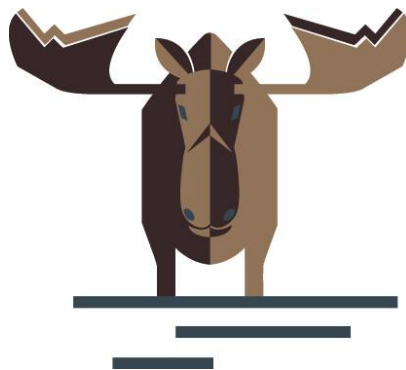




Moose Hill Nature Camp Family Handbook Summer 2026



Welcome to Mass Audubon's Moose Hill Nature Camp! We look forward to meeting your camper and having a fun summer exploring and learning about the natural world.

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Camp Mission

Welcome to Moose Hill Nature Camp! We believe that camp is a place where children can grow, spend quality time outdoors and have fun summer experiences. Through hands-on, inquiry-based activities, free play, games, and nature discovery campers learn about their surroundings, themselves, and others. Spending time learning and playing outdoors helps foster a deep, life-long connection to nature and inspires environmental stewardship.

Camp Goals

- Campers of all backgrounds, abilities and identities feel safe and supported physically, socially, and emotionally.
- Campers explore local ecosystems and develop confidence in nature.
- Campers learn about conservation and stewardship through age-appropriate hands-on activities.
- Campers connect with each other, create friendships, and grow through trying new experiences.

Program Goals

The three key concepts that guide programs at Moose Hill Nature Camp include **community**, **interdependence**, and **stewardship**. At Moose Hill Nature Camp, we strive to create a safe, inclusive, and caring community where each person is respected and supported. We believe that diversity is essential to strength, resilience, and innovation in natural and human communities. Campers discover the interdependence of all living things by practicing sustainable farming and observing nature. Young people develop a sense of responsibility for nature and one another as they continue to care for the land, a tradition of stewardship begun thousands of years ago by Indigenous nations.

Camp staff work to create a unique and fun outdoor camp experience for everyone. Please note that activities and curriculum do not vary between sessions except for themed sessions. For detailed information on each camp group, please visit the camp website: [Programs and Pricing >](#)

Our Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

At Mass Audubon Camps, we strive to create a safe, inclusive and caring camp environment where each person is respected and supported in their learning and growth. We believe that diversity—both in nature and in our human communities—is essential to strength, resilience and innovation, and we are committed to recognizing the unique contributions of each community member.

Camp staff receive training on how to build an inclusive camp group, lead age-appropriate conversations, and prevent and respond to bullying. We provide opportunities for campers and staff to introduce themselves using their names, pronouns, something special about themselves, among other identity-affirming activities. We expect all campers and staff to respect every person's identities and background, and staff will support campers to celebrate each person and their unique story. Mass Audubon does not require staff or campers to disclose any details of their identity.

Camp License & Accreditation

Our camp complies with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (105 CMR 430) and is licensed by our local Board of Health. We are accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA).

Contact Info

Email: moosehillcamp@massaudubon.org

Phone: 781-486-3066

Address: Moose Hill Nature Camp 293 Moose Hill Parkway, Sharon MA 02067

[Get directions to Moose Hill Nature Camp](#)

Camp Staff

Our caring, well-prepared camp staff are actively engaged in teaching and playing with campers. Camp staff bring their enthusiasm for outdoor exploration, a desire to facilitate learning, and a compassionate heart for children. This specialized team works to foster a sense of community among campers and individual connections with nature. Summer staff are carefully selected based on their enthusiasm, teaching experience, natural history knowledge, and deep commitment to engaging campers with nature.

All staff undergo background checks, are certified in CPR and first aid, and receive training in health and safety procedures, child development, natural history, and environmental education best practices.

Camp Leadership

Camp Director, Shawn Moriarty (He/Him), has worked with summer camps and outdoor education programs for 40+ years around the country. Shawn is a firm believer that children need to spend time in nature as often as possible and that time at camp can play an incredibly important role in the development of a child. Shawn grew up in Storrs CT, went to UCONN, and is an author and co-author of two books about experiential education and nature connection.

Payment Deadlines, Deposits and Refund Policy

To find your balance, and to pay, visit massaudubon.org/payments

Full payment for camp and all forms (including health forms and immunization records to CampDoc) are **due on or before May 1**, unless a payment plan has been set up with the Camp Director or Registrar. No camper is allowed to attend camp unless all forms, waivers, payments are complete, or arrangements have been made.

Deposits

- A **non-refundable deposit of \$50 per session** is required at the time of registration.
- Please review your calendar for any scheduling conflicts **before registering**.

Refunds

- **On or before May 1:** You will receive a refund for any payments made **excluding** the \$50 non-refundable deposit per session.
- **After May 1: No refunds** will be issued.

Please note: If Moose Hill cancels a session, you will receive a full refund, including the deposit. Refunds are not available for participant dismissal, failure to attend, absences, or sick days.

Coming to Camp

What to Pack?

Make sure to dress for exploring outdoors and playing games outside. Be prepared for any weather - we will be outdoors so rain gear and something warm may come in handy! Any clothing should be ok to get muddy, wet, or dirty since our camps are hands-on in nature.

Please make sure that your child's name is on everything! We cannot be held responsible for lost items. We will keep a Camp Lost and Found. Any items not picked up by September 15 will be donated to a local charity.

What to Wear:

- Comfortable clothes that can get dirty or muddy
- Closed-toe shoes like sneakers, boots or hiking shoes – for safety and sanitation reasons, no sandals, Crocs or shoes with holes in them such as Keens.
- Socks (to protect against blisters and poison ivy)
- A hat – wide-brimmed is best!
- Sunglasses (optional)

What to Pack:

- Backpack to keep your gear together
- Two nutritious snacks
- Lunch - We notice that campers need to eat more at camp than they do while at school. An insulated bag with an icepack is recommended.
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Water bottle(s)- we can refill throughout the day. Som ice or electrolytes can help on hot days!
- An extra set of clothes and socks, extra shoes if possible
- Raincoat – we will still be out in if it's raining, unless it's a thunderstorm!
- A bathing suit and towel on hot days for sprinkler time / water games

What NOT to bring to camp: Campers shall not bring electronic devices, cell phones, personal treasures, or expensive items to camp. No one (campers, staff or families) may bring personal sports equipment to camp. No one may bring knives, matches, firearms/ammunition, or other potentially dangerous items, and any of these are grounds for dismissal. The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and weapons are prohibited. No animals, other than service animals, are allowed at camp.

Peanuts and Other Allergens at Camp: We allow peanuts and tree nuts at camp and will remind campers that food should not be shared with other campers. If there is a camp group with a known severe allergy, we will inform camp families beforehand and ask that you do not pack any foods that contain the specific allergen.

Food Allergies

Please let us know on your CampDoc form if your child has any food allergies. Some camp activities may include cooking and eating foods outdoors. If your child has a food allergy please contact our [Camp Director](#) to discuss how your child can be accommodated. Campers are not allowed to share lunches or snacks. Moose Hill Nature Camp is NOT a nut or allergen-free site.

Extra Food at Camp: We keep a few snacks on hand for emergencies. If a camper drops their lunch or does not have enough food, we will call home to see if additional food can be provided. If not, we will consult their CampDoc profile for any known allergies and provide them some snacks to help fuel them for the day.

Bathrooms: Campers will have opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the camp day. While we know some of our younger campers may be new to going to the bathroom on their own-- please reinforce potty training before the start of camp. Our staff do not provide one on one assistance during toileting and campers are expected to be able to fully use the toilet and clean up after themselves. Please talk to your camper about this before camp.

If an accident occurs, cleaning up and changing clothes is handled by the Camp Director and another trained member of camp leadership in a matter-of-fact way that does not shame, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Soiled clothes will be bagged and returned to the family at pick-up. If you have any concerns about bathrooming, please contact the [Camp Director](#).

What NOT to bring to camp: Do not bring electronic devices, personal treasures, or expensive items to camp. Cell phones and other electronics are not to be used during the camp day. No one (campers, staff or families) may bring knives, matches, firearms/ammunition, or other potentially dangerous items, and are grounds for dismissal. The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and weapons are prohibited. No animals, other than service animals, are allowed at camp.

Typical Camp Day

Each day there will be a nature-related theme, and the hikes, activities and crafts will be tied to that theme. Each day at camp is built around the schedule below. There will always be some flexibility based on weather, camper interests and what we might see while exploring!

7:45-9:00	Before Camp program
8:50-9:30	Check-in and Choice Time
9:30-9:55	Opening Circle and Songs
9:55-12:00	Theme Intro and Snack/ Activities/ Explorations/ Hikes
12:00-1:15	Lunch and Choice Time
1:15-3:00	Activities/ Explorations/ Crafts
3:00-3:40	Snack and Group Wrap-up
3:40-3:55	Closing Circle
3:50-4:30	Pick-up
4:00-6:00	After Camp program.

Drop-off and Pick-Up

Drop-off

Campers may be check in between **8:50–9:30** am daily to give families a flexible start to their day.

Please drive slowly and stay alert for kids, wildlife, and vehicles. When you first enter the parking lot, stay to the right and turn right. **The parking lot is one-way.**

You will have 2 options at drop off:

- 1) You can stay in your vehicle and do drop off like many schools do where you stay in your car and drive around the loop where you will be greeted by a staff member who will check you in.
- 2) You can park in a space when you first arrive in the parking lot. Then walk over to the camp yard gate and a staff member will check you in. You can walk your camper into the camp yard after checking in. We do ask that adults do not linger too long at drop off as it can make amplify homesickness.

If your camper may have difficulty separating from you, please let us know in advance.

Pick-up

Camper pick-up is from **3:50–4:30 pm** in the parking lot in the same way as drop off.

If you park and walk over and pick up your camper(s), please check in with a staff at the gate before entering the camp yard.

If you are driving through to pick up, please stay in your car.

Campers are released only to people listed on the Release Form and a photo ID must be shown.

Please bring your ID every day as our sign out staff may vary. Guardians may modify the release list by providing a signed note, email, or text.

Early Pick-up: Please notify your staff in advance of any schedule changes if possible.

Late Pick-up: Call us if you are going to be late. Please contact camp as soon as you know you will be late.

After Camp Pick-Up

Pick up for After Camp is at the parking lot. Park your car and head into the Camp Yard where the welcome signs are, and there will be a sign telling you where the After Camp folks are located.

Pick up is by 6:00 pm. If you are running late, please call 720-597-1858.

Medication Check-in

All campers whose medical forms indicate they will be bringing medications to camp will receive an e-mail with the following details:

- To check in medications for campers at Moose Hill Nature Camp sites, please give them to the staff running Check In. **This must be done when dropping off your camper on the first day of a session.**

Severe Weather Drop-off / Pick-up

In the event of thunderstorms or heavy rain, please look at your email for instructions. Drop-off or pick-up will move inside and may be delayed. We will bring campers out to the parking lot for pick-up as soon as it is safe to do so, based on our emergency protocols.

Camper Feedback

We are excited to learn directly from Mass Audubon campers about their experience. Some campers may have the opportunity to participate in a brief, internal group survey to help us learn about and improve the camp experience. Camp staff will make audio recordings, which we will share with the Director of Evaluation to transcribe and analyze. Quotes and data from these surveys may be published, however campers will not be identified. Only campers with prior authorization (media release) signed by their parents/guardians may participate in the camper survey.

Health and Emergency Policies

Our complete healthcare policy is available upon request.

Sick Campers: If your camper is sick, please keep them home until they feel better. If a camper starts to feel sick while at camp, we will have them rest in a designated area until they can be picked up. A staff member will stay with them during this time. If a camper has a fever, they need to be fever free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours before they can return to camp.

Medications: Medication must be sent in the original container with the pharmacy label attached. Medication must be handed to the Camp Director or Assistant Camp Director upon arrival. No medication, whether prescription or over the counter, may be administered to a child without it being listed in CampDoc. Be sure that any inhalers have the prescription label attached or bring along the box with the label attached. All over-the-counter medications should be in their original container with the camper's name and date of birth written on the container along with instructions for administration.

Sun Exposure/Insect Bites: We will have a designated sunscreen and insect spray area near the parking lot and encourage your camper to wear both. Applying sunscreen first and bug spray second is recommended.

Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention: There are potential health risks associated with ticks. Please take an active role in protecting your camper by checking each evening for ticks. Visual checks for ticks on campers' arms, legs, and clothing are a regular part of camp. Learn more at Mass Department of Public Health webpage: www.mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases

Bathroom Needs: Campers will have opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the camp day. While some of our younger campers may be new to going to the bathroom on their own - please reinforce potty training before the start of camp. Our staff do not provide one on one assistance during toileting and campers are expected to be able to fully use the toilet and clean up after themselves. While far from facilities, if it is an emergency, we will provide campers with support if they need to use the bathroom outdoors. Staff are trained on how to provide camper privacy and hygiene and minimize our impact. Please talk to your camper about this before camp. If an accident occurs, cleaning up and changing clothes is handled by the Camp Director and another trained member of camp leadership in a matter-of-fact way that does not shame, humiliate, or

embarrass the child. Soiled clothes will be bagged and returned to the family at pick-up. If you have any concerns about bathrooming, please contact the [Camp Director](#).

Adapting to the weather:

- **Rainy Days:** Campers are outside for most rainy days. Summer rain can be cold. Be prepared with rain gear and jacket. We have outdoor shelters to use when needed as well as indoor spaces to use during thunderstorms.
- **Hot Days:** On very hot days we will play water games. Your camper may be damp when you pick them up! You may want to bring a towel to protect your car seat. Please inform your camper and/or the staff if you wish to limit how wet they get. We also will be using indoor cooling stations with air conditioning throughout the day.

In the event of injury or first aid: Families will be notified, indicating the nature of the injury, what was provided, and by whom. All camp staff are first aid and CPR certified.

In case of emergency: First aid will be administered at the level of training. We will work with you to coordinate further care, pick-up, or transportation of the child. When appropriate, local emergency response personnel will be called. If a camper needs transportation, it will be provided by a parent/guardian or ambulance service. If unable to reach the camper's primary contacts, we will call emergency contacts from the health form.

Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees

Campers are *not* considered to have increased risk of Meningococcal Disease, but the Department of Public Health requires us to provide you with the information in the link below.

[Meningitis info from mass.gov](#)

Please read the document "Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions." You do not need to print or return a signed waiver to us.

Mandated Reporting

Massachusetts law requires professionals who work with children to notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) if they suspect that a child is being abused, neglected, or both.

Health Forms and Insurance

After registering for camp, you will receive an email from CampDoc with a link to fill out required health forms online. CampDoc.com is secure, encrypted and password protected. ALL camper families must complete the health insurance portion of the health form. If your child does not have U.S. health and accident insurance, please contact the camp office.

Accommodations for Campers and One-to-one Aides

Accommodations for Campers

Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our camp programs, campers move on uneven terrain throughout the day. The terrain varies from hard-packed, gently sloped paths to steeper, uneven trails that may have exposed rocks, tree roots, and other obstacles. Weather could affect our trail conditions. We encourage all families to visit the camp's sanctuary prior to enrolling to understand its unique terrain.

If your child requires accommodation, please contact the camp's director as soon as possible; a delay in request could disrupt your child's Mass Audubon camp experience.

One-to-one Aides

Mass Audubon camps do not provide one-to-one support; however, we do welcome one-to-one aides to support campers when they are provided by the family. Aides must follow Mass Audubon's Child Protection Standards, including obtaining a CORI/SORI and background check.

If your child requires an aide in school, please contact the camp's director as soon as possible to discuss how we can best support your child. Family members are not permitted to be aides.

Behavior Expectations

Our staff establishes expectations and offers guidance throughout each day. Our sanctuaries are open to the public and camp groups may spend time in areas that have visitors, vehicles, varied terrain, water, and wild animals. In order for everyone to have a safe and positive experience, campers are expected to follow Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct with minimal support from staff.

Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct

Respect Yourself. Examples include:

- Take care of yourself and your body and ask for help.
- Apply sunscreen and bug spray.
- If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, talk with an adult.

Respect Nature. Examples include:

- Carry in / carry out – take trash and recycling with you or put in an appropriate bin.
- Leave animals, plants, and other parts of nature where you found them.
- Observe wild animals from a distance – use your eyes not your hands, unless it is permitted by camp staff.

Respect Others. Examples include:

- Listen and follow instructions given by camp staff.
- Always stay with your group.
- Use caring and kind language.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Respect other people's physical space and objects.
- Listen to all ideas and be inclusive – allow others to join/play with you.
- Treat others the way they want to be treated and celebrate each other's individuality.
- Use pronouns and names people introduce themselves with.

Proactive Behavior Guidance Strategies

Before coming to camp, family members provide information about camper's needs to camp staff and/or the Camp Director. Camp staff may contact a family to discuss best strategies to meet camper's needs during their session. Any previously known behavior issues that may affect a camper's participation should be shared with the camp before the session begins. Failure to disclose information may result in grounds for termination.

Camp staff are trained to proactively manage behaviors within each group. Some strategies staff use include:

- Reinforce positive behavior through praise
- Provide ample warning to campers prior to transitions
- Clearly state behavior expectations through group agreements and visual tools
- Provide daily schedules through group check ins and visual tools

When campers struggle with the behavior expectations set for them in the Camper Code of Conduct, camp staff will follow one or more of the steps below, depending on the situation. Camp staff may try a step multiple times.

	Leader Response	Consequences for Camper
1st step	Reminders of the rule.*	Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
2nd step	Reminders of the rule, plus short break. Take notes on a behavior incident report. Camp Director or designee may have a brief check-in with family in person or via a call.	Take a break for up to 15 minutes. Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
3rd step	Discussion with the camper about the rules of camp. Update the Camp Director or Assistant Director on the steps taken so far. Supervise camper during longer break. Add to incident report. Camp Director or designee updates family.	Camper will take a longer break which may include an entire activity. Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
4th step	Camper will be brought to the Camp Director or Assistant Director for a discussion. The Camp Director or Assistant Director will speak with the family about behavior contract.	The camper will be asked to reflect on the discussions about behavior and begin a behavior contract.
5th step	The Camp Director and other Leadership staff (Director of Camps, Education Manager, Regional Director) will discuss possible dismissal of participant from the camp and speak with family.	The family will be called. Behavior contract is reviewed. Possible dismissal.

*If a camper intentionally hurts another person, themselves, or runs away from the group or staff member, they will immediately be brought to the Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director and/or Behavior Specialist.

After steps 1 through 4, if there is no mutually agreeable resolution of the behavior issues, the Camp Director may issue a written notice of termination. Refunds will not be provided for behavior-based dismissals.

Prohibitions When Managing Behavior

In accordance with the State of Massachusetts Minimum Standards for Recreational Camps for Children:

- (1) Corporal punishment, including spanking, is prohibited.
- (2) No camper shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- (3) No camper shall be denied food, water or shelter; and
- (4) No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

Termination from Camp

Mass Audubon camps recognize the various needs of campers at different ages and stages of development, and that campers must be treated individually. The family will be notified of issues leading to a child's termination from a Mass Audubon camp.

Mass Audubon reserves the right to dismiss any camper whose actions or behaviors jeopardize the overall health and goals of the camp, including campers requiring routine, on-going one-on-one attention and direction related to behavioral issues. Mass Audubon also reserves the right to dismiss any enrolled participant whose actions interfere with the successful operation of the camp. Repeated failure to comply with camp rules and/or procedures will result in dismissal. No refunds will be given for behavior-based termination of participation.

Immediate Suspension

Any camper whose behavior seriously threatens the emotional or physical safety of themselves, or others may be suspended, for an initial period of up to 2 days. During the period of suspension, the Camp Director, camp staff, and the family will further evaluate to determine whether it is appropriate for the camper to return to the camp.

Examples of behavior that may warrant immediate suspension include:

- Physically attacking or threatening another child, themselves, or an adult.
- Documented harassment of another child, including the use of discriminatory language on the basis of race, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.
- Due to a child's dangerous behavior, an emergency physical restraint is used on the child to protect themselves or others from imminent serious physical harm.
- Leaving the camp site without permission of the staff (includes leaving the sanctuary grounds or leaving the immediate vicinity of an outdoor activity without permission of camp staff).

The camp reserves the right to allow provisional reentry into the camp or to proceed with the termination of the camper's enrollment. No refunds will be given for behavior-based termination of participation.

All families and campers review and sign off on Mass Audubon's Behavior Expectations and Camper Code of Conduct before attending camp. In addition, visit our website to view Mass Audubon's [camp goals and inclusion practices](#).

Camp Policy Requests

Our background check, health care, behavior and discipline policies as well as the grievance procedures are available upon request.

Thank you for being part of the Moose Hill Nature Camp community. Together, we create a space where children can explore, learn, and grow in the natural world. We look forward to an exciting summer of discovery and adventure with your family!

