



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

YMCA Camp St. Croix

2018 Overnight Camp Parent Handbook

YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities Mission

The Y's mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Camp St. Croix Mission

Camp St. Croix builds community and teaches respect for self, others and nature through summer camp, outdoor education and retreats.

Overnight Camp Goals

That every camper has a ton of fun, makes friends, feels a sense of belonging, and grows through healthy challenge.



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Contact Information

YMCA Customer Service Center

612-822-2267. Call them about registration, payments, financial assistance, cancellations, etc...

Camp St. Croix Office

651-436-8428. Call here for general info about programs, logistics, transportation, etc...

John Bussey, Program Director

612-465-0566. john.bussey@ymcamn.org. Call him if you have specific questions about programs, concerns about a camper, etc...

Ana Frascone, Assistant Program Director

612-900-0735. Christiana.frascone@ymcamn.org. Email her if you have questions about buddy requests, pick up and drop off, cabin groups, etc...

Health emergency on call phone

651-270-7031. For health emergencies only please.

This Document

This document undergoes occasional changes. You can always find the most up to date version at www.campstcroix.org under the Forms and Publications tab

Open House

Join us for a new and prospective parent open house on Sunday, June 3rd, from 11am to 2pm at Camp. We'll have brats and veggie burgers on the grill between noon and 1pm. It's a great chance to



Registration and Forms

Registration

Registration can be completed online at campstcroix.org or by downloading a registration form from campstcroix.org.

Camp will send you a confirmation within three weeks of receiving your registration and deposit.

The balance for your session is due one month before your camper's session unless you have a pre-approved payment plan established with the Customer Service Center.

Changes and Cancellations

We need change and cancellation requests in writing; you can submit your request at www.ymcamn.org/contact_us. Call the Customer Service Center if you would like to be walked through the process.

We charge \$25 for any change of session.

Cancellations made one month or less before your camp session start date are non-refundable.

Cancellations made more than one month prior to your session's first day will result in a loss of your deposit, but you'll get the rest of your money back.

We occasionally make exceptions for medical issues with a doctor's note, so call and ask if that is the case.

Pro Parent Tip

How we manage camper health information has changed. Most information is now fully online and a Camper Personal History is only required if you have not updated your camper's online profile. The medication release form has also gone away, and you'll be given the chance to add the administration schedule for any meds from home during check-in.

Camp St. Croix Forms

Not much is needed on the day camp starts. Those forms that are necessary are available at cwww.ampstcroix.org, under the 'forms and publications' tab. They are also all available during check-in; if you come empty handed you will still have all you need.

The **Camp Store Form** may be submitted if you would like your camper to be able to shop at the camp store.

The **Camper Personal History** is an addendum for those who have not updated their camper's health and medication information in their camper's online YMCA profile. It is not necessary if your camper's online YMCA profile has up to date health information.

You will be shown the health information that we have on file for your camper during check-in. At that time you will be given the opportunity to correct, add, and delete information, including adding in the **administration schedule for any medications** from home.

There is no separate medication release form.

Waivers

For some of our programs, we work with incredible partners. Some of these companies require their own waivers for you camper to take part.

To find out which camp programs require waivers, see page 5, 6 and 7. We'll send them to you electronically two weeks before your session. Please bring waivers with you for check in if your camper is taking part in these programs.

Don't worry, we have spares, but filling out ahead of time gets you through the line super quick.



First and Last Day

Transportation

St. Croix Overnight Camp does not provide transport to and from camp; you are responsible for getting your child to and from camp on the first and last days of camp.

Pro Parent Tip

Don't arrive early on drop-off day. On Sundays we will ask you to wait or return with your camper at 1:00pm. 2:30pm is when the lines are shortest and you get to meet all of your camper's cabin-mates.

Definitely don't forget your ID on pick-up day.

3-day Sessions have unique drop off and pick up times, so please be aware of those.

Directions

Camp St. Croix is located in Hudson, Wisconsin, just two miles south of Interstate 94 off of Exit #2.

From Interstate 94 head south at exit #2, Carmichael Road. St. Croix is on the west side of the road, just after Coulee Road and across the street from Rivercrest Elementary.

Drop-off

Sunday drop off is between 1:00pm and 3:00pm; while Wednesday drop off is between 10:30am and 11:30am.

Please email us during the week prior if you will be arriving late.

You'll be given the opportunity to update your camper's emergency contacts at drop off.

Pick-up

Pick up is between **1:00 and 3:00pm on Fridays**, and between **4:30 and 5:30 on Tuesdays**. If you arrive before pick up time you will be asked to wait until or return at 1:00pm.

Campers can only be picked up by someone listed as an emergency contact and carrying their photo ID.

Boots and Saddles

Boots and Saddles sessions have a 2pm Friday horse show that takes place just down the road from Camp St. Croix at Saint Croix Training center. Plan to pick up your camper between 1pm and 1:30pm to be on time for that show. T

Pro Parent Tip

The magic of camp is in the community that is built. For that reason we only allow campers to leave camp and return for highly unique reasons (medical appointments, etc...). Plan for your camper to miss things like sports games and birthday parties while at camp.



Life at Camp

Cabins. Campers spend their session with two counselors and a group of other campers in a cabin group. Our counselors are well trained and love their jobs (they're not in it for the money, we assure you).

Our cabins include rustic outposts, 'villages' of clustered cottages, and independent cabins. Campers are assigned to their cabin based on age and gender with younger campers in more modern cabins.

Pro Parent Tip

Don't be alarmed if you get a call from St. Croix while your camper is at Camp. Camp likes to get parent input on even minor health, homesickness, and behavioral issues. It's a low bar to call home.

Cabin Activities. Cabin groups do a lot together; they paddle, sail, climb, play sports, make art, geocache, swim, play music. It's during these activities that the strongest relationships, those with cabin-mates, are formed.

Units. It's also common for the cabins of our various units (pioneers, trailblazers, climbers, sailors, etc...) to spend time together playing games, singing songs, and roasting marshmallows around camp fires.

Camper's Choice. Each camper also gets to follow their own passion; on the day they arrive at camp your camper will be able to choose how they want to spend their mornings by signing up for their 'camper's choice' program. Outdoor Cooking, Team Sports, Life Aquatic, and Explore are just a few of the options.

Food. St. Croix campers eat very well; our kitchen takes great pride in providing a tasty, well-balanced diet. If your camper has dietary restrictions or allergies please note them on their Camper Personal History.

Health and Safety. St. Croix campers are well looked after. Our first aid and lifesaving certified counselors are supported by our health professional (an RN) and supervised by our consulting physician. We are two miles from the Hudson Hospital for emergency care.

We will treat bumps, bruises, and scrapes and be in touch with you if anything else comes up. We always call home if an injury or illness impedes a camper's enjoyment of camp.

Communication. Campers may not have cell phones; the ability to contact home tends to feed feelings of homesickness and inhibits cabin integration. If you would like to be in contact with your camper you may send a care package (no food as it can bring unwanted furry guests to the cabins). Mail your care package to:

Camper Name and Session Start Date
c/o YMCA Camp St. Croix
532 County Road F
Hudson, WI 54016.

Homesickness. For many campers, a week away at St. Croix will be the longest time they've ever been away from home. The challenge can be significant for both kids and their parents. St. Croix counselors and instructors are very experienced in coaching campers through their experience and we believe that overcoming the challenge of homesickness can be a hugely positive experience. Prepare your camper for the challenge and do not promise that they can call home "whenever they want"

Pro Parent Tip

Don't send your camper with a cell phone or other electronics. Much of camp's value is that it forces young people to enjoy the natural world and to make new face to face friends. Both of these are impeded by cell phones.



Camp Program Specifics

Traditional Camps

Our Traditional campers experience the best that St. Croix has to offer. They have tons of fun with their cabins in the morning, take part in Camper's Choice in the afternoon, join in all camp games in the evening, and round out the day with all camp games and campfires with their cabin groups.

Importantly, because of equipment and time limitations, traditional campers do not generally have the ability to sail or ride horses. Those are reserved for our sailing and horse Adventure Campers.

- **Summer Samplers.** These campers come to St. Croix for just three days to try out the overnight experience. They take part in Camp's most popular activities.

Summer Sampler sessions have unique pick up and drop off times to allow us to spend more quality hours with campers.

Sunday-Tuesday Summer Samplers:

- Drop off between 1pm and 3pm on Sunday
- Pick up is between 4:30pm and 5:30pm on Tuesday

Wednesday-Friday Summer Sampler:

- Drop off between 10:30am and 11:30am on Wednesday.
- Pick up between 1pm and 3pm on Friday.

- **One-Week Traditional.** These are our oldest, most classic camp sessions. Our youngest campers, typically grades 2-4, form our Pioneer Unit, those grades 4-6 our Trailblazer Unit, and our oldest traditional campers make up our Woodcrafter Unit. Units form extended families for campers with unit coordinators organizing games and activities throughout the week.

While Pioneers spend all nights at camp in their cabin, Trailblazers and Woodcrafters are introduced to Camp St. Croix's tripping program. One-weekers spend a night camping out in Camp St. Croix's South Forest

- **Weekend Bridges.** Campers in grades 6-9 who want to extend their stay can sign up for a canoeing or climbing weekend bridge, connecting one-week Traditional sessions and/or one-week Adventure sessions to form a two-week session

Bridge campers are introduced to camp's tripping program through two night campouts. Canoers paddle down Lake St. Croix to Afton State Park while Climbers head to Interstate State Park for a day of climbing facilitated by Vertical Endeavors Guided Adventures. **(VEGA waiver needed for climbing bridgers)**



Camp Program Specifics

Adventure Camps

In our Adventure Camps participants spend at least two hours a day pursuing the activity of their choice. During the rest of their day they take part in the wide variety of activities and games that Camp has to offer.

Any two one-week sessions may be combined by registering for a Weekend Bridge session. See Camp Program Specifics—Traditional Camps for more information on that.

Bicycling

- **Randonneurs.** Randonneurs spend their week building, maintaining, and riding bikes. The session includes a biking overnight, riding 30-50 miles on mountain bike trails over the course of two days.

Participants must bring their own mountain bike in good working condition and their own helmet.

Climbing

- **Rockers.** Our one week climbers learn the basics on our climbing walls. On Wednesday they head to Interstate State Park for a campout during which eight hours of real rock climbing is facilitated by Vertical Endeavors Guided Adventures. (VEGA Waiver needed)
- **Cliffhangers.** Our two week climbers learn climbing safety basics at Camp and hone skills with a day of indoor climbing at Vertical Endeavors. They leave Camp for a four night campout at Devil's Lake State Park. Vertical Endeavors Guided Adventures facilitates three days of climbing there. (VEGA Waiver needed)

Sailing

- **First Mates.** One week sailors spend their days at our waterfront, learning the ins and outs of our optimist class sailboats while cruising Lake St. Croix.

- **Windjammers.** Two week sailors spend time on Camp's optimist and 420 class sailboats on Lake St. Croix. Over the weekend they spend three nights camping at Willow River State Park, taking part in keelboat training facilitated by St. Croix Sailing School during that time. (SCSC Waiver needed)

Horses

- **Trail Trotters -** Trail Trotters spend two hours each day with our staff wranglers learning basic western riding skills.
- **Boots and Saddles.** These campers spend two afternoons at camp with our staff wranglers and two afternoons at St. Croix Training Center learning English riding basics.

To finish the week Boots and Saddles campers perform in a horse show at 2:00pm, just down the road from Camp at the Training Center. Plan to collect your camper between 1:00 and 1:30 to bring them there on time for the show. (SCTC Waiver needed)

- **Wranglers.** Our oldest horse campers spend their time at Camp training with our staff wranglers. Over the weekend they head to Pine Lake Pastures for four days of world class western riding training. (PLP Waiver needed)

Canoeing

- **Frontiers.** Our one week canoeing campers learn basic paddling skills on Lake St. Croix before departing for a two night overnight trail to Afton State Park.
- **Voyageurs.** Our two week canoeing campers refresh their skills at Camp before heading north to Camp Menogyn to explore the Boundary Waters on an amazing, physically demanding five day paddling trip.



Camp Program Specifics

Leadership Development Program

All of our LDP participants are taught St. Croix's 445 Teamwork Model and spend days developing group leadership skills. In addition they are instructed in outdoor skills in their area of choice.

- **Mariners.** Mariners refresh climbing and sailing skills at Camp and indoors at Vertical Endeavors. They then leave for three days of sailing training with Sail Pepin (on Lake Pepin) and three days of climbing at Devil's Lake State Park (with Vertical Endeavors Guided Adventures). (VEGA Waiver needed)
- **Advanced Mariners.** Advanced Mariners train with Sail Pepin (Lake Pepin) and Vertical Endeavors Guided Adventures (Devil's Lake) before heading north to Lake Superior. There they take part in an extended big water sailing training with Amicus Adventures and push their climbing skills further at Tettegouche State Park. (VEGA and AA Waiver needed)
- **Explorers.** Explorers refresh their canoeing skills at Camp before heading north to explore the Boundary Waters for six days with our partner Camp Menogyn.
- **Advanced Explorers.** Advanced Explorers master wilderness paddling skills during an eight day trip in the Boundary Waters, facilitated by our partners Camp Menogyn. More than anything else St. Croix does Advanced Explorers is a physical challenge.
- **Equestrians.** Equestrians gain skills in horse training, riding and caring with our own wranglers before spending three days learning with Changing Gaits Equine Therapy. (CGET Waiver needed)
- **Advanced Equestrians.** Advance Equestrians train with our staff wranglers, with Changing Gaits Equine Therapy, and with Pine Lake Pastures, then help teach our younger horse campers. (PLP & CGET Waivers needed)

BOLD & GOLD

Selected to represent multiple aspects of diversity, BOLD & GOLD participants are trained in the National BOLD & GOLD leadership curriculum.

Tier 1

- **Canoeing.** Tier 1 Canoers learn paddling basics at Camp and then head out on a two night overnight campout to Afton State Park.
- **Climbing.** Tier 1 Climbers learn basic climbing safety and technique at Camp, then test their skills during a two night trip to Interstate State Park. Outdoor climbing is facilitated by Vertical Endeavors Guided Adventures. (VEGA Waiver needed)

Tier 2

- **Canoe and Climb.** Tier 2 participants refresh their outdoor skills at Camp, then head out on both a climbing and paddling trail similar to that of a two week traditional camper..

Tier 3

- **Canoe and Climb.** The most experienced of our Bold & Gold participants refresh their skills at camp before taking part in both climbing and sailing trails. They are in camp at very similar times to their Tier 2 counterparts, but all activities are separate.



Common Parent Concerns

Weather

Whether it's sunny or rainy is out of our hands, but making sure campers are safe and having a blast is not.

We follow strict American Camp Association based guidelines that keep campers near shelter when weather may be on its way, and keep them inside in safe locations when storms do rage.

Our staff are trained and experienced with indoor games and activities that keep kids having fun even when they cannot be outside.

Emotional + Physical Safety

No other goal we have is as important as keeping kids physically and emotionally safe from harm while at camp. We train our staff by bringing in professionals in the field to teach on subjects such as *bullying and harassment prevention* and *wilderness first aid*. We also follow American Camp Association based standards for avoiding situations in which harm could occur, such as following the "truddy" rule (i.e. a staff and camper, or two campers, can never be alone together but rather must always be in groups of three).

You can be assured that we are doing everything in our power to keep your camper safe while they are at camp.

Ticks + Mosquitos

Ticks and mosquitoes are a horrible nuisance and can be vectors for disease. Though tick- and mosquito-borne disease is rare, we take the potential extremely seriously.

Our counselors make sure campers apply bug spray daily to repel insects that call Camp St. Croix home. We do tick checks at least twice daily, with extra checks after passing through tall grass.

You can help by treating your camper's clothing with permethrin and sending them with bug repellent that you trust.

Sun

Rain or shine, our counselors make sure their campers apply sunscreen at least twice daily.

You can help by being sure to send sufficient sunscreen.

Inclusion + Homesickness

Within the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities Camps, one of the unique roles of Camp St. Croix is to be the first camp that many campers attend. One aspect of this focus is that we train and coach our staff to be acutely aware of the development of healthy friendships between campers. After all, assuring that camper feel a sense of belonging and build friendships are two of our key goals.

You can be assured that your camper, when they are at camp, will be in an environment where counselors are doing everything they can to help facilitate the growth of awesome friendships.

Water

Camp St. Croix sits high on the forested bluff on the east side of Lake St. Croix, the mile and a half wide portion of the St. Croix River just south of Interstate 94. Our sand beach is one of the best in the area, with plenty of space for on-land games and a sandy swim area that we divide into a shallow zone and deep zone. There is absolutely no noticeable current.

Our lifeguards are well trained and follow overlapping standards set up the American Camp Association, the State of Wisconsin, and the YMCA.



Notices

Diversity and Inclusion

It is the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities' vision to serve relentlessly with our community until all can thrive in each stage of life. At Camp St. Croix we make sure that all really does mean all; we gladly welcome campers of all backgrounds, walks of life, and genders. We cherish diversity and want to make sure all feel enthusiastically at home at Camp St. Croix.

Please contact us if you have perspective on your camper that may help us support your camper better while they are at camp (e.g. what your transgender camper needs to feel at home).

Camper Behavior

Caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility are the YMCA's core values and the foundation

- We expect campers to take responsibility for their actions.
- We expect campers to respect themselves, one another, the environment, and camp equipment.
- We expect campers to be honest with one another and their counselors.
- We expect campers to care for themselves and one another.

St. Croix staff do a great job at coaching campers who behave inappropriately. If we find that we are unable to redirect your camper's behavior we may be in contact with you.

We reserve the right to send a camper home, without refund, if consistent misbehavior affects the experience of other campers.

Risks at Camp

Camp St. Croix is a member of the American Camp Association, meaning we are rigorously held to account on over 300 pages of standards regarding health and wellness, transportation safety, aquatic safety, and more. These standards guide us to use the best practices regarding ticks and other insects, sun exposure, hygiene, bullying prevention, staff medical training, and many more.

Nonetheless, like all other experiences in life camp is not risk-free. We simply cannot guarantee that no harm will befall a camper. Please refer to our waiver at [campstcroix.org/ forms_publications/](http://campstcroix.org/forms_publications/) if you would like to review our indemnification policies.



Packing: Traditional Camps

The following is a suggested packing list for a week of traditional camp; decrease for shorter stays and increase for longer ones.

Bring

- A sleeping bag and a twin sheet
- A pillow
- A pair of pajamas
- Two pairs of old tennis shoes or sandals with backstraps for daily wear (no flip flops)
- Two pairs of shorts
- Two pairs of long pants
- One or two long-sleeved shirts
- Three t-shirts
- Five pairs of underwear
- Five pairs of socks
- One or two sweatshirts
- Swimming suit (trunks for boys; one piece for girls)
- Rain jacket or poncho
- A bath towel and washcloths
- A beach Towel
- A hat
- Personal toiletries
- A flashlight (headlamps are great)
- A bandana
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent and sunscreen
- One or two ditty bags

Consider Bringing

- A camera (disposables are a good idea)
- Journal and pen
- Paper, envelopes and stamps for letters (pre-addressed post cards work well)
- Books and small games
- Medications (along with a Medication Release Form)

Do Not Bring

- Cell phones
- Spray deodorant
- Music players or video games
- Food or drinks, including candy
- Fireworks
- Knives or weapons

Pro Parent Tip

Campers are well fed from our dining hall while at camp. We ask that no other food be brought because food hidden in camper cabins attracts pests and rodents, which is NOT pleasant.

Lost and Found

We display our lost and found as we accumulate it for campers to see and parents to peruse on pick-up day. Please make sure to check while you are at camp, as we donate all lost and found to Goodwill every two weeks. Unfortunately we can't send items home for individuals.



Packing: Adventure Camps and LDP

In general, what one would pack for St. Croix Traditional Camps isn't too different from what you'll want if you'll be hitting the trail on your camp session. Here are a few notes and a few additional suggested items

- On trail you want a compact, efficient sleeping bag, consider a mummy-style bag.
- Camp provides a basic sleeping pad for everyone but many campers like thermarest style pads.
- Rain jackets matter a lot; bring one that is durable and breathable so you can comfortably be active in it.
- Down is lightweight and wool and synthetics are warm when wet; tend toward those fabrics and fills instead of cotton for clothing and sleeping bags.
- Good long underwear and wool hats are great for keeping you warm without much bulk.
- Pack in a cheap crushable duffel bag (like an Outdoor Products Basic Duffel) and bring a light backpack or messenger bag along.

Pro Parent Tip

Don't feel the need to go buy lots of new things if you already have gear that will do. With very few exceptions, high-end gear doesn't improve your camp experience. In fact, most St. Croix staff pride themselves on taking good care of old gear and using it until it's worn out.

Bicycling Camps

- Biking Helmet*
- Mountain or road bicycle*
- Lightweight shirt and pants

*Contact Camp if you need to borrow one of ours.

Climbing Camps

- Lightweight stretchy pants
- Climbing shoes*
- Climbing harness*
- Climbing helmet*

*Camp provides these for climbing campers, but some campers like to use their own.

Sailing Camps

- Gloves (neoprene or waterproof are great)
- Wind shirt (optional)

Horse Camps

- Sturdy riding boots or shoes
- Durable riding pants

Canoeing Camps

- Full foot enclosure sandals
- Sturdy boots (for two week sessions)
- Two or three pairs of wool socks

Partner packing lists

We team up with some amazing partners for some of our longest sessions. YMCA Camp Menogyn and Amicus Adventures provide their own packing lists which can be very helpful to prepare for those intense and physically demanding experiences.

