

DEER CROSSING WILDERNESS CAMP

HIGH SIERRA OVERNIGHT CAMP

EST 1983

2025 DCWC Parent Handbook

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Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp is accredited by the American Camping Association (ACA). We are authorized under a Special Use Permit with the Eldorado National Forest. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



2025 DCWC Contact Information

Office Phone: (650) 369-4382 **Email:** mail@deercrossingcamp.com

Central Coast Office: 614 De La Vista, Santa Barbara, CA 93103

2025 DCWC Camp Schedule

Two-Week Sessions

Session 1: June 15–June 28
 Session 2: June 29–July 12
 Session 3: July 13–July 26
 Session 4: July 27–August 9

Leadership Sessions

Counselor-in-Training (CIT): June 15–June 28
 Leader-in-Training: June 29–July 26
 Wilderness-Guide-in-Training: June 29–July 26

Four-Week Sessions

Session 1/2: June 15–July 12
 Session 2/3: June 29–July 26
 Session 3/4: July 13–August 9

One-Week Session

Session 1A: June 15–June 21
 Session 4A: July 27–August 2

Opening and Closing Days of Camp

All sessions begin on a Sunday and end on a Saturday. Deer Crossing offers bus service to and from Redwood City, Concord and Sacramento for all 2-week and 4-week sessions.

- **1-WEEK CAMPERS:** there is no bus FROM camp. Campers must be picked up on Saturday at 11:30 am at the Loon Lake boat ramp.
- **4-WEEK CAMPERS:** campers staying for two consecutive sessions may stay at camp and DO NOT need to be picked up at the end of their first session. However, if parents want to pick up their campers on Saturday, they must contact the office to make arrangements. This **does not** include campers in the **LIT** and **WGIT programs**, who stay at camp for the entire four weeks.

REQUIRED Forms and Information

Due at least 3 weeks before your camper's session begins.

All forms can be found in your online account ([Parent Login](#) on camp website). All campers must have:

- Up-to-date vaccinations, including a Tetanus shot within the past 10 years.
- Medical insurance valid for use in the United States for the length of their stay at camp.

<i>Health History</i>	Online form – PRINT, SIGN and UPLOAD to your account
<i>Physician Exam</i>	Print and upload online. This form must be based on a physical conducted within 12 months of your camper's arrival at camp.
<i>Immunizations</i>	Upload only if immunizations not included on Health History.
<i>Parent Authorization</i>	Print and upload online
<i>Liability Waiver</i>	Online form
<i>Raft Release*</i>	Online form
<i>LIT Application*</i>	Online form to be completed by camper
<i>CIT-LIT Reference Form*</i>	Print and email to camp office (mail@deercrossingcamp.com)

*If applicable. Special forms for CIT, LIT, and WGIT programs should be completed as soon as possible after enrollment.

BUS Transportation TO & FROM Camp

Camp Bus

On the camp bus, campers begin making new friends before they arrive at camp. Bus reservations are handled on a first come, first served basis. Contact the camp office to schedule your camper for the bus.

The camp bus is air-conditioned with a restroom. Windows do not open so all campers, staff, and the bus driver may wear masks while on the bus. Camp staff supervise bus trips. **For the bus TO camp, campers must bring a bag lunch.** For the bus FROM camp, Deer Crossing will provide bag lunches.

Please arrive at least 15 minutes early. You must sign your camper on and off the bus with the Deer Crossing staff member in charge. Give the staff member all camper medications. Stow gear on the bus as directed. At the end of camp, make sure you collect all of your camper's gear and medications.

Camp Bus Schedule

Sunday TO Deer Crossing: on the first day of each session

Depart Redwood City	8:30 AM
Depart Concord	10:00 AM
Depart Sacramento	12:00 PM

Saturday FROM Deer Crossing: on last day of each session

Arrive Sacramento	2:00 PM
Arrive Concord	4:00 PM
Arrive Redwood City	5:30 PM



Camp Bus Pick-up and Return Locations

- Redwood City: Shinnyo-En USA, 3910 Bret Harte Dr.

Exit Hwy 280 at Farm Hill Blvd. At the stop SIGN, turn left onto Emerald Hill Rd. Turn left onto Bret Harte Dr. At the top of the hill, go through the gate into Shinnyo-En and turn left when the road forks. Take the first right turn into the parking lot. Park near the bus (LUX Bus) or as directed by staff. Do NOT follow your GPS instructions if they route you via Wilmington Way because the back gate will be locked.

- Concord: The Willows Shopping Center, 1975 Diamond Blvd.

Exit Hwy 680 onto Willow Pass Rd. in Concord. Take Willow Pass Rd. to Diamond Blvd. Turn left onto Diamond Blvd. to Willows Shopping Center (on left). The bus (LUX Bus) will be parked near the REI store.

- Sacramento: Capitol Park, 1300 Block of 15th St.

Exit Hwy 80 onto 16th St. and go north toward the State Capitol. Turn left onto L St. and then left onto 15th St. (one way). The bus (LUX Bus) will be parked between Capitol Ave. and N St., on the park side of the street.

If you miss the Bus TO Camp ...

The bus will not wait for late campers. It is your responsibility to drive your camper to the Loon Lake boat ramp.

If you miss the Bus FROM Camp ...

If you miss the bus at your chosen stop, your camper will stay on the bus to its next stop. If you are not at the last stop in Redwood City, your camper will be supervised at all times by our staff and there will be an extra charge.

Call the office to arrange pick-up: (650) 369-4382

PARENT Driving Instructions TO & FROM Camp

Transportation by Parent to LOON LAKE RECREATION AREA BOAT RAMP

For picking up your camper at camp, arrive at Loon Lake boat ramp on Saturday by 11:30 am

For dropping off your camper at camp, arrive at Loon Lake boat ramp on Sunday by 2:00 pm

Meeting Place: Loon Lake boat ramp parking lot – PRINT AND BRING OUR MAP

The last 29 miles takes 1 hour to drive: HWY 50 to Loon Lake boat ramp. Allow plenty of time to arrive by 2:00 pm (see *Map*). There are picnic tables, drinking fountains, and restrooms at the boat ramp area.

Due to the distance from the boat ramp to camp, staff do not wait at the boat ramp area for late arrivals.

This is a Forest Service campground and dogs must be on a leash.

TO Camp: arrive at Loon Lake: Sunday (first day of session), by 2:00 PM

Staff meet campers arriving by bus and parent transportation, and escort them in groups to camp via the Loon Lake Trail. It is an easy hike of about 2½ miles. Their gear goes in by boat. Campers need to have eaten lunch and have a full water bottle.

FROM Camp: arrive at Loon Lake Saturday (last day of session), by 11:30 AM

Staff escort campers as a group out of camp on the Loon Lake Trail. Their gear goes out by boat.

Distances & Driving Times (approximately):

Cupertino to Loon Lake	220 miles, 5 hours
San Francisco to Loon Lake	200 miles, 4½ hours
Concord to Loon Lake	160 miles, 3½ hours
Sacramento to Loon Lake	100 miles, 2½ hours
Placerville to Loon Lake	65 miles, 1½ hours
Ice House Road/Hwy 50 to Loon Lake boat ramp	29 miles, 1 hour (two-lane mountain road)

Drop-offs and Pick-ups at Camp

Sign your camper in and out of camp with the Deer Crossing staff member in charge. Give the staff member all camper medications. Take camper gear to the location directed by staff. At the end of camp, make sure you collect all of your camper's gear and medications.

If You Are Going to be Late ...

- As soon as you know you will be late, call the camp office (650-369-4382). If you will be less than 30 minutes late, the staff will wait for you. If you will be more than 30 minutes late, the staff (and your camper) will return to camp and come back to the Loon Lake Boat Ramp area at your estimated time of arrival.
- Past Pollock Pines on Highway 50, cell service is spotty or non-existent as you get closer to Loon Lake.
- If you do not call the camp office, camp staff will not return to the Loon Lake Boat Ramp area to look for you. They will return only when the Central Coast Office has provided your expected arrival time.
- If you pick up your camper late there will be an extra charge.

Accommodations Near Camp

- Historic Cary House Hotel, Placerville, 530-622-4271
- Best Western Plus Placerville Inn, 530-522-9100
- National 9 Inn, Placerville, 530-622-8334
- Davies Family Inn, Placerville, 530-295-1000
- American River Inn, Georgetown, 530-333-4499

General Camp Information

Packing

Campers are expected to be responsible for themselves and their belongings. Please have your camper pack their own gear so they know what they have and where it is.

- See *Camper Packing List*, below on page 9 and on our website.
- Use a backpack (for backpacking) and a duffel bag for gear. Two medium duffel bags are easier to handle than one giant bag. No footlockers, suitcases, or roller bags.
- Pack only items that you are willing to lose, forget, or break. We do not return forgotten items.
- Label all personal items with the camper's name
- Resources: Redwood Trading Post, REI, Sports Basement, Sierra Trading Post, etc.

Sleeping Bag

Sleeping bags should not weigh more than 6 pounds and should be rated for at least 30° F / -1.1 C

Hiking Boots

Other than a sleeping bag, **hiking boots are the most important item that campers bring to camp.**

Try to buy boots in a store to make sure they fit well. They should be made of sturdy material, give good support, cover the ankle, lace up, have a sure-grip sole, and be well-broken in.

Backpack

A backpack is required for all backpacking trips for two-week campers. Try to buy a backpack in a store to make sure it fits well. We suggest an internal frame pack with a hip belt, large enough to stow clothing and food for three days. Campers tie their sleeping bag on top of the pack and ground pad below it.

Not Allowed

Open shoes of any kind (e.g. sandals, flip-flops, Crocs), electronics (e.g. cellphone, iPod), matches or any fire starter, knives (camp will supply when needed) or other weapons, bar soap, jewelry or make-up.

Camp Photos

Photographs are taken throughout the summer of camp life, activities in camp and on out trips. In early September we will let you know that camp photos are available via the camp website. While we work hard to capture everyone at camp, we cannot guarantee that there will be photos of your camper.

Camp Store

The Camp Store stocks basic items such as toothpaste, sunscreen, shoelaces, single-use cameras, batteries, tampons, stamps, and camp water bottles. We also sell Deer Crossing branded items such as t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, hats, blankets, and stickers. Every camper has a store credit, and cash is not needed at camp. Deer Crossing is not responsible for cash that a camper brings to camp.

Visiting Camp

Camp tours are scheduled only on the first day of each session and begin after the camp bus arrives (2:00 PM). Please let the office know in advance so that we are prepared. Staff will guide you in and out, give you a tour of camp, and provide snacks. It is a 2½-mile hike, 45–60 minutes each way. Bring water, wear hiking shoes, long pants, long sleeves, and a jacket.

General Camp Information (continued)

Homesickness and Separation Anxiety

First time separation anxiety is a real issue, not only for the camper but also for parents. Many campers will experience some level of homesickness while at camp. This is normal and a key growth opportunity for children, and a camp environment is about the best place on earth to experience this growth experience. Camp staff are trained to help campers through the feelings. You can help in this effort by reading the homesickness article on the camp [website](#) or *Homesick and Happy: How Time Away from Parents Can Help a Child Grow*, by Michael Thompson, PhD.

If the first letter(s) you receive from your camper says they are homesick and you have not received a call from either the Camp Director or the Office Manager, your camper is now fine and enjoying camp. We will not keep campers at camp if they are excessively homesick.

Addressing Homesickness Before Camp

There are a number of tried and true concepts in dealing with homesickness, both before your child comes to camp and once they are here.

- Do not be afraid of the topic It should be openly discussed.
- Communicate with the child that the fear and anxiety is perfectly normal.
- Communicate that there will be other children at camp with the same type of concerns.
- Make sure the child knows that the camp staff have dealt with this type of issue and are trained to assist the child through any difficulties they may experience.
- Doug is available to speak with your child before they come to camp so they know there is someone there that knows them and is ready to personally greet them when they arrive.
- Please **DO NOT** make a deal with your child that “if you don’t like it, I will come get you”. The first time a child is unhappy, they may hold you to that promise, and you will be left without any options. You can promise that if there are any problems you will be working with the Director and the instructors to make sure the camper is happy.
- You should discuss the topic long enough that your child becomes comfortable with the concept and is ready for the challenge.
- If you cannot get your child comfortable with the concept of being away from home, your child may not be ready for camp yet.

Mail for Campers at Camp

There is no mail service at camp. We pick up and take mail to the nearest post office, about 50 miles from camp, once a week. To ensure that your camper receives mail, send letters to:

- **Camper’s Name**, c/o Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp, P.O. Box 1227, Pollock Pines, CA 95726
- It may take 5 days for a letter posted in the Bay Area to get to your camper.
- **DO NOT SEND FOOD.**
- Send all mail by US Postal Service. The PO Box does not accept mail from UPS, FedEx, etc.

Health & Safety

Health History Form

This is the most important piece of information we obtain from parents and guardians. The information in this form alerts us to everything from allergies to current medical conditions to emergency contacts and health insurance details. This form is found in your Parent Account, under Forms & Documents. It should only take 10 minutes to complete, and once you have signed the form and submitted it, *you can still go back and make changes*. This form provides our staff with vital information about your child.

Medications

All medications - over-the-counter, prescription, supplements - must be listed on your camper's Health History form. **DCWC stocks most Over-the Counter medications** (listed on page 16). Send enough medications to last the entire time at camp. If your camper uses an inhaler or EpiPen, **send two to camp** - one for your camper to carry (we provide a fanny pack for use at camp) and one as back-up. Keep all medications in the **original packaging** that identifies the prescribing physician (if Rx), name of medication, dosage, and frequency of use. Give all meds to the designated staff member at the bus stop, or if a parent is driving, at the boat ramp. **Do not pack medications in camper luggage.**

We cannot accommodate medications that require refrigeration.

Illness & Emergencies

We will contact you as quickly as possible in the event of a natural disaster, accident, safety or security threat, or medical emergency affecting your camper. If your camper is in the First Aid Room for more than 24 hours, we will contact you to discuss the possibility of returning home if symptoms do not subside within 48 hours. Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp does not communicate with camper families or anyone else through the press or social media. As appropriate, we provide wilderness first aid and CPR-certified staff services as well as transportation to Marshall Hospital in Placerville.

We maintain satellite phones and satellite internet service for emergencies. Emergency helicopter service is available to a nearby landing pad. We are also in communications with the US Forest Service, El Dorado County Sheriff, El Dorado County Health Department, State of California's Fire Department (CalFire), and the two nearest school districts for assistance in case of emergency or evacuation order.

Safety at Deer Crossing

Since 1983, Deer Crossing has maintained a consistently high safety record due to training and awareness. Instructors are certified in Wilderness First Aid, including Professional Rescuer CPR. Some staff are also certified as Wilderness First Responders or Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Most of our staff are certified American Red Cross Lifeguards with advanced waterfront training. In addition to the regular training, we conduct hands-on safety scenario training for all instructional staff.

In addition, all campers learn artificial respiration, canoe rescues, and other wilderness safety skills. Working with both staff and campers results in a safety awareness that filters through all our programs. As part of all activities - from archery to climbing, water sports to campfire, and rafting to day hikes - campers are taught the safety procedures and techniques to ensure their own and others' safety.

Camp Location & Facilities

Camp Location

Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp (DCWC) is located on Loon Lake in Eldorado National Forest in northern California, at an elevation of 6400 ft. (1950m). Nearby is Desolation Wilderness, a beautiful area surrounded by mountains up to 9000 ft. (2743m) in elevation. Deer Crossing is about 50 miles from Pollock Pines, the nearest town. **There is no road access to camp:** campers hike 2½ miles into camp and we take their gear, supplies, food, mail, etc. into camp by boat.

Climate

At Deer Crossing, days are usually quite pleasant, low 80's to mid-90's F (27–35° C). Nighttime temperatures can get very cold. During our mountain summers, it occasionally rains for a day or two.

Facilities

Deer Crossing is fully self-contained. Our rustic lodge built by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1960s for the Boy Scouts, is equipped with a commercial kitchen and large dining hall. The lodge overlooks Loon Lake, and is attached to an adjacent two-story building that houses the crafts room, workshop, storage, first aid room, and director's office. Bathrooms have hot showers, flush toilets, and sinks with hot and cold water. We provide our own electricity and water. Gas generators create electricity, powering refrigerators and lights. Propane tanks provide gas for the kitchen stove and water heater. We pump lake water through filters, ultra-violet, and chlorine sanitation systems for the kitchen and bathrooms. A septic system serves the kitchen, bathrooms, and showers. Camp complies with California State Health Department Regulations for Organized Camps and is inspected annually by the El Dorado County Health Department and the USDA Forest Service.

Sleeping Accommodations

Campers and staff are housed in tents on wood or sand platforms, located in separate areas for girls and boys under the pine trees behind the lodge. Two or three campers share each tent, although younger campers may share a larger tent in each area. Staff also sleep in tents, with female staff tents scattered around the girls' area and male staff tents throughout the boys' area. Each camper brings their own warm sleeping bag and camp provides a foam mattress.

Communications

There is no landline or cell phone service at camp. We use satellite phones to make essential outgoing calls and to communicate with our Central Coast Office. Camp also has satellite-based internet service, which is limited to staff use only. If you have an urgent message for your camper, contact our Central Coast Office for assistance: (650) 369-4382 mail@deercrossingcamp.com

Swimming Skills

Campers must pass a swim test at camp, which is swimming 25 yards in the lake. Dog paddling with their head out of the water does not count as swimming. This requirement helps ensure that your camper will be comfortable swimming in the open water of a mountain lake and will not require an individual lifeguard. If your camper is not a strong swimmer, we recommend you enroll them in swim lessons to give them as much opportunity as possible to improve their skills before camp.

Payment of Tuition & Refund Policy

Deposit and Payment Schedules

- A deposit is required: \$500 for 1 and 2-Week sessions, \$1000 for all 4-Week sessions
- Full payment is due by March 31
- Installment Billing option: Payments due January 15, February 28, and April 15
- Paying by a physical check is the most economical way to pay your camp tuition. A convenience fee will be charged for credit cards (3%) or eCheck (1%). We no longer accept debit cards.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Cancellations must be in writing. Cancellation fees are charged per camper, and families who cancel multiple children would incur cancellation fees for each camper. If you cancel:

- By March 31 – Cancellation fee is \$250
- After March 31 – Cancellation fee is 20% of tuition
- After April 30 – NO refunds

Camp Tuition Insurance

We HIGHLY recommend that you purchase camp tuition insurance because it is your only avenue for obtaining a refund after April 30 in the event something gets in the way of a camper coming to camp. Read the policy carefully! This insurance is available through several companies, such as TravMark (programprotector.mhross.com/consumer/portal/DEER0690CA), AM Skier (amskier.com/peaceofmind-insurance/). International campers can obtain insurance through TravMark's Abroad Insurance and other firms. Read the policies carefully!

Withdrawals, Absences, Late, Arrivals

There is no refund for late arrival or early departure, including homesickness or physical problem.

Camper Dismissals

One of the most difficult things for the Camp Director to do is to dismiss a camper. Before leaving for camp, please discuss with your camper this important condition of enrollment:

Enrollment Application Terms & Conditions #3:

Dismissals: Camp will dismiss a camper immediately whose conduct or influence is unsatisfactory, dangerous, illegal, or at the discretion of Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp, is detrimental to the camp and/or other campers. This includes, but is not limited to, possession of or any involvement with recreational or illegal drugs, alcohol, smoking, weapons, vandalism, fighting, and any other disruptive behavior that is determined by Camp to threaten the health, safety, or well-being of any person, or the smooth operation of Camp. In the event of dismissal, there is no refund and the parent agrees to pick up their child at camp as soon as possible.

In the event of a dismissal, we provide staff supervision, baggage, and transportation services to the Second Dam on Loon Lake at a pre-arranged date and time to meet parents.

Leadership Programs

Counselor-In-Training (CIT)

Deer Crossing's Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program is for teens who want to learn the leadership and outdoor skills for working as a camp counselor. This two-week program is held during Session 1 each summer. CIT candidates are 14–17 years old, with good character, good swimming skills, and the desire and enthusiasm to learn how to lead in a summer camp setting. Two written references from school counselors, teachers, coaches, or employers are required.

CITs learn the basics of being a camp counselor, assist instructors in program activities, and help in the daily jobs of camp life. CITs are guided by a CIT director who helps plan their daily activities, conducts training sessions, and evaluates their progress. Campers who successfully complete our CIT program often enter the LIT program the following summer.

Leader-In-Training (LIT)

Deer Crossing's Leader-in-Training (LIT) Program is an intensive and strenuous four-week program held during Sessions 2 and 3. The LIT program provides teens aged 15-17 with a framework for building leadership skills. Graduates leave camp with increased self-confidence in themselves, and the awareness and skills to positively affect their relationships, and certifications in American Red Cross lifeguard, first aid, and CPR.

LITs participate in camp life, and spend their time in LIT-specific training, such as: developing skills in rock climbing, windsurfing, canoeing, and kayaking, wilderness guide training and orienteering skills, creative problem-solving methods, and goal-setting techniques.

Deer Crossing's LIT program has a maximum of eight campers, and all LIT candidates must apply for the program. Decision criteria to accept a camper into the LIT program include:

- Physical health: Regular exercise schedule, such as after-school individual or team sports
- Swim ability: Can swim at least 300 meters crawl (freestyle) non-stop
- Grades: B average or better
- Extracurricular activities: Regular involvement in programs such as drama, debate, scouting, electronics club, class officer
- Community service work
- Emotional state: Stable, with the ability to keep a positive attitude and a love of challenge
- Prior Deer Crossing experience, including feedback from staff.

To be accepted into the LIT program, campers must enroll in the LIT program and pay the deposit, complete the special LIT application, have a video interview with the Camp Director, and submit two written references from adults who knows them well (e.g., coach, teacher, employer). During the interview, campers may be asked to do some preparation work prior to arriving at camp, such as community service, physical conditioning (especially in the area of swimming), raising a grade point average, or working on other personal areas that the director feels will contribute to their success as a LIT.

Leadership Programs (continued)

Wilderness Guide-In-Training (WGIT)

Deer Crossing's Wilderness Guide-in-Training (WGIT) program is for Leader-in-Training (LIT) graduates aged 16-17 who want to learn and improve their skills in teaching children. The WGIT program is by invitation only, and is a four-week program held during Sessions 2 and 3. A WGIT must show commitment to the values and philosophy of Deer Crossing's leadership programs as shown by active goal-setting practice, attitude development by working on PEGSS, eradicating power-sapping phrases, and demonstrate intermediate or higher skill level in a primary camp activity (such as sailing, rock-climbing). WGITs spend two of four daily activity periods in special WGIT classes (e.g., memory techniques, wilderness first aid), assisting an instructor teach a class, or in periodic group meetings with the Camp Director. The other two activity periods they participate in camp like any other camper. WGITs attend LIT classes to reinforce what they have already learned or to learn new topics that have been added to the LIT program. WGITs are not directly responsible for campers and are always under the supervision of a staff member. Many WGITs return to Deer Crossing as instructors.



A Day at Deer Crossing

7:30 AM: Wake-Up. Campers wake themselves up, get dressed, and clean their tent. Instructors inspect tents for cleanliness and organization at 7:50. A clean tent is your ticket to breakfast.

Activity Board: at 7:30 the daily activity board is created. Campers can request that an activity be offered that day, ensuring that campers get to do the activities they're most interested in.

8:00 AM: Breakfast. All meals are eaten family style. Each table has their own bowls of food and will be passed around the table for everyone to take what they want. Campers must eat everything they put on their plate. Campers eat with their "pods" which consists of two instructors and 5-7 other campers.

9:00 AM: Chores. Everyone at camp - campers and staff alike - does chores. New campers begin with Pine Needle Patrol where they learn basic forestry, tree identification, fire causes and prevention, and how to care for the forest in and around camp. Old-time campers help with a variety of chores, ranging from cleaning areas like the lodge or bathrooms, doing dishes, and assisting with equipment repairs.

9:45 AM: Activity Board Sign-Up. Campers sign up for the day's four activity periods! Sign-up order is rotated so that all campers get a chance to be first for sign-ups. Up to eight different activities are offered during each period.

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM: AM-1 Activities. Instructors will call for your AM-1 activity by shouting, "first call." When you hear "first call" you will meet them at the lodge to gather gear.

12:00 PM: Lunch. Campers eat with their pods, and announcements are at the end of the meal.

1:00 PM: Rest Period. During the daily rest period campers can read a book or magazine, write in a journal or letters home, or take a nap. A bit of quiet time helps everyone keep their energy up.

2:00 – 4:00 PM: PM-1 Activities. Campers continue with their second activity of the day.

4:00 – 6:00 PM: PM-2 Activities. Campers continue with their third activity of the day.

6:00 PM: Dinner. Dinner is a hearty meal and a time when all of camp celebrates birthdays, and camper achievements. Dinner is eaten in pods during the first 5 days at camp, and then free seating with one or two instructors heading each table.

7:00 – 9:00 PM: Evening Activities. Before evening activities start, campers spend time with friends, visit the flagpole, play music, etc. At around 7:30, instructors start activities, such as ping-pong, improv theater, volleyball, guitar, board games, and story-time.

9:00 PM: Lights Out for 12 and Unders. After a busy day, younger campers should be in their tents, tucked into their sleeping bags, with flashlights turned off. Instructors come around to say "Good night" and make sure everyone is in bed. It's been a great day!

9:30 PM: Lights Out for 13 and Ups. Older campers are off to sleep, recharging their batteries for another day filled with excitement, challenge, and laughter

Out-Trips

Whitewater Rafting

Whitewater rafting is an optional one-day raft trip during week 2 of each session. We raft down the upper South Fork of the American River through class 2 and 3 rapids. The raft trips are staffed by the professional whitewater guides of Mother Lode as well as two Deer Crossing certified lifeguards. There is an extra charge for the rafting trip, and a minimum of 12 campers must sign up. Campers must be at least 4'10" tall, weigh at least 85 pounds, know how to swim, and we require a special waiver form.

3 Day/2 Night Out-Trips

The final three days of each two-week session are dedicated to out-trips. With 3–4 different trips each session, we accommodate campers at all levels of interest and skill. Two wilderness backpacking guides supervise each trip. They coach campers in Leave-No-Trace ethics and basic outdoor living skills, and give campers the opportunity to lead the group for part of the trip.

Backpacking Valley Trip

The Valley Trip is ideal for beginning backpackers. Hiking roughly three miles a day with plenty of breaks for food, water, and photos, this trip is a Deer Crossing classic. As certified guides in Desolation Wilderness, we can take campers into such pristine lakes as Buck Island, Rockbound, and the Rubicon.

Backpacking Mini-Ascent Trip

More experienced campers can challenge themselves by participating in planning a Mini-Ascent trip, which cover 5–7 miles per day. Some of the most exciting parts of Desolation Wilderness are not accessible by path and teams may seek out natural water slides, hidden alpine lakes, or mountain summits. Campers on the mini-ascent are proactive and show it through their choice of activities and personal attitude at camp. Campers who want to go on a mini-ascent must interview with trip instructors at camp to determine their readiness for challenge.

Backpacking Full Ascent Trip

Ascent trips are the most challenging backpacking outings offered at Deer Crossing. Campers who qualify for ascent trips are responsible for planning the three-day, two-night backpacking trip on their own. Food, gear, trip goals, rest stops, where to set up camp, everything is decided by the campers. On the ascent, campers truly lead themselves. Instructors' responsibilities are to ensure the safety and well-being of the campers, but not to lead them. Ascent trips have lofty goals that include multiple peak ascents, covering 10–20 miles in a day and hiking off trail, relying on orienteering skills.

Canoe Camping Trip

A favorite among campers, the canoe trip accommodates campers of all ages and physical abilities. Because canoeing is part of our core program, by the time the out-trips depart, every first-time camper knows how to handle a canoe. The canoe trip takes campers to the far reaches of Loon Lake, exploring the lake's Pleasant Lake Arm. We visit islands, discover beachfronts, bask in the sun, and play canoe games. At low water, we may paddle into the cave at the base of Dragon's Lair. Campers on canoe trips often hike to the top of Dragon's Lair peak as a daytime activity.

Rock Climbing Trip

Advanced rock-climbing students are eligible for our exceptional climbing out-trips. The team sets up base camp at the foot of a mountain at the north end of Loon Lake, from where they explore a number of challenging climbing routes. Top-roping protection is set up by instructors, who belay campers to create an exciting and safe experience.

The Deer Crossing Difference

The underlying ethos at Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp is that leadership abilities and emotional resilience are fostered in children in large part through skill development - whether physical, emotional, social, or intellectual. A summer at Deer Crossing means:

-Lots of personal attention. A maximum of 50 campers per session means we get to know you. By name. Our activity offerings are designed daily, based on the interests of each camper.

-Character building. Our campers learn that *true leaders first learn to lead themselves*. The Deer Crossing program is designed to promote character traits associated with leadership: positive attitude, empathy, courage, persistence, and responsibility.

-Instructional depth. Deer Crossing instructors bring out the best in campers. A camper can start, never having seen a windsurfer, and can progress to sailing in the open lake. This goes for climbing, sailing, kayaking, canoeing ... The depth of instruction allows campers to return year after year and progress in their chosen activities.

-Real wilderness. Deer Crossing is a lodge-based, wilderness summer camp, accessible by boat or a 45-minute hike from the nearest trailhead. We enjoy Loon Lake at our front door, peaks rising to over 9,000 feet at the back door, and 100 square miles of national forest around us.

-Family. Lifetime friendships are made at Deer Crossing. Those who first come for two weeks return year after year, some become instructors, and former campers send their children to Deer Crossing.

DCWC Campership Program

Summer camp is powerful - it has the ability to develop character and change lives in important ways. Now more than ever, children need the life skills, experiences, and time in nature that camp provides. We believe camp is for everyone! The DCWC Campership Program, which began in 2023, gives children from underserved communities the life-changing experience of summer camp. Thanks to our generous donors we have provided 12 campers with full or partial scholarships to attend DCWC, and our goal is for them to continue attending camp through our Campership Program. And in 2025 we plan to double the number of campers in the DCWC Campership Program.

Your tax-deductible donation to the DCWC Campership Program will help send deserving children to Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp. We greatly appreciate any level of support!

Why Deer Crossing Matters

Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp proudly does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, national origin, gender or gender identity or on any other basis that fails to properly respect all people. During their time at DCWC, campers and staff benefit and grow from this inclusive community while they develop an appreciation for the out-of-doors, enhance their understanding of their roles and responsibilities toward nature, and simply have fun while building strong outdoor and social skills.

Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp is accredited by the American Camping Association (ACA). We are authorized under a Special Use Permit with the Eldorado National Forest. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



2025 DCWC Packing List

CLOTHING

- ___ 4 t-shirts
- ___ 1 [long sleeved hiking shirt](#)
- ___ 2 long sleeved warm shirts and/or sweatshirts (at least one of these three long sleeves must be cotton/wool for campfire)
- ___ 1 warm jacket, we recommend a light weight [puffy jacket](#).
- ___ 6 underwear
- ___ 3 pairs long pants/sweatpants, including at least one pair of [hiking pants](#)
- ___ 2 pajamas/sleepwear
- ___ 2 swim suits
- ___ 2 shorts or cut offs
- ___ 8 pairs socks (3 wool, 5 cotton), covering ankles
- ___ 1 pair study athletic shoes
- ___ 1 pair old tennis shoes for water activities
- ___ 1 pair [work gloves](#) for forestry projects (hardware store)
- ___ baseball cap or brimmed hat (not cowboy hat)
- ___ poncho or raincoat
- ___ beanie or warm hat

TOILETRIES – MUST BE UNSCENTED

- ___ 2-3 washable, reusable face masks
- ___ personal hand sanitizer (75% + alcohol) for out-trips
- ___ comb and hairbrush
- ___ shampoo, must be UNSCENTED
- ___ toothbrush and toothpaste, UNSCENTED or mint flavored
- ___ lip balm (SPF 15+), must be UNSCENTED
- ___ sunscreen (SPF 15+, waterproof), must be UNSCENTED
- ___ insect repellent. Solid stick or cream/lotion (NO SPRAYS). Natural repellents are ok. [DEET](#) or [picaridin](#) work better.
- ___ [biodegradable liquid soap](#), must be UNSCENTED
- ___ 1 package moleskin (footcare/drug store) [precut](#) or preferably the [uncut](#) kind so we can adjust it to the hot spot
- ___ personal hygiene supplies

MEDICATIONS – DCWC stocks many Over-The-Counter meds

- ___ ALL medications/supplements - MUST be listed on the health form and individually labeled.
- XX Please do NOT send any of the medications we stock (list on next page). Please do NOT send any unneeded supplements.

DO NOT BRING TO CAMP

- XX open shoes of any kind (e.g. sandals, flip-flops, Crocs)
- XX electronics (e.g. cellphone, Kindle, iPod)
- XX matches or any fire stater
- XX knives or weapons of any kind
- XX bar soap
- XX jewelry or make-up

EQUIPMENT

- ___ 1 pair study, [ankle high hiking boots](#), MUST cover ankles, be broken in, and comfortable (not trail or other shoes)
- ___ **backpack (internal frame preferable, must have a hip belt) [backpack examples](#)
- ___ sleeping bag (warm to 30° f, not over 6lbs) and stuff sack [sleeping bag example](#), [compression stuff sack](#)
- ___ extra blanket (in case of unseasonably cold nights)
- ___ pillow (option: [inflatable pillow](#))
- ___ twin fitted sheet (for camp mattress)
- ___ sleeping bag liner (if desired, helps keep bag clean)
- ___ **ground pad (dense, non-absorbent foam; if inflatable, bring patch kit) [foam pad](#), [inflatable pad](#)
- ___ **4' x 8' piece light plastic (for backpacking, under pad) [tent ground tarp](#), [regular tarp](#) (can be bought at hardware stores), or a [rain poncho](#) also works
- ___ 2 towels (bath and/or swimming), [microfiber camp](#) towels are great for backpacking
- ___ laundry bag
- ___ sunglasses with UV protection
- ___ extra pair of eyeglasses and case
- ___ [headlamp](#) and/or flashlight with extra batteries
- ___ 2 1-liter water bottles (not glass) [Nalgene](#) is popular (DCWC sells them at camp) or [Hydroflask](#) (they are heavy).
- ___ **[A Sierra cup](#) is a lightweight bowl for out-trips.
- ___ any backpacking spoon, fork/spoon, or simple metal spoon.
- ___ watch or travel alarm clock
- ___ stationery, stamped envelopes, pens/pencils

OPTIONAL

- ___ bag lunch (a must if taking camp bus)
- ___ musical instrument and case
- ___ digital/single use camera (labeled with name)
- ___ rock climbing shoes
- ___ *wetsuit
- ___ *skateboard helmet (for windsurfing)
- ___ mask, fins, snorkel
- ___ trout-fishing gear (campers 16+ must bring a fishing license)
- ___ books/reading materials
- ___ swim goggles
- ___ UV swim shirt/rash guard

* Deer Crossing has these items, but yours may fit better
**For two-week campers only. Backpacking items are not needed for one-week campers.

NOTE: hyper-links (available through the packing list on the DCWC website) are examples, not specific recommendations
PLEASE: label everything with camper's name

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications Stocked by DCWC

Must be approved on camper's Health History form

Area	OTC Medications	Uses
Pain	Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	NSAID - Reduces fever, relieves mild pain (headaches, sore throats, menstruation)
	Ibuprofen (Advil)	NSAID - Relieves mild-moderate pain (headaches, muscle aches, menstruation, cold/flu pain symptoms)
Airway	Cough drops (generic)	Stop coughs & relieve sore throats
	Zicam	Homeopathic cold relief
	Guaifenesin (Mucinex, Robitussin)	Expectorant – Taken with sufficient water it relieves coughs & congestion by thinning mucous making it easier to cough up or drain from nose
	Dextromethorphan Hbr (Robitussin Coughgel)	Cough suppressant – helps incessant cough
	Pseudoephedrine HCl (Sudafed), ages 12+ only	Decongestant – Relieves stuffy nose & sinus pain/pressure due to common cold, flu, hay fever, allergies, asthma
	Loratadine (Claritin – non-drowsy, 1/24h) Diphenhydramine (Benadryl – fast-acting)	Antihistamines – Relieves allergy & common cold symptoms (rash, watery eyes, itchy eyes/nose/throat/skin, cough, runny nose, sneezing), itching from hives.
Skin	Topical Diphenhydramine lotion (Calamine)	Topical Antihistamine – Relieves pain, itching, discomfort from minor skin irritations (e.g., poison oak)
	Topical antibiotic cream (Neosporin)	Prevent infections in minor burns, cuts, & wounds
	Aloe	Soothes rashes, skin irritations, sun burn, burns
	Hydrocortisone cream	Soothes rashes, skin irritations
	Butenafine HCl (Lotrimin)	Treats fungal conditions for jock itch, athlete's foot, ringworm
	Clotrimazole 2%	Broad anti-fungal for yeast infections, jock itch, athlete's foot, ringworm
Scalp	Pediculosis treatment (Nix)	Treats head lice
Gut	Antacids (Tums, Maalox)	Treats stomach upset, heartburn, indigestion
	Dimenhydrinate (Dramamine)	Reduces motion sickness, anti-emetic
	Bismuth Subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol)	Treats diarrhea, gas, heartburn, nausea, stomach discomfort
	Loperamide (Imodium)	Treats diarrhea
	Magnesium hydroxide (Dulcolax)	Osmotic laxative for constipation
	Docusate sodium (Colace)	Stool softener for constipation
	Senna (Senokot)	Mild stimulant for constipation

Map to Loon Lake Boat Launch

DEER CROSSING

High Sierra Summer Camp

From Sacramento

1. Take Hwy 50 east past Pollock Pines.
2. Where Hwy 50 crosses the American River, turn left onto Ice House Road.
3. Stay on Ice House Rd. for 24 miles. Turn right at the sign that says Loon Lake Campground.
4. Approximately 5 miles, turn right at the sign Eldorado National Forest Recreation Area: Loon Lake.
5. Drive ¼ mile to boat launch ramp parking lot. Park near picnic tables.

Landmarks on Ice House Road

- 9 miles** Ice House Resort (store, restrooms)
- 12 miles** Crystal Basin Information Station (maps, restrooms)
- 23 miles** Ice House Rd / Wentworth Springs Rd junction
- 24 miles** Right turn to Loon Lake
- 29 miles** Right turn to Eldorado National Forest Rec Area: Loon Lake (water, restrooms, picnic tables)

Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp
650-369-4382

Map to Deer Crossing Camp/ Loon Lake Boat Launch Ramp

