

# Wilderness Camp - Expeditions

A ministry of Spruce Lake Retreat

5389 RT. 447 CANADENSIS, PA 18325 PHONE: 800-822-7505X2 FAX: 570-595-0328 EMAIL: WC2023@SPRUCELAKE.ORG

Dear Parent,

Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp is excited to serve you and your child this summer! Each year we work hard to hire quality team members and thoroughly plan programs to assure that camp remains a safe place for kids to grow in independence, make new friends and experience Christ's love. Our theme this year is "Amazing Grace." We are working on creating exciting and engaging experiences to share Christ's teaching throughout each day.

This packet contains information for you, the parent, about your son/daughter's upcoming expedition experience. We hope to answer common questions and be open about our policies and procedures. We know it is a lot of information, so please don't hesitate to call or email with questions.

God Bless,

*Josh Reichart*

Wilderness Camp Director

## Things to do now that you have registered:

- Look over the [packing list & info](#) page for the expedition your child is attending. There you will find arrival and departure details, a packing list, and much more.
- [Plan ahead on Health information](#). You will need a health exam within 24 months of attending, a tetanus booster within 10 years, and if your child is taking prescription medication regularly (**including inhalers and epi-pens**) or while attending camp, enter all medication information in the online health form and bring the **original containers** to camp.

## Things to do by 3 weeks prior to your child's camping experience (NOTE: you can do these online by logging in to your account):

- [Make the final payment if you have not already done so.](#)
- [Fill out online/mail the completed Camper Health Form.](#)
- Visit the [packing list & info](#) page for the expedition your child is attending. This will help you pack & see important times.

## Remember to contact us if:

1. You are aware of [any current issues](#) that arise after the health form is submitted such as a recent injury or illness, psychiatric issues, or traumatic events (parental issues, loss of a loved one).
2. [You made arrangements for someone to pick up your child not specified as an authorized adult while registering.](#)
3. You have [travel related issues](#) that affect your arrival or pick-up times for your camper; special arrangements will need to be made for late arrivals or early departures. Please try to conform to our normal times if possible.

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## **AFFILIATIONS**

**Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA)**- Spruce Lake Retreat is a member of CCCA, which exists to proclaim the power and benefits of the Christian camp and conference experience, and to provide leaders at member organizations with ongoing encouragement, professional training, and timely resources. CCCA has over 1000 camps and organizations as members and can be found at [www.ccca.org](http://www.ccca.org).

**Franconia Mennonite Camping Association (FMCA)**- Spruce Lake Retreat is owned and operated by an association called FMCA. More information can be found on the web at [www.sprucelake.org](http://www.sprucelake.org).

**Mennonite Camping Association (MCA)**- Spruce Lake Retreat is a member of MCA, which serves as a clearinghouse for directing and promoting Christian camping among Anabaptist/Mennonite conferences and congregations throughout Canada and the United States. See [www.mennonitecamping.org](http://www.mennonitecamping.org) for details.

**American Camping Association (ACA)**- Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp upholds the standards for health, safety and program quality set by the American Camping Association. See [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org) for details. Not accredited with ACA.

## **CONTACTING WILDERNESS CAMP**

### **Mailing Address:**

SPRUCE LAKE WILDERNESS CAMP  
5389 Route 447  
CANADENSIS, PA 18325

**Phone:** 570-595-7505 x2 & 800-822-7505 x2

**Fax:** 570-595-0328

**Website:** [www.wildernesscamp.org](http://www.wildernesscamp.org)

**Contacting Wilderness Camp when camp is not in session**- Since we operate primarily for three months, we do not always have set year-round office hours. If you get our voicemail we will return your call in a timely fashion. We can also be reached by e-mail through the contact us feature on our website [www.wildernesscamp.org](http://www.wildernesscamp.org).

**Contacting Wilderness Camp when camp is in session**- While camp is in session, we maintain the following office hours:

*Monday – Friday 8am-5pm*

*Sunday 1pm-6pm*

We check messages on weekends while camp is in session. We encourage you to anticipate needs for upcoming weeks of camp (busing changes, directions, etc.) before the weekend prior so that you can take advantage of our regular office hours.

### **Please contact us in a timely fashion when:**

- **You are aware of a camper wellness issue** that arises after submitting the Health Form, such as a recent injury or illness, psychiatric issues, or traumatic events (parental issues, death, etc.).
- **You are responding to our call** when your child is here at camp.
- **You have travel-related issues** that affect your arrival at the drop-off or pick-up times.
- **You made arrangements for a person not listed** on the Authorized Adults Form to pick up your camper.

## **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**

If you have an emergency and cannot get through to Wilderness Camp on the phone, try the emergency cell phone/**Director's cell phone: 215-933-9521**. As a last resort call the Retreat Center 570-595-7505 ext. 1 or 800-822-7505 ext. 1 and ask if they will be able to contact Wilderness Camp by radio.

Please rest assured that in the event of a communications breakdown such as a power outage, regional crisis, or national incident, we are doing everything in our power to care for your child.

## **HEALTH CARE AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

**Camper Health Form and Release-** These are significant forms that we need to help ensure your child's wellbeing during camp. The *Health Form* includes emergency contact information and health related information required to care for your child. The *Release Form* gives your child permission to participate, and the Authorized Pick-Up List gives us permission to dismiss your son/daughter to someone other than yourself. Both must be signed and fully completed for your camper to attend camp.

- **Please complete the form online or mail the Camper Health Form at least 3 weeks prior** to your son/daughter's week.
- You may attach a copy of your child's immunization records and a copy of both sides of your insurance card.
- You are responsible to provide health and safety updates after the form has been mailed. Updates include changes in your child's health, emergency contact information, adults permitted to pick up your child, and any other information that would help us in caring for your child.

**Medications at camp-** All medications must be sent in the **original container** with the **original label**. Over the counter medications should be brought only if they will be taken on a regular basis at camp.

Help us reduce the amount of vitamins and drugs to administer by sending only what is essential. If your son/daughter has a medication that needs to be with them at all times (bee sting kit, inhaler, etc.), please provide a fanny pack for your child.

**Health Care at Camp-** A camp nurse will review your child's health form and any medications during registration upon arrival. The nurse will discuss any health-related issues with your camper's guides so that they are aware. At least one expedition guide is trained in CPR and Lifeguarding, as well as Wilderness First Aid due to the backcountry nature of the expedition trips. The guides are trained to respond in emergency situations and to seek additional medical attention if necessary.

**Accident Insurance-** Your child needs insurance while at camp. There are plans available that provide coverage for one week while your child is at camp that can be purchased independently. Please contact camp if you need one of these.

## **TEAM MEMBER SCREENING AND TRAINING**

Each summer Wilderness Camp employs over 30 team members, ages 16 years and older. A quality team is our number one asset at Wilderness Camp. We seek to find solid Christian men and women who are living out their faith authentically and with integrity and place them in roles that match their passions and skills.

**Screening-** Each team member at Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp is carefully screened. We require each summer team member to go through the application process annually, even if previously hired. We review applications, screen at least three confidential references, review employment/education history, and conduct personal interviews. All potential team members are required to sign a voluntary disclosure statement giving us permission to complete background checks with the Pennsylvania Sexual Abuse registry, Pennsylvania Criminal History, FBI fingerprinting, and Social Security address verification.

**Training-** All team members are required to attend a summer team training event that covers both general subjects and subjects specific to their roles. Our general training involves sessions on Health and Safety, Abuse prevention and reporting, Risk Management, Age Group Characteristics, Organizational Mission, Supervision, and more. More specific trainings are offered for team members working with campers, leading expeditions, in the kitchen, supervising others, and so on depending on the role.

## **WEB FEATURES**

Each camp week will have a web page where details can be found. There is a printable version available.

- Forms: **The Health Form MUST be filled out online OR printed and mailed to camp.**

Go to our website, [www.wildernesscamp.org](http://www.wildernesscamp.org) to find additional helpful information.

*\*Please note that certain links are only accessible with the username and password you used to register.*

## **CONTACTING YOUR CAMPER**

**Camper Contact Policy- Family/friends are asked not to have direct contact with campers while camp is in session.** While we support good parent/camp communications, we do not support direct camper/parent phone calls or direct camper/parent visits while camp is in session. The reasons for this policy are many including authority confusion, camper security, homesickness, misunderstandings, and technology issues. Camp is really about the special relationships formed in the camp setting. This is not to say that we will not allow contact as we or you have special circumstances, but we ask you to trust Spruce Lake with checking on and reporting to you the well-being of your son/daughter.

If you choose to send letters or emails to your camper, please note that they will not receive them until they return to camp property at the end of the expedition trip.

**Mail-** *If you are mailing a letter to your camper please allow 3-4 days.*

*Some parents choose to drop off notes at registration. Generally format your letters to campers as follows:*

CAMPER NAME  
EXPEDITION NAME  
SPRUCE LAKE WILDERNESS CAMP  
**5389 Route 447**  
**CANADENSIS, PA 18325**

**“Camper Checks” During Camp-** Due to the nature of Expeditions, camper checks are more difficult, but not impossible. Please allow for ample time for us to contact the expedition guides if a camper check is requested.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

This statement shows all charges and credits that are applied to your child’s account. Please use this statement to confirm the following information and **let us know if you see any discrepancies:**

- The name and dates of the camp that we are expecting your child.
- Transportation details from Franconia or William Penn Hwy (To Camp, and/or Home From Camp)
- Discounts for new campers will be deducted on the referred camper’s bill once they register for camp.
- Expedition campers need to bring cash if they want to have spending money.

If there is a **balance due**, return the payment slip with payment at least **three weeks** prior to camp.

## **PACKING FOR CAMP**

The camper details for your child’s week can be found on the webpage on the Wilderness Camp website, under the name of that expedition. Included in the **packing list & info** are important times and activity information. In addition to clothing items, some commonly overlooked items are unbreakable dishes, sleeping bags, flashlights, and rain gear.

- Please look over the packing list at least a week prior to camp.

- Please help your child plan what to take, making sure that they are bringing an appropriate amount and style of clothing, noting the **modesty standards**.
- Make sure that luggage and important items have your son's/daughter's full name on them.

## **DIRECTIONS TO WILDERNESS CAMP**

The Wilderness Camp entrance is located off Route 447, about 2 miles north of the traffic light in Canadensis (the intersection of Rt. 390 & Rt. 447). Turn left onto Long Rd. by the wooden Wilderness Camp sign. Make the first right, following the dirt road just less than 1 mile to the Wilderness Camp Pavilion. For more general directions to get to this area, visit our website at [www.wildernesscamp.org](http://www.wildernesscamp.org).

## **REGISTRATION/ ARRIVAL**

**Registration opens Sunday at 3:15 PM** in the Wilderness Camp Pavilion. Buses will arrive by 4pm. To register, campers must have:

- Any special notes or instructions
- Medications clearly marked in **original containers**
- Camper Health Form & Safety Waiver if not already completed. These are required to participate at camp.

## **WILDERNESS CAMP CONTACTING YOU**

Non-emergencies and routine questions make up the vast majority of our phone calls. But we do ask you to be thoughtful in providing emergency contact information on the health form so that we are never without a method to contact you or a designated emergency contact during a camp week.

### **Typical reasons we may call:**

- If following up on financial balances or incomplete information on the Health Form or the Safety Waiver.
- If there is any question about how (bus/car) and with whom your child is departing camp.
- In response to a request for us to check on your camper.
- If we need higher medical care than we offer within the camp setting for your child.

**Other reasons we may call-** As a camp, you are entrusting us to make reasonable decisions with regard to your child's welfare. Understand that we will not call home about every circumstance, but you are welcome to do camper checks at any time throughout the week, and we will give you an open and timely response. We generally call to get your perspective on a specific situation or when we feel the situation is uncommon. Below are some examples of how we deal with situations at camp:

**Homesickness-** It is common for children to miss their parents and home, especially in the later hours and less structured times of day; in these situations you probably would not get a call. It is uncommon to be homesick throughout whole days or cry or be withdrawn consistently. It is uncommon for children to become demanding, inconsolable, or shut themselves off from the counsel of others. In the last two situations, we will call. *Please know that you can help children avoid homesickness by helping them to know what to expect at camp and then sending timely and upbeat correspondence to them while they are at camp. When possible, avoid vacations directly prior to camp experiences for younger children.*

**Illnesses/injury-** We will call if your child will need to seek medical care.

**Behavioral issues-** It is common to have disagreements among campers or for a camper to feel uncomfortable within a new setting. But it is uncommon to have relationships with ongoing, increasing tensions or for a child to feel continually out of place or sorts; therefore we may call home to keep you informed and ask for your perspective. Also, if a behavior occurs that gives us concern for the physical or emotional wellbeing of your child or another child, we will call.

## **DISMISSAL & DISMISSAL POLICY**

**Dismissal is at 3:30 PM on Friday.**

**Camper Dismissal Policy-** *Only authorized persons will be permitted to pick up a camper from camp.* Parents/Guardians will be asked to list authorized adults who have permission to pick up their child/children. Campers not riding the bus will remain at their table with their guide and wait for an authorized adult to sign them out. If the person picking up your child is not on the list of authorized persons, they will not be able to leave with your child until we contact you or another emergency contact person for permission.

This procedure will also be followed at the Bus Drop-Off Locations. You or the authorized person will be asked to sign out your child/children prior to departing. If you arrive early, you can sign your camper out before the bus arrives.

**Early Dismissal/Pick-up at unusual time-** This will likely not be possible for expedition campers, due to the timing of return from off-site trips, so please plan accordingly.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

We will do our best to return whatever was left at camp by your camper. Contact our office to provide a description of the item lost, and we will contact you to let you know whether the item has or has not been found.

- Items with full camper names written or sewn in help us return lost articles with more success.
- Returns will occur at the cost of the camper family.
- Items left on the bus or in the luggage truck will be returned to Spruce Lake on the following Friday or Sunday bus and then kept at Spruce Lake.
- Our bus can be used to return lost items without cost as long as you contact us and are willing to meet the bus at the scheduled time of arrival.
- Lost items not claimed before September of the same year may be redistributed to a thrift store, disposed of, or set aside for future camper use.

## **TRANSPORTATION BY BUS**

**Bus registration and Fee for service-** Add bus transportation to your registration if desired. We cannot guarantee a spot on the bus if a seat is not reserved and paid for at least 3 weeks prior to the week of camp. There is a \$25 fee each way for the Franconia bus and \$20 fee each way for the William Penn bus. Your transportation needs (to camp and home) and location (Franconia, William Penn Hwy) are indicated on the Statement of Accounts. *Please confirm the details and contact us to make changes.*

**Pre-registration/ Loading the bus-** A camper bus registration table will be set up only at the Franconia location. Campers and parents/chaperones ***will visit the table prior to loading the luggage or the bus*** to verify necessary information and to receive a name tag for your camper. Campers must remain with parent/guardian until they board the bus. Please have your camper visit the restroom before boarding the bus they are assigned. A water bottle may be carried on.

**Unloading the bus-** Unloading is more involved; for your camper's security we cannot release a camper to any person not authorized by the parent or guardian. You or the authorized person will be asked to sign out your child/children prior to departing.

**Chaperoning for the bus-** We need chaperones on Sundays and Fridays to accompany the campers. If you indicate an interest in chaperoning, we will call you if we are in need of a chaperone for that week. Please note that only if you are a confirmed chaperone will you receive a reimbursement for the bus fee.

## Franconia Bus Location & Time

**Bus location-** Bus service is provided to camp from the Franconia Mennonite Church, located on Route 113 between Harleysville and Souderton (30 miles North of Philadelphia). Please use the Route 113 main entrance and NOT the Meeting House Rd. entrance.

**Directions from PA Turnpike:** Take the Lansdale, PA Rt. 63, exit #31 of the NE Extension, PA turnpike. Turn right onto Rt. 63 W. Continue 4-5 miles to the intersection of Rt. 113 & Rt. 63. Turn right at the light onto Rt. 113 N and continue about 2 miles. Turn left into the Rt. 113 main entrance of Franconia Mennonite Church.

**Directions from Route 309:** Travel PA Rt. 309 S. from Quakertown or Rt. 309 N. from Lansdale to the Souderton, PA Rt. 113 exit. Take Rt. 113 South and continue on Rt 113 South to the Church. (Note: within 2 miles Rt. 113 S. crosses a RR track and turns right. Within 6 miles it passes Bergey's GMC and Allentown Rd) Turn right into Franconia Mennonite Church.

**Bus times-** It is important that you arrive at least **20 minutes early** to Franconia to register.

- √ **Franconia Bus Departs:** Sundays at 2 PM
- √ **Franconia Bus Returns:** Friday around 5:30 PM

## William Penn Hwy Bus Location & Time

**Bus Location-** Bus service is provided from the William Penn Hwy Park and Ride. The Park-n-Ride is a public parking area on the North West corner of the intersection of PA Rt 33 and the William Penn Hwy.

**Directions from Route 309** Travel PA Rt. 309 North to I-78 and travel East approximately 10.5 miles to PA Rt 33 (Pocono Exit).

**Directions from I-78:** Exit PA Rt-33 (Poconos exit) 4 miles west of the PA-NJ border. Travel Rt-33 North approximately 2.5 miles to the William Penn Hwy exit and follow signs.

**Directions from Rt 22:** Exit PA Rt-33 (to I-78) 4 miles west of the PA-NJ border. Travel Rt-33 South for approximately 1 mile to the William Penn Hwy exit and follow signs.

**Bus times-** It is important to arrive at least **15 minutes early** to the William Penn Hwy Park and Ride. We cannot guarantee that the bus will wait beyond the scheduled departure. Cars may not be parked overnight, and there will be no formal registration.

- √ **WP Hwy Bus Departs:** Sundays at 3 PM
- √ **WP Hwy Bus Returns:** Friday around 4:30 PM

## EXPEDITION SPECIFICS

Wilderness Expeditions are very different from resident weeks of camp since the majority of the camping experience will take place off-site. We ask that you read the following exceptions and special procedures if your child is involved in an Expedition. Also see the **webpage** for your camper's specific **expedition** for more **printable details**, as they provide a detailed **packing list** and helpful information.

### Communicating with Off-Site Expeditions

While the expedition team has a cell phone with them, it is for their emergencies and often kept off to preserve the battery. Prior to each trip the team communicates the general timing of when they will be calling in to update our Wilderness Camp Office.

Specific "Camper Checks" are more involved because of reduced and delayed communication, but they are possible. Our communication with expeditions involves leaving messages and waiting for call backs. Trip leaders are instructed to check messages nightly and provide timely call backs as reception allows.

## Health & Safety on Expeditions

When your child is on an Expedition the following health care and safety measures are provided:

- One or both trip guides will be certified in CPR and Wilderness First Aid.
- Guides who are driving have had their driving records checked that year, have taken a driver safety course, and have experience driving the vehicle with which they are transporting campers. Each vehicle is checked by an experienced maintenance team member before leaving the site.
- Guides leading aquatic activities will be fully certified as a Lifeguard and be trained in rescue.
- On all trips an RN will screen campers and meet with guides prior to the trip to discuss medical/food issues related to the campers on the trip.
- At least one cell phone accompanies all trips providing more immediate contact with camp, 911, local hospital and clinical services. Each guide will carry a logistical contact sheet with them that includes emergency contact information, local medical care facilities, and logistical contact information. *Note that cell reception may not be available in some areas.*

## Registration/Arrival/Departure

**Register at the Pavilion-** Registration timing is Sunday 3:15-4pm, like Wilderness Camp. Upon arrival you may take your luggage to the Blueberry Pavilion, a smaller pavilion located to the right and slightly uphill from the main pavilion, but you will need to go through the registration line in the main pavilion.

## Bus Service for Expeditions

Bus service for weeklong expeditions is available in the same schedule and locations as Wilderness Camp. See page 7 for details on the typical bus schedule and locations.