

Outdoor Education at Camp Ocean Pines

Teacher Guide, 2023-2024 School Year

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We are so excited and honored that you have chosen Camp Ocean Pines for your group's nature camp experience! This packet is designed to answer the big questions about what our program offers and how it can best meet your needs. Over the next few months, we will send out information regarding desired lessons, group arrangements, accommodations, schedules, waivers, etc. We take pride in tailoring our program to fit specific school needs and encourage your collaboration during the planning process.

Hopefully this answers many initial questions, but please contact us anytime with any additional questions or concerns. We look forward to creating an enriching outdoor experience for your students!



The mission of Camp Ocean Pines is to foster enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world among people of all ages through creative activities in a residential camp setting.

Nature Camp Expectations: The F.A.C.T.S. of Life!

We cannot explain *every* rule for *every* situation. Students should understand that *this is a school experience*, and if something is not okay at school it's probably not okay at Camp. We want kids to make smart, responsible choices. As a general rule, we use the F.A.C.T.S of Life.

Fun: What am I doing to ensure that I, all my friends, and all the adults are having fun?

Attitude: Am I choosing to be positive, helpful, and respectful? To do the right thing? Am I helping others to stay positive, and to always be excited to be at Camp?

Community: How am I making this community better? Am I looking out for my friends? Keeping my cabin clean? Am I sharing food at the table? Am I treating the animals with kindness and respect?

Try New Things: Am I willing to do stuff that I've never done before? Do I encourage and support others to try new things, too?

Safety: How do I keep myself and other people safe? Am I getting enough sleep, and drinking water? Do I help my friends up a steep hill? Do I keep my eyes open when I'm near the ocean?

Naturalist Staff

We hire a diverse array of seasonal staff to work with your students. They all have unique backgrounds and experiences, and we appreciate the individual ways in which they enrich our program. All of our staff are certified in First Aid and CPR, and they carry first aid kits with them during program. Additionally, all of our naturalists are mandated child abuse reporters and meet all state requirements for working with children. Below are brief bios of our naturalist staff this season:

Anna: Anna is the lead naturalist this season. A graduate of McGill University in Canada, Anna has extensive experience working with youth in a variety of settings. During the summer, they work at a Quaker backcountry camp in Virginia. This is Anna's second season with us.

Tay: This is Tay's fourth season of outdoor education at Camp Ocean Pines. Tay has also worked as a counselor for our summer camp and family camp programs. Previously Tay worked at Chico State's Gateway Science Museum where he specialized in fossils, specifically shark teeth.

Amanda: Amanda received her B.S. in environmental education and interpretation from the University of Wisconsin. From Alaska to Maine, Amanda's passion for equitable environmental education has taken her across the country. This is Amanda's second season with us.

Joe: After graduating from Chico State, Joe jumped right into outdoor education by working for the Conejo Valley Unified School District. He has worked on our summer camp staff for two years, and we are thrilled that he is (finally) joining us on the outdoor education team.

Shirley: A Fresno native, Shirley received her bachelors in Child and Family Science from Fresno State. She previously worked at the San Joaquin River Parkway and Trust, and the Sierra Outdoor School before joining us here at Camp Ocean Pines. This is Shirley's first season with us.

Channing: Channing is the outdoor education director at Camp Ocean Pines. She previously worked as a naturalist here in 2020 and returned as the director in January 2022. She has worked at six different outdoor education/camp facilities all over the country and has her M.S. in secondary education from SUNY Albany.

Chaperones

We require each of our groups to bring along adult chaperones to supervise the students overnight. In some cases, we have allowed schools to bring high school chaperones (if you are interested in discussing this, please contact us in advance). We allow each school to bring free chaperones at a ratio of one adult for every eight students. Interpreters, one-on-one aids, and other paraprofessionals attend for free.

Chaperones are required to stay with their cabin group during all meals, free time blocks, and overnight. Good chaperones are important for a successful camp experience. An engaged, energetic cabin chaperone can support their student group throughout their camp experience, helping them to navigate homesickness, loneliness, and the nervousness that comes from trying new things in a new environment.

Medical Information

All of our staff members are First Aid/CPR certified. We encourage each school to send a first aid kit that can be kept in the teacher cabin in case any first aid is needed overnight. We are happy to provide first-aid for general cuts, scrapes, and bruises **but any medical treatment beyond that, including the handing out of prescription and over-the-counter medications, is the responsibility of the teachers.** Camp waivers, which includes a medical form, must be scanned and emailed to the OE director prior to arrival. By attending camp, the school is agreeing that all chaperones and students are free of any communicable disease.

Children requiring an EpiPen or inhaler must carry it with them at all times. If the school or parent is not comfortable with this, please assign an adult that will be with this student to carry the item(s).

Food Service

With advanced notice the camp kitchen is happy to provide meals that are vegetarian, gluten-free, dairy-free, etc. We ask that schools *send dietary information to the camp at least 2 weeks prior to arrival*. Participants with extreme allergies or medical conditions are asked to bring their own food, which we are glad to store in our kitchen facilities. Chaperones and teachers have access to a fridge, microwave, and dry food storage in the Dining Hall.

All meals are served in the Dining Hall. In order to minimize the possibility of outdoor creatures and rodents being attracted to the cabins, no eating or drinking is allowed in the cabins. Help us avoid problems with animals by not allowing students to bring any food, snacks, or treats with them to camp.

Other Concerns

We welcome all students at Camp Ocean Pines! If you have a student(s) with a special need (sleepwalking, bedwetting, snoring, health condition, in a wheelchair, etc.) please let us know in advance so that we can work with you to ensure that they have a positive camp experience.

Electronics Policy

Camp Ocean Pines is a place to celebrate and enjoy the great outdoors—to take a break from everyday life and electronics. For this reason, please don't allow students to bring cell phones, tablets, computers, or any other electronics. (E-readers are welcome!) Cell phones and other electronics brought by students will immediately be collected and given to the teachers to return at week's end. Teachers and adult chaperones are of course allowed to bring electronics to camp.



Sample Schedule

8:00	Breakfast
9:00	First 3-hour lesson block (or two 1.5 hour lesson blocks)
12:00	Cabin time - for students to change, grab anything that they forgot at the cabin, etc.
12:30	Lunch
1:30	Rec field time
2:00	Afternoon lesson block (1.5 hour)
3:30	Student choice activity block (1 hour)
4:30	Cabin time for students to shower, take a nap, etc.
5:30	Dinner
6:30	Rec field time
7:00	1.5-hour evening activity block
8:30	Evening announcements
9:30	Lights out

On off-site days, we will pack a lunch after breakfast and leave camp around 9:15am. We usually return to camp between 3-3:30pm for cabin time.



Activity Options

A month before arrival, we will send you worksheets that include an activity request form. Lessons can frequently be adapted in both content, approach, and duration, so let us know what would work best for your students. We believe that education works best when we meet students where they are at, and we look forward to working with you for your school's schedule.

We believe that educators teach best when they are passionate and knowledgeable about a subject, and we empower our educators to develop their own teaching style. The descriptions below encompass the theme of the lesson; however, individual activities within a lesson may vary per instructor discretion.

Double Lesson Blocks (3 hours)

Forest Exploration Hike - Just like our city communities, the forest is alive and bustling. What sounds do you hear? What neighbors do you see? From solo hikes to climbing trees, this is a very hands-on lesson that will allow students to fully experience life in a coastal forest.

Tide Pool Exploration In this lesson, students will take a short walk to our local tide pools, where they'll search for sea stars, crabs, and other intriguing invertebrates. They'll investigate tidepool interactions and zonation along with the unique adaptations that allow certain animals to thrive in the tough tide pool environment. *(This lesson is tide dependent!)*

Single Lesson Blocks (1.5 hours)

Animal Adaptations We offer several variations of animal adaptations that includes live onsite animals (raptors, reptiles, rabbits), animal artifacts, games, and activities. Multiple blocks of this course can be included to utilize our diverse resources. During activity selection, please note if you would like this block more than once and we will delineate what your options are for diversified programming.

Forest Ecology This is a shorter version of our Forest Exploration Hike. Students will explore the wooded ecosystem here at camp by turning over logs to look for ensatinas, examining Monterey pines, and learning about native vs. invasive species.

Marine Discovery Why can elephant seals survive for months in the cold Alaskan waters? What does it mean for something to be neutrally buoyant? Is algae a plant, an animal, or something else altogether?

Marine Lab is a broad, exploratory course with many hands-on components. *(Returning schools please note that our touch tank is currently under construction and not functional this season.)*

Native Cultures Through Native stories and games, students will engage with each other and their landscape. Students will gain an understanding of the hunter/gatherer lifestyle and an appreciation for what life was like here before the arrival of the Spanish by examining artifacts, learning a classic Chumash story, and playing an Native-style game.

Nature Art How does nature influence art? What are the ways you can connect to nature using art? What even is art anyway? Students will open their creative minds and learn about nature through art-focused activities.

Target Sports More than just trying to hit a bullseye, shooting a bow and tossing an ax are actually teaching skills related to perseverance and focus. And they're really fun, too!

Team Building Team building can be a great bonding experience, while also encouraging students to use communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills. During this block, instructors will use our portable initiatives to present students with fun challenges. Depending on the group dynamic, activities can range from puzzle-like problems to games that focus on collaboration and fun.

Student Choice Activities (1 hour)

We believe that kids know themselves best, and we strive to give students a sense of agency while here at Camp. Student Choice is a structured free block where students are allowed to choose their activity/ies. Choices vary depending on weather, student body, and instructor knowledge, but options include fort building, arts and crafts, field games, relaxing at the hammocks, and animal meet & greet. Student Choice allows students to explore their own interests but also to choose an activity that best fits with their energy level (camp can be exhausting for some, while others have boundless energy). If you have a specific Student Choice request, please let us know ahead of time.

Evening Activities (1-1.5 hours)

Astronomy What's a binary star? Where can you find Orion and what's the story behind this constellation? Using games, stories, and observation, students will explore the richness of the night sky. *(Please note: evening programs generally run 7-8:30. Depending on the season, it may not be fully dark for night activities and sometimes stargazing is not possible.)*

Crepuscular Avengers + Campfire Taking place at dusk, Crepuscular Avengers pits predators (teachers and adult chaperones) against prey (students) as they attempt to make it from the dining hall up to the cabin area without being eaten (tagged with a soft foam ball).



Afterwards, instructors debrief the game by helping the students make connections between their own actions and the actions of actual prey animals. And what is camp without the campfire?! Each cabin has a chance to come up with a song, story, or skit to share and our naturalists fill in with performances of their own. We'll end the night with s'mores under the stars. Schools often have campfire without playing Crepuscular beforehand.

Night Adaptations How do nocturnal creatures survive in the darkness? How have we humans adapted to the dark? In this lesson, students will discover many of the challenges and some of the extraordinary solutions that nocturnal animals have developed to be successful in the dark.

Owl Pellet Dissection What exactly is an owl pellet? Students will discover the answer as they pair up to dissect a real owl pellet. Each pellet contains fur and bones from rodents, snakes, and/or small birds. Students will have the opportunity to try and identify the bones they find, and to build their own creative animal skeleton. Owl pellets can also be offered as a daytime activity.

Squid Dissection Why do squid look so weird? In this lab, students will answer this question and investigate the amazing anatomy of the Pacific coast squid, *Loligo opalescens*, through dissection. Each student will partner with a classmate to dissect their very own squid.

Off-Site Trips

We live in a rich, vibrant area, and there is much to explore beyond Camp's gate. ***All off-site transportation is the responsibility of the school*** although we are happy to aid in logistics when possible. Off-site trips are scalable in terms of academic focus. Trips can be entirely experiential and adventure-based, or our naturalists can interweave a scientific lens and activities into the experience.

Morro Bay – Situated 25 miles south of Cambria, a visit to Morro Bay provides students with the opportunity to explore all the wonders of an estuary ecosystem. Whether it's kayaking through mudflats or gently removing nudibranchs from the underside of a dock, Morro Bay offers another facet of local watersheds for students to explore. If you are interested in a trip to Morro Bay, we will work together to select appropriate programming. A typical excursion includes kayaking in the morning, lunch at Tidelands park, and an afternoon activity like belly biology or free time on the Embarcadero. (*Note: Kayaking is an additional \$15/participant*).

San Simeon Beach + Elephant Seal Rookery – With over 24,000 seals visiting annually, the Piedra Blancas Rookery is one of the largest and most accessible rookeries in the world. Schools can elect to only visit the rookery, or to add on a visit to the nearby W. R. Hearst State Beach, which offers beach access and a lovely coastal hike shaded by eucalyptus.

Additional Options – We are open to additional off-site adventures as well. Past trips have included hikes in Montaña de Oro State Park and Harmony Headlands State Park, as well as alternative tide pooling locations. Please work with the outdoor education director to coordinate these trips.