



2021 Eco-Camp Handbook

****See beginning page 3 for important construction and Coronavirus related policies (updated 3/22/2021) ****

Berks Nature Educational Programs, LLC
575 St. Bernardine Street, Reading, PA 19607

610-372-4992 (phone) • 610-372-2917 (fax)
www.berksnature.org





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! We would like to officially welcome you and your child to the eleventh year of our camp and the ninth summer at Angelica Park and our 4th summer at The Nature Place. 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 us at Michael 610) 755-7834 or Anne 610-223-5411 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 at The Nature Place at Angelica 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 technological or creative activities. Eco-Camp is operated by Berks Nature Environmental Education Programs, LLC.



**Berks Nature Eco-Camp
Procedures during the
Coronavirus pandemic.**

MUST READ



Top of everyone's mind is how we can return to a sense of routine all while employing measures to keep our staff and students as safe as possible. We obviously cannot guarantee that your child won't get sick while attending Berks Nature Eco-Camp with any illness or the covid-19 disease. What we can and will do is follow the best and most up to date health procedures and guidelines given to us by our public health officials. To that end, the following additional procedures will be implemented while operating under the various levels of PA Governor Wolf and the State Department of Health's phases for the reopening/closing and easing of restrictions in Pennsylvania. These procedures were thoughtfully designed (and in some cases required as a condition of re-opening) under the guidance of the PA Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as handwashing, staying home when sick) and environmental cleaning and disinfection are important principles that are covered in this document. Fortunately, there are a number of actions school administrators can take to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread during school sessions and activities.

Since the majority of our camper's day is spent outside, we think our eco-camp option provides a healthier environment for learning and less opportunity for virus to be spread.

MASKS

- Children **must wear a cloth face** covering their nose and mouth while indoors and per current PA Health orders, while outside at Eco-Camp. **We expect the majority of our day to be outside where will receive frequent mask breaks. This may change based upon vaccination success and when our community reaches a herd immunity.**
- Berks Nature staff must wear masks and may also choose to wear a face shield.

Daily Health Checks for Children and Staff:

- Parents will sign an agreement that they will not administer a fever reducing medication to their child in the morning in order to mask a potential fever in their child.
- All staff, children, and families' health will be visually assessed prior to accessing the child care space. (OCDEL)

- We will take the temperature of all children and staff at check-in with a no-touch infrared thermometer before they enter the Eco-Camp. A fever for the purposes of this screening is $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$. Individuals with fevers will not be admitted. (OCDEL)
- We ask that you keep children home who display any signs of illness. (OCDEL)
- We will exclude children and staff with fever and respiratory symptoms (cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, fast breathing). (OCDEL)

Protection of children in the care of Berks Nature Eco-Camp

- Upon arrival all students and children must immediately wash their hands.
- We will limit items coming into Camp from home.
- To reduce the sharing of craft supplies children will have their own bins of supplies for their use only.
- Cohorting - Practice social distancing when possible and ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children).
- Limit mixing between groups if possible.
- Eliminate family style meals and cooking activities with Eco-Campers.
- Snacks and meals will be eaten outside if possible. Meals should be items that your child can manage on their own. Counselors and teachers will help if necessary. If it is necessary to be in the classroom for snack or mealtime, students will be appropriately distanced so they can eat safely without their masks on.

Infection Control

- We will use strict hand washing hygiene at all times. Children and Staff will wash their hands properly numerous times during the day.
- We will use strict respiratory etiquette when coughing, sneezing or blowing nose. Staff members must wear gloves when wiping noses of children.
- Clean, sanitize and disinfect surfaces after any use and routinely throughout the day.
- We will keep sick children away from all well children and staff until they can be sent home.
- Children and staff will practice keeping their hands away from their face at all times.

Public drinking water fountains and bottle fill stations

We know how important hydration is during the hot summer months of Eco-Camp.

Campers will be required to bring a refillable water bottle. Our drinking fountains are not in use; however, our bottle refilling stations are available. Students will be instructed not to come into contact with the nozzle when refilling.

We will do our best to clean the surface, handle and buttons on the water fountain before and after use.

Again, campers will be instructed to clean their hands afterwards with soap and water.

Children may also get water by asking their teacher to refill their water bottle or for a cup of

water.

In the event of an infection: Parents will be notified as soon as we are aware that someone in their child's pod has tested positive for COVID-19 or that someone left with symptoms of the virus. That pod will be shut down for at least 24 hours. If we are notified of a positive diagnosis, that pod will be shut down for the remainder of the week and those campers should enter a 14 day quarantine. A form of prorated refunds will be made. Ex: Wednesday evening Mr. Michael learns that someone from his pod tested positive for the coronavirus. Parents and staff from that pod will be immediately notified (without disclosing the name of the individual) and that pod's camp activities will be shut down for the remainder of the week. The affected camp staff will have to quarantine for 14 days. Parents will be offered some sort of prorated refund at the discretion of the President. The remaining pods can carry on.

Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts

In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, camp administrators will notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Payments and Refunds

- Payment is due upon registration.
- **There will be no refunds for cancellations made after 1 week prior to the week of camp for which you child is registered.**
Example: If Jane cancels on June 28 for her son who is registered for camp for the week of July 6, she will get a refund. If she cancels any time after June 29, there will be no refund.
- If a cancellation is made because a camper is sick, a refund (or some form of a prorated refund) will be given regardless of timing.
- 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.

In SUMMARY

Based on CDC, PA Department of Health, and the PA Office of Childhood and Early Learning we know that at minimum, the new "rules" for operating Eco-Camp will include:

- Students & staff must wear a clean face mask at all times. (masks are available for purchase in our Berks Nature store if desired).
- Daily temperature checks of all children and staff at check-in, utilizing a no-touch infrared thermometer to reduce contact. A fever for the purposes of this screening is $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$. Individuals with fevers will not be admitted.

- Parents will sign an agreement that they will not administer a fever reducing medication in the morning in order to mask a potential fever in their child and they will not send their child to camp if someone in their family is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- Exclude children and staff with fever and respiratory symptoms (cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, fast breathing).
- Upon arrival, all staff and children must immediately wash their hands.
- We will reduce community sharing of crayons, scissors, craft supplies etc. Children will be provided their own bin of supplies for their use and only their use that week after which everything will be sterilized.
- Children will be in groups of 15 or less. Most likely “pods” of 10. Their interaction will be limited to only their pod (divided by age) this reduces any potential exposure to a smaller group of individuals. As customary with eco-camp, the majority of the day will be spent outside weather permitting.

A Word About 2021 Summer Eco-Camp and our Nature Place campus:

We are very excited to share that Berks Nature will be embarking on a construction project this summer. We are adding a second floor above our preschool which will include a roof top deck and classroom. We anticipate that construction will begin the end of May and last through September. This addition will allow us to accommodate larger groups of visitors, campers, field trips and events. Because of this, and because of the continued uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation, we will again be running our camps at a reduced number. Both the preschool and school age programs will be capped at no more than 30 students per group, per week.



Due to construction and safety plans, we will be operating summer camp entirely out of the Nature Place building. Preschool classrooms will meet the same state licensing requirements that are currently required and are subject to inspection by the Department of Human Services. Our older campers will have their classroom set up in the lobby of the building. In addition we are exploring the potential of tenting a portion of the Nature Play Area for shade and rain relief.

We expect our existing path to the building to largely be used as a construction thoroughfare. To minimize the number of people we have coming to the building and to provide the safest possible access, drop off and pick up (for all campers) will be right off the parking lot at the Nature Play Area. *(we are adding an additional gate for more direct access to the NPA directly off of the parking lot)*. Campers will be walked to the building along the St. Bernardine street side of the Nature Play Area fence line. Campers will enter the building on the western end of the building. More details will be provided as necessary.

Parent-Staff Communication

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

You can contact the camp directors by calling Michael 610-755-7834 or Anne 610-223-5411. General questions besides camp related questions can be directed to 610-372-4992 Ext.100.

This year's camp directors include Michael Griffith and Anne Muvdi with support from Camp for School teacher, Beckey Seel.



Michael Griffith
Office: 610-372-4992 x108
Mobile: 610-755-7834
Michael.griffith@berksnature.org



Anne Muvdi
Office: 610-372-4992 x115
Mobile: 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. Also they are trained in water safety.



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 Directors and lead activities when appropriate. The counselor to camper ratio is approximately 1:10.

The camp counselors and Group Leaders are 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 camp's commitment to stewardship of the natural environment.

The camp directors, provide the primary leadership, along with the President of Berks Nature, for the Eco-Camp. The directors are working professionals who have 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 hours is between 8:45-9:00 AM. Pick up for morning only camp hours is 12:00 Noon – 12:15 PM

Pick up for afternoon and full day camp hours is between 4:00-4:15 PM.

Late pick-up charges

Pick-up after 4:15 PM or after 12:15 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 Park parking lot (see map on p 8). A camp staff person will be there to greet you and will escort your child to and from the car.

Due to summer construction, Drop off and Pick up will occur at the Nature Play area.

****Special Note for 2021: Make sure that the person dropping off and picking up has a picture id. Staff will ask to see it each and every day your child is at camp.**

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 can 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.



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**
- A mask and spare masks. (we have youth masks for sale in our store if interested)
- Backpack with child's name on it.
- Lunch with a drink 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.

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 directors 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.

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 /Heat Days

The camp will be held rain, shine, and on sweltering summer days. The Nature Place is air-conditioned which will provide us with enough indoor space to 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 directors (Dave for 6-12 year olds 610-780-6786) or (Anne for 3-5 year olds 610-223-5411). If you get the voicemail system, please leave a message.

Registration

A registration form and health form must be completed for each child before the start of camp. **The registration tuition balance is due one week before the start of camp.** Payment plans are available for campers attending more than one week. Please contact 610-372-4992 ext. 100 for more information.



Refunds

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

- There will be no refunds for cancellations made after 1 week prior to the week of camp for which you child is registered. Example: If Jane cancels on June 28 for her son who is registered for camp for the week of July 6, she will get a refund. If she cancels any time after June 29, there will be no refund.
- If a cancellation is made because a camper is sick, a refund (or some form of a pro-rated refund) will be given regardless of timing.
- 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.



Cancellations

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.

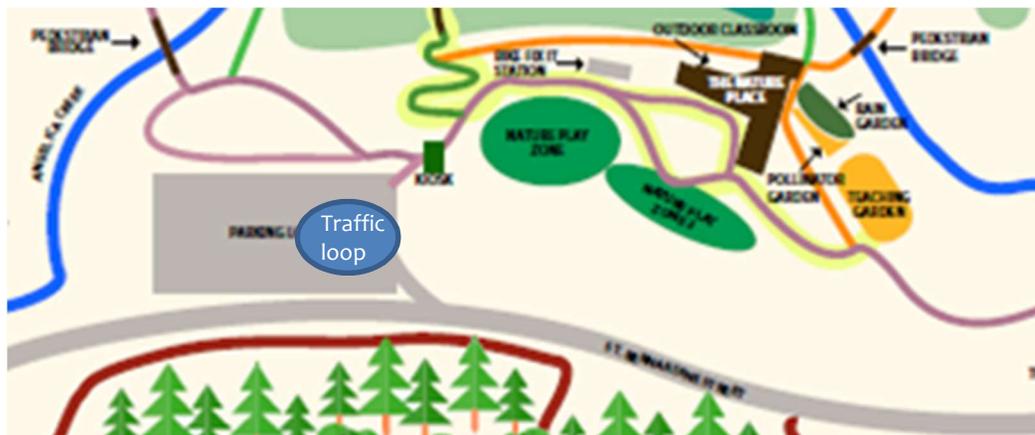
In the case of dismissal or voluntary withdrawal, there will be NO refund of any fees.



Map of Camp Headquarters and Drop Off & Pick Up Location



Convenient Drop off & Pick up at The Nature Place at Angelica 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 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 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.



Parent Visiting Days

We know that sometimes children going off to camp for the first time is harder for parents than our campers. Normally we would welcome visiting parents any time. Due to the nature of the pandemic, we would prefer that parents not visit camp. If you wish to observe your child at camp or visit please let us know and we will make accommodations for an outside visit only. Please call the directors on their cell phones upon your arrival so that we can meet you and point you in the right direction of where your child is located at that time.

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 constantly supervising campers over the course of the day, along with assistance from camp directors and activity directors as needed.

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.
6. Patiently 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 (Dave 610-780-6786 or Anne 610-223-5411) to provide additional information to help us meet your child’s individual needs.

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

