

McKinney Roughs Nature Camp 2012 Weekly Themes

McKinney Roughs Nature Camp seeks to foster an appreciation for and the natural world by inviting campers to explore the world around them through outdoor, experiential learning. In so doing, we hope to inspire the young people of today to become environmentally responsible and conscientious citizens of tomorrow; to spark a lifelong love of learning and to forge a deep and abiding connection with the natural world.

Each camp (Tonkawa, Comanche, Caddo) will have age appropriate explorations of a weekly theme allowing in-depth exploration and fun. CITs will follow their own agenda of leadership and conservation.

Session 1: June 11-15 Colorado River Critters

Our young adventurers will get acquainted with the residents of McKinney Roughs Nature Park while ferreting out the creatures that inhabit our 1,100-acre park. Mammals and marsupials inhabit the river banks of McKinney Roughs as well as osprey, bald eagles and great blue herons. Campers will be taught to track deer, opossum, ring-tailed cats, raccoons, armadillos, bobcats and coyotes, and observe turtles and fish in the river. They will learn to respect the living world while enjoying an interactive adventure with animals from the Capitol Area Zoo and our very own reptiles, amphibians and insects.

Session 2: June 18-22 Energy Sleuths

Campers will discover where electricity comes from and how it gets into their home. They will bring to light ways to conserve energy while exploring fun facts about renewable energy and experiment with model solar cars and wind turbines. They will harness power of hydro with a working model and examine an electric vehicle, real working solar array and wind turbine. Campers will create their own experiments with weather related games and renewable energy activities. Caddos will follow the path of energy with a visit to the Lost Pines Power Park.

Session 3: June 25-29 Outdoor Adventurers

Comanches explore Lake Bastrop by foot trekking along a winding hiking path that allows them to get up close to water fowl and other ecological wonders. Caddos explore the lake by water atop a kayak traveling between North and South Shore Park. Both will complete their day when they meet back up for a refreshing swim in the lake. New high challenge course adventures await as Caddos and Comanches will test their sense of adventure on the Giant Swing. Tonkawa's will experience challenge course challenges of their own on low elements that encourage qualities of communication and cooperation. They also become turtle trackers as they learn to use GPS the way biologists use it to track animals in the wild. (Before and After Care available this week)

Week 4: July 9-13 Navigating Nature

The focus turns to equipment used to navigate in nature. The campers will set their bearings by using the Earth's natural magnetic field! Hide and seek takes on new meaning as the search for the geo caches begins. They will experience navigating through the beautiful woodlands and open meadows using maps and GPS units, engage in a friendly shelter-building contest, and explore nature with games that will enhance recreational outdoor stewardship.

Session 5: July 16-20 The River is the Reason

Campers will be immersed in the world of the Colorado River! They will learn how to identify the plants and

wildlife that call it home. Each age will explore exciting ways to use water more efficiently through games and hands-on experiments. Campers will enjoy Lake Bastrop's South Shore for a day of learning and playing in and out of the water. They will discover the science of water chemistry, examine the quality of the Colorado River, and join in a shore-based river cleanup as they become good stewards of the river.

Session 6: July 23-27 Native Texas Trackers

Delve in the mysteries of animal tracking and surviving in the wild. Build shelters and make yaupon tea and mesquite flour cookies from scratch. Sharpen your atlatl and rabbit sticks throwing skills. Discover clues and use your powers of deduction to interpret animal activities. Absorb Native American knowledge and legends through dancing, stories, and games. (Before and After Care available this week)

Session 7: July 30-Aug. 3 Survivor Week

Campers will encounter nature on a deeper level and increase awareness of their surroundings. Animal tracking and shelter building will enhance abilities. They will learn how to "stay found" with the National Association for Search and Rescue's Hug a Tree and Survive program and test newfound survival skills with a friendly camp-wide competition.

Session 8: Aug 6-10 Hooked on Water

This week, campers will dip into the wonders of macroinvertebrates and will discover how they can determine the water quality by what is squirming in their dip net. All ages will make fishing rods; catch the thrill of fishing, and bank on having fun with a special visit to Lake Bastrop! They can meet a biologist who worked in Alaska on fishing boats featured on the "Deadliest Catch" TV series.

Register online at www.lcra.org/naturecamp