

# DUTCHESS COUNTY PARKS



## SCHOOL PROGRAMS 2025

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

Bowdoin Park  
85 Sheafe Road  
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590



Sue Serino, County Executive

# WELCOME TEACHERS

## Thanks for your interest in Dutchess County Parks School Naturalist Programs

Our programs offer hands-on educational opportunities for students of all ages. Learn various aspects of environmental awareness, prehistoric Native American culture, and survival skills. We can also offer more than one course during a field trip such as pairing Compass and Map Skill courses. Each class will have the opportunity to participate in both programs. Combination courses are \$5 per child. Available program locations are listed under each description.

**Program cost is \$5 per student.**

**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*



# PROGRAM OFFERINGS

## Prehistoric Native American Studies

Grades 4+

Students will take a journey into the distant past to discover what life was like for prehistoric people living within modern day Bowdoin Park. How did they meet their daily needs without modern conveniences? How did they build their homes? How did they view the world? Students will immerse themselves in the many activities that would have been a part of daily life seven thousand years ago. Students will visit to a reconstructed rock shelter dwelling and learn how prehistoric people interacted and depended on the land around them. Teachers may choose one of the following points to focus on:

### Hunting

Students learn hunting methods for survival and practice the skills of silent movement and awareness. The beliefs surrounding survivalist hunting will be discussed and compared to modern views. Students will be invited to try an atlatl, an ancient hunting device.

### Worldview

Indigenous people from all over the world believed all of nature is alive and animals and plants were seen as teachers. During this class, students will explore the stories and songs of the Algonquian peoples of the northeast, go on a walk to learn to see nature in a different way.

*Bowdoin / Wilcox / Outreach*



## Animal Track ID

Grades 3+

Students grades three and up, will learn to identify animal tracks under controlled circumstances and then explore the park to find tracks themselves.

*Bowdoin / Wilcox / Outreach*



## Mammals

Grades Pre K - 3rd

What makes a mammal a mammal? This question and more will be explored using furs and skulls of mammals native to the New York area. Students will learn about adaptations, carnivores, herbivores, omnivores, habitats, hibernation, predators versus prey, senses, and camouflage. The program includes the use of animal dioramas to show animals within their natural habitat.

*Bowdoin / Wilcox / Outreach*



## Pond Exploration

Grades 2 – 4

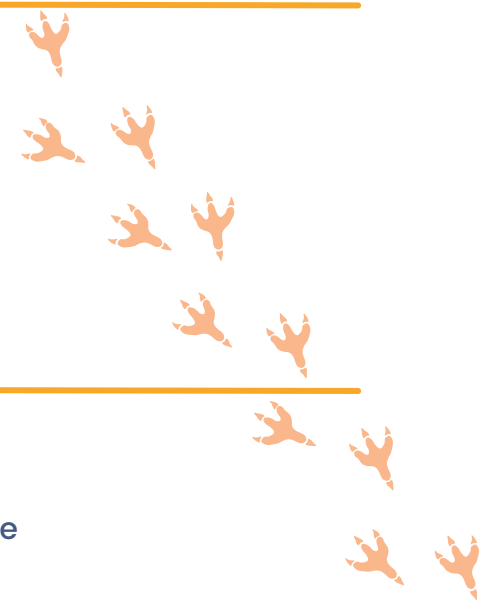
Students will learn about life in a pond. What kinds of plants and animals call the pond home? We will talk about the interdependency of life and how each part plays an important role in the health of this habitat. Through interactive games, students will look at the food chain of the pond, the life cycle of a frog, and the impact of environmental damage. Other topics may include movement of energy through the system, water cycle, invasive plants and pollution. *Bowdoin*



## Nature Exploration

Grades Pre K – 2

Come hike with a Park Naturalist at Bowdoin or Wilcox Park and learn about the animals and plants that live in the parks. Students will use their senses to explore the trail and discover nature. Other topics may include tracking, tree ID, simple plant ID, and animal habits and habitats. *Bowdoin / Wilcox*



## Map and Compass Skills

Grades 3+

Students 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. Students will then be given a map and must use their skills to find checkpoints in the surrounding area.

### Compass

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

*Bowdoin / Wilcox*





## Maple Sugaring

Grades K – 2

Learn the art of making maple syrup. This hands-on program, teaches students how to tap the trees, collect the sap, and then boil it down to syrup. We also explore Native American methods used to create maple sugar. Students will learn about wooden containers, early tapping methods, fire by friction, and rock boiling sap. Everyone will come away with a greater appreciation of the work that goes into making maple syrup and why it was such an important part of early American life.

*Bowdoin*



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## Nature Awareness

Grades K – 2

Everyone loves to see animals in the woods but for each one you see, you have likely passed by dozens that went unnoticed. Awareness is one of the most important tools for seeing the natural world. In this program, students will look at different ways to blend into natural surroundings, move in ways that animals will not detect, and how to use their senses to the fullest just like animals do in the wild. .

*Bowdoin / Wilcox*



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## Woodland Survival

Grades 2+

If you find yourself lost in the woods, would you be able to survive until rescuers came? This program helps students understand the necessary steps to take in a survival situation. Students will look at shelter, water, fire, food, and their importance to safety and security. Students will then work together to build a survival shelter from all natural materials.

*Bowdoin / Wilcox*



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 as part of New Deal policies and the "Back to the land" movement under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The summer camp operated until the mid-1970s before the land was acquired by Dutchess County and turned into a public park.

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## **Dave Beck, Park Naturalist**

Dave has been with Dutchess County Parks for 30 years, serving 26 years as lead naturalist. He is a graduate of SUNY Fredonia with a BA 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**

Jessica has been with Dutchess County Parks for six years. She received her BFA in Music Theater from University of Buffalo. As a youth, Jessica attended Dutchess County Parks' summer camp for 13 years participating as a 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, 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.