

DUTCHESS COUNTY PARKS



SUMMER PROGRAMS 2026

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Dutchess County Parks

Adventure and Survival Programs

In our fast paced world, kids get swept up in the rush of modern life and have very little time to slow down and explore. They don't get a chance to go for a walk or sit by a lake and take in the natural beauty that surrounds them. Without these moments, life becomes an endless race from one responsibility to the next. They also begin to spend less and less time outdoors as technology becomes a larger part of our lives. We tend to forget nature still provides the core of our physical survival in this world and so, we take it for granted.

Dutchess County Parks summer programs strive to reconnect children with nature and their imagination. The activities are structured to be hands-on and allow for creative exploration. Whether we're hiking, learning survival skills, adventuring or telling stories, we are outside experiencing the world around us. Personal responsibility plays an important role in everything we do. If a child is lost in the woods and there is no adult to turn to, they must understand every choice and action has consequences. This is reinforced with challenges and quests the children undertake each day to test the skills they have learned. We also cover group dynamics through various activities to emphasize the importance of teamwork.

Our goal is to give youth a new sense of confidence in themselves and an appreciation for the natural world around them.

Adventure Program Registration opens Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:00am
Survival Program Registration opens Thursday, March 19, 2026 9:00am

First come, first served
No cancellations or refunds

Parknaturalist@dutchessny.gov

845-298-4602

Why Go on an Adventure?

Ever find yourself longing for the days of recess past? Remember when childhood was about pretending to be someone else on a brave adventure, with maybe just your grandpa's old hat and a stick sword from the backyard?

Our Adventure Program gives youth the opportunity to be their own super hero and simulates a full-scale adventure. Throughout Bowdoin Park, they will find bandit villains to fight, helpful characters to meet, missions to accomplish, and puzzles to solve.

Along with the fun of an adventure, there are also many skills students will learn:

Creativity: Thinking outside the box is important. Even in the toughest situations, there is usually a solution if you think creatively and efficiently. Use your imagination!

Courage: Push yourself to make choices outside your comfort zone. Be a better version of yourself. Growth comes from courage and the bravery to make hard, necessary choices.

Leadership: Making choices to benefit the group and not just yourself and being prepared to make sacrifices for the betterment of your adventure-mates is what makes a true leader.

Remember, these skills are about more than just adventuring. When you apply them to everyday life, you're not just pretending to be a hero, you're becoming one.

Join us for all the fun this summer in our Adventure Program!



Adventure Program

Ages 9 -11 & Ages 12-14

Adventure Program is a video game come to life in the real world. Participants will spend the week working on group tactics, leadership, and problem solving in preparation for two days of adventure! During the adventure campers will use foam weapons to battles monsters and bandits, solve puzzles, and explore the woods to accomplish their quest. Topics will include:

- Group Strategy and Problem Solving
- Puzzles and Treasure Hunts
- Foam Weapons (Take them home at the end of the week)
- Treasure Hunts with Clues and a Storyline

A New Storyline Every Summer!

Early drop-off and late-pick up options available.
Due to demand, each child is limited to one Adventure Program session.

9:30am - 4:00pm
\$200 Per Student, Per Session
Location: Bowdoin Park

Ages 9 - 11

Session 1: July 6 - 9

Session 2: July 20 - 23

Ages 12 - 14

Session 1: July 13 - 16

Session 2: August 3 - August 6



2025 CAMP OFFERINGS

Eaglet Adventures

Ages 6 - 8

Eaglet Adventures program will give youth a chance to become explorers and scientists! Participants will search for the tracks of passing animals, discover the hidden life below the surface of the pond at Bowdoin Park and begin to see the interconnection that keeps the natural world in balance. There will be games, hands-on learning, crafts and plenty of adventure!

Topics will Include :

- Endangered Species
- Nocturnal Animals
- Pond Life
- Food Chains
- Hiking Safety
- Tracking

August 3 - August 6

10:00am - 2:00pm

\$150 per student

Location: Bowdoin Park



Why Learn Survival Skills?

Survival skills are useful in any situation, not just when a person becomes lost in the wilderness. Beyond learning to build a shelter or make a fire, survival skills teach individuals a new way to approach every day challenges.

The five steps to overcoming a challenge are:

Awareness – First, assess the situation. What is the challenge? What resources are available? What options are there to solve the problem? Try to look at the situation from an objective perspective.

Perseverance – Things are going to go wrong. Sometimes our attempts will fail. There is no excuse; get up and try again.

Creativity – Think outside the box. Do not be afraid to experiment and try a new way to solve the problem if the usual answers are not working. If it fails, try something different.

Knowledge – Never stop learning. Seek answers everywhere. There is a big difference between reading about flying a plane and actually flying a plane. Get out and try new things. After you have done something successfully once, do it again a thousand times. Constantly challenge yourself.

Silence – The mind is both the greatest asset and the worst liability. Learn to control self-doubt, worry and fear. These feelings can sabotage a person's best efforts to overcome a challenging situation.

Survival skills are just that, skills that help us survive.

Join us this summer for our Survival Program!



Survival Program

Ages 9 - 11

This program is a combination of nature study and survival skills. Participants will explore forest habitats, hike Bowdoin Park's many trails, and observe native wildlife. Our focus this year is shelter.

Topics will include:

- Basic Survival Techniques
- Lost Proofing
- Basic Shelter Construction
- Basic Camouflage
- Survival Pack Construction
- Team Building



Early drop-off and late-pick up options available.

Due to demand, each child will be limited to one Survival Program session.

9:30am - 4:00pm

\$200 per student, per session

Location: Bowdoin Park

Session 1: July 6 - 9

Session 2: July 20-23



Survival Intensive Program

Ages 12 - 15

The survival intensive program blends survival techniques with an understanding of how prehistoric people lived in harmony with the land. This summer, we are focusing on Shelter.

Topics will include :

- Group Survival Techniques
- Lost Proofing
- Advanced Shelter Construction
- Natural Camouflage
- Survival Pack Construction
- Teambuilding



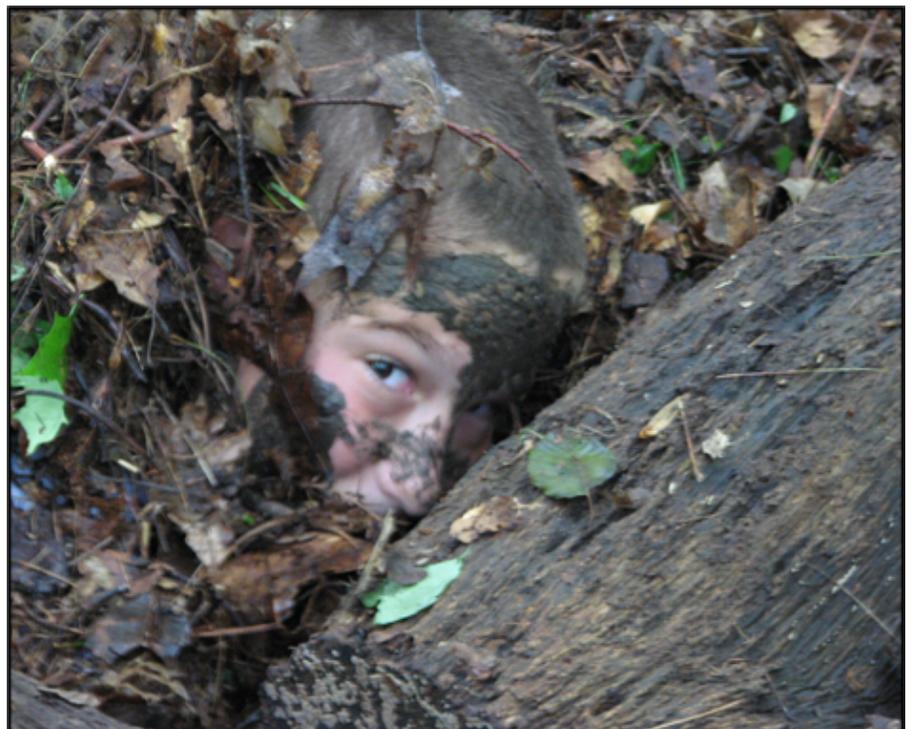
Early drop-off and late pick-up options available.
One session per student.

July 13 - 16

9:30am - 4:00pm

\$200 Per Student, Per Session

Location: Bowdoin Park



Complete Survival

Ages 12 - 15

The complete survival program ties together all the survival techniques we have learned. We combine this with an understanding of how prehistoric people approached survival and resources. We will spend four days in a re-creation of a survival situation. Participants will build shelters, start fires, find food and water, and observe the wildlife around them. They will work together to accomplish tasks and challenges. The week ends with an optional overnight on Thursday.

Students must have previously attended the **Survival Intensive** program to be eligible.

July 27 - July 31

9:30am - 4:00pm

\$200 per student

Location: Wilcox Memorial Park, Milan



Living Adventure

Ages 15 - 17

Living Adventure combines summer adventure and survival programs into one. Youth will spend four full days live action role-playing within a unique storyline and will use their knowledge to solve ancient mysteries, purify water, build shelters, discover treasure, and maybe even save the day! The emphasis of the week is to teach self-reliance and teamwork. Unexpected events force an adaptive attitude which is vital in real survival situation and success is not guaranteed. There is always the possibility the group will fail at its quest, which gives gravity to the situation. The actions of the entire group will influence the storyline as it progresses. Participants learn to make quick decisions, plan, use tactics, cooperate with each other, and deal with stressful situations. At the beginning of summer, participants will receive a packet containing the weeks scenario along with the playing rules. Then, it's off to the adventure!

August 10-13

9:30am - 4:00pm

\$200 per student

Location: Bowdoin Park



Dave Beck **Park Naturalist**

has been with Dutchess County Parks for thirty years, serving twenty-seven 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 six 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' The Park Palette Art Series and Senior Park Prints. In addition, she leads Archery, Eaglet Adventures and the popular Summer Adventure Programs.



Dave Beck
Park Naturalist



Jessica Lindros
Assistant Park Naturalist

Dutchess County Parks Educational Programs



We offer educational opportunities for youth and adults of all ages. Our programs are hands-on to facilitate learning through experience.

Our program schedule includes:

- Maple Sugaring
- Prehistoric Native Americans
- Map Skills
- Mammal Studies
- Basic Survival

School Programs

School programs are focused on Grades K through six. We strive to create new programs that meet the needs of our local schools. We host programs on-site as well as at the schools when transportation is an issue.

Scout Programs

We work with Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops to develop programs that meet their needs.

- Archery
- Survival Skills
- Tracking
- Orienteering

Weekend Archery

This program is for youth and adults (eight and up) of any experience level. Each class is spent working on technique and playing various games to improve accuracy. All equipment is provided. Typically, archery is offered select Saturdays, September through June.

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Sue Serino, County Executive