

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 yourselves, 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 few 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, unless specifically arranged otherwise.

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:



Classes Offered

Aquatic Macros Hide and Seek

Archery

Canoeing

Cricket Cookies

Fire building

Fishing

Foraging Adventure

Forest Bathing

Critter Scene Investigation (CSI)

Indigenous History and Stories Walk

Nature Journaling

Nature Scavenger Hunt

Nature Sculptures

Owl Pellets

Race to Zero Waste

Rare Habitats Hike

Playground/Loose Parts Play

Soil Study

Team Building

Treasure Hunt (Orienteering)

Tree Identification

Underground Railroad

Survival Game (Predator/Prey)

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: grade 2 and up

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.

Season: Fall, Spring, Summer

Recommended Grades: grade 4 and up



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 a camp instructor.

Season: Spring, Fall, Summer

Recommended Grades: grade 3 and up



Cricket Cookies

Try something new! Make cricket cookies and learn about using insects as a sustainable protein source. While cookies bake, students will discuss the aversion to and benefits of eating insects. There is an additional fee for the purchase of cookie ingredients, estimated at \$0.50/person.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter



Fire Building: Energy focus

Students learn the primitive skill of fire building with sparks (using ferro rods) and no matches. They are taught proper fire handling and fire safety. They may have an added challenge to boil a cup of water over their fire. 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 the most sustainable for the future. This class must be taught by a camp instructor.



Fire Building: Ecosystem focus

Students learn the primitive skill of fire building with sparks (using ferro rods) and no matches. They are taught proper fire handling and fire safety. They may have an added challenge of boiling a cup of water over their fire. They will finish by discussing the way prairies and oak savannas are fire dependent ecosystems. This class must be taught by a camp instructor.

Season: All

Recommended Grades: grade 4 and up



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: grade 4 and up (need a permit if over 16 years old)



Foraging Adventure

Engaging all the senses, students examine a variety of wildflowers and other plants useful as food and medicines. Students also learn about plants that are better left alone. Safety and respect are emphasized. This class must be taught by a camp instructor.

Season: Spring, Summer or Fall

Recommended grades: grade 3 and up



Forest Bathing

Did you know that exposure to mature trees boosts your immune system by increasing your natural killer (NK) white blood cells? Did you know that spending time in nature can reduce stress and improve your mood and ability to focus? Using tools such as open-ended nature invitations, magnifying glasses, and "sit spots", campers will pay attention to nature in their own way, using all their senses.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: All ages



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: grades 2-8



Indigenous History and Stories Walk

Students hear story of where Shavehead Lake got its name, the legend explaining why the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa call the Great Lakes home, and the story of river restoration work done by the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi in the last few years, all while being encouraged to see our non-human neighbors as relatives. This class must be led by a trained Camp Friedenswald staff member.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: grade 4 and up



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: grade 4 and up



Nature Scavenger Hunt

Students connect with nature by finding specific items and answering questions outside and/or in the Nature Center. This class can be a friendly competition or a collaborative effort and is a great class for a parent or teacher from the school to supervise.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: grade 2 and up



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: All ages



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 has an added fee for purchase of the owl pellets.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter

Recommended grades: grade 4 and up



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 adopt the mindset of "reduce, reuse, rot (compost), 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. This class must be taught by a camp instructor.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: grade 4 and up



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 the rare habitats of prairie, fen and oak savanna.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

Recommended grades: grade 2 and up

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: All ages



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 types of soil. Students will observe that what we see all starts with what is under our feet. This must be taught by a camp instructor.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

Recommended grades: grade 5 and up

Team Building Initiatives Course

On their journey through alligator infested swamps 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: grade 5 and up

Treasure Hunt (Orienteering)

Students discuss different strategies humans have used throughout history to find their way. They then 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. It is recommended this class be taught by a camp instructor.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: grade 5 and up



Tree Identification

Students will learn keys to tree identification based on leaf structure and shape. They will try to identify at least nine trees at Camp by using their tree identification resource. This class must happen while leaves are on trees. 😊

Season: Summer, Fall

Recommended grades: grade 2 and up



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 a camp instructor.

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter

Recommended grades: grade 4 through 8



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: grade 3 and up

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 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: All ages



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: All ages



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: All ages

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