



## Nature Camps, Inc.

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410-343-0223 or 410-935-1545 (Don's Cell)



Dear Teen Adventurer and Parents,

Our goal at Nature Camps and in Teen Adventure (TA) is to promote growth in young people through outdoor adventure. We deeply believe in the power of outdoor experiences to enrich and guide young lives. It is our task to make that experience happen in well planned, safe, constructive, and meaningful ways. *We provide the knowledge and the supervision – but the outdoors is the big teacher.*

Teen Adventure Trips are about self-confidence, teamwork, and attaining goals. We emphasize both individual responsibility and positive group interaction. In addition, the TA program has been known for its capacity to affirm individual strengths, engender compassionate and responsible behavior, and bring forth environmental stewardship. Teens feel the power of tradition and community.

During week one, teens will be working with children (4-12), working on an NC service project, and participating in teen activities, including a Counselor/Teen Adventure Overnight on the first Monday of each session. TA Explorers are really in a Counselor-In-Training (CIT) program. We have decided to return to this format to further the understanding of the important role that teens have in NC's mixed-age adventure experience. This strengthens the teens' skill base and understanding as being that older child role model in Camper activities, as well as sets the tone that first day for an effective working relationship between counselors and TAs.

*On the first Thursday of TA Day Camp week*, teens will take a mini backpacking trip to Bunker Hill in Hereford, MD. Teens and the two TA leaders will backpack 5 to 6 miles from NC base camp, north along the Gunpowder River, and stay at group campsites at Gunpowder State Park. Each teen will be assigned an ingredient to bring for dinner and breakfast.

During the second week of camp, teens will begin their first of two five-day trips.

*The first TA five-day trip* begins on Monday of the second week of TA. Teens and gear are taken by camp vehicles to the Northern Central Railroad Trail, where they bicycle from Whiteford to the O'neill Family Farm in northern Baltimore County. Activities on the farm include harvesting, planting, cooking, farm chores, farm service projects, and contra dancing. Contra dancing takes place at Lovely Lane Church in Baltimore on Wednesday evenings. Teens bicycle back to Nature Camps on Friday, arriving before 5 p.m.

*The second TA trip*, during the third week of TA, will be exciting, strenuous, and challenging. Teens will spend four days backpacking and hiking approximately 30 miles on the Appalachian Trail in Western MD. On Thursday, teens will stay at the Harper's Ferry Hostel (Hosteling International). On Friday, teens will go white water rafting (with River & Trail Outfitters) on either the Potomac or Shenandoah River. Along with NC staff, certified River Guides will be in each raft, guiding teens down the river in a safe and fun atmosphere.

*The fourth week of TA* will be spent at NC, completing service projects; helping with camper activities; celebrating; canoeing, hiking, and helping with the Family Overnight.

Teens who are registered for the Full Season TA Session will go on the away trips two of their eight weeks at Nature Camps. The remaining six weeks will be spent at Nature Camps. See Day Camp on the TA web page.

For complete gear lists, please refer to our web site. We suggest you do your best to purchase these items, as often borrowed items do not always fit correctly and make for an uncomfortable backpacking trip. One local store which carries these items are REI. Please mark all items with your name.

iPods, MP3, cassette, and CD players, radios, fireworks, butane lighters, and pocket knives, should not be brought.

On the Sunday prior to the Appalachian Trail away trip (TA week 3), there will be a pre-trip Gear Check-In. Teens will be checking in their gear, unpacking and re-packing their bags with the TA staff, which cannot be accomplished the morning of the trip. TA Support Staff will contact families with the best time to arrive on Sunday.

In keeping with NC's safety and health policies, TA staff is in communication with our base camp in Monkton. This allows us to monitor the group's safety & health, and usually permits urgent messages to be forwarded to and from the TA group. TA Staff carries cell phones, and call the NC office each afternoon to report on their status, and to receive any messages. Cell reception is not always available between points of the Appalachian Trail and NC. Cell service is usually available at the local Ranger stations.

*TA trip leaders begin each day with a circle time to set group and personal goals for the day. Each day concludes with a similar meeting, allowing time for reflection of the day's learnings.*

Waiver forms are required for White Water Rafting and O'neill Family Farm. All three necessary forms (TA Contract and two waivers) may be downloaded from the TA page on our web site. **Please mail them with the NC Registration Form and Health Form, or fax everything to the NC office (410-343-0236).** Enrollment will be complete, and your teen's space will be held, when all completed forms are in the NC office.

For additional information:

- [www.naturecamps.com](http://www.naturecamps.com) and click on Programs, then Teen Adventure, or
- call 410-343-0223