

# GREEN RIVER PRESERVE

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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## A Letter from the Director

Greetings from GRP!

Thank you for your interest in Green River Preserve. We are excited that you are considering a visit to the Blue Ridge Mountains with your students. Together, we will explore, challenge ourselves, make scientific observations and discoveries, and rejoice in the beauty of nature!

Our School of Environmental Education program offers 3- to 5-day residential outdoor education programs for both public and private schools. Our curriculum is designed for rising 5th grade through middle school and is easily adapted for older students. We believe that understanding the interconnectedness between humans and nature brings respect and knowledge for one's self, each other, and all living things.

Through investigating student-led inquiries and immersive nature experiences, our Mentors (instructor naturalists) offer a wide breadth of teachings in ecology, history, and wellness. Teachers tell us that no other program compares in terms of our knowledgeable, inclusive, and supportive team. Many of our Mentors have been working with us for over 25 years; they are educators, artists, scientists, and storytellers who all share a common vision of educating future stewards of the earth.

Green River Preserve's 3,400 acres of forest, fields, and rivers is the perfect environment in which to learn through exploration. Students use all of their senses to experience the outdoors as they crawl into caves, step under waterfalls, plunge into rivers and creeks, explore archaeological sites, track wildlife, sample edible plants, and climb mountains. The physical, social, and psychological benefits of these unhurried outdoor experiences are invaluable. After spending time with us in the Green River Valley, students gain greater confidence and leadership skills as they collect lived experiences of classroom concepts.

We hope to share more with you about the impact of our program. Please do not hesitate to call (828-214-5087) or email ([catherine@greenriverpreserve.org](mailto:catherine@greenriverpreserve.org)) with questions, concerns, and inquiries. Looking for testimonials from teachers and students who've experienced SEE? We would be happy to connect you! We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Seek the joy of being alive,

Catherine Schenck  
Executive Director

## Our Mission & Values

*The mission of Green River Preserve is to inspire environmental stewards through a joyful connection to nature.*

### The Woodcraft Laws

The Woodcraft Laws are the core values of Green River Preserve. Based on original concepts from Ernst Seton of the Boy Scouts of America, *our* Woodcraft Laws were rewritten in 2022 to more accurately reflect the mission of GRP:

#### Beauty

Celebrate wonder. Appreciate all that exists in yourself and everything around you.  
Nurture yourself. Extend compassion for self and others.  
Protect all living things. Share in our collective responsibility to conserve the natural world.

#### Fortitude

Be brave. Support others when you are strong and ask for support when you are challenged.  
Live respectfully. Show deference to those with life experiences unlike your own.  
Be humble. Acknowledge that the greatest and smallest among us have wisdom to share.

#### Truth

Be honest. Build trust in yourself and the world around you.  
Play fair. Let integrity be your compass.  
Stay curious. Seek the truth about the universe and its inhabitants.

#### Love

Be Kind. Show generosity to yourself and others.  
Be helpful. Do your share of the work.  
Be joyful. Seek the joy of being alive.

### Our Goal: Four Pillars of Growth

**Intellectual.** To mentor campers in their quest as future leaders and stewards of the land. To expose children to a wide variety of the natural sciences and foster an awareness of the wonder and complexity of the natural world. To offer experiences for children to learn from a community where ideas, creativity, and discovery are celebrated.

**Physical.** To provide a safe, non-competitive, and healthy outdoor living experience for children. To introduce children to a wide variety of lifelong learning skills and activities such as hiking, fire-building, climbing, cordage-making, swimming, and more!

**Social.** To offer campers a safe, supportive community based on respect where individuals can “Be My Best Me.” To provide an atmosphere free of materialism and cliques where the quality of one’s character is what really matters.

**Spiritual.** To inspire discovery of the interconnectedness of the natural world and the growth of personal virtues and morality. To encourage campers to have a greater respect and understanding of themselves, their environment, and their fellow man.

## Program Essentials

### Mentor Hikes

Every day at Green River Preserve students thrive in Nature's classroom. Guided by trained naturalists, called Mentors, students venture on one to two hikes per day through our private nature preserve. Over the course of the program, students will splash in a waterfall, trek to peaks and rock formations, study our cave and ancient carvings, and look for critters in the Green River.

To teach resilience, positivity, and to instill a sense of wonder at the marvels of the natural world under many conditions, our hikes take place rain or shine. On a typical day, students will venture on a Mentor Hike each morning and each afternoon. At the end of these hikes, students return to base camp to eat and rest before the next activity. Students are divided into hiking groups of 10-12 and will rotate with this same group to different hikes.

**The Cave:** 1½ to 3 hours, easy walk. Visit clear-cut and game feed plots on your way to the cave. Walk and crawl into multi-chambered cave. See a hand cut chimney, bats, and cave crickets. Experience pitch-black darkness after scooting through a narrow opening into one of the cave's chambers. Children love the adventure. You'll get dirty!

**Long Rock / Upper Bald:** 2 to 3 hours, easy walk. See beautiful mountain overlooks from this Natural Heritage designated site. Gain first-hand knowledge of ancient erosion on exfoliated granitic domes. Due to an unusual plant community (with a sizable nearby feed plot), this area provides a wonderful wildlife habitat and services as a great introduction to mountain ecology.

**The River / Hemlock Field:** 1½ to 3 hours, easy walk. This area provides a hands-on look into the early history of the Green River valley. A short walk reveals a pioneer cabin site circa 1790, with a nearby spring and cemetery. After viewing a grove of original growth hemlock and examining the flora and fauna of the "bottomland", wade through a stream and feed the wild trout. -

**Uncle's Creek Falls:** 2½ to 3 hours, moderate walk. Climbing from the valley floor to the headwaters of Uncle's Creek provides a memorable first glimpse of the falls. Stepping under the falls to join the "Polar Bear Club" is quite a thrill for some students while others are content to enjoy the cool mist in this original growth forest. Abundant with wildlife, the riparian zone offers great homes to critters such as salamanders, crawfish and the native brook trout.

**The Spire/Big Laurel:** 1 ½ to 3 hours, moderate to strenuous hike. This trail was built by our Trail Blazer Leadership crew in 2012 and is an incredibly diverse hike with many ladder structures to climb on the way. Campers will hike to Big Laurel Creek, see waterfalls along the way, and get the opportunity to try out a natural rockslide. The reward of the wet feet and heavy breathing is to sit on top of a rock spire with a spectacular view of the Green River Valley.

**Lower Bald Rock:** 2 to 3 hours, moderate to strenuous hike. View spectacular overlooks of the Green River Valley. This Natural Heritage designated sight is peaceful and undisturbed with interesting plant, insect and bird life. This is a wonderful destination at The Green River Preserve. Bring your camera!

## Meals

We eat family style at GRP, in a cozy log cabin called the Lodge. Each table will have serving dishes with food for the entire table. Meals are hearty, delicious, and kid-friendly. Breakfast entrees are supplemented with a fruit and yogurt bar. Lunch and dinner are complemented with a salad bar. A vegetarian entree is available at all meals and reasonable accommodations will be made for campers with food allergies. A chalkboard displayed in the Dining Lodge lists all the items on the menu as well as any common allergens found in each dish.

Campers who have extreme dietary restrictions or allergies may plan to supplement meals with personal food brought from home. Personal food must be checked in to the Kitchen. Due to the number of children with severe nut allergies, Green River Preserve strives to be a nut-free community. Products containing peanuts or tree nuts are not allowed in the Dining Lodge or Kitchen. Please call the camp office at 828-698-8828 if you have questions about meals, allergies, or dietary restrictions, and we'll be happy to connect you with our Kitchen team.

## Evening Programs

A typical SEE program has at least 3 nights, and those evenings offer students, chaperones, and GRP staff the chance to build a vibrant and healthy community. We have standard programming that we love, AND, we are happy to work with your team to meet your school's needs and interests. A typical program begins with a Council Fire the first night, proceeds with a Night Exploration the second evening, and closes with a Variety Show. (Details below.)

Please communicate with Catherine if you have any questions or special requests for evening programs.

**A Council Fire** sets the tone for your time spent here. You will sit back and be entertained by our talented staff members. You may witness fire by friction, dance a wild jig, sing some hilarious songs, and listen to storytellers weave captivating tales. Get ready to be amazed.

**Night Exploration:** Students spend the evening exploring the wonders of nightlife in the forest. They will discover what adaptations help animals stay active at night and encourage the use of senses other than sight. The explorations also provide opportunities for learning about night vision and the components of the eye, observing and listening to animals at night, and teachings about the night sky. We may create our own light by learning how to build a one-match fire. GRP's night explorations seek specifically to counteract the widespread fear of the night.

**Variety Show:** Students take the floor in this student-led showcase. They can choose to perform solo or alongside classmates. Highlights from past variety shows include solo musical performances, hilarious skits, well-timed jokes, and more. Teachers and chaperones claim this as a highlight of the year for their class as they see their students in a different light.

**Auction:** A go-to rain plan or Variety Show replacement. GRP staff take front and center as a cast of silly Judges while students are instructed to take a standard trash bag and fill it with items from the cabin that they “think they might need!” The goal is to prepare for anything! Students will be given prompts - everything from “Show me something purple!” to “Dress up one group member to be the most prepared for a rainstorm!” - and Judges determine points. Teambuilding, cooperation, and creativity are key! (And a good sense of humor.)

**Predator vs. Prey:** This is an optional activity designed to simulate the life of an animal, the food chain, and how different species of animals are in connection with each other and are affected by humans. Students are broken into groups and utilize Base Camp of the preserve to act out the trials and tribulations of the life cycle. It's a GRP favorite, and it always brings out everyone's secret camouflage skills.

\*As spring and fall mean darker evenings, let us know if you'd like us to run this program in lieu of a hike!

## Housing

Students live in cabin groups of up to eight campers based on assignments determined by your school team. Your school will bring adult chaperones: one will live in each student cabin. Our cabins are built with wood harvested from the Preserve. They come in pairs; the wooden duplex structure is separated by a central bathroom. To capture the classic camp feeling, students and chaperones sleep on bunk beds. Cabins have screen windows and doors to let in fresh air and natural sounds.

Separate teacher housing for up to 4 individuals is available in our Health Hut upon request.

## Add-On Programs

Challenge and intellectual enrichment are core experiences at Green River Preserve, but we like to provide the option to extend these further. During our four and five day programs, we offer a morning or afternoon activity where campers divide their time between two classic GRP camp activities: Homestead Cabin & Climbing

The first activity aims to enrich students' understanding of how our ancestors used natural materials to make crafts, tools, and entertainment – by learning how to do these things themselves. Once they've experimented with making things like cordage and foraged teas, students spend time learn the basics of climbing at our climbing wall. Skilled instructors help students through each step, encouraging them through every satisfying challenge with a safety-first mindset.

Please contact Catherine if your group would like to take part in these activities during a 3-day program.



## Program Guidelines

The following rules and procedures will help us all have a successful program while you are visiting GRP. These are meant for administrators, teachers, and parent chaperones. Think of them as your job description from our perspective. We will have plenty of time to discuss them when you arrive, but we ask that you take a look and share them with any adults who will be with your group so we can all be on the same page.

## Responsibilities

- The guiding principle is to be with your group and insist on safe, respectful behavior during all times while on and off property at camp. Be enthusiastic and supportive of mentors and all GRP staff and encourage the children to try new things while they are here.
- Green River Preserve staff will expect the chaperones to maintain and enforce behavioral guidelines with the students.
- Key areas requiring supervision are:
  - **Cabins and Showers** – A chaperone will stay in the cabin building with the children through the night. A chaperone should be in the showerhouse helping to monitor behavior and water use.
  - **Dining Hall** – A chaperone will accompany the cabin group to the Lodge, assist students in lining up on the Lodge deck prior to each meal, and sit with students at each meal. Please encourage an “ort free” table. Clean up can be a bit tricky – the main rule to remember is that no more than two students should be up from the table at one time.
  - **Trips Out of Base Camp (Hikes)** – A chaperone will “check in” with the Mentor at the beginning of each field trip in order to review key information. The chaperone’s role is to assist the naturalist in keeping the students safe and together, and administer first aid when necessary. Campers must be seated at all times on buses.
  - **Evening Programs and other activities** – A chaperone will accompany children to all activities and evening programs.
  - **Free Time Responsibilities** – Half of the chaperone group are asked to supervise in conjunction with Mentor staff during free time.
  - **Quiet Time and Cabin Time** – Chaperones are expected to supervise children during quiet time and cabin time if listed on the schedule. **9:45 pm** marks the beginning of Quiet Cabin Time. All children should be in their cabins and quiet at this time, respecting other cabins’ wind-downs and rest.
  - Each chaperone will supervise the cleaning of the cabin and cabin bathroom, clearing out showerhouses of all clothing, toiletries, towels, etc., at the appropriate time.

## Medical and Emergency Information

- If an emergency occurs, immediately notify your school's emergency care personnel and a GRP staff member.
- If the situation requires immediate advanced medical care, dial 911 from any camp phone (office, staff lounge, kitchen office, infirmary). Tell the 911 service the emergency is at Green River Preserve on Green River Road in Cedar Mountain.
- If the camp bell is rung continuously for several minutes, immediately bring your students to the lodge deck and wait calmly for instructions.
- In the event of a nighttime emergency, GRP staff will be found in the Mentor Lodge.
- If an emergency occurs out of Base Camp, consult your Mentor. All Mentors carry a radio and a first aid kit and will assist where needed.

## Conduct of You & Your Students

- We are an **electronic-free** camp. What that means is that at no time should campers be on their phones or other devices. (Exceptions can be made for medical conditions.)
- **As part of our dedication to an unplugged environment, we expect you to not interact with your phone or device in any area visible to students.**
- We ring a bell to announce the start of the next activity. Please make sure your students stick with you until the bell has rung.
- We ask that students only enter their own cabin and only when supervised by a chaperone.
- Green River Preserve does not allow pranks, practical jokes, cabin raids or other behaviors that will discount another person or group. We stress a non-competitive learning environment.
- We ask that students do not push or pull luggage carts without an adult. Students hauling heavy carts have resulted in injuries to students and the breaking of our carts. Adults must help with the carts.
- Please be mindful of conservation. Help us reduce how much food, paper, water, and time we waste. Place recycling in marked containers. Pick up any trash you see. Keep showers fairly brief.
- Please do not bring or allow food in the cabins. We have animals that will try very hard to get in and eat it! If you do have food, we will gladly store it for you. Just let any staff member know.
- We ask that there be no graffiti in the cabins or other areas of the camp. Any defacement or destruction of property will be noted, and your school will be billed.
- Please do not enter the kitchen unless there is an emergency.
- Please make sure your students' flashlights are always turned off during evening programs. Lights are distracting!

## General Guidelines

- Please make yourself at home in our Staff Lounge.
- Please keep all personal food in the Staff Lounge. We have a microwave and refrigerator available for your use.
- **GRP does not have cell service. We do have (very slow) wi-fi that teachers and parents may use, but please only use this in the Staff Lounge.**
- Please park all vehicles in the Back Field lot.
- Schedules and other logistical information will be posted in the Lodge for your reference.
- Schedules are subject to change due to weather.
- If you have a concern at any time, please immediately notify any GRP staff member.
- All visitors must provide their own bed linens, pillows and towels.

## Camp Store

- The Camp Store will be open during Free Time
- Please advise attendees in advance that we **only accept cash (no cards)**.
- We offer a variety of clothing options including t-shirts, sweatshirts/hoodies, sweatpants, and hats/beanies that run anywhere from **\$20-\$50**. We have most of these in youth and adult sizes (depending on the item) from XS to XXXL.
- We offer a Clearance rack (what you see is what you get) with prices ranging from **\$10-\$30**
- We also have stuffed animals, water bottles, blankets, towels, backpacks, sunglasses, Journals, Crazy Creek chairs, hammocks, headlamps, stickers, and other merchandise that run anywhere from **\$2-\$60**
- We carry basic toiletries, many of which are locally crafted, such as toothpaste, deodorant, and soap for **\$3-\$5**

## Packing List

Campers play a lot at Green River Preserve. They will get wet and dirty. Sometimes it is hot; sometimes it gets cool, even *cold*. It is important for campers to be comfortable and equipped to meet Mother Nature head on. Durable, inexpensive clothes are recommended. Green River Preserve is not responsible for items that are lost or damaged while at camp.

### Sleeping Items

- 1 **warm** sleeping bag or twin sheets and a blanket.  
Temperatures can get into the high 40s at night.
- 1 pillow and pillowcase

### Clothing

- 1 fleece jacket (retains heat when wet)
- 1 sweatshirt
- 3 shirts (amount for 4-day program; bring 1 extra for the number of days you will attend)
- 3-4 shorts (bring 1-2 quick dry for wet hikes)
- 3 pairs of socks (enough for 2 changes per day, at least 1 wool or quick drying)
- 2 sets of pajamas (warm)
- 2 pairs of long pants - jeans or lightweight hiking pants
- 4-5 pairs of underwear
- 1 swimsuit
- 1 pair of comfortable, closed-toed walking shoes  
hiking boots okay if broken in, tennis shoes recommended
- 1 pair of closed-toe water shoes with a heel strap for hiking i.e., Keens. **Please no crocs.**
- 1 pair of flip-flops for shower
- 1 rain jacket (we hike rain or shine!)
- 1 wool hat (it gets cool at night!)
- 1 hat with visor

### Miscellaneous Items

- 1-2 one-quart reusable water bottles
- 2 bath or beach towels
- 1 flashlight or headlamp with batteries
- Toiletry items:  
*soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, hair care products, etc.*
- Sunscreen & bug spray
- 1- 2 heavy duty kitchen trash bags  
for wet clothes
- Straps for eyeglasses (so you don't lose them on hikes and in the water)
- Camera, book, journal

### Bags

- Daypack (for your daily hikes while at camp)
- Duffle bag (to pack all your items)
- Rolling suitcases acceptable but not recommended

### What Not to Bring

- No electronic devices**
- No food**

## Sample Daily Schedule

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
11:00 Welcome! Luggage to cabins and settle in	7:15 Wake-up bell	7:15 Wake-up bell	7:15 Wake-up bell
12:00 Respect Circle in the Front Field	7:40 Breakfast	7:40 Breakfast	7:40 Breakfast
12:45 Lunch	8:30 Cabin Time - Get Ready for Hike	8:30 Cabin Time - Get Ready for Hike	8:30 Cabin Time - Get Ready for Hike
1:45 Cabin Time - Get Ready for Hike	8:50 Meet in Back Field Mentor Hike #1	8:50 Meet in Back Field Mentor Hike #3	8:50 Meet in Back Field Mentor Hike #5
2:05 Introductory Hike	9:05 Buses roll out	9:05 Buses roll out	9:05 Buses roll out
4:45 Free Time - field games, swimming, board games, camp store, music, zipline, crafts	12:00 Mentor Hike pick-up	12:00 Mentor Hike pick-up	11:30 Mentor Hike pick-up
6:00 Cabin Time	12:30 Lunch	12:30 Lunch	11:45 Cabin Clean Up
6:30 Dinner	1:30 Rest Period	1:30 Rest Period	12:00 Closing Circle
7:45 Evening Program <i>Council Fire</i>	2:05 Meet in Back Field Mentor Hike #2	2:05 Mentor Hike #4: Climbing & Homestead Cabin	12:10 Depart with packout lunch
9:00 Cabin Time/Showers	2:15 Buses roll out	5:15 Free Time	<b>Thank you and have a safe trip home!</b>
9:45 Quiet cabin time	4:55 Mentor Hike pick-up	6:00 Cabin Time	
10:00 Lights Out	5:15 Free Time	6:30 Dinner	
	6:00 Cabin Time	7:45 Evening Program <i>Variety Show</i>	
	6:30 Dinner	9:00 Cabin Time/Showers/ Packing for Departure	
	7:45 Evening Program <i>Night Exploration</i>	9:45 Quiet Cabin time	
	9:00 Cabin Time/Showers	10:00 Lights Out	
	9:45 Quiet cabin time		
	10:00 Lights Out		

## Sample Menu\*

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Arrival Day 1		Pizza (cheese, pepperoni, vegetable)  Carrots & ranch  Salad bar  Soup: Corn chowder	Baked chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, rolls, & butter  Salad bar  Rice & bean bar  Fruit cobbler	Afternoon: Sun butter cookies  Evening: Goldfish
Day 2	Scrambled eggs, sausage, biscuits, butter, & jelly  Fruit & yogurt bar, oatmeal bar  Coffee and tea for staff and chaperones	Grilled cheese sandwiches & cheesy zucchini chips.  Salad bar  Soup: Tomato bisque	Spaghetti & meatballs, roasted carrots, & bread sticks.  Salad bar  Rice & bean bar  Brownies	Morning: Homemade granola bars  Afternoon: Fruit  Evening: Mini muffins
Day 3	Baked oatmeal, bacon, & peaches  Fruit & yogurt bar, oatmeal bar  Coffee and tea for staff and chaperones	Chicken tenders & Caesar salad  Salad bar  Soup: Broccoli cheddar	Pulled pork, buns, coleslaw, baked beans, & sauces  Salad bar  Rice & beans bar  Lemon bars	Morning: Fruit  Afternoon: Homemade granola bars  Evening: Cheese and Crackers
Departure Day 4	Waffles, link sausage, strawberries, syrup, & whipped cream  Fruit & yogurt bar, oatmeal bar  Coffee and tea for staff and chaperones	Packed-out turkey- or ham-and-cheese sandwiches, string cheese, fruit, & chips  Water  Salad bar  Soup: Lentil		Morning: Homemade granola bars

\*Alternative dietary accommodations available for all meals and snacks

## Group Booking Policies

### Deposit

SEE requires a 30% deposit based on the number of participants including students, teachers and parent chaperones. Please make checks payable to Green River Preserve.

### Participant Costs

Number of Days	Students Price	Adult Price
3	\$275	\$145
4	\$345	\$170
5	\$415	\$210

### Payment Schedule

- 30% deposit due with the signed contract
- 70% due 2 weeks prior to arrival

### Attendance Guarantee

- Increases in numbers of participants will result in a total cost increase.
- The minimum final invoice will be based on the number of students.
- Any decreases in the number of students and/or adults must be received and confirmed by GRP in writing at least two weeks prior to the program start date to reduce final payment amount due.
- You may increase your numbers at any time if space is available. Please contact SEE before increasing numbers to ensure availability.

### Cancellation and Refund Information

- Green River Preserve contracts staff well in advance of each program. Our staff size and salaries are based on the number of students and the arrival and departure times shown in this contract.
- All cancellations will lose their deposit.
- Groups that cancel within 90 days prior to the scheduled arrival date will be billed for 50% of their scheduled number.
- Cancellations due to travel advisories or school closures are not subject to the 50% payment. Deposits may be applied to a rescheduled trip for up to a year.
- In case of overpayment, refunds will be made 2-3 weeks after the reservation dates.

### Communication

Please keep us informed of your needs, challenges, and changes. We may be able to work with you in extenuating circumstances.