Tonkawa Camp (Ages 5-6) | Comanche Camp (Ages 7-8) | Caddo Camp (Ages 9-12)

Each week, Tonkawa, Comanche and Caddo campers have the opportunity to swim at Bastrop State Park pool. Tonkawa campers climb the rock wall and participate in a camp-wide field day. Comanche and Caddo campers experience select high elements on the challenge course and raft the Colorado River or Lake Bastrop. All campers explore the week’s theme through a combination of structured and unstructured activities, such as guided hikes, presentations, field studies or experiments, nature play and games. Instruction is scaffolded and content sensitively differentiated for each age group.

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POLLINATOR POWER (Week 1: June 15-19)
Why are pollinators truly powerful? Understand the varied and amazing adaptations of bees, butterflies, bats and hummingbirds and the critical role they play in an ecosystem. Dive into the insect world through field exploration and direct observation. Tonkawa and Comanche campers visit a botanical garden to understand the importance of native plants, plant pollinator host and nectar plants in the park. They’ll even build a bee habitat and create a beeswax product to take home. Caddo campers conduct a pollinator bioblitz to contribute to citizen science and soar across a pine canyon on a zip line.

WATER WONDERS (Week 2: June 22-26)
Dip into the aquatic world and experience its macro and micro wonders. Tinker with water-related science experiments to understand its properties, dip nets in a pond to understand water quality and peer through microscopes to view water teeming with life. Tonkawa and Comanche campers view live aquatic animals with underwater viewers to understand their unique adaptations and create an artistic memento of their observations. Caddo campers explore Lake Bastrop from kayaks and stand-up paddle boards.

BIODIVERSITY BLAST (Week 3: July 6-10)
Understand the world’s biomes and factors for supporting life. Explore the park’s riparian, pine forest and Post Oak Savannah ecosystems on guided hikes and discover the plants, trees and creatures that call them home. Campers conduct a field bioblitz looking for animal signs, then hone their observation and awareness skills at a personal sit spot. They’ll use dichotomous keys and field guides to identify wildlife and record these observations scientifically. Caddo campers explore the park on UTVs (driven by camp staff) and contribute their observations online as citizen scientists through the iNaturalist app.
MAKING THE MARK (Week 4: July 13-17)
Navigate like an intrepid explorer using wayfinding tools and sharpen your archery skills on the range. Understand the Lewis and Clark journey through a historical reenactment, and follow in their footsteps by observing nature closely and journaling your experiences. Tonkawa and Comanche campers find hidden caches while geocaching and letterboxing. Comanche campers practice shooting a compass bearing and use a GPS to find a waypoint. Caddo campers practice advanced orienteering techniques using map and compass, then create a treasure hunt for others to follow.

WILDERNESS SKILLS BASICS (Week 5: July 20-24)
Build shelters using natural materials, purify water, make emergency signals, start fire without matches, identify edible, medicinal and useful plants and learn how to “stay found” in an emergency. Caddo campers participate in a capture-the-flag style scavenger hunt, while zombies attempt to steal resources. Tonkawa and Comanche campers take part in a non-zombie adventure race for survival resources.

CALL OF THE WILD (Week 6: July 27- July 31)
How do animals communicate? Learn the secret language of creatures great and small. Train your senses to hear bird language on a blind fold hike, recognize common birds by ear and play games that fine tune your sense of touch and spatial perception. Identify mammals by the scent signals they leave behind, and explore how plants use color for defense and attraction. Campers experience a live reptile and bird presentation.

NATURE MAKERS (Week 7: August 3 – August 7)
Learn about foraging for edible, medicinal and useful plants, then create art and products from the plants you harvest. Pick Mustang Grapes for jelly, Yaupon for tea and syrup or flowers for a healing salve. Create a simple basket using dried plants or a pouch for your valuables from a cactus pad. Design land art to bring joy to others and try your hand at rock stacking. Campers will set up a primitive forest camp and create a marketplace to trade their wares. Camp will culminate in a celebration of art, craft and food.

BUSHCRAFT AND TRACKING (Week 8: August 10 – August 14)
Build on your foundational survival skills to apply self-reliance in wilderness situations. Learn how to prepare and cook food without utensils, track animals, navigate backcountry, read the landscape to find water and make rope from natural fibers. Practice useful knots for survival and eat cricket cookies. Caddo campers participate in a capture-the-flag style scavenger hunt, while zombies attempt to steal resources. Tonkawa and Comanche campers take part in a non-zombie adventure race for survival resources.