shooting .22 caliber rifles. (Bringing your own eye and ear protection is encouraged, but not required.)

Instructors: VT 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors (Steve Haupt, Bill Barney, Zach Willson, Derek Williams)

2H — Crafts, Games, and Teen-Led Fun

Appropriate for all ages

Join 4-Hers and Green Mountain Conservation Camp junior counselors for a lively session full of hands-on crafts, outdoor games, and creative activities — all led by teens, for youth. Come ready to play, create, and have fun!

Instructors: 4-H Teens and GMCC JCs

2I — Log Tricks and Tree Climbing

Suggested age: 8 to adult

Discover what it is like to be a professional Arborist. Including tree identification, assessment, pruning, removals, climbing and rigging. Receive demonstrations and hands on experience in the areas of knot tying, setting pull ropes, felling and climbing. Also get an overview of what it's like to have a career outdoors.

Instructor: Dan Gibson, Arborist and Educator

2J — Wilderness Survival and First Aid

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Instructor: Keith Sampietro, Hunter Education Instructor & Environmental Educator

2K — Rope Tricks and Low Angle Repelling

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Instructor: Milan Kubala, Outdoor Enthusiast deeply involved in national and international ski mountaineering (Skimo)

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Join Allison in exploring engineering and science concepts through hands-on problem solving in the outdoors. Work collaboratively to investigate real world challenges such as building structures, exploring natural forces, or designing basic systems using natural and provided materials. This activity will encourage observation, experimentation, and creativity while helping children understand scientific principles and the engineering design process in a fun and engaging way.

Instructor: Allison Crimm, Engineer and Backcountry Hunter and Angler

2M — Dog-Powered Sports

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Instructors: Rob Farley and Dimitrios Kapoukranidis, October Siberian Dogsled Adventures

2N — Fiddleheads, Lamb's Quarters, Nettles & Nuts: Wild Edible, Medicinal and Poisonous Plants

Can someone really become immune to poison ivy after drinking milk produced by a goat that has eaten that plant? What did young Quaker women use for rouge when their parents forbade them from wearing makeup? Which has more vitamin C — a glass of orange juice or a glass of pine needle tea? On this walk we'll share Colonial and Native American folklore and information to learn about the myths and realities concerning the use of wild edible, medicinal, and poisonous plants. We will also sample some of these delectable treats. If Socrates had attended this workshop he may have realized that you can drink tea made from the boiled needles of the hemlock tree, but not from the small herbaceous plant called poison hemlock!

Appropriate for all ages

Instructor: Michael Caduto has traveled throughout the world performing stories and music for audiences of all while working closely with many indigenous peoples.

2O — Backwoods Food for the Hungry Camper

Appropriate for all ages

Join Eric Nuse, with Backcountry Hunters & Anglers and help cook up some real backwood's food for hungry campers. If you have never roasted up a chicken under a garbage can, you are in for a tasty treat. Cooking fish, potatoes and steak on hardwood coals is the best, especially with a side of fiddleheads and a crusty hunk of bannock, the national bread of Canada.

Instructor: Eric Nuse, Retired Vermont Fish and Wildlife Game Warden

2P — Intro to Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP)

Appropriate for all ages

Get your feet wet with the basics of stand-up paddleboarding! This beginner-friendly workshop covers safety, balance, and paddling techniques—all while enjoying the beautiful waters of Lake Groton. More experienced paddlers are welcome to join the fun and help build a supportive, splash-filled session for all.

Instructor: Lauren Traister, SUP enthusiast

2Q — Ham Radio for the Outdoors

Curious about amateur radio? This workshop offers an introduction to the world of ham radio and how it can be a valuable tool for outdoor adventures. Learn what ham radio is, how to get licensed, and the basics of setting up a portable station in the field. Discover how amateur radio can help you connect with others across the country—or even around the world—whether you're deep in the backwoods or just looking for a new hobby that combines technology, communication, and the great outdoors.

Instructor: Ron Rossi, KK1L

2R — Critter Conflicts: Peaceful Solutions for Wild Encounters

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Join Stillwater State Park staff for an insightful workshop on managing wildlife encounters peacefully. Learn practical strategies and ethical approaches to coexisting with local wildlife, ensuring harmony between humans and nature.

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Backcountry cooking doesn't have to be daunting — or limited to bland, store bought, freeze-dried meals. In this hands-on workshop, we'll explore two practical meal planning strategies suitable for both weekend warrior or for extended multi-week expeditions. Learn essential backcountry kitchen safety, simple cooking techniques, and enjoy preparing (and tasting!) a delicious trail-ready meal.

Instructor: Derek Gevalis, Derek has a background that includes serving as an Outward Bound instructor, EMS climbing guide, director of the Green Mountain College Adventure Program, and 16 years in the food industry.

2T — Free Time: Unwind, Recharge, or Find Your Adventure

Discover tranquility in Groton State Forest: Whether you're splashing in the water, losing yourself in a book under a tree, or reveling in birdsong, this free time is yours to embrace the beauty of nature however you need.



SESSION 3: Sunday, September 7, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

3A — Canoe Lake Groton

Suggested age: 8 to adult, youth must be accompanied by an adult

Develop a life-long enjoyment of canoeing by learning the parts of a canoe (of any boat), proper etiquette, and effective paddle strokes. With this class you'll minimize the chances of getting wet while canoeing (when you want to stay dry) and increase the ease and efficiency by which you move across your favorite body of water.

Instructor: Dean M. Menke, Canoeing and Outdoor Enthusiast

3B — Introduction to Archery

Required age: 8 to adult

Using lightweight bows on the range, participants will learn proper form, technique, and safety.

Instructor: VT 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors (Linwood Smith, Karon Given, and Josh Smith) *Repeat of session 1B*

3C — Nature Games

Appropriate for all ages

Both children and adults will build new skills through hands-on games inspired by plants, animals, and the natural world.

Active, cooperative, sensory, and other types of games will focus on acquiring and growing appreciation of the beauty and wisdom of nature. Kay Gibson, has been leading both original and established games that develop concepts based on the natural world. She has been involved in Nature education for many years and continues to learn new ways to bring concepts to those in her workshops and classes.

Instructor: Kay Gibson, Activities Director at Beaver Brook Children's School summer camp

3D — Log Tricks and Tree Climbing

Suggested age: 8 to adult

Discover what it is like to be a professional Arborist. Including tree identification, assessment, pruning, removals, climbing and rigging. Receive demonstrations and hands on experience in the areas of knot tying, setting pull ropes, felling and climbing. Also get an overview of what it's like to have a career outdoors.

Instructor: Dan Gibson, Arborist and Educator

3E — Geocaching 101

Appropriate for all ages

Do you like the idea of a treasure hunt in the outdoors? Explore the park in a new and different way by learning the past time of geocaching. You'll venture about locating geocaches, learn what they are, and get the low down on proper etiquette surrounding this fun scavenger hunt style hobby.

Instructor: Rebecca Bissonette, Homeschooling Mom and Geocaching Enthusiast

3F — Shooting Sports — Air Pistol

Required age: 8 to adult

Experience and gain knowledge of the basics of target shooting: sight alignment, muzzle control, and proper grip by using different styles of air pistols. Participants will engage with a variety of fun to challenging targets. This is a great workshop for participants that range from entry level to intermediate experience with firearms. Time on the range will be spent shooting air pistols. (Bringing your own eye protection is encouraged, but not required. Hearing protection is not needed for this workshop.)

Instructors: VT 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors (Steve Haupt, Glenn Card, Bill Barney, Derek Williams)

3G — Aquatic Exploration

Appropriate for all ages

Come explore the stream and aquatic habitats in Stillwater State Park! Let's see what we can find in the water. Follow your curiosity and discover how to learn more about the plants and animals that call this habitat home. Sheri is a homeschooling mother of two with over 20 years of experience working with all ages in outdoor settings including summer camps and environmental education programs.

Instructor: Sheri Smith, Homeschool and Summer Camp/Environmental Educator

3H — Wilderness Survival and First Aid

Appropriate for all ages

This hands-on workshop combines essential first aid skills with fundamental wilderness survival techniques to prepare you for outdoor adventures. Participants will learn what to carry in a first aid and survival kit, how to assess and treat injuries with splints and pressure bandages, and how to safely assist an injured person. The session will also cover key survival skills, including fire starting, safe drinking water practices, dressing for the weather, lean-to building, and strategies for staying safe in the wilderness. Whether you're a seasoned explorer or new to outdoor adventures, this workshop will equip you with the knowledge to handle unexpected situations with confidence.

Instructor: Keith Sampietro, Hunter Education Instructor & Environmental Educator

3I — Dog-Powered Sports

Appropriate for all ages

During this workshop we will be discussing how you can pursue dog powered sports with your dog(s). Some of these activities includes Skijoring, Bikejoring, Scootering, Rig running, Cani cross, Dog Sledding and many other vehicles that roll or slide. The workshop will include presentations of the equipment used in these sports: Harnesses, lines, belts, scooters, bike set-ups, rigs and sleds. Learn training tips, goals, and expectations for your dogs. Hands-on activities, demonstration and meeting the friendly Siberian Huskies.

Instructors: Rob Farley and Dimitrios Kapoukranidis, October Siberian Dogsled Adventures

3J — Rope Tricks and Low Angle Repelling

Appropriate for all ages

Learn the basic skills to conquer rugged terrain with confidence. Immerse yourself in the fundamentals of rope techniques. Learn the art of safe and efficient maneuvering as you experience the thrill of rappelling and ascending. Through hands-on practice, learn the skills of lifting, lowering, tying, and anchoring.

Instructor: Milan Kubala, Outdoor Enthusiast deeply involved in national and international ski mountaineering (Skimo)

3K — Nature Journaling

Appropriate for all ages

A nature journal is a lens that focuses your attention, enriches your experiences, and develops your skills as a nature observer. You do not need to be an artist, writer, or a naturalist to begin. These skills can be learned by anyone, and you can start developing them in this workshop. Together we will work on making nature observations, practicing some writing prompts, and learn some art techniques to capture the beauty around us. Simple nature journals and supplies will be provided.

Instructor: Rebecca Roy, Interpretive Program Manager, Vermont State Parks

3L — Critter Conflicts: Peaceful Solutions for Wild Encounters

Appropriate for all ages

Join Stillwater State Park staff for an insightful workshop on managing wildlife encounters peacefully. Learn practical strategies and ethical approaches to coexisting with local wildlife, ensuring harmony between humans and nature.

Instructors: Stillwater Park Staff

3M — Cooking with Vermont Wild Kitchen

Appropriate for all ages

Join the Vermont Wild Kitchen for a demonstration in outdoor cooking with Vermont wild edibles! Cooking with wild foods can be super simple and a great way to further live in harmony with the beautiful Vermont landscape. Bring your friends, family, appetites, and questions.

Instructor: Shane Rogers of Vermont Wild Kitchen Outdoor

3N — Intro to Shotgun

Ages 8 and up

Learn the basics of shotgun safety, handling, and shooting technique with certified 4-H Shooting Sports instructors. This beginner-friendly workshop offers a safe and supportive environment to try your hand at clay target shooting. (Bringing your own eye and ear protection is encouraged, but not required.)

Instructors: VT 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors Jeni Slattery, Glenn Card and Derek Williams

3O — Free Time: Ready Yourself for the Journey Home

Whether you choose to hone a newly acquired skill, share moments with both old and new friends, take a moment to contemplate your experiences at Stillwater or opt for an early start on your journey home, the choice is yours. Embrace this time to make it meaningful in whichever way resonates with you!



**Outdoor Family Weekend extends gratitude
to our sponsoring and partnering organizations!**

