

January 12, 2023

DEC ANNOUNCES SUMMER CAMPS REGISTRATION OPENS APRIL 2, 2023

Families Encouraged to Register Early

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced that online registration for the 2023 Summer Camps program will open Sunday, April 2, 2023, at 1 p.m. Applications should be submitted through the online registration program available through a link from the Summer Camps website <https://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html>. Parents and guardians are also advised to monitor this site to complete registration forms and encouraged to register early since spaces fill up quickly.

“DEC’s Summer Camps program has a long tradition of introducing youth to the outdoors through fun, hands-on, minds-on activities that create life-long connections to nature,” Commissioner Seggos said. “Our camps provide increasingly rare opportunities for children to unplug and immerse themselves in the natural world. Kids at DEC Summer Camps are guided by highly qualified staff in hiking, canoeing, and overnight camping adventures each week.”

Now in its 76th year, the Summer Camps program offers week-long adventures in conservation education for children ages 11-17. DEC operates four residential camps for children: Camp Colby in Saranac Lake (Franklin County); Camp DeBruce in Livingston Manor (Sullivan County); Camp Rushford in Caneadea (Allegany County), and Camp Pack Forest in Warrensburg (Warren County). Opening specific camps is dependent on staff availability.

Camp capacities will be reduced again this next year to provide the safest experience possible. New and returning individual campers will be limited to one week of camp. If spaces remain available after May 26, campers will be allowed to sign up for multiple weeks. Eligible campers who were unable to enjoy camp in 2022 due to camp closures will receive priority registering in 2023.

Camps Colby, DeBruce, and Rushford will offer two weeks of programming for children ages 14-17. Camp Colby and Rushford will offer five weeks for ages 11-13, and Camp DeBruce will offer four weeks. Camp Pack Forest will host children ages 14-17 for five weeks and ages 11-13 for two weeks. The complete schedule of camp opportunities for different age groups is available on the Summer Camps website at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/education/2013.html>.

Campers will have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of outdoor adventures and are encouraged to try new things. Activities may include fishing, bird watching, fly-tying, archery, canoeing, hiking, camping, orienteering, and hunter safety education. One hunter education program of gun, bow, or trapping is offered at each camp during four of the weeks. Class size is limited for hunter education programs and campers must sign up for it during registration and complete the homework in advance.

Along with adventure experiences, DEC campers engage in fun, hands-on activities and outdoor exploration focused on field, forest, stream, and pond ecological principles. Campers may collect insects in a field, use nets in a stream, investigate soil composition, measure tree sizes, or practice taking field notes and writing in journals. Trips to nearby State lands might include kettle bogs, State Parks, fish hatcheries, or nature museums.

Camp Pack Forest will offer “Outdoor Adventure Week” during Week 4 (July 23-28). DEC encourages teens aged 14-17 who love being outdoors to sign up for this popular program that will help deepen their enjoyment and widen their horizons at Camp Pack Forest. During this week, campers will develop hands-on outdoor skills that go above and beyond the traditional camp week. In addition to our typical camp activities, campers may be

engaged in team and trust-building activities, forestry, citizen science, conservation science, and more. Guest DEC and natural resource professionals will introduce campers to a variety of career options.

All four camps offer at least six one-week sessions (Sunday to Friday) beginning July 2, 2023; Camp Colby, Rushford, and Pack Forest will operate for seven weeks. One week of camp remains \$350 per child for 2023, and includes meals, trips, and a camp t-shirt.

In addition to inviting parents to register their children to participate in the DEC environmental education Summer Camps program, sporting clubs, civic groups, and environmental organizations are encouraged to sponsor one or more children for a week at camp. Information about becoming a sponsor and managing sponsor accounts is available at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1866.html> on DEC's website.

For more information, please visit the DEC's website at www.dec.ny.gov, email EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov, visit "NYS DEC Summer Camps" on Facebook or write to: DEC Camps, 3rd Floor, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-5256.