



Green Mountain Conservation Camp

The Power of Outdoor Play

By Alison Thomas, Education Coordinator

Research suggests that when children spend time outdoors they are better able to solve problems, think creatively, and experience better health, such as improved vision and lung strength. Although the concept of spending time outdoors as being healthy is an easy notion to believe, it's nice to read the statistics that prove it too. However, at GMCC no scientific studies are necessary to see the physical and mental benefits everyone is experiencing from their time outdoors learning about Vermont's natural resources.



Smiling Kehoe campers

Whether you spend an hour or day at camp, the staff and campers' energy and enthusiasm are telling enough, and it's clear that everyone is having a really good time playing outdoors. Sometimes the "playing" is more focused during a hunter education or forestry class, and other times it's less structured, like when campers immerse themselves in mud during a wetlands ecology activity.

Campers, junior counselors (JCs), and staff participate in games with wildlife themes. Hide-and-seek takes on new meaning when the name of the game is Predator-Prey, about 70 people are taking part, the playing field is 50+ acres, and survival is on the line. Concepts of adaptation, wildlife diversity, and habitats are covered, but it's also just really fun.

GMCC proves that outdoor play is a powerful educational method for subjects ranging from science to ethics. The value of connecting with natural resources in new, challenging and interesting ways is fostered when the fun happens alongside staff who can help interpret the unknown while you are exploring natural areas, hiking tough trails, and learning new outdoor skills.

GMCC staff, JCs, and campers had another great summer, one which I am confident none of them will forget. We can thank a lot of time playing with a dedicated staff in the forests and lakes for the memories.



Buck Lake campers and staff take a mud break at the wetland.

GMCC By the Numbers

Basic Session Campers = 610

Advanced Session Campers = 263

Boys Attending = 609

Girls Attending = 264

Hunter Combo Certifications = 568

Trapper Certifications = 127

Waterfowl Certifications = 136

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GMCC: Truly a Unique Experience

By Corey Hart, GMCC Camp Coordinator 2015

GMCC just ended the 49th year of camp. that's 49 years of introducing young people to the outdoors. It's not uncommon to hear from parents on graduation day who say they are pleased their child had a similar unforgettable experience that they did when they attended camp.

Has GMCC changed over the years? Yes, there is no denying that, but I believe the changes have been for the better. Thankfully, some of our staff have been involved with GMCC since they were campers, and it is so dear to their hearts that many traditions hold fast. A perfect example is the final fire during advanced week at Buck Lake. Every Thursday night during advanced week there is a final ceremony when the campers tell the staff exactly what camp means to them, and then they add a stick to the roaring fire. It truly is amazing to hear why campers feel camp is so special, because it's often an unexpected reason.

Kehoe has an incredibly unique canoe trip during advanced week in which everyone paddles from the docks to Lake Bomoseen State Park. Once at the Park, they portage to Glen Lake and camp overnight.

I could talk all day about ways GMCC is unique, but for me there are two major aspects that stand out, and those are our Junior Counselor (JC) program and volunteer work weekend. Our JCs take time off from their busy summer schedules to volunteer at the camp they loved as campers by assisting with teaching classes and completing work projects. Once again this year, GMCC had about 100 JCs in the program, many of which volunteered for multiple weeks.

Every year GMCC hosts two volunteer work weekends, one at each camp. In only two days volunteers accomplish many large projects, which allow us to keep GMCC in a condition that we can all be proud of for years to come. Some major accomplishments this year at Kehoe include a new canoe rack, a Lets Go Fishing shed, and a slate roof and trim work for our woodshed near the campfire pit. At Buck Lake many doors were repaired, difficult tree removal was done by a skilled forester, and new shutters on the cabins were installed. All of these projects happened along with a lot of deep cleaning throughout camp.

Both of these programs are completely voluntary, require travel and time, and include a lot of hard work. It is because we have dedicated volunteers that staff can focus on educating youth about Vermont's natural resources. We can't thank JCs and volunteers enough, and we look forward to seeing many familiar faces along with new ones in 2016.



Kehoe JCs during the last week of camp



**GMCC Position Open
APPLY NOW!**

• Camp Coordinator •
(Environmental
Assistant B)

This a critical position that helps hire and prepare summer camp staff, orders materials to ensure that the program is equipped properly to educate and train approximately 1,000 youth, evaluates the programs during summer, and supports the camps in any way necessary.

This position serves as a vital link between each camp, the network of support staff and volunteers, and the department's management staff to ensure the success of this critical Fish & Wildlife program. The Camp Coordinator ensures the quality, integrity, and accountability of the camp program to ensure a healthy, safe, and positive environment for the campers.

Full-time, temporary position.

To Apply, Contact:
Alison Thomas,
Education Coordinator
Alison.Thomas@vermont.gov
(802) 371-9975
Closing Date: November 15



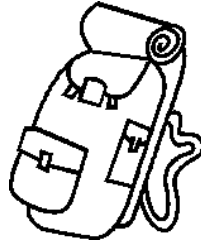
Kehoe campers build shelters out of forest materials.

New Projects

New interpretive panels were installed at Kehoe's trailhead and on the deck. The panels invite visitors of the trail to interpret wildlife signs and sounds, and learn more about forest succession and Kehoe's land management plan. The deck panel provides the names of the peaks seen from the overlook as well as the geological history of the unique Taconic Mountain Range.



Warden Schichtle and Magooch demonstrate F&W K-9 duties.



Kehoe trailhead and deck panels



Kehoe advanced week campers practice waterfowl decoy patterns.

The GMCC program will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016! There are a lot of fun projects happening now that will be ready by camp season next summer.

- A new GMCC logo will be unveiled;
- The new Buck Lake Dining Hall & Education Center will be complete;
- Kehoe will have a new 100 ft x 100 ft wildlife garden planted to provide educational opportunities, decrease the lawn and mowing requirements, and beautify the area;
- An aquatic ecology & angling interactive educational display will be completed in the classroom at Kehoe; and more!



Advanced week campers from both camps put their outdoor skills to the test during the legendary "Woodsmen Competition."



To commemorate GMCC's 50th Anniversary next year, the department is creating a short film, and asking for your help! If you are a GMCC camper or staff alum with photos or stories to share, please send them to Ali at Alison.Thomas@vermont.gov.



Lasting Memories

By Kim Barrett,
Hunter Education Technician

Although my title has changed from Natural Resource Instructor to Director to Hunter Education Technician, my ties to GMCC have kept me close to camp. This summer I visited camp multiple times for both advanced and basic weeks. It was wonderful to see new smiling faces and to catch up with returning campers, junior counselors and Natural Resource Instructors. I spent the summer at camp co-teaching Waterfowl and Crossbows for advanced week, as well as taking footage for GMCC's 50th year anniversary film.



Advanced campers practice crossbows.

During basic weeks, GMCC staff use a welcoming fire on the first night as a way for campers to introduce themselves, and share what they are looking forward to for the week. It also serves as a metaphor to help campers understand that although



Endowment Fund

A 501(c)(3) Endowment Fund with a mission of providing a perpetual source of income for the environmental education facilities and programs at GMCC.

Membership Benefits:

- Receive GMCC Newsletter
- Receive GMCC email updates
- Invitations to special GMCC and Fish & Wildlife Events
- GMCC Anniversary Sticker

Your support helps provide youth with an educational, fun, and memorable experience discovering Vermont's natural resources.

See the website for details:
www.fishandwildlife.com/
Go To: Get Involved >
Donate > Green Mountain Conservation Camp Endowment Fund

we come from different walks of life and experiences, our week together is spent learning with and supporting one another. We leave camp with new experiences that enrich our lives as each stick enriches and enlivens the welcome fire.



Fire at Buck Lake

I spent the last week of the summer at Buck Lake for a girls advanced week. I had the opportunity to participate in Buck's final fire ceremony. This fire represents the culmination of each campers experience from basic week to their advanced week. It provides campers with the chance to reflect on their growth and share their reflections. I listened as several campers reflected on their personal growth at camp. Several of them describe GMCC as a safe place to face fears, make friends, and most importantly, learn to accept themselves and others. Campers, Junior Counselors and NRIs alike shared their triumph, gratitude, and reflections together at the fire. I wouldn't have ended my summer any other way!

Attention Educators

You can become a camper for a week, and learn how to integrate wildlife management education into your classroom while earning 3 graduate level credits through the University of Vermont. Preservice, non-formal, and pre-kindergarten through grade 12 teachers are invited.

For the continuing education experience of a lifetime, contact Ali Thomas for details: Alison.Thomas@vermont.gov or call 802.371.9975.



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Green Mountain Conservation Camp

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