



2025 Eco Camp Handbook

Berks Nature Educational Programs, LLC

575 St. Bernardine Street, Reading, PA 19607
610-372-4992 (phone) • 610-372-2917 (fax)
www.berksnature.org

UPDATED 12/13/2024



Message from the Camp Staff:

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We believe that nature is essential to our quality of life.
Thank you for sharing that value with your children and for choosing Berks Nature's Eco-Camp for your child's summer camp experience! The building addition adds more space for our campers and we are looking forward to utilizing our fireplace for cooking outdoors!



We plan to build upon the great memories that we created from last year's camp session. We have a very exciting summer planned that is packed with engaging, fun and educational adventures. We have created this handbook to provide you with all the information you should need regarding your child's upcoming camp experience. Please read over all of the enclosed information about the camp policies and procedures. Feel free to contact Anne Muvdi, Preschool and Eco-Camp Director at 610-372-4992 x115 or Michael Griffith, Teen Edition Camp at 610-372-4992 x108 with any questions you may have or if you need further assistance.

Sincerely,
The Eco-Camp Staff

Berks Nature's Mission

Berks Nature is the leading agent for the conservation of the environment in Berks County.

Purpose of the Camp

Eco-Campers will have fun and learn more about how they can live "green" and protect our environment and will grow their understanding of and commitment to the stewardship of our earth.

About the Camp

This day camp experience is being offered by Berks Nature at The Nature Place at Angelica Creek Park. The Nature Place is owned and operated by Berks Nature. Berks Nature and Alvernia University work in partnership with the City of Reading to manage the City-owned Angelica Creek Park. Our camp has a variety of offerings to reach children and young adults who already love the outdoors and those who prefer more scientific or creative activities. Eco-Camp is operated by Berks Nature Environmental Education Programs LLC.

Payments and Refunds

- Payment is due upon registration.
- There will be **no refunds** for cancellations made **after the 2 weeks prior to the week of camp for which your child is registered.**

***There will be a \$50 service charge removed from your refund for every canceled week.**

- Cancellations must be made via email to Anne Muvdi
- If a cancellation occurs for a physician-documented medical reason, all fees (MINUS an administration fee) will be refunded. If during a session a camper needs to go home for medical reasons, the remaining portion of the session will be refunded.



Parent-Staff Communication

We are interested in hearing your suggestions and appreciate your calls! Please let us know of any questions, suggestions, or issues, so we can provide you and your child with a successful camp experience.

You can contact the camp director by calling the office of Anne Muvdi. Please only call the director's personal phone number if immediate attention is required.

Anne Muvdi
Office: 610-372-4992 x115
Personal Cell: 610-223-5411
Anne.muvdi@berksnature.org



Staff Leadership

Our staff leadership is a carefully selected and well-trained group of men and women. All staff members have been chosen for their experience, special talents, creativity and sensitivity. They have been thoroughly screened through a complete background and criminal history check. All Staff members are certified in CPR, AED and basic first aid.



The camp counselors, who must be 18 years of age, are responsible for the health, safety, engagement and well-being of the campers. They work closely with the Camp Director and cooperatively lead activities as a team. The counselor to camper ratio is approximately 1:10.

The camp counselors and group leaders are working professionals and college students who are responsible for the development and delivery of activities that are safe, fun and age appropriate. The activities reflect the weeks' theme and a commitment to stewardship of the natural environment.

The camp director provides the primary leadership, for the Eco-Camp along with the Vice President for Education. The director is a working professional who has had extensive experience in formal and/or informal education. They are responsible for the health, safety and engagement of campers and camp employees through the safe operation of the Eco-Camp.

Hours of Operation

Before Care hours

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

After Care hours

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Regular Camp hours

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Morning Camp hours

9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Drop off for full day and morning camp: 8:50-9:00 AM.

Pick up for morning only camp: 12:00 Noon – 12:10 PM

Pick up for afternoon and full day camp: 4:00-4:10 PM

Late pick-up charges

Pick-up after 4:10 PM or after 12:10 PM (for half day campers) will result in a \$5.00 late charge for every 5-minute increment.



Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures

Regular Camp Hours

When dropping off or picking up your child during regular drop off and pick up hours, please proceed to the entrance to the Angelica Creek Park parking lot (see map on p 8). A camp staff person will be there to greet you at the entrance to the Nature Play Area.

Lunch

Full day campers bring their lunches and lunch drinks every day, which will be stored in an air-conditioned location. Limited refrigeration is available; campers should bring their lunch in an insulated lunch box. Please do not pack any items that need to be microwaved. We do have limited access to a microwave in the case of special situations. Please bring a refillable water bottle that can be refilled at The Nature Place. We DO NOT allow single use water bottles.



Snacks

A camp snack is provided every morning and afternoon to all campers.

What to Bring to Camp:

- **PLEASE CLEARLY MARK YOUR CHILD'S NAME ON ALL ITEMS THAT THEY BRING TO CAMP**
- Backpack with child's name on it.
- Lunch kept in an insulated lunch box.
- A water bottle (very important).—**Please no single use plastic water bottles**
- Closed-toed shoes and socks are strongly recommended, as campers will be doing a lot of walking and hiking around the park.
- Sunscreen.
- Water Shoes.
- Lightweight jacket or raincoat if it looks like rain or it is an unseasonably cool day.
- Extra clothes. Please dress your children in clothes that you do not mind getting dirty, as camp will be held outdoors for most of the time.
- A “ready to have lots of fun” attitude
- Money for Thursday Camp Store Days (\$1.00- \$30.00) - Your choice how much your child brings to spend.

Please do not bring the following items to camp:

We would appreciate it if children would please leave the following items at home:

- Any excess items (stuffed animals, toys, etc.)
- Money (except for designated days)
- iPods, MP3 players
- Trading cards, video games, or any other toys
- Cell phones **are permitted** but should remain in the child's backpack during camp hours.

The Eco-Camp is not responsible for any items that are misplaced, damaged, and/or stolen. We do have a lost and found box but cannot guarantee items will be returned if they are not labeled.

Camper Illnesses

If your child is sick, please keep them home for their own sake and for the sake of the other campers and staff members. In the event that your child becomes ill during camp, we will contact the parent/guardian listed on the HEALTH/PERMISSION FORM (completed as part of camp registration) followed by those listed as emergency contacts.

Medications from Home

Medication that needs to be administered to a child should:

- Be brought directly to the camp director by the parent or caregiver in the original medicine container and with specific directions for dispensing the medication

- Be accompanied by a written note containing permission for the staff to administer the medication, dosage information, time, and dates to be given to the child, parent's name, phone number, and physician's name and phone number for reference.
 - **If this information is not provided, Berks Nature Staff cannot administer the medication.**

Emergency Information

In the event of an emergency, every effort will be made to reach you or other contacts on the camper's registration form. If we are unable to reach any of the persons listed, we will take the necessary actions for the health of your child.

Should there be any changes in the emergency contact information, please notify Berks Nature in writing so that we may update your child's file.



Rainy /Hot Days

The camp will be held rain, shine, and on sweltering summer days. Our building is air-conditioned which will provide us with enough indoor space to take breaks from the outdoors and keep the campers engaged, happy, and cool.



Absences

If your child will not be attending camp on a specific day due to illness or for other reasons, please contact the camp director. If you get the voicemail system, please leave a message.

Registration

The registration tuition balance is due at the time of registration.

Refunds

No refunds will be made for late arrivals or early departures.



In the case of dismissal or voluntary withdrawal, there will be NO refund of any fees.

Map of Camp Headquarters and Drop Off & Pick Up Location



Convenient Drop off & Pick up at The Nature Place at Angelica Creek Park's Parking Lot "Traffic Loop". Pull into lot off of St. Bernardine Street; Campers will be met by Counselors & Camp staff. Continue to end of lot and exit.



Directions to Camp Headquarters at The Nature Place at Angelica Creek Park (575 St. Bernardine Street; Reading PA 19607)

Local Directions (via Routes 422, 222 and 61)

From the North (Schuylkill County, Lehigh Valley):

Follow Routes 61 or 222 South to Reading/Lancaster until you reach Rt. 422 East. Follow Rt. 422 East (towards Pottstown) until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a right onto Lancaster Ave. ***Continued below**

From the West (Lebanon):

Follow Rt. 422 East to Reading until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a right onto Lancaster Ave. ***Continued below**

From the East (Pottstown, Norristown):

Follow Rt. 422 West to Reading until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a left onto Lancaster Ave. ***Continued below**

From the South (Lancaster):

Follow Rt. 222 North to Reading. Take Rt. 422 East towards Pottstown until you reach the BUS 222 (Lancaster Ave) exit—this will be a left lane exit. At the bottom of the ramp, make a right onto Lancaster Ave. ***Continued below**

***From Lancaster Ave.** Make a left onto Rt.10 and proceed for roughly 1 mile and make a right onto St. Bernardine Street, the entrance to Angelica Creek Park and Alvernia University. Proceed approximately 1/8 mile and turn right into parking lot entrance. Campers will be met by staff during regular pick up/drop off hours. Parents may proceed through the parking lot and exit onto St. Bernardine Street.

During Regular Camp Hours:

Follow St. Bernardine Street to the parking lot for Angelica Park. A camp staff person will be waiting to assist you with drop off and pick up.

During Extended Camp Hours:

Please park in the Angelica Park parking lot off of St. Bernardine Street and proceed to The Nature Place to drop off or pick up your child.

Camp Rules Discipline Policy

Camp is the perfect environment to promote social skills and self-esteem in children. To achieve this, we include age specific groups and activities, low camper-staff ratios, positive reinforcement, group and individual decision- making, and attention to the individual needs of each child. You are your child's own best advocate and so we encourage you to share any special information about your child that you feel will help ensure that he or she has a successful camp experience.

All campers are expected to follow basic rules of behavior. These rules will be explained at the beginning of each camp week. Camp counselors will be consistently supervising campers over the course of the day, along with assistance from the camp director.

Camp Rules:

1. All campers must be with a staff member at all times.
2. Campers should be respectful of self, peers, and staff at all times.
3. Play safely and fairly (fighting or threatening behavior will not be tolerated).

Discipline Policy

We believe children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use discipline techniques such as the following:

1. Guiding children by setting clear consistent limits for group behavior. In the case of older children, helping them set their own limits.
2. Visualizing mistakes as learning opportunities.
3. Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity.
4. Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
5. Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help them solve their own problems.

Patently reminding children of the rules and their rationale as needed. If rules are broken at camp, counselors ask campers to identify the rule that was broken and counselors give a verbal warning. If the rule is broken a second time, the counselor will supervise a 30-second to 5-minute "break" near the activity. The next step will be to see the camp director. Parents are called when physical contact or repeat infractions are involved.

Special Needs

We strive to meet the needs of all children. In order for us to be able to help your child have an enjoyable experience at camp, we ask that you notify us of your child's special needs prior to your child's first day of camp. This may include information on allergies, accessibility concerns, behavioral, psychological or emotional conditions or other special needs. While we offer our camps to as wide a range of children as possible, it is not possible for us to offer one-on-one care.

Campers requiring more attention than the prescribed camper-to-counselor ratio provided (1:5 – 1:10) depending on the activity, must be accompanied by a parent-provided Therapeutic Staff Support at all times at camp. If your child has special issues or requires a TSS, please contact our Eco Camp Director who will provide additional information to help us meet your child's individual needs.

**Thank you! We look forward to a Safe,
Fun-Filled and Educational Eco Camp season!**

