

Outdoor Skills Classes

CANOEING

*Our trained educators will guide novice paddlers for this adventure as they navigate the placid canyon stream among 80-foot bluffs and cascading waterfalls. Understanding the equipment, executing basic river paddling strokes, and following safety precautions will be essential as participants paddle both upstream and back down. **Students should be prepared to get wet during this activity. Canoeing is not recommended in cold months. Please select a backup class incase canoeing cannot run due to wind, high water, etc..***

Time: 1.5 hours

Distance: Short walk to the canoe area, but includes very steep staircase

Activity Level: Moderate; cannot be modified for alternate abilities

Students will:

- Practice communicating and working together with other participants to achieve a shared goal
- Demonstrate personal responsibility by making sound decisions and safe choices
- Execute basic paddling strokes to navigate through both slow and fast-moving river waters

MEET A MAP

Never ask “where is that?” again at Camp McDowell because you will learn how to navigate our campus using teamwork and maps! Students will practice their visual spatial skills by creating and using a variety of maps to navigate both indoor and outdoor courses, scavenger hunt style to solve a mystery word.

Time: 1.5 hours

Distance: Minimal walking required

Activity Level: Can be modified depending on group needs

Students will:

- Familiarize themselves with using and interpreting the pieces of a map
- Understand how to read and orient a map using the features of a map such as scale, legends, landmarks, etc
- Navigate using a map and gather spatial information about the distribution of resources in an area

NAVIGATION

Students will gain experience with a compass and learn how compasses work through demonstrations and kinesthetic activities using a compass. Students will then apply their skills by completing an outdoor compass course scavenger hunt style to solve a mystery word.

Time: 1.5 hours

Distance: Minimal walking required

Activity Level: Can be modified depending on group needs

Students will:

- Be able to use a compass to determine cardinal directions, read bearings and apply them properly
- Navigate an outdoor course using a compass
- Use a map and a compass to discern bearings properly

STEWARDS OF THE FOREST

*What does it mean to be a steward of the land? How can we take care of the land both here at camp and back home? WHY should we take care of the land? This class is a service based class that aims to answer those questions through a hands-on, service project at McDowell Environmental Center. From pulling invasive plant species to clearing trails, there are always ways we are working to care for our land here at Camp McDowell and we are ready for your help! **Projects vary seasonally and by need, if you have an idea let us know and we will tell you if we think it can work.***

Time: 1.5 hours or 3 hours

Distance: Varied, ranging from 0.75 - 1.5 miles

Activity Level: Moderate: Involves hiking trails, hauling equipment/materials and using tools

Students will:

- Define what it means to be a steward of the land
- List ways in which they can practice stewardship while at camp and back home
- Utilize new skills such as how to maintain trails, identify and remove invasives, and use various tools (varies by season and the needs of MEC at time of trip)

SURVIVAL SKILLS

This class combines learning with play in a way that is fun for all ages. Participants will learn basic skills necessary in a wilderness survival situation through shelter building and fire starting. Students will work together in teams to try to survive.

Time: 1.5 or 3 hours

Distance: Varied, ranging from 0.75 - 1.5 miles

Activity Level: Moderate: participants will be lifting and moving sticks and logs

Students will:

- Identify the difference between a want and a need
- Prioritize basic survival needs
- Collaborate with a team to build a shelter and fires