

Camp Friedenswald Outdoor Education

Curriculum and Class Choices

Welcome to your unique camp experience! We offer a variety of options to help you and your students deepen connections to themselves, each other, and nature. Through outdoor, hands-on learning, and highly engaging activities, students have memorable and profound camp experiences.

An important feature of the Friedenswald program is the option to select your own classes. We encourage schools to utilize Friedenswald staff to teach up to five sessions per day. However if desired, we offer instructor-friendly lesson plans for a number of classes to help prepare teachers and chaperones to teach a larger variety of classes. Class sizes should be limited to a maximum of 15 students.

Class descriptions include a listing of the appropriate seasons during which the class may be enjoyed and the main concepts covered. Please note that some classes have a minimum age requirement.

Sustainable Adventures and Environmental Explorers: Themed Camp Experiences

Below are two themed camp experiences we are excited to offer to help focus your time at Camp.



Sustainable Adventure Camp

Your students will experience what it takes to build a sustainable world while having a blast at camp. Experiential learning through games and activities will help students explore ways everything is connected. They will race to zero waste, experiment with energy from the sun, hike through rare habitats, and perhaps even taste some cricket cookies! A pinnacle experience playing the Survival game – in which students role play an animal in the peaceful woods and try to survive – will top off their sustainable adventure.

Key classes for Sustainable Adventure are noted with this symbol:



Environmental Explorers Camp

Students will get up close and personal with nature in all its beautiful forms at Environmental Explorers Camp. Highlights include catching macro invertebrates and determining water quality based on their finds, hearing the story of the endangered



Mitchell's satyr butterfly and walking through its rare fen habitat, playing detective in the woods during Critter Scene Investigation, and searching for fish and turtles via canoe on gorgeous Shavehead lake. Role playing an animal in the much loved Survival game, or heading out on the trails for some creative fun in the Ultimate Scavenger Hunt will top off their environmental exploration.

Key classes for Environmental Explorers camp are noted with this symbol:



Class Descriptions



Aquatic Macros Hide and Seek

Students go dipping in the fen to find the macroinvertebrates (and sometimes some vertebrates too!) who live there. Using magnifying glasses, they get up close and personal with these important creatures. Students learn to identify which creatures can and cannot tolerate polluted water, and use a Pollution Tolerance Index (PTI) chart to determine what the macros they found might say about the water quality of the fen.

Season: Fall, Spring, Summer

Recommended Grades: 2-12

Archery

A brief history of the bow and arrow are examined, the parts and procedures explained and then the students practice this ancient art. This class must be taught by a camp instructor per insurance reasons.

Season: Fall, Spring, Summer

Recommended Grades: 4-12



Canoeing: Exploring the water

Learn to canoe on the lake while looking for turtles and fish. It includes a brief discussion about how the lake was formed and the journey the water makes to Lake Michigan. This class must be taught by camp staff per insurance reasons.

Season: Spring, Fall, Summer

Recommended Grades: 2-12

Cricket Cookies

Try something new! Make cricket cookies and learn about using insects as a sustainable protein source. While cookies bake, discuss our aversion to and benefits of eating insects.

Season: Fall or Winter only

Recommended Grades: 2-12

Fire building: Energy focus

Students learn the primitive skill of fire building with flint and steel, no matches. They are taught proper fire handling and fire safety. They will finish by discussing the variety of ways the sun's energy is captured and then used by humans, along with discussing ways of sourcing energy that are most sustainable for the future.

Fire Building: Ecosystem focus

Students learn the primitive skill of fire building with flint and steel, no matches. They are taught proper fire handling and fire safety. They will finish by discussing the way prairies and oak savannas are fire dependent ecosystems.

Fishing

Learn basic skills for cane pole fishing. Identify local fish, understand laws and have fun. We will provide bait. Catch and release is practiced. If there is time, students will also play an engaging strategy game that teaches sustainable fishing practices.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter

Recommended grades: 4-12

Friedenswald CSI

Students hike the Unnatural Trail and learn how to infer meaning from the clues left behind. They then become detectives as they visit the five animal crime scenes to look for clues about the identity and habits of the "victim" and the "culprit".

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: 2-8



Nature Journaling

Students learn basic techniques of scientific observation of their surroundings through the use of a journal. With guidance, the students go outside and explore the world around them by drawing, writing and formulating questions.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: 4-8



Nature Sculptures

Inspired by the ephemeral nature art of artist Andy Goldsworthy, students explore the natural world and their own creativity by collecting loose and free natural objects and creating their own ephemeral nature sculptures. The class ends with a gallery walk for students to enjoy each other's creations.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: 2-12



Owl Pellets

While working in pairs, students dig into a sterilized owl pellet (not poop, more like a hair ball). We use this as a springboard to look at predators, prey and the food web. We also discover birds as the perfect predator. This class does have an added fee for purchase of the owl pellets.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter

Recommended grades: 4-12



Race to Zero Waste

In this class focused on moving to a circular economy, students will discuss ways we view waste, and how we can change our mindset to one of "reduce, reuse, recycle". Then, using Camp's recycling and composting procedures, students will have a friendly competition, with two teams each sorting a pile of waste (curated by Camp staff) into a variety of recycling and composting categories. They will then calculate how much waste was diverted from the landfill to see how close they came to zero waste while still following proper recycling and composting procedures.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: 4-12



Rare Habitats Hike

Animals live, work and play in "neighborhoods" just like we do. Students learn about the different natural habitats, or "neighborhoods" at Camp and the families of animals that live there, including the federally endangered Mitchell's satyr butterfly. Students travel through our Prairie, Fen and Oak Savanna.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

Recommended grades: 2-12

Playground/Loose parts play

Let your students run free on our beautiful new treehouse themed adventure playground structure. Or if they'd prefer some open-ended creative play in the woods, they can spend the time next to the playground in our loose parts play area. This is a great open-ended class for a parent or teacher from the school to supervise.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter

Recommended grades: 2-12



Soil study

Learn all about the foundation of every ecosystem – the soil! Students will make soil sample jars and analyze the percentage of clay, silt, and sand in different soil types. Students will observe that what we see all starts with what is under our feet.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

Recommended grades: 5-8

Team Building Initiatives Course

On their journey through alligator infested swamps, over boiling peanut butter pits and across acid rivers, students develop better cooperation, leadership and problem-solving skills. Depending on the students' ages, activities become progressively more difficult and complex. It is recommended our staff lead this class.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter

Recommended grades: 5-12



The Three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)

Students find out how fun recycling can be as they create paper with their own personal flair by adding flowers, leaves and other items. Students gain an understanding of the importance of conserving our resources.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter

Recommended grades: 4-8

Treasure Hunt (Orienteering)

Students learn how to use a compass and then embark on a treasure hunt, using a map and their compass skills to find the hidden treasure in the woods.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: 4-12



Underground Railroad

Cass County was a site for the Underground Railroad, with a safe house located just a mile down the road from Camp Friedenswald. Using hands-on activities, students will be exposed to various questions and challenges Freedom Seekers along the Underground Railroad may have encountered. This class must be taught by camp staff.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: 4-8



Foraging Adventure

Engaging all the senses, students examine a variety of wild flowers and other plants useful as food and medicines. Students also learn about plants that are better left alone. Safety and respect are emphasized.

Season: Spring, Summer or Fall

Recommended grades: 4-12



Survival Game (up to 120 students)

Students take on the roles of animals in their struggle for survival and come to a new understanding of the impact of human activities on the natural world during this exciting simulation game. Please note that this is a whole group activity (30-120 people) and will be led only by Friedenswald staff. **This activity lasts 1.5-2 hours.**

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter

Recommended grades: 2-12

Evening Activity Options

Camp Friedenswald is able to provide a wide range of evening activities that are led by Friedenswald staff. Each evening activity lasts approximately one hour. Teachers and chaperones are asked to be present at all evening activities.

Dutch Auction: Cabin groups compete in a crazy and exciting indoor personal scavenger hunt that encourages creativity and cooperation.

Recommended grades: 2-8

Group Games: Students participate in a variety of new and unusual cooperative and competitive games. (e.g. Capture the flag, Borrow the Balls...)

Recommended grades: 2-12

Popcorn over the fire: Students enjoy popcorn made in a huge kettle over a roaring fire, the school plans activities and songs to go with it, a great time for a talent show.

Recommended grades: 2-12



Ultimate Scavenger Hunt: Students explore the trails and test their knowledge and ability to work together to gather points. This is no ordinary scavenger hunt.

Recommended grades: 4-12



Night Explorations*: Students will explore what it is like to let their night vision and other senses guide them in the dark. They will be introduced to some cool science behind properties of light and dark.

Recommended grades: 2-12

*Availability of this activity is dependent on staff capacity and may result in additional fees.
