

Borrow an Outdoor Educator

A brand-new program!

Saugeen's education department has developed a new program for families who are keeping their children out of school to learn at home – Borrow an Outdoor Educator!

Our outdoor educators can be borrowed for 2 hours at a time, and multiple families who are already within their own 'Bubble' can choose from a variety of themes.

Home base for this program will be at our Resource Centre at Sulphur Spring Conservation Area. Programs listed below are educational, however they are also recreationally based. As each group would include children of various ages, the program will not target a particular age/grade but include a varied age range for the engagement of all participants, including adults.

Price

The cost is \$145 (plus HST) for 1 group of up to 14 participants, including adults. Payment is available through credit card, cash or cheque.

Registration

Groups can reserve an educator between 10 am - 12 pm or 1 pm - 3 pm on any Monday, Thursday or Friday with at least 2 weeks' notice. Educators are available on a first come first serve basis. Booking requests made under 2 weeks' time may also be available, but not guaranteed.

Select one adult from your family/friend group to manage the booking by calling SVCA office at (519) 367-3040 dial "0" or email us at publicinfo@svca.on.ca .

Choose your activity

Look at the list below to see which activity your group would like to do with our educator. After you "return" the Outdoor Educator, groups can stay at Sulphur Spring Conservation Area and picnic or explore more including trails for a hike on their own.

Fall

Nature Exploration and Hike: Using their senses, children will explore nature through experiential activities aimed to heighten their awareness of the world around them. Youth will investigate the ways in which animals respond and adapt to their environment and the seasonal changes.

Focus on Forests: Families will investigate the structure, ecology and importance of trees through a variety of games and activities. After learning how to use a dichotomous key to identify trees, participants will follow one of Sulphur Spring's trails and try their hand at tree identification.

Citizen Science: Learn how to use apps like Seek and iNaturalist to discover what's crawling or growing around you. Find out how your stroll in nature can actually help the scientific community.

Free Play Forest: *It has long been acknowledged that there is a strong link between play and learning for young children, especially in the areas of problem solving, language acquisition, literacy, and mathematics, as well as the development of social, physical, and emotional skills* (NAEYC, 2009; Fullan, 2013; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014c).

At Sulphur Spring, young children will actively explore their environment through play within our secluded cedar forest area. Participants will be engaged in learning through play within this natural forest setting.

Wilderness Survival: Students will learn to be better prepared for outdoor adventure, how to prevent becoming lost, and what measures they can take if they are. Programming focuses on keeping warm, staying in one place and building a shelter (with snow this will be a quinzhee) and a fire in the woods. Basic needs such as food, water and warmth are investigated as well as edible wilds, distress signals, search and rescue methods and what you should take with you to ensure safety.

Geocaching: Learn skills with a hand-held GPS unit to find hidden codes around Sulphur Spring Conservation Area. Once you test your skills with a guide to help you, you can try the world of Geocaching and looking for caches on your own, anywhere in the world.

Find Your Own Way: Want a natural way to learn how to use a compass and map to find your way on site? Orienteering courses offer your students the opportunity to use project (trail markers) and compass orienteering skills. Includes some wildlife skills and information on what to do if lost.

Winter Fun

Frozen Dead Lemming: Long, dark Northern winters encouraged First Nations people to invent many games to sharpen their hunting skills. Games of observation, strength and quick reflexes will help your young ones pass the winter months too. Try your skills at "Frozen Dead Lemming", snow snakes and more!

Snowshoeing: The people of the First Nations taught explorers from Europe how to get around in deep snow. Do you know how? Learn what snowshoes are made of and how people have adapted them to suit their environment and lifestyles. Try on a pair and learn the basics: how to fall, how to get up, how to turn, how to walk and how to run. We walk the trails to see if we can find any animals that have "built-in" snowshoes.

Winter Wildlife: Once there is snow, participants can strap on some snowshoes and become nature detectives. While we might not always see the animals we share the forest with, there are always signs that they are around. Observe the forest and look for scat, tracks, nests and nooks all while enjoying a 'Book Walk' with "Under the Snow" written by Melissa Stewart and Illustrated by Constance R. Bergum along the trail.

Winter Birds: Using the “S” system to identify birds: size, shape, sound, site, season, and special features we will investigate which birds are active at SSCA in winter. Care and use of binoculars and making bird feeders also included in the program.

About Sulphur Spring Conservation Area

Sulphur Spring Conservation Area is made up of more than 200 acres of conservation lands including wetlands, forest, meadows and ponds. There are close to 6 km of trails throughout the property.

Additionally, the SSCA features a variety of wildlife viewing opportunities including trout ponds for viewing rainbow trout and with the ponds, many wild ducks and geese make this their home. Playground equipment structures, a picnic shelter and heated washroom facilities are also available. The area also hosts the Saugeen Valley Children’s Safety Village.

COVID-19 restrictions and safety precautions

Screening

This program is limited to 14 participants, including adults, but excluding the Outdoor Educator. All members of the group must be screened and pass a list of COVID-19 health questions upon arrival at the Resource Centre parking lot and drop off area. Educators will be using the Province Of Ontario’s school screening list of questions <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> before entry to the program. To assist in tracking purposes, we will also be asking for a list of the people (and their phone numbers) participating in the program on the day of your visit (please bring it with you).

If any member of the group fails to pass the health screening, or develops symptoms during programming, the entire group will be asked to leave the Resource Centre/program site and will not be able to participate in the Borrow an Outdoor Educator Program for at least 14 days. It will be your responsibility to have reasonable means to leave the Resource Centre/program site in the event of an unsuccessful screening. Groups are welcome to book a different day at no extra cost after following proper Covid 19 isolating and testing procedures as outlined by the Grey Bruce Health Unit.

Masks

To protect each other, everyone will be asked to wear a mask while inside. If physical distancing is not possible when the program is outside, then everyone will be asked to wear a mask outside as well.

The following individuals do not have to wear a face covering in indoor public spaces:

- Children under two years of age, or children under the age of five years either chronologically or developmentally who refuse to wear a mask and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver.

- Individuals with medical conditions rendering them unable to safely wear a mask, including those with breathing difficulties or cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information.
- Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without help.
- Anyone wearing a face covering that would inhibit the ability to breathe in any way such as, but not limited to, during moderate to intense physical activity (such as running) or activity that would preclude its use (such as swimming).
- Individuals who cannot wear face coverings for any religious reasons.
- Children under Grade 3 will be encouraged to wear a mask.

Educators will also be wearing a mask when physical distancing with group members is not possible.

Refunds and cancellation

Please note that the program may be cancelled at any time due to COVID-19 restrictions. If a cancellation occurs on the day of your booking because someone in your group does not pass the health check, or has developed symptoms during the programming, no refund will be issued. However groups can re-book a different day at no extra cost, after following proper testing and isolation procedures as described by the Grey Bruce Health Unit.

If a cancellation occurs because our facility or staff have been compromised due to the COVID-19 virus, groups can have an option of a refund or rebooking. Refunds will be issued if cancellations are requested at least one day's notice ahead of time.

Any questions regarding the program can be directed to Nancy Griffin, Conservation Education Coordinator (the Outdoor Educator) at n.griffin@svca.on.ca or cell (519)369-4706.