



## Outdoor Family Weekend

**Hands-on outdoor skills and experiences for the entire family**

**Friday, September 11 – Sunday, September 13, 2026  
Stillwater State Park, Groton State Forest  
Groton, Vermont**

Join us for our 28th 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](mailto:holly.ferris@uvm.edu)

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



[go.uvm.edu/outdoor-family](https://go.uvm.edu/outdoor-family)

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# 2026 Daily Schedule

## Friday, September 11

- 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 12

- 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
- 6:30 p.m.** **Evening Performance: *Touching the Sky Dome: Stories of the Sun, Moon and Stars***  
Come hear how Coyote becomes the moon (Kalispel), how Grandmother Spider steals the Sun (Muskogee/Creek), how Fisher goes to Sky Land and changes into the Big Dipper (Anishinabe/Chippewa) and how Nagah, the mountain goat, becomes the North Star (Paiute). This performance uses songs, chants, native instruments and stories that are carefully chosen from among the native cultures found throughout North America and beyond. Participants are immersed in an experience of the great sky dome that arches overhead.
- 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 13

- 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**

### **Touching the Sky Dome: Stories of the Sun, Moon and Stars 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**

- 1K – From Fire to Bowl: Bushcraft Burn Bowl Making – John Medose
- 1C – Fly Tying for Beginners – Téa Ferris
- 1F – Mindful Art – Elizabeth Adams
- 1G – Morning Yoga – Christine Badalamenti Smith
- 1H, 3D – Recreational Tree Climbing – Dan Gibson
- 1J – The Shapes of Things in Nature for the Very Young Explorers – Rebecca Roy
- 1M – Blood Trailing Wounded Animals – Keith Sampietro
- 1I, 2L, 3I – Leashed Tracking Dogs – Tim Nichol and Tammy Barrows
- 1P, 3J – Introduction to Nature & Wildlife Photography – Jason Johns
- 2E – Rewilding: A Mindful Outdoor Experience – Christine Smith
- 2F – Shooting Sports Skills for Young Adventurers – Adrienne Card and Jessica Paxton
- 2J – Nature Writing – Rebecca Roy
- 3L – Birds on the Move – Brian Aust

## **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.
3. Drawing will take place Friday Evening.

# General Information

## Registration and Campsites

The registration link will be posted on our website at [go.uvm.edu/outdoor-family](http://go.uvm.edu/outdoor-family) and will open on June 8, 2026. If you need assistance or to register over the phone, please contact UVM Office of Non-Credit Registration 1-800-639-3210.

The cost is \$180 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 14, 2026. 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](mailto: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, 2026**.

## Parents and Guardians

4-H staff, park staff and screened volunteers supervise youth only during scheduled program activities. Outside of these times, including evenings and overnight, adults are responsible for the supervision and well-being of their children (or have designated a responsible adult).

Parents/guardians assume all associated risks and agree to release and indemnify UVM Extension 4-H, its staff, and volunteers from any liability on behalf of themselves and their children/wards outside of scheduled program hours.

## Cancellation Policy

If you cancel on or before August 14, you will receive a full refund less an administrative fee of \$50.00. Any cancellation after August 14 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.

## **Need Financial Assistance?**

Scholarship assistance may be available for families needing help with registration costs through generous support from Vermont Parks Forever. Lamoille County residents may also apply for financial assistance through the Lamoille County 4-H Foundation. Please contact us for more information about available support and how to apply.

## **4-H Shooting Sports Members**

Since many of the shooting workshops are designed for participants who are newer to the activity, current Vermont 4-H Shooting Sports members are asked not to register for shooting sports sessions. If you are interested in helping out or sharing your skills, please check in with Holly Ferris about opportunities to assist with workshops – we'd love your help!

## **A Family Weekend — We Welcome Your Support!**

Outdoor Family Weekend is truly a family-centered event, and we love the sense of community that makes it so special. Families are encouraged to jump in and lend a hand with small tasks throughout the weekend – whether it's helping put up signs, assisting with the Saturday evening program, lending a hand with Sunday lunch, or pitching in where needed. Volunteering in small ways helps make the weekend a success and builds the warm, supportive atmosphere that makes OFW so memorable! Sign ups to volunteer will be available during the online registration process and at check-in on Friday.

## 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 and Paddleboards

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. Rentals 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.

**Intermediate Archery:** Required to bring your own bow.

**Mindful Art:** \$6 supply fee per participant

**Morning Yoga:** Clothes you can feel comfortable in and a bottle of water.

**Tracking Nature's Clues:** Long pants and boots.

**Recreational Tree Climbing:** Pants and sneakers **required**; boots recommended.

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

**Painting in the Great Outdoors:** \$10 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.

**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 12, 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 — Fly Tying for Beginners**

Suggested age: 8 to adult

Curious about fly fishing or creating your own fishing flies? This is a hands-on introduction to the art of fly tying, where participants will learn basic techniques, tools, and materials used to create simple, effective flies. Perfect for beginners, this workshop will guide you step-by-step as you tie a fly to take home and try on the water!

**Instructor: Téa Ferris, 4-H'er and Green Mountain Conservation Camp Jr. Counselor**

### **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. \$10 Supply fee per participant.

**Instructor: Natasha Bogar, Painter and Teaching Artist**

### **1F — Mindful Art**

All ages and abilities are welcome

In this workshop participants will learn several techniques to make artwork that brings them peace, grounding and connection to the world around them. Mindful artmaking focuses on the process of creation, rather than the outcome.

When this is done in a beautiful, natural environment it can be especially great for relieving stress and anxiety. \$6 supply fee per participant.

**Instructor: Elizabeth Adams, Artist and Educator**

### **1G — Morning Yoga**

Appropriate for ages 12 to adult

Join a morning yoga experience that will bring you closer to yourself and closer to nature. If you have a yoga mat/towel or any props bring them. Dress in clothes in which you feel comfortable moving and have a bottle of water! This session will be for one hour.

**Instructor: Christine Badalamenti Smith, Yoga Therapist and Rewilding Guide**

### **1H — Recreational Tree Climbing**

Appropriate for all ages with adult support

This unique outdoor experience introduces the basics of recreational tree climbing while fostering a deeper appreciation for nature, and environmental stewardship. Participants will learn how to safely climb trees using professional-grade ropes, harnesses, and knots—no prior experience required. Whether you're climbing high into the canopy or staying closer to the ground, everyone can participate at their own comfort level.

**Instructor: Dan Gibson, Arborist and Educator**

## **1I — Leashed Tracking Dogs**

Appropriate for all ages

Discover the fascinating world of leashed tracking dogs and their important role in recovering wounded game in Vermont and New York. Participants will learn about the history of tracking dogs in the region, common breeds used, training methods, and how these skilled dogs work alongside handlers in the field. Meet experienced tracking dogs and handlers while gaining a deeper appreciation for this unique partnership between people, dogs, and wildlife.

**Instructors: Tim Nichols and Tammy Barrows, Leashed Dog Trackers of VT & NY**

## **1J — The Shape of Things in Nature for the Very Young Explorers**

Appropriate for ages 3 to 8

Nature is filled with objects of different colors, sizes, and shapes. In these Project Learning Tree experiences, children will search for the shapes and colors that define our natural world. We will share a story, move to music, and create shape necklaces along the way.

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

## **1K — From Fire to Bowl: Bushcraft Burn Bowl Making**

Appropriate for ages 8 to adult

Learn the traditional bushcraft art of creating a wooden bowl using fire, carving, and hand tools. Participants will explore the process of safely burning and shaping a bowl from natural wood while learning about wilderness skills, fire control, and primitive craftsmanship. This hands-on workshop offers a unique opportunity to slow down, connect with traditional outdoor skills, and create a functional piece to take home.

**Instructor: John Medose, Vermont State Parks**

## **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, George Putnam)**

## **1M — Blood Trailing Wounded Animals**

Appropriate for all ages

Learn the fundamentals of tracking wounded game through this introduction to blood trailing. Participants will explore tracking techniques and ethical recovery practices used to follow a trail after the shot. Perfect for hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, and anyone interested in wildlife tracking skills.

**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 — Introduction to Nature and Wildlife Photography**

Suggested for ages 8 to adult

Slow down, heighten your powers of observation, and explore the beautiful world around you with your camera! Join professional photographer Jason Johns to learn the artistic fundamentals and technical skills to make outdoor photography an engaging and rewarding lifelong hobby. All skill levels are welcome. Participants are encouraged to bring their own photography equipment - digital SLRs are preferred but even phone cameras are ok! A limited number of compact digital cameras may be available to borrow.

**Instructor: Jason Johns, Professional Photographer and 4-H Volunteer**

### **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.

**Instructor: Brian Aust, Park Interpreter, Vermont State Parks**

### **1R — 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 12, 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 — Rewilding: A Mindful Outdoor Experience**

Appropriate for all ages

Slow down during this guided experience in nature. Engage all of the senses and learn to inhabit outdoor spaces rather than move through or upon them. Reconnect with your kin in the more-than-human world, and reconnect with your inner wild! This gentle hike will last approximately 90 minutes, interspersed with thoughtfully guided activities intended to connect and commune with nature, followed by a community circle.

**Instructor: Christine Badalamenti Smith, Yoga Therapist and Rewilding Guide**

### **2F — Shooting Sports Skills for Young Adventurers**

Ages 5-7

Young adventurers and their grown-ups are invited to explore the exciting world of shooting sports through safe, hands-on activities designed especially for Cloverbud-aged youth. (In 4-H, Cloverbuds are youth ages 5-7 years old) Participants may enjoy activities focused on target skills, outdoor safety, teamwork, wildlife knowledge, and other fun challenges. This workshop emphasizes confidence-building, listening skills, sportsmanship, and having fun outdoors together! Note: Youth will not be shooting firearms in this class.

**Instructors: Adrienne Card and Jessica Paxton, Vermont and Massachusetts 4-H Volunteers**

### **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 — 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**

## **2J — Nature Writing**

Appropriate for all ages

Bring your imagination and creativity to this workshop. Writers will learn how to interpret their natural environment and turn their feelings and observations into haiku, nonfiction, and other creative pieces. Bring good footwear for the exploring section, and we'll supply the pencils and paper for the creative section. All ages welcome, but you need to be able to write, listen, and share.

**Instructor: Rebecca Roy, Interpretive Program manager, Vermont State Parks**

## **2K — 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**

## **2L — Leashed Tracking Dogs**

Appropriate for all ages

Discover the fascinating world of leashed tracking dogs and their important role in recovering wounded game in Vermont and New York. Participants will learn about the history of tracking dogs in the region, common breeds used, training methods, and how these skilled dogs work alongside handlers in the field. Meet experienced tracking dogs and handlers while gaining a deeper appreciation for this unique partnership between people, dogs, and wildlife.

**Instructors: Tim Nichols and Tammy Barrows, Leashed Dog Trackers of VT & NY**

## **2M — 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!

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

## **2N — 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**

## **20 — 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**

## **2P — 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.

**Instructor: Brian Aust, Park Interpreter, Vermont State Parks**

## **2Q — 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 13, 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 — Recreational Tree Climbing**

Appropriate for all ages with adult support

This unique outdoor experience introduces the basics of recreational tree climbing while fostering a deeper appreciation for nature, and environmental stewardship. Participants will learn how to safely climb trees using professional-grade ropes, harnesses, and knots—no prior experience required. Whether you're climbing high into the canopy or staying closer to the ground, everyone can participate at their own comfort level.

**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, Bill Barney, and Jason Kelley)**

### **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 — Leashed Tracking Dogs**

Appropriate for all ages

Discover the fascinating world of leashed tracking dogs and their important role in recovering wounded game in Vermont and New York. Participants will learn about the history of tracking dogs in the region, common breeds used, training methods, and how these skilled dogs work alongside handlers in the field. Meet experienced tracking dogs and handlers while gaining a deeper appreciation for this unique partnership between people, dogs, and wildlife.

**Instructors: Tim Nichols and Tammy Barrows, Leashed Dog Trackers of VT & NY**

### **3J — Introduction to Nature and Wildlife Photograph**

Suggested for ages 8 to adult

Slow down, heighten your powers of observation, and explore the beautiful world around you with your camera! Join professional photographer Jason Johns to learn the artistic fundamentals and technical skills to make outdoor photography an engaging and rewarding lifelong hobby. All skill levels are welcome. Participants are encouraged to bring their own photography equipment - digital SLRs are preferred but even phone cameras are ok! A limited number of compact digital cameras may be available to borrow.

**Instructor: Jason Johns, Professional Photographer and 4-H Volunteer**

### **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 — Birds on the Move**

Appropriate for all ages

Where do your favorite summer birds go this time of year? Explore the science of bird migration through a fully interactive role-playing game. Learn about bird identification and habitat needs in a fun, exploratory way. We will learn some bird identification by ear, explore the multiple habitat needs of our favorite summer visitors, and dive into the science of migration. This hands-on learning activity is fun and informative for all ages.

**Instructors: Brian Aust, Park Interpreter, Vermont State Parks**

### **3M — 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 Glenn Card, Derek Williams, and Mike Kidder**

### **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!**

