summer 2020
Lord Stirling Park
Environmental Education Center
Parent Guide for Eco Explorers & AWESIM KIDS

www.somersetcountyparks.org
190 Lord Stirling Road, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908 722-1200 ext. 5002
Environmental Education Center
Summer Camp Programs

The Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center Summer Camp Programs are designed to promote a child's lasting curiosity and interest in the natural world. We offer hands-on learning opportunities for children to explore the natural world through fresh air lessons, activities, and games all while working independently in both small and large groups. Our days are carefully planned to meet these goals while at the same time creating a safe, educational, inspiring, and fun experience.

Our Program Staff
The programs are facilitated by full-time professional Naturalists. The summer seasonal assistants are chosen for their enthusiasm, experience, knowledge, and ability to work with children in the outdoors. They are college graduates or current undergraduates in an environmental and/or educational degree program. Every staff member participates in a two-week training program and is certified in First Aid, Anaphylaxis Response, and CPR.

Our Expectation of Program Participants
Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our programs, participants must be able to move about on uneven terrain. Participants are expected to participate in age-appropriate activities, including nature explorations. All participants must follow behavior expectations and safety rules. If you have any questions regarding your child's ability to participate in the program or if your child requires reasonable modifications, please contact us by May 1, 2019.

Additional Program Information
Morning Drop off begins at 8:30am but our lessons begin at 9:00am, leaving the children some social time as everyone arrives. Our program generally wraps up for the day by 4:15pm allowing for an additional period of social time before the 4:30pm pickup.

Participants must be signed in/out by a parent or a previously designated adult. Please do not park in the fire lane, loading zone or handicap spaces when dropping off or picking up your child unless appropriate.

Somerset County Park Commission welcomes everyone to participate in its programs and facilities regardless of race, color, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, national origin or religious or political affiliation. If you have individualized needs due to a disability, please call 908 722-1200 ext.5324 and we will be happy to arrange reasonable modifications. Six weeks notice is required to ensure that appropriate accommodations can be provided.

For more information visit www.somersetcountyparks.org
Health, Safety, and Communication

First Aid
In case of emergency we will attempt to contact parent/guardians first, using all the phone numbers provided. If we are unable to reach a parent/guardian we will then call the emergency contacts listed on your child’s health form.

The staff are all trained in emergency first aid and CPR. We are additionally trained in the use of an epi-pen. If your child carries an epi-pen, please contact the program coordinator to discuss your child’s specific needs by June 1, 2020.

Illness
If your child gets sick or is injured during the day, we will notify you immediately. It is your responsibility to pick up or arrange for the immediate pick up of your child.

If your child has a fever please keep them home until they are fever-free, for 24 hours without the use of fever reducers.

Medication
Participants are responsible for their own medications. We need to know what they take and when they are taking it to assist in monitoring their health and well-being.

Sunscreen & Bug Repellant
Participants must be able to apply their own sunscreen and bug repellant without additional assistance. We do remind participants to reapply their sunscreen throughout the day.

Communication
When registering please provide an email that you check frequently as most communication is via email. Please add us to your contact list. For more information or answers to specific questions, please call, write or email.

Eco-Explorers (ages 7-9) Vanessa Darras vdarras@scparks.org 908 722-1200 ext. 5335
AWESIM KIDS (ages 10-13) Christa Wood or Rich Hoffman 908 722-1200 x.5330 kawesim@scparks.org or cwood@scparks.org

It is very important to do a thorough Tick check each and every day! We do tick checks each day while we are out and about on the trails but it is important to do your own tick check at home. For more information visit the Center for Disease Control Website at http://www.cdc.gov/ticks
Registration Information: Read Carefully

Registration Policy
Online at www.somersetcountyparks.org and walk-in registrations begin **Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 9:00am**. Phone/mail registration begins at 11:00am; phone 908 722-1200 ext.5002. Enrollment is on a first-come first-served basis.

*A minimum, non-refundable, deposit of $150 per session is due at registration. Payments are non-transferable.*

Non-refundable balance must be paid by Friday, May 1, 2020. VISA, MasterCard, Discover, Amex or cash/check are accepted.

Extended Day Option
For an additional fee, your child can be enrolled in our Extended Day Post Care Option, they can stay as late as 5:30pm. Sessions which have zero enrollment in post care as of June 1, 2020 will be cancelled. If you did not choose to sign up when you registered your child for a session, you can add post care by calling 908 722-1200 ext.5002.

Payment Deadline
The balance of the program fee is due by Friday, May 1, 2020. No program participant is allowed to participate unless all forms, waivers, and payments are complete. If registering after May 1, your registration must include a non-refundable full payment.

Forms and Waiver Deadline
All forms and waivers are due by **Monday, June 1, 2020**. Participants without completed paperwork will be sent home. Your child can only attend the program if we have all necessary health forms, waivers, and payments. No exceptions.

Refund and Cancellation Policy
*Deposits and full payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.* There will be no refunds for dismissal, failure to attend, absence or sick days.

Waitlist
When the program has reached its maximum enrollment your child may be placed upon a waitlist. There is no charge for being placed on the wait list. You are under no obligation to enroll your child if a space becomes available.

If a space becomes available in a session, the waitlist households will be contacted in the order in which they enrolled.

Ever wonder what the acronym **AWESIM KIDS** stands for?

A- animals
W- wetlands
E- environment
S- science
I- imagination
M- minds
K- knowledge
I- interdependence
D- discovery
S- solutions

Too young for our Eco-Explorers?
Too old for the AWESIM KIDS Program?

Check Out Coyote Kids Xtreme Adventure
somersetcountyparks.org
or like us on Facebook!

Each year we offer hundreds of programs to the general public.
There is something for everyone!
Our Day

Our day begins at 8:30am with the arrival of the first of the program participants. As participants trickle in, the kids enjoy supervised unstructured social time until the focused lessons begin at 9:00am.

Our day’s focused lessons end at about 4:15pm which leaves time for an additional supervised unstructured social time before pick up at 4:30pm. During this time the kids entertain themselves talking and playing with friends, observing the animals in our tanks or by helping out in the garden.

If you need to pick up your child earlier or drop them off later than usual, please speak with staff.

Signing Your Child In and Out of the Program
An adult must sign their child in and out of the program each day. This must be done by a parent, guardian or approved substitute at the designated location. You will not be permitted to leave with your child unless they have been signed out.

Please do not leave your child unattended on the grounds.

Program Activities
Our program activities take place at the Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge. We hike and explore in the fields and forests of the park. We canoe/kayak on Branta Pond, AWESIM Kids sometime explore the local stretch of the Passaic River with our expert paddling Naturalists.

Trip Days
In each session, we take participants on educational field trips off site. Typically we take additional Naturalists with us for better supervision.

There is a lot to do all year round at the Somerset County Park Commission....

Hike, swim, golf, play bocce, horseback ride, smell the roses, take a nature walk, take a class... www.somersetcountyparks.org
Other things to know

**Attendance**
If your child will be absent or late, please notify us 908 722-1200 ext. 5002. Please also inform us if your child will be absent due to illness.

If your child is ill prior to the start of the program day (fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea) please keep them home. We do not have facilities for sick children. When your child has a fever please keep them home until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducers.

**Picking Up Your Child Before the End of the Day**
If you need to pick up your child prior to the end of the day we request that you let us know ahead of time unless it is an emergency. To help us ensure the program participant’s safety, visitors (including parents or legal guardians) must stop at the front desk for approval during the scheduled program day before heading to the program room.

**Different Person Pick Up**
You must complete a different person pick-up form whenever an individual other than the parent or legal guardian is picking up your child. This includes anyone you may be carpooling with, nannies, siblings, aunts, uncles or grandparents. The form asks for the name of the individual as well as the dates the person has permission to sign out your child.

**Session Calendars or Schedules**
Calendars and schedules will be emailed to parents or guardians prior to each session. Please note that the session schedule of activities are subject to change at the discretion of the program staff.

**Swim Policy**
There is a possible opportunity for AWESIM KIDS and Eco-Explorers to swim as an activity each session. We will know in early June if a pool is available for our use. If your child is not interested in swimming, they are welcome to bring a book or another quiet activity to enjoy poolside. Goggles and nose plugs are welcome! Please notify us in advance if your child is unable or not allowed to swim for any reason.

**Trips**
Trips have been scheduled throughout the summer. Please see the calendar which is emailed prior to the session for specific dates and destinations. Detailed information on each trip will be sent home via email prior to the trip. Please have your child wear their program t-shirt on trip days. T-shirts will be handed out to participants during the session or the morning of the trip.
Youth ages 7-9

The Eco-Explorers program, led by Naturalist Vanessa Darras, is a fun and exciting program where an appreciation of nature and a fondness for the sciences is encouraged and fostered. Hiking, nature lessons, canoeing, field trips, environmental games, water play or pool time, guest speakers, and more will add up to a fun and educational summer! Eight nature and science themed sessions are offered. Description, duration, and price vary per session.

Aquatic Adventures
Learn about the properties of water and observe aquatic wildlife during this water filled adventure!
Monday, June 22-Friday, June 26
8:30am-4:30pm

Dino Rocks
Love Dinosaurs? This 4-day session is for you! Learn about a variety of dinosaurs and all their fascinating characteristics.
Monday, June 29-Thursday, July 2 (No program Friday, July 3)
8:30am-4:30pm

Swamp Scientists
Put on your lab coat and conduct fun, wacky experiments while finding out more about the science behind nature!
Monday, July 6-Friday, July 10
8:30am-4:30pm

Creature Feature
Earth is home to a variety of amazing animals. Meet special animal guests and become an expert!
Monday, July 13-Friday, July 17
8:30am-4:30pm

Mystery in the Swamp
There are a lot of mysteries to solve in the Great Swamp! Be sure to bring your sense of adventure!
Monday, July 20-Friday, July 24
8:30am-4:30pm

Animal Olympics
NEW PROGRAM
Jump, skip, and run your way through Eco-Explorers while discussing the Olympics and comparing animals to athletes.
Monday, July 27-Friday, July 31
8:30am-4:30pm

Scales & Tails
NEW PROGRAM
What do Bearded Dragons, Ball Pythons, and dogs have in common? They are all pets! Meet a variety of pets and learn the importance of pet care while assisting with critter care.
Monday, August 3-Friday, August 7
8:30am-4:30pm

Bugtastic
Fly, crawl, hop, and buzz through the week while learning all about bugs and their amazing characteristics!
Monday, August 10-Friday, August 14
8:30am-4:30pm
The AWESIM KIDS program, led by Naturalists Rich Hoffman and Christa Wood, is a fun summertime adventure focusing on the environment and outdoor activities. Youth who enjoy hiking, bird and wildlife observation, exploring pond life, boating, and exploring new places will enjoy our safe, educational, inspiring, and fun sessions.

Each of the four sessions, while differently themed, will offer nature walks, interesting trip destinations each week, visits from professionals in the environmental and science fields, and much more. Favorite activities like berry picking, boating, shore line exploration, and swimming are repeated throughout the summer.

**H Meets O**
Every living thing on Earth depends upon water. Learn about our amazing blue planet while exploring both salt and fresh water habitats. Plan to get wet and dirty while paddling on ponds, exploring streams, and spending time in kayaks. Paddling experts will teach strokes and safety while having a good time with friends.
Sleepover Thursday, June 25; pick-up Friday, June 26 between 7:30am-9:00am
Monday, June 22-Thursday, July 2 (no program Friday, July 3) 8:30am-4:30pm

**Survive**
This session is all about the basics of both animal and human survival including finding safe water for drinking, shelter for protection from the environment, gathering food, and additional hands-on activities. Whether making a piece of rope, learning to tie basic knots or learning basic wilderness first aid, there will be a challenge every day.
Sleepover, Thursday, July 9; pick-up Friday, July 10 between 7:30am-9:00am.
Monday, July 6-Friday, July 17 8:30am-4:30pm

**Science Rules**
Nature and science go hand-in-hand. From slug slime to sticky webs, flashing fireflies to glowing worms, calling frogs to soaring songbirds, observe nature’s rules about locomotion, adaptations, and much more. Spend time hiking, boating, exploring the swamp, and adventuring on day trips. STEM challenges will be part of the daily fun!
Sleepover, Thursday, July 23; pick-up Friday, July 24 between 7:30am-9:00am
Monday, July 20-Friday, July 31 8:30am-4:30pm

**Yum**
Enjoy nature’s bounty while learning about wild edibles and growing organic food in the AWESIM KIDS garden; test your creative culinary skills during the awesome iron chef challenges. Spend time hiking the trails in search of high bush blueberries and wild blackberries, when perfectly ripe, are tasty treats, and search for the pollinators responsible for making our food grow.
Sleepover, Thursday, August 6; pick-up Friday, August 7 between 7:30am-9:00am
Monday, August 3-Friday, August 14 8:30am-4:30pm
On the first Thursday of each session, AWESIM KIDS are invited to a sleepover at the Environmental Education Center. If a child is not interested in sleeping over, they can stay as late as you are willing to pick them up but no later than 11:00pm.

Pick-up is Friday morning between 7:30am-9:00am.

Please Bring:
- A sleeping bag or blankets
- A Pillow
- Personal Toiletries
  - Toothbrush
  - Toothpaste
  - Facecloth
- Pajamas
- Flip flops, sandals or slippers
- A sweatshirt or fleece pullover
- A change of clothes – we suggest long sleeves and long pants for the night hike

Evening activities are determined by the weather conditions and may include night hikes, black light bug catching, star gazing, and firefly catching!

Yes, the kids do sleep, they typically fall asleep between 11pm and 11:30pm. Girls sleep in the library and boys in the auditorium.
Day Bag

Each participant will need to bring certain items with them each and every day. Backpacks/day bags will help keep these items together. You do not need to purchase a special bag for this, whatever you use for school should be fine.

Each day participants should bring their lunch, two snacks, and a drink in a refillable container. These items can be kept in a separate lunch bag or included in your day bag.

Each participant will need to bring a complete change of clothes, a sweatshirt or fleece in case they get cold in the building, a hat to help with sun and bug protection, sunscreen, and bug ‘stuff’ if desired. If rain is in the forecast you may want a raincoat or poncho as we may still go out in the rain.

Please label personal items; backpack, bags, water bottles with your child’s name.

Optional items include:
Sunglasses, a book, a drawing pad or camera.

We are not responsible for the loss, damage, or theft of personal items.

Note: no personal electronic devices are needed—leave your ipods, ipads, cell phones, smart watches, and handheld gaming units at home.

Families should speak to the staff if they are sending their child with one of these items.
Waste Free Lunch

We are proud to be starting our second decade of our ‘waste free lunch’ program. Help us create healthy habits by having your child participate by bringing snacks, lunch, and drinks in reusable containers. All containers should be labeled with the child’s initials or name.

So how do you pack a waste free lunch? A simple tip is to avoid packing the following four items; paper, disposable plastic (including ziplocks) foam, and foil. While sandwich/snack containers can be easy to figure out, the following are simple substitutions for other common lunch box items! Paper napkins can be replaced with cloth napkins, disposable forks/spoons with washable ones.

Drink bottles can be tricky because some of them leak, others are made of plastics that can leach chemicals that are not good for human health. If you are going the plastic route we suggest BPA free. If you are looking for an in-expensive stainless steel (not aluminum) just check that it does not have a plastic liner. Stores like the Christmas Tree Shop frequently have them for under $5.
We ask that you complete a permission form whenever an individual other than the parent or legal guardian is picking up your child. This includes any person(s) with whom you may be carpooling, as well as siblings and grandparents.

Please provide us with the name of the individual picking up your child and the date. If you need additional forms, please feel free to photocopy this form or ask for additional copies. Thank you for your assistance in helping us to provide the best care for your child.

**Somerset County Park Commission**  
Permission Slip for Different Person Pick-up

______________________________________________________________ has my permission to go home with  
Participant’s Name

Person’s Name ____________________________ Cell Phone or Other Contact Phone Number ____________________________  
on_______________________________, 2020

Parent/Guardian Signature ____________________________ Print Name ____________________________  
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**Somerset County Park Commission**  
Permission Slip for Different Person Pick-up

______________________________________________________________ has my permission to go home with  
Participant’s Name

Person’s Name ____________________________ Cell Phone or Other Contact Phone Number ____________________________  
on_______________________________, 2020

Parent/Guardian Signature ____________________________ Print Name ____________________________  
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Somerset County Park Commission
Emergency Medical Information - MINOR

Name
________________________________________________________________________
(Last) (First) (MI)
Address
________________________________________________________________________
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)
Home phone: ___________________
Parent/Guardian Name: ___________________ work: ___________________ cell: ___________________
Parent/Guardian Name: ___________________ work: ___________________ cell: ___________________
Birth Date _____/_____/_____
□Male □Female
In the event of an injury, the local Rescue Squad will transport the injured person to the nearest hospital.

In case of an EMERGENCY when a parent / guardian is not available, who should be notified?

1. Name_______________________________ Relationship ________________________
   Phone____________________ Other Phone____________________

2. Name_______________________________ Relationship ________________________
   Phone____________________ Other Phone____________________

If there has been a custody decision, please list the name or names of the person NOT permitted to pick up the child.
____________________________________________________________________________________________

(Please provide documentation, which will be kept confidential.)

Before engaging in any physical activity it is advisable to check with a physician regarding any conditions that may limit participation. Should an emergency arise, we need to know the following information:

Name of Physician _________________________________________________________
Phone Number (___)_________________________ Date of last Tetanus shot ___________

Circle if your child has any of the following:

Allergies Specific Food Allergies Insect Allergies Medication Allergies
Diabetes Seizures Contact Lenses Dentures

Explain in detail any circled above:
____________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________
Signature of Parent /Guardian
Please PRINT Signature Name ______________________ Date

Presently taking any medications? □Yes □No If Yes, what?__________________________
This medical information is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Please Return To:
Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center
190 Lord Stirling Road ♦ Basking Ridge ♦ New Jersey 07920 ♦ 908 722-1200 x.5002 ♦ 908 766-2687 Fax
RELEASE, WAIVER, AND PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT
FOR MINORS/DEPENDENTS

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Assumption of Risk – As the parent or guardian of the below named minor or dependent, I assume full responsibility for the decision for my child/dependent to participate in environmental education programs (including public programs, Eco-Explorers, AWESIM Kids, and Xtreme Adventures, watercraft programs, day trip, and overnight trips) (the “Programs”) of the Somerset County Park Commission. I acknowledge that participation by my dependent in the activities listed above may entail known and unanticipated risks, which could result in physical injury, death or property damage. I understand that such risks may also occur as a result of my dependent’s own actions, inactions or negligence, as well as actions, inactions or negligence of others, weather conditions, condition of equipment, condition of the facilities and grounds, natural disaster, national disaster, and any first aid emergency treatment which may be administered. There may also be other risks that are not foreseeable at this time.

Release – As part of the consideration for my dependent participating in the activity identified above, I release, discharge, and hold harmless the Somerset County Park Commission, the County of Somerset, any director, officer, employee, or any person acting in any capacity on their behalf (hereinafter collectively referred to as “SCPC”) from all demands, causes of action, suits contracts, agreements, obligations, covenants, defenses, costs, liabilities and judgments, whatsoever, known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, in contract or in tort, in law or in equity, which I might have against the SCPC, arising from my child/dependent’s participation in the Programs.

Waiver and Indemnification – I hereby waive all claims and demands against the SCPC for any loss, damage, injury (including death) or claim of any kind arising from, related to or caused by my dependent’s participation in the Programs and agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the SCPC from all loss, liability, damages, costs, and expenses (including actual attorney’s fees) arising from or related to same.

Photography/Video - In permitting my dependent to participate, I understand that my dependent’s photograph/video may appear in publicity or brochures marketing SCPC programs and facilities. I understand that there are no rights granted to me or my dependents to inspect or approve photographs/video prior to publication.

Term - I have read this Agreement and agree to be bound by its terms. This Agreement shall be effective for all environmental education activities in which my dependent participates throughout the entire 2020 calendar year. I freely execute this document.

Dated: ________________________ ________________________
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

________________________________________
Name – Please Print

________________________________________
Name of the Minor/Dependent Participant

Mark Caliguire, President
D.J. Hunsinger, Vice President
Paul Drake, Helen Haines, Jim Leonard,
Doug Ludwig, Kevin McCallen, Dorothy Paluck,
Scott Ross
Geoffrey D. Soriano, Secretary-Director
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