

2026  
Camper Parent Handbook



*The Michigan Out-of-Doors Youth Camp is run and operated by Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), the largest state-wide conservation organization in the nation.*



Parents, Guardians and Campers,

Welcome to the Michigan Out-of-Doors Youth Camp for the 2026 season! We are very excited to have you join us for what will be an amazing summer. We are proud to have operated summer youth camp programs continuously since 1946 where more than 59,000 youth have learned to enjoy the outdoors safely and have left camp with a deeper appreciation and respect for the natural world.

We hold camp at Cedar Lake Outdoor Center, a place rich in Michigan history, wildlife and beauty and we could not be more excited to share it with you. Located within the Waterloo State Recreation Area at **2500 Pierce Rd. Chelsea, MI 48118**, we are privileged to call Cedar Lake home and have spent the last two decades restoring the camp with the help of countless volunteers, donors and MUCC members.

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## **HOW TO REACH US**

### ***THE CAMP PHONE NUMBER IS (517) 582-0390***

If you need to contact camp or the camp director when your child is at camp, you will need to contact the camp phone, which is listed above and highlighted below.

You can **text** or call this phone number at any time when your child is at camp. You can email the camp email as well, but just know both the camp email and camp director's email are only monitored about twice a day throughout the summer.

<b>Michigan Out-of-Doors Youth Camp</b>	<b>Phone</b> <i>September 1<sup>st</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup></i> (517) 346-6462  <i>June 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup></i> (517) 582-0390  <b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:camp@mucc.org">camp@mucc.org</a>	<b>Mailing Address</b>  <i>September 1<sup>st</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup></i> 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI 48912  <i>June 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup></i> 2500 Pierce Road Chelsea, MI 48118
<b>Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)</b>	<b>Phone</b> <i>Office Main Line</i> (517) 371-1041	<b>Mailing Address</b> <i>Office</i> 2101 Wood Street Lansing, MI 48912  <i>P.O. Box</i> PO BOX 30235 Lansing, MI 48909
<b>Camp Director – Shannon Stover</b>	<b>Phone</b> <i>September 1<sup>st</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup></i> (517) 346-6462  <i>June 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup></i> (517) 582-0390	<b>Email</b>  sstover@mucc.org

## STAFF



### *Meet the Director – Shannon Stover*

Shannon began her position at MUCC as Camp Director and Educator in January of 2023. Since then, she has run three seasons of the MOOD Youth Camp. Growing up as an equestrian, hunter, angler, and camping, she enjoys connecting children to the outdoors. She comes from a family of veterans, outdoor enthusiasts, and hunting advocates.

Shannon attended Central Michigan University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies with a double minor in Anthropology and Geography.

Prior to MUCC she worked as a camp counselor in Elk Rapids, Michigan while also working as a Behavior Technician for children with autism and other developmental disabilities.

### *Summer Staff*

Michigan United Conservation Clubs carefully recruits its camp staff from verified job posting sites, colleges, universities, and recommendations from trusted partners. Staff selected to be employed at camp have experience in their specific role, outdoor education, working with children, or natural resources, and all staff are CPR/First Aid Certified.

Background checks are completed for all staff hired and participation in a weeklong training session is a requirement. During training, our camp staff learns the importance of teaching techniques, camper motivation, behavior management, leadership, and emergency procedures plus the many different curriculums they will be instructing.

The waterfront director, range officer, and health officer all meet or exceed the requirements of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs for the State of Michigan. We are extremely proud

of the staff at Cedar Lake Outdoor Center and assure you that the utmost care will be taken to provide a safe and encouraging atmosphere for your child at camp. As a state of Michigan licensed camp, we not only meet the requirements of several inspections, we strive to go above those requirements to deliver the best experiences for your child.

*All 2026 staff will be posted on our camp website during our staff training week in June for parents and campers to get to know them. <https://www.mucccamp.org/register-for-camp/staff/>.*

## **CAMPER CHECK IN**

### ***RESIDENTIAL CAMPS***

Camper check-in begins Sunday at **4:00 p.m.** and all campers must be checked in by **5:00 p.m.**

You will be directed to park upon your arrival, and will need your child's medications and camp store money to check in. Please leave all other luggage inside the vehicle.

Check in steps:

1. Check in at the Lodge.
2. Health screening and medication drop-off at the Health Office.
3. Retrieve luggage from vehicle and head to cabin OR if available, drive to cabin.
4. Move camper into their cabin, parent/guardian departs.

We respectfully ask all parents and guardians to depart the property after moving their camper in. This ensures adequate time for campers to settle into cabins, meet counselors, and be on time for dinner.

*All campers will receive a lice check upon arrival, if an indication of head lice is present your child will not be permitted to stay at camp.*

*All campers will be asked prior to entering cabin to confirm their bags do not have items that are not allowed at camp. This includes weapons, drugs, alcohol, electronics, and food/drink. Any of these items must be released to parents, or camper will not be permitted to move in or attend camp.*

### ***DAY CAMPS***

Camper check-in begins each day (Monday – Friday) at 9 am.

On the first check-in on Monday, you will be directed to park upon your arrival, and will need your child's medications and camp store money to check in.

Check in steps:

1. Check in at the Lodge.
2. Health screening and medication drop off at the Health Office.

We respectfully ask all parents and guardians to depart the property after check-in.

*Check in for the rest of the week will be much quicker, with campers being able to check themselves in, Tuesday – Friday.*

# **CAMPER CHECK OUT**

## ***RESIDENTIAL CAMPS***

**Camper pick-up is Friday Morning at 10:00 A.M.**

*(Cedar Lake Teaser Week: Check out is Wednesday at 4 P.M.)*

We request that you do NOT arrive earlier than 9:30 a.m. so as not to disrupt the campers' final activities.

Check Out Steps:

1. Sign out camper in the lodge.
2. Stop at the lost and found and ensure no items are your campers.
3. All campers will be packed up and waiting inside the dining hall for parents/guardians.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU SIGN YOUR CHILD OUT BEFORE LEAVING. NO CHILDREN WILL BE RELEASED TO THEIR PARENTS UNTIL YOU HAVE CHEKED THEM OUT IN THE LODGE.

*PLEASE have whoever is checking out your camper bring their driver's license/ID. No child can be released without proof of identification.*

## ***DAY CAMPS***

**Camper pick-up is each day at 4 pm.**

Check Out Steps:

1. Sign out camper in the lodge.
2. Stop at the lost and found and ensure no items are your campers.
3. All campers will be packed up and waiting for parents/guardians by the flagpole with counselors.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU SIGN YOUR CHILD OUT BEFORE LEAVING. NO CHILDREN WILL BE RELEASED TO THEIR PARENTS UNTIL YOU HAVE CHEKED THEM OUT IN THE LODGE.

*PLEASE have whoever is checking out your camper bring their driver's license/ID. No child can be released without proof of identification.*

## **SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

### ***RESIDENTIAL CAMPS***

6:30 am - Sunrise Swim (optional)  
7:15 am - Camp Wake Up Call  
8:15 am - Breakfast and Flagpole  
9:00 am - Camp Programs  
12:00 pm - Lunch  
12:30 pm - Feet off the Floor (Break)  
1:30 pm - Hunter Safety/Leave no Trace  
2:30 pm - Camp Programs  
5:30 pm - Dinner  
6:30 pm – Free Recreation  
7:30 pm - Showers  
8:30 pm - Campfire  
9:30 pm – Night game/cabin time  
10:00 pm - Lights Out

### ***DAY CAMPS***

9:00 am - Check In  
9:15 am - Flagpole  
9:30 am to 12 pm - Camp Programs  
12:00 pm - Lunch  
12:30 pm - Feet off the Floor (Break)  
1:00 pm - Camp Programs  
2:30 – Camp Store/Snack Break  
3:00 – Camp Programs  
4:00 – Campers Depart

*Camp Programs are assigned based on the camp your child is attending by the Camp Director. A few examples of these activities include, but are not limited to: Canoeing/kayaking, fishing, archery, fire building, shooting, wild edibles, hiking, arts and crafts, camp games, and guest presentations.*

## **LUNCH – DAY CAMPS**

**For our day camps, all campers are responsible for bringing their own lunch each day.** Meals are not provided during day camps. Snacks and other beverages are for sale in the camp store.

You may pack an extra snack for your camper to have during the snack break in the afternoon.

## **SAMPLE MENU – RESIDENTIAL CAMPS**

Here are some *potential* meals that we could have this summer! Of course, they will come with sides and beverages.

Breakfasts: French toast Sticks, Sausage, Pancakes, Mini-muffins, Eggs, Bacon, and Breakfast Burritos

Lunches: Mac and Cheese, Sloppy Joes, Chicken Nuggets, Corndogs, and Pulled Pork

Dinners: Hot Dogs, Burgers, Quesadillas, Tacos, Spaghetti, and BBQ Chicken Flatbreads

- *Cereal, Milk, Juice and Fruit will be provided at ALL breakfasts.*
- *Salad and Juice will be provided at all lunches and dinners.*
- *Accommodations will be made for those with dietary restrictions.*
- *If a camper refuses to eat for 3 consecutive meals, they will be sent home for their own health and safety.*

## **SWIM TESTS**

ALL campers attending the Michigan Out-of-Doors Youth Camp will have to complete a swim test administered by the waterfront director. Swim tests take place prior to any waterfront activities.

- Campers will either receive a blue wristband or a red wristband, indicating their swimming zones, and are required to keep that band on for the entire duration of their week at camp.
- If a camper chooses not to participate in the swim test, they will not be allowed to participate in ANY waterfront activities, including kayaking, swimming, fishing, etc.

## **PACKING LIST**

### ***RESIDENTIAL CAMPS***

*PARENTS: Please pack WITH your camper to ensure contraband is not brought and that the camper has everything they need. Labeling items is also recommended to reduce lost items not getting claimed.*



- ☐ Warm sleeping bag (please do not send just a blanket)
- ☐ Pillow with pillowcase
- ☐ Single sheet to cover a twin mattress
- ☐ Reusable water bottle (REQUIRED)
- ☐ Pants (2-3 pairs)
- ☐ Shorts (2-3 pairs)
- ☐ T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts
- ☐ Sweatshirts, fleece
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Socks (7-8 pairs, you can never have too many socks)
- ☐ Sleeping attire
- ☐ Sturdy/closed toed shoes for hiking (REQUIRED)
- ☐ Waterfront/Shower Shoes (Open toed shoes may only be worn at waterfront and in the shower)
- ☐ Flashlight (not exceeding 100 lumens)
- ☐ Jacket
- ☐ Waterproof rain gear (poncho)
- ☐ Swimsuit and beach towel
- ☐ Bath towel and wash cloth
- ☐ Sunscreen (IMPORTANT)
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Insect repellent (IMPORTANT)
- ☐ Camp store money (Recommendation \$20)
- ☐ Small bag/backpack for daily items (Once campers leave cabin for the day, they will not be back until after dinner) (IMPORTANT)
- ☐ Inexpensive camera
- ☐ MEDICATIONS (In original containers, marked, with instructions)
- ☐ Other personal items needed

## ***DAY CAMPS***

- ☐ Reusable Water Bottle (REQUIRED)
- ☐ Sturdy Shoes (REQUIRED, Open toed shoes may only be worn at waterfront)
- ☐ Waterfront Shoes
- ☐ Jacket or sweatshirt
- ☐ Waterproof Rain Gear (poncho)
- ☐ Swimsuit, Beach Towel
- ☐ Sunscreen (IMPORTANT)
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Insect Repellent (IMPORTANT)
- ☐ Camp Store Money (Recommendation \$20)
- ☐ Small Backpack for items
- ☐ Inexpensive Camera
- ☐ MEDICATIONS (In original containers, marked, with instructions)
- ☐ Other Personal items needed

## **WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP**

These items are considered contraband and if brought, will be confiscated from the camper and returned to their parent or guardian when they are picked up at the end of the week.

- Food, gum, candy, snacks (Don't worry we will feed you plenty)
- Cell phones
- Smart Watches
- iPods, handheld gaming devices, E-readers, electronic tablets
- Knives, of any kind
- Firearms or ammunition
- Archery Equipment
- Axe, Hatchets or Saws
- Pets
- Cigarettes, lighters or matches
- Valuables (Jewelry, etc.)
- Hair Dryer, curling iron, etc.
- Perfume or Cologne
- Illegal Substances (Possession of illegal substances will result in the camper being sent home. It may also result in local authorities being contacted).

## **PACKING TIPS**

- Please label all belongings with the camper's name to avoid items being left at camp and to facilitate lost and found claims later.
- Pack with your camper. Campers may be less likely to leave items at camp if they know which items they brought to camp initially. A checklist for younger campers to take to camp is also handy when repacking.
- Please pack items in a sturdy suitcase or duffle. Items in trash bags or several small shoulder bags are difficult for campers to carry.

*Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the Michigan Out-of-Doors Youth Camp are not responsible for items that are lost, stolen or damaged. Do not send anything that cannot be easily replaced or that you consider to be expensive.*

## **BRINGING PERSONAL EQUIPMENT TO CAMP**

Campers are not allowed to bring any personal archery equipment, firearms or knives of any type. These items will be provided by camp staff.

Campers can, however, bring their own fishing pole and a small tackle box if they wish. We have plenty of gear for campers, but if you are partial to your own pole, you can bring it. Please have it labeled before bringing it to camp.

## **CAMP STORE MONEY**

Campers will be able to purchase two food/drink items a day (pop/Gatorade/candy/chips) from our camp store. The camp store also offers non-food and drink items for campers to purchase, such as posters, camping related items, and other fun goodies. Camp store food/beverage items are \$1-\$3.

The recommended amount of camp store money is \$20. CASH ONLY.

After checking in to camp, your camper's money will be turned into the camp store and the counselors will keep track of what each camper purchases. This is done to discourage campers from having money in their cabins and potentially losing it. On the last day of camp, if your camper has any money left over, it will be returned to the parent/guardian, or it can be donated back to the Michigan Out-of-Doors Youth Camp.

*Staff keep track of how much money they spend, but we do NOT limit them from spending their money, so only bring what you'd be comfortable with them spending.*

## **CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONICS**

We know several children have electronic items, such as cell phones, iPads, Kindles, and smart watches.

However, please do not let your camper bring these items to camp with them. MUCC cannot be held accountable if any personal items get damaged or lost. Cell phones and electronics will be confiscated if found and returned to the parent/guardian at pick up.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Our lost and found bin can be accessed at pick up and any time throughout the summer until the end of the camp season on August 11th. Any items not claimed by August 11th will be donated.

## **LAUNDRY**

Our laundry facilities at camp are only for emergencies. Please make sure your camper has enough clothing for the week.

## **MAIL – RESIDENTIAL CAMPS**

Campers enjoy receiving happy and cheerful letters while at camp and we encourage you to send them! This typically helps alleviate home sickness as well. Tuesday evening/Wednesday morning, campers will be able to open mail from home.

Please consider sending mail one to two weeks before their first day of camp to be sure that they get it during their time at camp. **Please do not send any food, care packages, or contraband items.** *\*We do not guarantee letters will arrive on time to be given to campers if they are mailed, mail is often extremely slow getting to us. Any mail received after campers depart will be forwarded back to mailing address.*

The mailing address is: **2500 Pierce Rd, Chelsea, MI 48118**

*You may bring your letter at check-in instead or email a letter to the camp address (camp@mucc.org) and we will print it out for you. If emailing, please do so BEFORE Monday of your camper's week.*

## **CAMP ADDRESS**

Camp's address is 2500 Pierce Road, Chelsea, MI 48118.

You may type in 'Michigan Out-of-Doors Youth Camp' or 'Cedar Lake Outdoor Center' into your GPS as well. The entrance is off Pierce Road in-between Bush Road and Cavanaugh Lake Road. The GPS may take you too far down Pierce Road. If you end up at the dirt road on the corner of Bush and Pierce, you will need to go back down Pierce Road, and it will be on your right-hand side.

## **HOMESICKNESS**

Missing family, friends, pets and feeling homesick is normal. Knowing this beforehand may be tolerant of homesick feelings. You can help facilitate a successful camp experience by preparing your child for their stay away from home. Encourage them to help with packing and preparation. Inform your child that when they are at camp it is encouraged to speak with a counselor or director if they have trouble adjusting or feeling homesick.

We also know many campers attend with friends or siblings and this can be helpful for them to alleviate that fear or nervousness. However, a lot of campers attending do not know anyone. Out of fairness to all campers, we do not accommodate with groups or bunk requests. If your camper does know another camper or has a sibling attending, they will get to spend time with them regardless of their group or cabin. We strongly encourage campers to build new friendships and stepping out of their comfort zone.

## **VISITING AND CALLING**

There are no visiting times during the week. Mid-week visits can cause homesickness, not only for your child but for other children as well. All campers must remain at camp for the whole duration of their program. If you decide to remove your child from the camp at any time, they are not allowed back on site.

Camp only has one phone line, which we keep free for camp business and emergencies. Campers may not use the phone to call home or to talk to family, except for emergencies. We believe that calling home prompts homesickness and interrupts the routine of the campers. If you have any concerns about your child, please feel free to call the camp and speak with the directors. If there are any problems with your camper the director will call you.

It is a GOOD thing if you don't hear from us! All photos taken throughout the week will be sent to all parents/guardians at the end of their camp week and uploaded to a shared folder at the end of the summer. Due to the fast pace of camp and our limit to electronics, photos of your child are not guaranteed. Staff tries our best to get photos throughout each week.

## **ILLNESS WHILE AT CAMP**

If your child becomes ill while attending camp, the Health Officer will evaluate and take the necessary action. If your camper has severe symptoms, remains sick for more than one day, cannot participate in activities due to illness, or has a fever, the parent/guardian will be contacted, and camper will be sent home.

In an emergency, a camper will be taken to the hospital and parent/guardians are contacted immediately.

Please do not send your child to camp if they have had a fever, stomach or intestinal illness 72 hours or less prior to camp. This is for the health and safety of all campers and staff.

## **CAMP RULES**

These simple yet helpful rules will help keep all campers and staff safe and having fun while at camp. The following things will not be tolerated and can result in your child being sent home from camp.

- Consumption or possession of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.
- Foul, offensive, or abusive language to another camper or staff member.
- Discrimination, harassment, or cruelty to another camper or staff member.
- Theft or damage to property belonging to another camper, staff member or facility.
- Physical relationships between any camper/camper or camper/staff.
- Intentional bodily harm or violence or any kind to another camper or staff member.
- Consistent disregard for safety rules or disruption of camp activities.
- Possession of any weapon, including pocketknives.

## **FOUR STEP DISCIPLINE SYSTEM**

Each camper has a reasonable expectation to enjoy and have a positive camp experience. The misbehavior of one camper or a group of campers should not be permitted to negatively affect the camp experience of others. We do our best to ensure all campers practice social skills that allow them to resolve conflicts and meet their need without resorting to harmful or destructive behaviors. When problems occur, we act promptly. We follow a four-step discipline system, but some actions may warrant skipping a step or steps and be sent home right away. Physical violence, bullying, sexual harassment or possession of illegal substances are offenses that will get a camper sent home immediately.

**Step 1: Verbal Warning** - The staff member will speak with the camper and identify and describe what behavior was unacceptable. The staff member will also offer methods to correct the behavior and describe the consequences if behavior does not change. The counselor notifies the Camp Director.

**Step 2: Sitting out of an Activity** - The staff member will once again speak with the camper and identify and describe what behavior was unacceptable. The staff member will also choose a fun, non-program related activity for the camper to sit out of. The staff member will remind the camper what behavior is expected of them and what the consequences will be in inappropriate behavior continues. The staff member notifies the Camp Director.

**Step 3: Meeting with Camp Director and a call to parents/guardians** - The camp director meets with the camper and together they complete and sign a written "behavior agreement" that outlines the negative behavior and what can be done to prevent it from continuing. Also outlined is acceptable behavior and acknowledging the understanding of the consequences of continued poor behavior. The director will then call the parent or guardian and together the director, camper, and parent/guardian will discuss the negative behavior and what can be done to make sure the camper stays at camp for the remainder of the week.

**Step 4: Camper sent home** - The Camp Director contacts and notifies the parent/guardian that they must come pick up their camper.

## **A HEALTHY CAMP STARTS AT HOME**

This may be the most important section of this handbook. We want every camper to enjoy their time at camp and make memories that last a lifetime. While they are with us at camp, there is only so much we can do to combat a child not having a good time because of personal endeavors in their home life.

Please ensure your child knows they are going to camp and that they WANT to attend camp. If they are not wanting to attend camp, verbally express they do not want to go, or if you sign them up without telling them, any of these situations can cause a negative experience or further homesickness. Keep this in mind before sending your child to camp this summer.

Here are some other things you can do at home to help assure your child has a great summer camp experience.

*Adapted from American Camping Association: A Healthy Camp Starts At Home*

- When children show signs of illness, keep them home. This greatly reduces the spread of illness at camp.
- Teach your child to sneeze in their sleeve, and to wash their hands often at camp.
- Closed-toed shoes are needed for activities such as sports and hiking. This will help avoid slips, trips and falls, which could cause injuries. Stress to your child the importance of wearing closed-toed shoes to prevent a toe, foot, and/or injury.
- Send enough clothes so your child can wear layers. Mornings can be chilly and by afternoon it will be hot. This enables your child to peel their layers off as the weather warms.
- Fatigue plays a part in injuries. Explain to children that camp is not a sleep over, and it is important they get some sleep and not stay up all night.
- Don't forget to send sunscreen and insect repellent. Be sure to instruct your child on how to properly use both.
- Please send a reusable water bottle. Your child can refill it frequently during their stay at camp and staying hydrated is very important!

*If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our Camp Director Shannon Stover. She can be reached at (517) 346-6462 during the off season and **517-582-0390** during the camp season. You can also email [camp@mucc.org](mailto:camp@mucc.org) or [ssstover@mucc.org](mailto:ssstover@mucc.org).*