

DUTCHESS COUNTY PARKS



# SCOUT PROGRAMS 2023

[DUTCHESSNY.GOV/PARKS](https://dutchessny.gov/parks)



# WELCOME SCOUTS

Dutchess County Parks Survival/Naturalist programs are designed to give Scouts ongoing training in wilderness survival skills.



These classes build upon each other creating a framework that will allow scouts to handle any situation that might arise. We emphasize teamwork, creative problem solving and self reliance. As scouts progress through the classes, they will learn how to build different types of shelters, start fires under any condition, find water and food, observe nature in detail and feel comfortable in the woods. The most important lesson we try to convey is that even in this modern world, we are still interconnected and dependent on nature in many ways.

Program cost is \$5 per scout.

For more information

Email: [parknaturalist@dutchessny.gov](mailto:parknaturalist@dutchessny.gov)  
or call 845-298-4602.



**Dave Beck**  
**Park Naturalist**

**Jessica Steinbach**  
**Assistant Park Naturalist**



*Facilitators*

## Introduction to Archery Ages: 9+

This program is designed for scouts with any level of experience in archery. We first look at basic archery safety and skills. Then, we discuss proper form and ways to improve accuracy. This course is hands on practicing with bows, and learning through experience.

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## Exploring the Woods Ages: 5-7

Scouts will hike with a Park Naturalist at Bowdoin or Wilcox Park and learn about the animals and plants that live in the parks. Scouts will use their senses to explore the trail and see what nature has for us to discover. Other topics may include tracking, tree ID, simple plant ID, animal's habits, and habitat.

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## Lostproofing Ages: 5+

If lost in the woods, could you survive until help came? How can someone avoid getting lost in the first place? This program helps scouts understand the necessary steps to take in a survival situation. We look at shelter, water, fire, food and their importance to safety and security. The group will then work together to build a survival shelter from all natural materials.





## Animal Track ID Ages: 7+

Within this program, scouts will learn how to identify animal tracks by providing them with an opportunity to see animal tracks under controlled circumstances and then allow them to discover track types themselves, within the park.



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## Basic Shelter Construction -Debris Hut Ages: 7+



Shelter is always the first concern when in a survival situation. In this program we will explore the factors of building an effective survival shelter. We will cover topics such as proper location, collecting materials, different design ideas and proper door construction. The scouts will then break into groups and build a shelter of their own. Group dynamics in an emergency situation will also be discussed.

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## Basic Fire Making and Safety Ages: 9+

Could you start a fire if you had to? Whether creating a campfire to cook dinner or to boil water for purification reasons, being able to start a fire safely and effectively is an invaluable skill. In this program we will cover fire safety and the dangers of having an open fire in a natural area. We will look at the science behind why a fire burns the way it does, how to collect the proper fuel and the different methods available for building a fire. Scouts will then have an opportunity to work in small groups to attempt to start their own fires.



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## Edible Plant ID Ages: 9+



How many plants can you identify in a backyard? A surprising number of common plants are edible and nutritious. Scouts will create a plant journal and learn how to observe nature in a new way. Scouts will be assigned certain plants to explore and write in their journal about. Journals will then be used in combination with plant guides to identify their subject. We will also talk about safe practices when gathering plants and have an opportunity to try a few of the local edibles.

## Advanced Shelter Building - Wickiup Ages: 9+

A debris hut is a fantastic shelter for short term survival. The only problem is that living and working space is severely limited. The answer is a secondary shelter called a wickiup. This provides a workspace out of the weather and can be used as a primary shelter in warmer conditions. We will look at the construction of this type of shelter. The overall layout of a campsite will also be discussed, including fire placement, use of debris walls and other shelters. We will then work together to set up a campsite using only the materials found in nature.



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## Map and Compass Skills Ages: 9+

Scouts will become familiar with the reading of maps and the use of a compass.

### Map

We will discuss the parts of a map, how to read topographic lines, and how to orient a map using landmarks to find north. Scouts will then be given a map and must use their skills to find checkpoints in the surrounding area.

### Compass

Scouts will learn the parts of a compass and the principles of its operation. Scouts will then participate in several activities, including a compass course.

### Grid

Through a series of games, scouts will learn how to:

- \* Read a grid with numbers and letters
- \* Place an object on the grid and read the coordinates
- \* Determine the number of boxes in a grid
- \* Use strategy and forward thinking to outwit other teams



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## Prehistoric Native American Hunting Ages: 11+

Hunting was a fact of life for the native people of the Hudson Valley. We will look at the methods that were used to provide food for survival. Scouts will have a chance to practice silent movement skills and awareness. The beliefs surrounding hunting will be discussed and compared to modern views.

Everyone will get a chance to try two ancient hunting devices the throwing stick and the atlatl, to test their skill.



## Advanced Fire Making Ages: 11+

Sometimes matches are not available to start a fire or they are in limited supply. This program explores how to make fire by using either a magnifying glass or a fire striker. We will discuss how these methods can be superior to matches under certain conditions and how adverse weather conditions affect fire making in general. Scouts will then take the fire challenge. Scouts will be broken into small groups and will start a fire using each of the methods discussed.



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## Water Purification Ages: 11+

Water is second in importance only to shelter in a survival situation. Being able to obtain clean drinking water can be a challenge. In this program we will discuss different ways of purifying water. We will look at commercial methods, how to make a simple filter, the importance of boiling water and how to make a solar still. Scouts will then create filters using natural materials and bandanas.



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## Fire By Friction Ages: 14+

For thousands of years, people made fire without any of our modern materials. They used techniques based on the idea of fire by friction. This program is about the creation and use of a bow drill. We will look at the steps in creating the parts of the bow drill, the science behind how it works, and the methods needed to make a fire with one. Scouts will then get a chance to try their hand at making a fire with this ancient device.



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## Wooden Containers Ages: 14+

Before the introduction of metal and clay, most containers were made of wood. They were created by a process of slowly burning and scraping away at the wood to achieve the desired shape.

This program will give scouts a chance to experience this process. We look at the importance of patience and safety while working with fire. The tools and techniques used to shape the wood will also be discussed. Each scout will begin to hollow out their own bowl during the program.





## **Prior to becoming**

a county facility in the mid 1970's, Bowdoin Park was a farming training site for the Children's Aid Society in New York City. In 1928, George T. Bowdoin donated the 328 acre farm to the Society and in 1929, the training program for boys moved from Valhalla, N.Y., to New Hamburg N.Y. The Children's Aid Society farming program was geared toward older boys ages 16-21 and the farm school and camp were direct results of New Deal policies and "Back to the land movement" under President Roosevelt. The summer camp operated until the mid-1970's then the land was acquired by the county and turned into a public park.

Naturalist education programming has taken place at the facility since the county obtained the land through active volunteers and dedicated park staff.

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## **Dave Beck**

### **Park Naturalist**

has been with Dutchess County Parks for twenty-nine years, serving twenty-six years as lead naturalist. Dave is a graduate of SUNY Fredonia with a BA degree in Anthropology. In addition to his degree, he is a certified instructor in Archery. Dave has extensive experience working with youth and adults and has the natural ability to create excitement about the outdoor world around us. Dave has taught thousands of education programs related to wilderness survival, archaeology, mammals, mapping skills, team building, pond study, local park history, Native American history, and environmental science.

## **Jessica Steinbach**

### **Assistant Park Naturalist**

has been with Dutchess County Parks for five years. Jessica received her BFA in Music Theater from University of Buffalo. As a youth, Jessica attended Dutchess County Parks summer camp for thirteen years participating as camper, counselor in training and then student intern. Active in Girls Scouts, Jessica achieved her Silver Award. Jessica's passion is working with youth and sharing her love of the outdoors through pond study, maple education, outdoor survival, archery, and habitat education. In addition, Jessica is an accomplished artist and leads Dutchess County Parks newest programs, The Park Palette Art Series and Senior Park Prints.



Visit: [DutchessNY.gov/Parks](https://DutchessNY.gov/Parks)  
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## DUTCHESS COUNTY PARKS

Bowdoin Park  
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William F.X. O'Neil, County Executive

