

Hello KEEN Families and Campers!

Welcome to KEEN's Summer Camp Programs 2026!

Pond to Pines and Wild Horizons summer day camps are 100% outdoor immersion held at the Yakima Canyon interpretive Center in Helen McCabe Park, just five miles south of Ellensburg (I-90). Camps run 9am-3pm M-F between June 22 and August 7, 2026. Each camp and all the activities are carefully constructed to provide the ultimate nature-based learning environment while providing a FUN hands-on experience!

Our primitive facilities provide for amazing nature-based experiences and true outdoor nature exploration. During our summer camp children learn through inquisitive and creative activities utilizing science, math, critical-thinking skills, and a great deal of imagination! Plus, we have a ton of fun!

To better serve you, we have developed this parent packet to help you prepare for your child's summer with KEEN. It is vital to everyone's safety and the success of this program that these policies are understood and followed by all. At any time, please feel free to call us if you have any questions regarding the program. We can't wait to see you!

1. Please read the ENTIRE parent packet carefully. The parent packet will tell you all you need to know about packing, procedures, medication, etc.
2. Please take specific note to all check-in and check-out times and procedures. Please arrive at the times listed and expect the process to take up to 10 minutes, possibly longer. If your camper will be arriving late or leaving early, please contact us in advance so that we can prepare. A charge of \$25 will be applied if you are more than ½ hour late at pickup.
3. Please make sure that your camper wears clothing that is appropriate for both the weather and the atmosphere of the park. This includes adequate warm weather gear (hats, sunscreen, bug spray). More information on the dress code can be found in this info packet.
4. During the summer, we will be posting pictures of our campers on our Facebook page. You can opt out of photos in the registration form if you prefer. Please like our page, KEEN – Kittitas Environmental Education Network, to see the feed of activities throughout the summer.

We are committed to helping your campers have an exciting summer. If there is anything we should know that will help make this possible for your camper, please call or email us before programming begins, or let us know at check-in. We want camp to be a great opportunity for fun and play, where campers grow in self-confidence, but also to grow in sense of self, relationships to others, and build an excitement to learn more about the natural world. We are super excited to see you!

KEEN Contact Information

Anna Baldwin, EE Director

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907-666-1147

or

Jen Smith, Camp Director

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509-607-0822

Preparing for POND TO PINES SUMMER DAY CAMP

Paperwork

Please fill out a complete health history and waiver form for each child attending camp before the first day they attend programming. [This form is online and can be found here.](#)

This form is REQUIRED for kids to attend camp.

Health Screenings Prior to CAMP

Monitor the health of your child daily, including symptoms of illness and temperature. If a child is showing symptoms or they have had confirmed contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, our Director will advise you to keep your child home and follow CDC guidelines for isolation. If a child is showing signs of being sick (including but not limited to fever, nausea, vomiting, coughing, shortness of breath, chills, sore throat, etc), KEEN will ask that parents consider keeping every child in the household at home while determining if the symptoms could be a result of COVID-19 or influenza.

Arrival Procedures - 8:45am-9:00am

When you arrive at the park, please remain with your child until you are greeted by a counselor. Please arrive promptly at your designated times each day. POND TO PINES is located at the [Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center please use the main entrance and parking lot by the pit toilets along Canyon Road.](#)

Checking in consists of:

- ✓ Campers' health screening approval;
- ✓ Confirming registration and payment and meeting your counselor;
- ✓ Checking in any medications with staff.

Departure Procedures - 3:00pm-3:15pm

When you arrive at the park, wait until you are greeted by a counselor to pick up your child. When picking up your child, please arrive promptly at your designated times each day. Follow the below instructions to ensure your check out experience is smooth. **YOU MUST CHECK OUT WITH A COUNSELOR BEFORE LEAVING THE PARK WITH YOUR CHILD.**

Checking out consists of:

- ✓ You MUST provide a valid photo ID when picking up your child. We will not release a child to anyone not specifically indicated on the registration form.
- ✓ Collecting any medications.
- ✓ Checking lost and found.

- ✓ Double checking that you have: your child, their extra clothes, their water bottle, and anything else they brought with them.

Medications

We prefer that parents administer routine medications to their child before or after daily programming when possible. We take the administration of medication very seriously. All prescription medications brought must be in their original containers with written directions for dispersal from their doctor. We cannot give medications in any manner that deviate from those orders. Also, while we must have the medications in their original container, we recommend you only send the amount needed for each day plus one extra (in case a pill is dropped and lost, we have a spare). All other non-prescription medications and ointments must also come in their original containers, with signed instructions for dispersal from the camper's parent or guardian. All medication must be identified to staff at check in/drop off.

Communicating with your Camper:

KEEN Summer Day Camps are a place for children to interact with each other, build friendships, and create memories. **Please do not bring cell phones and other electronic equipment, unless needed for after camp communication with guardians.** Not only do these devices detract from genuine interactions with those who are present, but they also are valuables that we would not want to be damaged or misplaced while here. **Please do not bring: cell phones, music players, kindles, ipads or tablets, game players, digital cameras, etc. If a child is found with an electronic device during programming, they will be asked to place it into their backpack until the end of the day.**

If you ever need to get a message to your camper, we will make it happen. Contact information for each program supervisor can be found on page 1. Also, in the event we need to get in touch with you or a contact that you designate, please make sure your contact information is accurate and up to date. Parents will be notified in the event of an emergency, including medical emergency and serious accidents, missing persons, evacuation, fire, or other natural disaster.

Packing List

Please write your child's name on every item to limit cross-contamination and lost possessions.

- ✓ Water bottle (preferably at least 32 oz.), filled. Pond to Pines will have water stations available for refilling.
- ✓ Weather-appropriate clothing, including sturdy close-toed shoes.
 - Summer clothing can include: lightweight t-shirt and shorts, hat, jacket
- ✓ Change of clothes
- ✓ Pond to Pines: water shoes, swimsuit, and towel for pond days, usually Thursdays or Fridays
- ✓ Backpack
- ✓ Sunscreen with your child's name written on it in permanent marker

- ✓ Hat and/or Sunglasses
- ✓ Pond to Pines: Bug spray; our mosquitoes are hungry. Nothing less than 40% DEET works. Treating clothing with Permethrin before camp is encouraged as well.
- ✓ A lunch option will be provided through the FISH food bank. Please indicate on your health and waiver form if you intend to utilize the free lunch option. Any child can bring their own lunch as desired. We will provide two daily snacks. If your child has specific dietary concerns, including allergies, please consider providing extra snacks (or a lunch) for your kiddo.

Dress Code

Please remember that we are an educational environment. Make sure that all clothing is age-appropriate and does not depict the following: violence, gangs, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, pictured or written sexual references. Weather can sometimes change quickly; children should have a warm layer packed. **Closed toed shoes are required.**

Please Don't Bring...

- ✓ Negative attitude
- ✓ Food, gum, or candy (attracts critters; two snacks will be provided daily)
- ✓ Cell phones and other electronics
- ✓ Digital cameras (we will post pictures on Facebook!)
- ✓ Valuables (jewelry, clothes, electronics)
- ✓ Weapons, knives, guns
- ✓ Cigarettes, chewing tobacco, drugs (other than prescribed medication)
- ✓ Animals or pets
- ✓ Personal toys

Helping Your Camper Succeed

Behavior Expectations

Please have a conversation with your children about social distancing, the importance of hand washing, and the use of face coverings. We expect everyone to follow the three rules of fun: **Respect Yourself, Respect Others, and Respect the Environment.** We know that no one is perfect and we are all trying to be better people. Our staff is trained to help redirect behavior, celebrate the positive, and not feed the negative. Please let us know if there are specific strategies you use at home that would be helpful for staff to know during programming. We hope that we can work as a team to help each child have the best experience they can. We may call you if our efforts are not having the desired effect, so that we can brainstorm together. However, certain behaviors are not tolerated: bullying (emotional or physical) and intentional endangerment. Both are grounds for

dismissal. Parents will be notified in the event of unacceptable or risky behavior that puts themselves or others in harm's way.

Setting Realistic Expectations

Engaging in outdoor education experiences are frequently highlights of a child's life, but not every minute of every day is perfect. Truthfully, one of the easiest ways to make friends is through common bonds. If you search your memories – many common bonds are from overcoming challenges. During summer camp – that long hike or that buggy morning - might not seem perfect at the time, but hopefully it will have helped bring campers to new friendships.

Friendships

Building and developing new, quality friendships is one of the primary goals of outdoor educational opportunities (along with safety and learning about the environment). We want our campers to create memorable experiences that they can build friendships on. The prospect of making new friends should be something to look forward to. It may be helpful to discuss ahead of time how to be a good friend and perhaps discuss the kinds of traits to look for in new friends.

Parent Visits

Each session's schedule is packed full of activities and visits disrupt the flow of programming and each camper's experience. As we are also adhering to group size guidelines, we cannot permit additional people outside of our groups to engage in our programming. You're welcome to call at any time to check on your camper, but please don't show up unannounced! If you need to pick your child up early, please call ahead!

Meals and Special Diets

FISH Food Bank will no longer be able to provide lunch for all campers - please pack your child a lunch every day. Two daily snacks (individually packaged) will be offered in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon. If your child has a special diet or food allergy, please indicate this on the registration form so that we can plan to keep your child safe and well-fed! If you have specific dietary concerns for your child, please consider sending them with snacks from home as well.

Photos and Cameras

We have a "no camera" policy for two main reasons: one, to protect our campers' property, and two, to try to make sure that every photo seen is one we think the camper will be proud of. So, we have our staff take photos, pick out the best ones we think everyone would be happy seeing, and share them on Facebook for easy access.

Lost and Found

Of course, we want you to leave with everything your child brought but please recognize that sometimes things do get left behind. Please check the lost and found each day when you pick up your camper! If belongings are labeled ahead of time, it is easier – but regardless, if we find something, we'll store it for a couple weeks giving you a chance to claim it. Please call us as soon as you notice something you've left behind. You will be responsible to come pick it up.

Supporting KEEN's Summer Day Camps

All programming within KEEN's Summer Day Camps are funded by tuition and infrequently, grants and donations. To grow and serve more people, we need your help. Your donations are treated as unexpected funds that help us support campers who might not be able to afford a summer camp experience. Gifts of recommendation also help us grow and serve more people. If you like KEEN's Summer Day Camp programs, please tell a friend and consider us in your annual giving.

Health, Safety & Medical Treatment

In case of Emergency or Illness

While your child is attending **KEEN Summer Day Camps**, our staff will make every effort to contact you by telephone in the event of an emergency or if out-of-camp health care is required.

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the situation – and your schedule – we may not be successful in reaching you. Our staff will use the telephone numbers you have provided on the Registration Form to attempt to contact you. Please make sure that we know how to reach you during your child's attendance during programming. If you have an answering machine or voicemail, we will leave an informational message. In the event that out-of-camp health care is utilized, the Program Supervisor will provide you with a written summary. The summary will include information such as:

- ✓ Nature of illness or health concern
- ✓ Name, address, and telephone number of provider
- ✓ Diagnosis and prognosis of the provider
- ✓ Description of health care given by camp staff
- ✓ Recommendations for follow-up care at home

Normally we will not contact you for routine health care or problems (ie. skinned knees, insect bites, etc.) that are not severe or do not require the additional attention of an out-of-camp health care provider. In these instances, commonly accepted first aid practices will be followed, as per staff training. The decision to contact you in those kinds of situations will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please contact us if you require a practice different from what is described above.

Smoke Hazards and Weather Considerations

Kittitas County is wildfire territory. In the event of an area wildfire, the program supervisor and staff will monitor air quality closely. If air quality limits safe outdoor exposure, **POND TO PINES and WILD HORIZONS** activities will be postponed or canceled. The potential for an indoor location to be utilized in such a situation is not guaranteed. Parents will be notified as soon as possible in the event of such a change.

POND TO PINES and WILD HORIZONS are 100% outdoor summer camp, and we are fully prepared to combat a variety of sudden and seasonal weather patterns. Children are extremely resilient to extreme weather changes, but if a situation could be hazardous to our campers and staff, our program supervisors will contact you with updates and cancellations in a timely manner.

During summer in the Kittitas Valley, we experience extremely hot and arid weather conditions. Our most common health issues during our summer programming are dehydration, sunburn, bug bites, and nose bleeds. Camp staff will encourage campers to drink regularly, and we encourage discussion at home on the importance of drinking water. If your child is prone to nose bleeds in dry conditions, please make a note of this on your health form.

Directions to Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center (Pond to Pines Summer Day Camp)

[From Ellensburg](#) Follow Canyon Road south from town, about 5 miles to YCIC @ Helen McCabe Park (just before the canyon)

[From Yakima](#) Take I-82 north towards Ellensburg Take Exit #3: Thrall Road Turn right onto Thrall Road Turn left onto Canyon Road [Parking](#)

For check-in and check-out, please park in the main park entrance on Canyon Road, near the pond and pit toilets.