



Battle Creek Outdoor Education Center Activity Choice Descriptions By Theme

Our schedule divides each day into a morning 3 hour block, an afternoon 3 hour block, and an evening 2 hour block. Some activities take a full 3 hour block, some take half a block, and some can fit in multiple time slots. Each description tells you the time block an activity **may** fill. We will do our best to include as many of your selected activities as we can.

Activities are grouped by four themes: Challenge/Adventure, History, Outdoor Pursuits, and Science. We also offer All Camp activities one or two evenings each week.

**Denotes activity has an additional fee.*

CHALLENGE/ADVENTURE THEME - Personal and group challenge characterize this theme. Students solve problems by trial and error. Debriefings focus on life applications. Classes larger than 16 students will be split into two patrols. Some activities have age minimums due to height or maturity requirements. Please see descriptions for details.

Activities are listed from **low to high** perceived risk, and from **group to individual** challenge.

COMMUNICATION (Half Block – low perceived risk, whole group and small group challenge and communication)

These activities stress communication and listening skills. The cornerstone activity is **The Beast**. Students are divided into small teams. One member of each team will have to describe a "Beast" to the rest of the team. They must obtain the parts and assemble an exact copy of the "Beast", following the directions given by this observer. Other complementary communication activities may precede and follow.

GROUP BUILDING ACTIVITIES, a.k.a. GBAs (Full Block – low perceived risk, whole group challenge)

A variety of challenges will be used to identify and develop the skills needed to be an effective group, such as communication or trust. With minimal props students will use their problem solving skills and imagination to accomplish group goals. These activities may be done indoors or outside.

TEAMS COURSE (non-spotted group initiatives) (Full or Half Block – medium perceived risk, whole group challenge)

A series of outdoor challenge stations tests the group's ability to work together to solve problems. The course includes some classic teambuilding elements such as whale watch, trolleys, stump to stump, all aboard, squeeze box, and the muse. Instructors tailor the activities to the group's needs.

The following five activities require at least 2 adults. Usually you, the teacher, are at this activity with one patrol while the other patrol is elsewhere at a different activity.

SHERWOOD FOREST (spotted group initiatives) (Full Block – medium perceived risk, small group or individual challenge)

This teambuilding area consists of several “low ropes” type challenge activities constructed of wire and wood. Students use teamwork to complete the challenge which may involve balancing, lifting teammates, or swinging on a rope. These activities present individual challenges with the support of the group. This activity requires safety instruction in spotting and may require a lead in warm up activity. For fall 5th grade and up.

THE BEAM (Full Block – medium to high perceived risk, small group challenge)

Students must work together to get each student, one at a time, safely up and over a 6 foot high horizontal beam. The beam requires planning, communication, teamwork, trust, and individual challenge. This activity requires safety instruction in spotting and may require a lead in warm up activity. For spring 5th grade and up.

THE WALL (Full Block - medium to high perceived risk, small group challenge)

Students must work together to safely get their entire group, one student at a time, over a ten foot high wall. The wall requires planning, communication, teamwork, trust, and individual challenge. This activity requires safety instruction in spotting and may require a lead in warm up activity. For spring 5th grade and up.

***TOWER CLIMB** (Full Block – high perceived risk, individual challenge)

Students push their personal limits on the thirty foot outdoor tower climb. Trained staff fit climbing harnesses and helmets on students and teach them how to use a team belay system. Each student will challenge themselves to climb as high as they can while their teammates belay. Students younger than spring 5th grade will be belayed by staff rather than a team belay.

***HIGH ROPES COURSE** (Full Block – high perceived risk, individual challenge)

Test what you can do thirty feet in the air! Trained staff will gear up students with harnesses, sling lines and helmets and teach them how to challenge themselves on our 15 element course. Individual challenge, expanding comfort zones and team support are all a part of this activity. Requires classroom teacher's participation up on the course. For spring 5th grade and up.

*\$15 per student for Tower Climb OR High Ropes for each student. \$20 per student for Tower Climb AND High Ropes for each student. Advance scheduling required.

HISTORY THEME – Go back in time when Michigan was just being settled. Try a pioneer craft. Discover firsthand what it was like to travel and settle in the frontier.

OLSON’S MERCANTILE (Half Block)

Pioneer struggles come alive! Students form pioneer “families” and go to Olson’s Mercantile to purchase all of the things that they will need for their trip across the frontier to settle in the “west”. After making their purchases, the students will walk a trail with typical encounters of the 1836 trail west. The value of their purchases will be tested. This activity is usually paired with **Pioneer Cabin** for a complete history experience.

PIONEER CABIN (Half Block)

Travel back in time to 1838 by visiting our Pioneer Cabin. Students will be able to experience pioneer life through different activities including a tour of the homestead, candle making, or trying common hand tools. This activity is usually paired with **Olson’s Mercantile** for a complete history experience.

OUTDOOR PURSUITS THEME – Students will learn an outdoor skill. Activities are listed alphabetically.

ACTIVE GAMES (Half Block)

Students enjoy learning some games and running off some energy. Whether they learn some old games such as “kick the can” or a camp favorite “camouflage”, students will enjoy playing hard and having fun with their class.

ARCHERY (Half block)

Students will have the opportunity to develop skills in using a bow and arrow. They will learn safe techniques and practice shooting at our archery range, usually in our Rec Room. Classes with more than 16 students will be split into two patrols. While one patrol is at archery class, the other will have a different half block activity. Requires two adults, generally one staff and one classroom teacher.

BOULDERING (Half Block)

This activity challenges individual students to horizontally traverse the lowest portion of our climbing wall for approximately 40 feet, using small gripping holds to keep them on the wall. This activity requires safety instruction in spotting and may require a lead in warm up activity. Classes larger than 18 students will be split into 2 patrols. Requires two adults.

***CANOEING** (Full Block)

Students will enjoy paddling around on Clear Lake. First, they receive instructions, life jackets and paddles. The instructor demonstrates some basic strokes and students try their new skills in the practice area. Time and weather permitting, the group will then go for a paddle along the lakeshore. Classroom teachers are expected to participate and

take students in their canoes. 1:10 adult to student ratio (including lifeguard, classroom teachers, and OEC staff). Lifeguard on duty. (\$40/class, paid directly to our contracted certified lifeguard. Advance scheduling required.)

COOKOUT (Full block + lunch)

Students first work in groups to prepare their meal at the lodge. Next, they learn the basics of fire building and fire safety. Working in small groups, they build fires to cook lunch outside. This activity takes a full block and replaces a meal in the dining hall. If a group attends camp for only 3 days, it may not be possible to schedule cookout. In that case firebuilding will be scheduled instead.

CRAFTS (Half Block)

Students will explore their creativity learning a craft. They may utilize natural materials such as pine cones and other collectibles or learn how to recycle paper. Popular crafts include paper making, friendship bracelets, leaf prints, leaf or crayon “stained glass”, rain sticks, god’s eyes, and nature picture frames. Pioneer crafts are also an option.

FIND YOUR WAY! (Full Block)

Combining elements of orienteering, survival, map reading, and GPS use, students learn essential survival principles. As a group, they navigate to a location on camp and perform a survival related task such as shelter building or giving their current latitude and longitude. Learn to be prepared!

FIRE BUILDING (Half block)

In this shortened class, students learn the basics of fire building and safety. They will build small fires and possibly prepare a snack such as s’mores. This activity does not replace a meal in the dining hall. For a full block of outdoor fire and cooking experience, please choose **Cookout**.

GEOCACHING (Half Block)

It’s a modern day treasure hunt! Instead of followings clues to find treasure, students must use GPS units to make their way around the course to find the treasures. May be combined with ORIENTEERING or another activity for a full class block.

ORIENTEERING (Full or Half Block)

Students will learn the parts of a compass and how to follow a bearing. They will have an opportunity to practice this new skill on our orienteering courses. A half block version of this class teaches compass basics and may be combined with **Geocaching** or another activity. A full block version of this class will include pace counting and a trip to our more advanced course in the woods.

SURVIVAL (Full block)

Learn the survival “Rule of 3’s” and elements of trip planning. Then practice shelter building skills out in the woods and learn to make a fire through various methods. A great hands-on class! (Note: Does not include compass use.)

SCIENCE THEME Explore and discover scientific concepts with hands-on activities in the outdoors. Activities are listed alphabetically.

ANIMALS (Half Block or part of Adaptations class)

- **Amphibians** Students learn about the natural history of amphibians and have the opportunity to see and touch some of our resident live animals. A live feeding may be a possibility.
- **Birds** Students will go to our bird watching cabin to observe native birds in their natural habitat from the comfort of an enclosed cabin. A close up look at the birds and their adaptations is a favorite part of this activity. Students will also stop by the aviary to view our Great Horned Owl and Red Tailed Hawk.
- **Mammals** Utilizing a set of study skins and skulls, students are encouraged to touch and observe various mammals and their characteristics. Emphasis is on the lives, needs, and habits of these creatures.
- **Snakes** Students will learn about common non-venomous snakes. They may have an opportunity to meet and touch our boa constrictors or other snakes.

ADAPTATIONS (Full Block with an animal choice)

Students will be challenged to "Build a Better Beast" from various odds and ends. They must design their "beast" with several adaptations to survive within its habitat. This activity is usually combined with a visit to some of our live animals for a look at adaptations in action. Please specify which animals (birds, mammals, snakes, amphibians) you would like to explore.

ANIMALS IN THE WOODS (Half Block)

This is a very active survival simulation that takes place in the woods or on the prairie. Students play the roles of predator and prey. They need to get food and stay alive until the whistle blows. For a focus on a variety of Interconnections, we can begin with a look at Predator-Prey, Competition, Mutualism, and Parasitism and then see how these interactions play out in the survival simulation. For a full block of science, we recommend combining with **Energy Flow** to see the big picture from photosynthesis through predation.

CARSON'S CORNER (Half Block)

Rachel Carson was a pioneer of the environmental movement and a proponent of encouraging children to explore and wonder. Carson's Corners, named after Rachel, is a hands on activity cabin. Learn about recycling, senses, tree rings, the water cycle, and much more. This is a great evening or half-block activity.

COMMUNITY MEETING (Full Block)

This is a simulation activity in which campers are told that the school district is considering selling Clear Lake Camp. The students are assigned roles and are asked to actively take on that role when a developer comes to present plans for the site development. How will the plants, animals, and other community members react to the proposal? This activity is done with all camp classrooms together in the style of a real community meeting, complete with mayor and developer. 2 classroom minimum.

EARTHWALK / SENSES HIKE (Full or Half Block)

Take a walk in the woods full of affective activities and see what you may discover! Instructors will include stops along the way for activities to increase sensory awareness and help students acclimatize to being outdoors. This is a great first day activity to get students outside, exploring the camp, and getting in touch with nature in a non-lecture environment. Favorite activities include **Hug a Tree, Magic Spots, Sky Eyes, Underworld, Rainbow Chips, Leaf Slides, Micro Parks, Sound Off, and more!**

ENERGY FLOW (Full or Half Block dependent on choices)

This class uses a series of activities to review how energy flows from the sun to plants to animals in food chains. The number of activities chosen will determine the length of the class. **Photosynthesis** activities may also be combined with **Animals in the Woods** for a full block.

- **Photosynthesis** Students are introduced to photosynthesis through a “leaf magic trick”, learning that inside the leaf oxygen and water, with a little “magic”, produce glucose and carbon dioxide. Students then actively review the process of photosynthesis by retrieving pieces of the photosynthesis puzzle. Their team will put these pieces together to unlock the secrets of photosynthesis. A basic food chain shows how the sun’s energy is used.
- **Deadly Links** This fast-paced activity demonstrates how contamination can move up a food chain through bioaccumulation. Students are identified as minnows, bass or eagles. Each group of animals in turn is released in a confined area, where they tag other students for food. At the end of the round, students count their multi-colored food chips to determine who has survived.

POND (Full or Half Block)

Take a half block quick exploration of the pond, or spend a full block exploring the pond, identifying critters, and using microscopes.

- **Pond Exploration** (Full or Half Block) Students explore the pond and its edges to gather information and water samples. The 270-foot boardwalk allows students to get out into the middle of our 4-acre pond. Students will use nets and hand lenses to study macro-invertebrate life forms. Their collection data will be compared to previous weeks to track the cycles of life in the pond.
- **Pond Lab** (Half Block) In our indoor lab, students use microscopes and to view the microscopic plants and animals of the pond.

RECYCLING (Full or Half Block, depending on chosen activities)

This class uses a series of activities to review recycling both in nature and by humans. The number of activities chosen will determine the length of the class.

- **Life Ledger or The Decomposing Game** Students learn that the earth's raw materials must be used over and over by becoming a part of the soil cycle. They become nutrients and move through the ecosystem in a high-energy tag game. Participants hit by the “disease bopper” must decompose and become soil before re-entering the game as plants. The importance of decomposers is emphasized.
- **Recycle Relay** Students review non-renewable resource use through a short relay race highlighting how recycling conserves resources.
- **Landfill** In a visit to the “Clear Lake Camp Landfill” students discover that many items we throw away could have been recycled, saving space in our “landfill”.

***ROV- REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLES** (Full Block)

Become an engineer in one of our STEM offerings! Students are introduced to the history of remotely operated vehicles and given a mission to complete. In small groups, students receive a bucket of vehicle “parts” including propellers, control box and motors. They are challenged to create a submersible vehicle, test its design, and drive it in the lake. (\$10/student. Advance scheduling required.)

SPECIAL INTERESTS SEMINARS (Half Block on Friday morning)

Camp staff and school teachers offer a variety of activities based on their interests and expertise. Students sign up for their favorite. This allows students to choose their own activities. Teachers are invited to offer classes during this time as well!

THE LORAX (Half Block)

Unwind with movie hour as we view the Dr. Seuss book in classic cartoon movie form. Movie will begin and end with an eco-conscious discussion of the themes.

OTHER EVENING OPTIONS In addition to other activities that can be done after dinner, these activities are always scheduled in the evening.

NIGHT EXPLORATION (Evening as sunset allows)

Head outside after dark on a hike with stops for sensory awareness activities to experience the night and its sounds. Discover that you really can see at night! Not available during Daylight Savings Time.

CAMPFIRE (single class sized) (Evening half-block)

Create memories with classmates at an evening campfire. Learn songs and tell stories with a fire in the background.

ALL CAMPS Offered two out of four evenings a week for the entire group in camp. They are active, fun, social opportunities. Shorter stays may opt for none, one, or two all camp evenings.

BATTLE OF THE GAME SHOWS (Evening)

Students are broken up into random groups to cycle through a series of camp style game show games such as “Win, Lose or Draw”, “Liars’ Club”, “Jeopardy”, and “Wheel of Fortune”.

INDOOR “CAMPFIRE” (Evening half block)

Gather the whole camp together in the Rec Room for camp songs, stories, and skits. May be combined with **Night Exploration** if sunset time allows.

RAPID FOOT MOVEMENT a.k.a. RFM (Evening)

Everyone enjoys some lively music and foot stomping. Students are taught a variety of dances, including some classics (Hokey Pokey), some new (Cupid Shuffle, Cotton Eye Joe), and the ever popular Virginia Reel. Since we don’t want students worry about “partner” dancing we call this activity Rapid Foot Movement and down play the “couple” aspect of dancing. Get ready for a night of fun and send us your dance requests!

SIX SOCKS (Evening)

Part “capture the flag” and part “steal the bacon” Students work together to protect their own three socks (a tube sock stuffed with other socks) from being stolen out the sock corral but are trying to capture the opponents three socks to win the game. A great outdoor evening energy burner! Not available when sunset is before 8pm.