

# **Volcano Camps & Outdoor School**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What will my child learn?**

While at Mount St. Helens, youth will explore the amazing biological and geological world of volcanos. For each program age appropriate lessons range from plate tectonics to wildlife adaptations, from technology for monitoring volcanoes to mapping and orienteering. Through all our activities we focus on developing inquiry and observation skills, team and confidence building and creative ways to communicate. For longer programs, youth also learn fundamentals in outdoor skills from preparedness to hiking and canoeing.

### **How do we get to camp? Where do we meet?**

This will depend on the program you are attending. We will send you details including a meeting time and directions before your program begins. Programs are typically based at the Science and Learning Center at Coldwater. The Center is located 43 miles from I-5 on Hwy 504. From I-5, take Exit #49 (Highway 504 exit). Head east on Highway 504 (Spirit Lake Memorial Highway). Once you enter the Volcanic Monument, you will travel straight on Hwy 504. DO NOT TURN when signs direct visitors to veer right to go to the Johnston Ridge Observatory.

### **How are your staff screened?**

Our staff are carefully selected for their experience and passion for working with youth. Permanent staff are professional and compassionate educators. Seasonal staff range from early career professionals to undergraduate students seeking a degree in education. All staff receive a rigorous criminal background check before they are hired and references are thoroughly examined.

### **How are your instructors trained?**

All staff receive approximately 48 hours of training including educational content, safety and risk procedures and policies, driving, first aid/CPR and managing group dynamics.

### **What is your staff to student ratio?**

Our staff to student ratio is 1:12 for groups with chaperones. For open-enrollment camps, without chaperones, our staff to student ratio is 1:8.

### **Do you have insurance?**

Yes, the Mount St. Helens Institute is insured.

### **What are your safety policies?**

Safety ensures fun, so we make safety our priority. All our staff are first aid/CPR certified. In addition, all our staff are trained in our safety procedures. Each field site has an emergency response plan and each day staff review the risks and preventative measures inherent in the day's activities. Students also participate during our daily safety talks. Because risks are part of life, we also ask that students take small risks to develop their confidence and to learn to trust their judgment during designated activities.

### **How do you discipline students?**

We begin each program by laying a foundation for a culture of respect and safety (physical and emotional). Youth and staff create a behavior contract together. If a student breaks the contract, the staff member talks with student to determine a solution. If the student's disrespectful behavior continues, the student and program manager meet and a parent is contacted. If the behavior continues, the student is sent home at the parent's expense. Any behavior that is illegal or is a direct threat to another person or building (such as violent or sexual harassment) is sent home immediately.

### **Tell me about the food.**

We aim to provide nutritious and diverse food with lots of fruits and vegetables, and plenty of snacks. We also accommodate, as best as possible, to special dietary needs. Please call or email us with dietary requests.

### **What does a sample day look like?**

7:00 am Wake Up  
7:30 am Breakfast  
8:30 am Group activity  
9:00 am Field-based activities  
12:00 pm Lunch in the field or at the Center  
12:30 pm Field-based activities  
2:30 pm Rest and reflection  
3:30 pm Group activity  
5:00 pm Recreation  
6:00 pm Dinner  
7:30 pm Evening activities and sky watching  
9:00 pm Prepare for bedtime  
9:30 pm Lights Out!

### **What should we pack?**

Headlamp/ flashlight, sturdy hiking boots or tennis shoes (no open-toed shoes), backpack for all gear (can also be used on hikes), sunscreen and sunhat (there is little shade at Mount

St. Helens), water bottle, warm Clothing (it gets cold near the Volcano and we will be outside a lot!), rain jackets, pajamas, toiletries (wash cloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, etc.), sleeping bag (tent optional), pillow, sleeping pad is recommended, no electronics or food will be allowed in the building. Once registered you will receive a packing list in the parent information packet.

**Is scholarship funding available?**

Scholarship funding is available for some programs based on grants and individual donations. See program specific pages for more information and the scholarship application. We do offer some special grant funded programs but these are not available to the general public. If you would like to donate to a scholarship fund please contact us.

*Please contact us if you have any additional questions!*