



Green Mountain Conservation Camp

Rain or Shine, Campers have a Blast at GMCC

By Alison Thomas, Education Coordinator

It was a damp start to the camp season, and by the third week the majority of days at both Buck Lake and Kehoe were rainy with occasional thunderstorms. The staff's creativity was definitely pushed by the challenge of coming up with so many rainy day activities. But, by the end of the season both camps were battling the heat with temperatures consistently reaching 90°. Despite the very wet and stormy beginning and hot and humid ending, GMCC staff continued to provide a wonderful experience for the campers. Constant revisions to the schedule of activities due to weather didn't cause the staff to lose sight of GMCC's goal, to teach kids about Vermont's natural resources.

Camper feedback was incredibly positive again this year. Campers repeatedly put "meeting new friends, participating in outdoor activities, and learning new natural resource information" as their favorite parts of camp. One camper described it concisely by stating that their favorite part of camp was "everything" and if they could change one thing of camp it would be "to make it longer." Reading comments like this makes me confident that the program is successfully providing safe, enjoyable, and educational lessons and outdoor recreation activities for the campers.

We hope to continue that success in years to come while integrating new lessons and materials that enhance the current environmental education activities. As described on page 3, there were exciting new programs that were part of the 2013 season, and there are many great new projects planned for the future.

2013 GMCC Totals

- Basic Campers = 566
- Advanced Campers = 235
- Hunter Education Certificates = 516
- Trapper and Waterfowl Certificates = 129



Apply Online http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/edu_camps.cfm

From the Directors

BUCK LAKE

By Tim Fields, 2013 Buck Lake Director

Another great summer at Buck Lake ended with a final campfire, last graduation slideshow, and pulling the behemoth dock out of the lake. This summer, Mother Nature kept throwing new adventures our way: windstorms, thundershowers, rain and sun. Yet one thing remained the same every week; the smiles and laughter of all the campers. This year was a fun mix of new and old at Buck Lake. Camp traditions carried on, graduations were filled with multiple generations of campers, parents, aunts, uncles and siblings who all graduated from Buck Lake. We also saw plans for the future unfolding at Buck. Contractors came to mark out the new shotgun and rifle range, architects visited camp to see where the new dining hall will be built. The camp at Buck Lake will continue to grow and change, but each summer it connects kids to the natural wonders of Vermont.

KEHOE

By Leslie Urban, 2013 Kehoe Director

Summer at Kehoe Conservation Camp on Lake Bomoseen is everything a summer should be. Whether it was a fish biologist demonstrating electrofishing, a game warden training his search and rescue dog, or marshmallows roasting over the campfire, the summer was full of laughter and learning. Campers and staff alike explored wetlands, learned how to shoot muzzleloaders, and took cover from late afternoon thunder storms. Every Friday

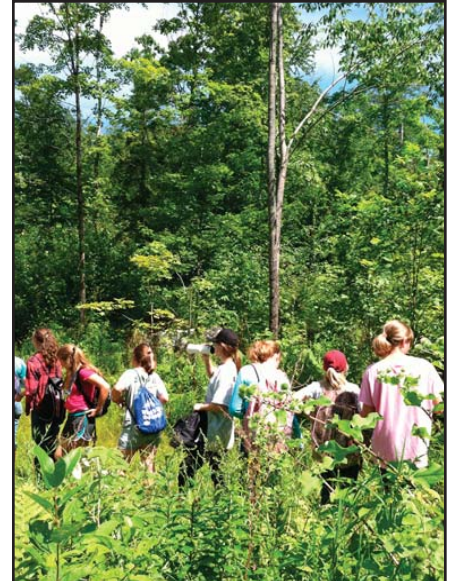


Graduation campers shared stories of excitement and adventure with their parents, leaving many parents wishing they could come to camp too. Summer camp is done for the year and winter is slowly creeping in, but for over 500 campers the memories and skills learned aren't quickly forgotten. Besides camp starts again in only seven months...



Buck Lake campers seine netting during the fisheries biologist activity.

Campers trek through the woodlands and wetlands during a Buck Lake day hike.



Campers at Kehoe enjoy campfire corn during the overnight campout.

Warden Greg Eckhardt assists a Kehoe camper at the shotgun range.



New Programs and Projects in 2013

GMCC debuted two new lessons during 2013, one for basic week and one for advanced. *Animals in the Wild* is a basic week lesson about biodiversity and habitat requirements on a small and large scale. The advanced week lesson, *Blinds, Boats, and Buddies: Waterfowl I.D. and Hunting*, teaches campers about waterfowl management changes throughout the years, natural history, and hunting techniques.



Kehoe's waterfront was completed just in time for camp season this year.

New Dock



Canoe Rack & Fishing Platform



With donations from Woodard Marine of Hydeville, VT and the Northeast Association Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Association, GMCC was able to purchase four new canoes to replace the dented and holey canoes at Kehoe.



In the Works

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Eli Rodd and Blane Wigmore, Williston Central School eighth graders and GMCC basic week alumni, Kehoe will have new benches and a larger fire pit for the 2014 season! Eli and Blane are in the process of raising funds and purchasing materials to help reconstruct the fire pit area.



New shotgun and .22 rifle shooting ranges are currently under construction at Buck Lake, and will be complete by October 31st of this year.

For the next couple of years the lower level of the Education Center at Kehoe will be getting educational displays put up that highlight four main themes that are taught at camp: aquatic education, hunter education, forestry, and habitats.

For the next couple of years planning and construction will be taking place at Buck Lake for the new Education Center and Dining Hall. The current building will remain open until the fall of 2015.

There is a position opening for GMCC staff: Camp Coordinator available (see side panel for details).



GMCC Position Open

APPLY NOW!

• Camp Coordinator •
(Environmental Assistant B)

This is 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.

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

HUNTER EDUCATION

Last year was a significant year – it marked the first hunting season in Vermont history with no hunting-related shooting incidents. Hunters proudly defied the common misconception that hunting is dangerous by using the tools given to them in Hunter Education (HE) classes and applying them to field situations. Education is the key to safety, and I know that the 2012 season was the safest in Vermont history because as a state, we are turning out remarkably educated hunters. Between superiorly trained instructors, outstanding teaching tools, and eager students, great strides are made every year in HE at GMCC. GMCC allows campers (many who may not have any exposure to hunting otherwise) the opportunity to learn about hunting in a safe and secure environment.

Once a student learns the fundamentals of firearm safety, they are often left



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.

Benefits of Membership:

- Receive GMCC Newsletter
- Receive GMCC email updates
- Invitations to special GMCC and Fish & Wildlife Events
- Volunteer opportunities

For details: (802) 828-1460

wondering why they were so intimidated by the prospect of firearms. GMCC staff does a wonderful job facilitating the HE courses, as they teach campers to handle firearms responsibly and with the utmost care. These instructors are the kind of role models campers aspire to be – safe and knowledgeable outdoorsmen and women.

2013 GMCC campers are proudly leading the pack as the most conscientious and well-educated generation of hunters yet. Campers took away not just their orange cards, but a deep appreciation of nature.

Safety is the main emphasis of the HE Program, but it opens the door to so much more than just hunting. HE can also be attributed to longstanding friendships, an appreciation of wildlife, and memories that last a lifetime. 2012 was a good year to be a hunter and hopefully the remainder of 2013 will be even better.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Green Mountain Conservation Camp
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620

http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/edu_camps.cfm

802.828.1460

Attention Teachers

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. Pre-kindergarten through grade 12 teachers are invited.

Contact Ali Thomas for details.

Alison.Thomas@state.vt.us
802.371.9975