



# Green Mountain Conservation Camp

## Unexpected Environmental Education

By Alison Thomas, Education Coordinator

Preparing for GMCC season takes a lot of time and effort. There are so many details that must be organized so the camp season runs smoothly. Hiring a great staff, making sure the utilities are functioning, and purchasing supplies are just part of the to-do list, which changes a bit every year. One aspect that we pay particular attention to is the camp lessons and activities. We try to incorporate high quality environmental education lessons that are hands-on, relevant to the campers, and fun. Every year there are small and large changes made to the lessons to ensure that we're providing an educational summer camp experience that is lasting.

Despite all of the planning, organizing, and revising that takes place outside of GMCC season, the best experiences that happen at camp are typically not planned. Campers exploring a new trail they didn't know existed, identifying an interesting snail that is found moving along the forest floor during a hike, jumping in a huge mud puddle after a rainstorm, and canoeing in fog so thick that most of the lake disappears from sight - these are the unplanned activities that the campers seem to remember most.

Does this mean our efforts to improve the camp lessons are wasted energy? No, I think it means we're succeeding in providing the experience we want for GMCC campers. One that is inspiring, memorable, instills an appreciation for the natural resources of Vermont, and creates a curiosity to explore the unknown. By providing unscheduled learning experiences, we've done an invaluable service that not only benefits our youth, but the wildlife, lands, and waters of Vermont.



### GMCC By the Numbers

Basic Session Campers =621

Hunter Combo Certifications =592

Advanced Session Campers =253

Trapper Certifications =129

Boys Attending =654

Waterfowl Certifications =124

Girls Attending =241

Apply Online [http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/edu\\_camps.cfm](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/edu_camps.cfm)

# All the Parts of a Great Camp Season

By Ray O'Connor, 2014 Camp Coordinator

The start of June seems worlds away, but it was just a few months ago that my life was completely absorbed by Green Mountain Conservation Camp. Whether it be preparing for Junior Counselor Orientation, helping the staff coordinate their cross-country travels, reviewing the summer menu, ordering 900 hunter orange hats, or encouraging apprehensive parents that their child was going to love summer camp, I was living and breathing GMCC.



The Junior Counselor (JC) program had almost 100 participants this summer, contributing a cumulative total of over 10,000 volunteer hours! Over 1,000 of those hours were dedicated to camp facility improvements. The JC program also saw some administrative changes, including a new “Step Program” which encourages the Junior Counselors to further develop their skills in leadership, communication, and mentorship.



The staff members this year were truly fantastic, coming from diverse physical locations and educational backgrounds. Four of our staff members were once campers and then Junior Counselors themselves, having at least five years of GMCC experience under their belts. Others travelled from Minnesota, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, and California to educate the youth of Vermont. The staff members were able to balance out their backgrounds in biology, wildlife studies, environmental science, and conservation law to ensure that GMCC campers ended the week with a diverse, yet in-depth knowledge of natural resources.



This summer, campers not only heard from our highly educated GMCC staff, but also from biologists, foresters, and wardens within the Agency of Natural Resources. Presentations included fishing with a seine net, proper rifle and shotgun handling, forest ecology, and wildlife and habitat management. Through these lessons, and all we teach at GMCC, we strive to foster an understanding of natural resources, hoping that campers will become, or continue to be, good stewards of the environment.



**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.

There are opportunities to lead other educational and outreach events, and year-round housing is included.

To Apply, Contact:  
Alison Thomas,  
Education Coordinator  
[Alison.Thomas@state.vt.us](mailto:Alison.Thomas@state.vt.us)  
(802) 371-9975

**Closing Date: November 15**

GMCC staffers are never afraid to get muddy in the name of aquatic ecology.



Campers get the opportunity to release brook trout raised in a Fish & Wildlife Department hatchery into Buck Lake during the first week of camp.



Tipping canoes and learning how to do a T-rescue is almost as much fun as paddling around the lake.



Practicing their archery skills is not only fun, but one of the great outdoor skills that campers learn while at GMCC. Along with archery, they shoot .22 rifles and shotguns.



## New Projects and Programs

### New Benches at Edward F. Kehoe Camp

Thanks to the hard work of Eli Rodd and Blane Wigmore, Kehoe's firepit area got a major facelift! Eli and Blane raised money to purchase hemlock lumber from Clifford Lumber in Hinesburg. They then helped cut and install the new bench tops at Kehoe during GMCC's annual volunteer work weekend. This project was part of their eighth grade capstone project at Williston Central School.



### Junior Counselor Step Program

JCs are an essential part of GMCC staff, as they provide essential help with work projects and camp support. This year the JC program was revamped to include a more structured mentoring and step program. With the program revisions, JCs now have a very structured opportunity to improve their leadership skills while still spending a fun week at GMCC.



## Ethics: The Camper's Code

By Nicole Corrao,  
Information and Education Specialist

You probably learned in your very first hunter safety class that ethics are the moral principles that govern a person's behavior – doing what is right even when no one is looking.

Ethics relate to fairness, respect, and responsibility. As Aldo Leopold said, "Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching – even when doing the right thing is legal." Ethical hunters demonstrate a sense of responsibility, compliance, fairness, and courtesy, both in the field and in everyday situations. Honest people occasionally make mistakes. Accidental or not, hunters are responsible for their actions – everyone is responsible for his or her own actions.

But if you follow every hunting law exactly, are you being ethical? Can ethics be enforced? Or is it a moral code ingrained in us from birth? Are we justified in bending the law just a bit? What if it is the last day of rifle season, and your buck is running through the woods? Do you shoot? What if you're not exactly sure whose land you are walking on as you're looking for your downed goose? You think it dropped



### 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
- Volunteer opportunities

*Your support helps provide youth with an educational, fun, and memorable experience discovering Vermont's wildlife, plant, and water resources.*

**For details:** (802) 828-1460

just over here... but you'll only walk in a few yards, right? You don't have a bear tag, but you're hunting with someone who does... you'll just use their tag. Fine, right?

The legacy of hunting ethics might best be described by Theodore Roosevelt who said, "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing." This has proven true for hunters, conservationists, and people living their everyday lives. Doing right isn't often easy, but it is ethical, moral, and decent; it is something GMCC campers and staff strive for every day, not just during hunting season.

At Green Mountain Conservation Camp, students are taught that hunting is a privilege, not a right. Instructors hold students to their highest ethical standards, not just in Hunter Education classes, but in all courses and throughout their whole camp experience. Not only does attending GMCC teach kids how to be ethical hunters, but it instills values and ethics to be a moral and upstanding individual. Kids who graduate from GMCC expect the same high standards from their hunting companions, family, and friends. If you see suspicious behavior, call the Operation Game Thief hotline at 1-800-74ALERT. Hunt safe. Hunt smart. Hunt ethical.

### Attention Educators

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

Contact Ali Thomas for details.

[Alison.Thomas@state.vt.us](mailto:Alison.Thomas@state.vt.us)

802.371.9975



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Green Mountain Conservation Camp

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