

Nature Discovery Camps 2021 Report

Project Leader: Tania Gale Taniagale@CalvertCountyMD.gov 410-535-5327

Number of Volunteers: 1

Number of Hours: 102

Including:

- School's Out Camps (including Spring Break Camp and Winter Camp overnight)
- Summer Camps

Counselors-in-training (CIT's) are volunteers who work alongside paid naturalists and interns in our Nature Discovery Day Camps to help campers have a fantastic camp experience. CIT's assist with crafts, keep track of campers on hikes, sing songs, play games, lead lunch time activities, watch out for camper safety, and help with set up and clean up before and after camp. CIT's work with campers who range in age from 4 to 10 years old. Generally, CIT's arrive at 8:30am and finish the day around 4pm. There may be overnights and differing schedules for some camps.

Our Counselor-in-training (CIT) volunteer program provides young adults with opportunities and experiences that push them to learn, grow, and practice new skills. This fun and educational program includes training in leadership skills in group and independent settings, interacting with different ages of campers, safe animal handling, and learning to lead many fun games, crafts, and activities. Our CIT's are depended upon to help lead activities, keep program materials clean and organized and, of course, join in on some fun and games with campers.

We believe that giving teens the chance to develop important life and career skills is a cornerstone of our program and we appreciate our volunteers' families' dedication to joining us in this process at home. We ask all our volunteers to take the lead in managing their schedule, correspondence, and responsibilities when working with our volunteer program and we ask for adult family members to support them in doing so. With this in mind, we encourage volunteers to complete their own applications and list their own email contact information when doing so. We thank families for helping their volunteers begin this process and encouraging teens take the lead.

SKILLS NEEDED

- Enjoy working with and teaching children.
- Work well as part of a team
- Relate well to others, especially children.
- Maintain a positive, patient and respectful approach with campers, families and staff
- Must not be afraid of snakes, spiders or getting dirty and/or wet

Optional, but Preferred, Skills

- Prior experience working with children is preferred, but not required
- General knowledge and interest of the local natural world and ecosystems. Volunteers will be trained with program-specific information, but prior knowledge or initiative for extra research is always helpful.

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

- Model appropriate behavior - set an example, use appropriate language. Be a friend to all campers. Encourage nervous or struggling campers. Be inclusive.
- Lead campers in games, songs, and free play activities daily
- Approach camp with a positive attitude
- Promptly communicate any issues to the naturalist
- Take steps to ensure camper safety
- Assist naturalists with set up, clean up, and transport of equipment. May include sorting, re-stocking, cleaning, hosing off, lifting, and carrying various items and weights.

REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

- We ask each CIT to volunteer for at least one week of camp during the summer
- CIT's must be available for all mandatory camp staff training days and a minimum 1 week availability during the summer (schedule based on participant's availability).
- School's Out Camp volunteers need to be past/current summer camp volunteers/paid counselors
- Be familiar with the park(s) where volunteering
- Be excited about exploring and spending time in nature, and be able to share this excitement with others
- Come appropriately dressed and prepared for the weather. The camp season includes high heat, wind, and thunderstorms. Volunteers may also be exposed to ticks, mosquitoes, and poison ivy.

TRAININGS

- Attend Summer Camp training week or meet with lead naturalist for an orientation (for School's Out camps)
- On-the-job training - There is be a blend of training, shadowing, and leading camp activities with feedback from naturalists
- Attend additional trainings and enrichment events as available

PROJECT DATES

- Summer Camps occur late June through early August
- School's Out Camps occur through the year on days where Calvert County Public schools does not have classes
- We prefer full week commitments for consistency. Exceptions can be considered

SUMMARY OF 2021 ACTIVITIES

We had 1 CIT for the summer of 2021. She assisted with Spring Break Camp, Forest and Marvelous Mud Camps.

FUTURE PLANS

- Get volunteers to use Galaxy Digital to register for opportunities
- Create an opportunity on for CITs – for orientation, training, the camps they work, final clean-up day
- Lead a scheduling meeting/website training at the beginning of summer camp – or prior to that for the CIT's separately – could be virtual
- Offer CIT spots in the summer of 2022. Positions will be limited because although we are planning in-person camps in 2022, due to ongoing COVID safety precautions, group size will continue to remain small and fewer staff will be needed. We currently have 2 applicants who are past campers.

Supporting Calvert County's nature parks and natural spaces



CALVERT STEWARDS

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

A partnership between Calvert Nature Society and Calvert County Natural Resources Division

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CALVERT STEWARDS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
c/o Natural Resources Division
2880 Grays Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
(410) 535-5327

Volunteer Portal: <https://calvertstewards.galaxydigital.com/>

Calvert Nature Society: www.calvertparks.org

Calvert County Natural Resources Division:
www.calvertcountymd.gov/NaturalResources

