



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

Outdoor Environmental Education

YMCA CAMP ORKILA

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Camp Orkila's OEE Program encompasses two areas of study:

Environmental Education focuses on nurturing a sense of appreciation for the natural world through an understanding of ecological systems. Surrounded by the natural world, our staff works to pique students' curiosity and guide their discovery experience. Basic ecological concepts are introduced and studied with an emphasis on how students can interact positively within natural systems. Areas of study include Marine Ecology, Forest Ecology, Garden and Sustainability, and Earth Science. Investigations are incorporated into several of the classes so that students can apply the scientific method in the field. All classes are aligned with state learning standards.

Challenge Education focuses on building cooperation, problem solving skills, trust, self-reliance, and self-esteem to build strong individuals and strong groups. OEE Instructors create a supportive and judgment-free atmosphere where individuals and groups are able to challenge themselves and learn through their experiences. Orkila has one of the largest challenge courses in the region. We utilize both ground and low ropes initiative courses, a climbing tower and zip line, giant swings, and traditional and advanced high ropes elements to help attain these goals.

At Orkila, your experience is completely custom.

Most groups that come to Orkila fully utilize the resources by choosing classes from both Environmental and Challenge education areas. You may choose the length of stay (traditionally 2 - 4 nights), and you may choose the class line-up to align with the goals of the trip.

Programs are predominantly held outdoor, in our beautiful Northwest setting. Our campus includes a beach front on Puget Sound, old growth forests, open fields, garden and pond space, a Marine Salmon center, and various indoor and outdoor gathering spaces.

Various accommodation choices exist at Orkila, to see more information about these choices [click here](#).

Our standard rate includes meals, housing, and program. Generous financial assistance is available based on need.

To discuss outdoor education opportunities at Camp Orkila for your school or group, contact:

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OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

At Orkila, we offer a variety of OEE classes to meet your program goals. Almost all learning takes place outside utilizing our beautiful outdoor learning areas. Some classes meet in the Marine Salmon Center on the waterfront.

Marine Ecology Classes

Beach Walk

By hiking on our beautiful beach, students observe and examine the shore community (including tidal pools, invertebrates, marine algae, and coastal wildlife) and show understanding of concepts related to tides and tidal zones. At the different coastal habitats, students explore the physical features of the beach and organisms living there. In this course, students are active participants in their own learning: they question, explore, and identify their living surroundings.



Marine Investigation

Students can participate in a variety of investigation options on the beach or in the Marine Center. The level of inquiry in the investigation will depend on the prior experience of the students in scientific investigation. Collaboration between the classroom teacher and the Orkila Director prior to camp will help guide the experience. Students can collect data about species presence and contribute to the Nature Mapping database.

Plankton

Students collect samples of ocean water and discover a universe through the guided use of microscopes. They play games to learn the role of plankton in the marine food web, invertebrate and algae life cycles, and in the production of the world's oxygen. This class provides a solid foundation of what plankton is through hands-on exploration and reinforcing ideas in fun activities.



Marine Invertebrates

Students meet creatures from the saltwater ecosystem. Through hands-on activities, students explore how marine invertebrates have adapted to different habitats and why these critters are suited to their habitats. Depending on the tides, students will identify and get to know creatures on the beach or in the Marine Center's touch tanks. Through interactive lessons, students will uncover the interconnectedness within the marine community.

Super Salmon

Students have the opportunity to explore Orkila's hatchery and, seasonally, see salmon develop at different the stages of their lives. Through active role-playing and lessons, students experience the life cycle of the salmon, learn of salmon's physical adaptations, and understand salmon's role in the food chain. As our hatchery and Marine Center grow, students can become more involved and informed in the lives and experiences of salmon.

Forest and Aquatic Ecology

Forest with an Investigation

In hiking through our majestic trees, students explore Orkila's forests and woodland ecosystems. Along with seeing the forest as a whole, interdependent, ever-changing community, students play games and participate in activities to learn about individual species in the forest and how they live. Students will ask a group question and perform an investigation in the Forest. The level of inquiry in the investigation will depend on the experience each group has with inquiry.

Micro-Forest with an Investigation

Students investigate the complexity of soil, an essential foundation of the forest. Students explore the habits and habitats of the small, fascinating world of the forest floor: slugs, mosses, lichens, centipedes, and beetles to name a few. In this class, students break down the larger concept of forest into smaller parts to see the connections among each part.

Habitat Hike

In this class students will explore three different habitats around camp. Options for exploration include Forest, Field, Pond and Near-shore habitats. Orkila instructors will guide students through these areas as they learn about the characteristics of a habitat and why it is suitable for some living creatures, but not for others. Habitat Hike is a great class to sample the different areas of camp and learn about field ecology.



Pond Study

The pond allows students to see and explore a unique and vital ecosystem. Students use dip nets, magnifying glasses, and microscopes to identify the many kinds of plant and animal life in the pond. They might investigate seasonal changes of the pond and the life cycles of the insects that make it their habitat.

Watersheds

In this class, students examine one of our most vital natural resources: water. Students can participate in activities that illustrate how the water cycle works, role-play different species that depend on the Puget Sound watershed, conduct a stream survey, or experiments on water quality in order to learn the importance of clean water. Students can then come up with solutions about what we can all do in order to conserve this natural resource.

Life and Death in the Forest

"Life and Death in the Forest" is an advanced hide-and-seek game. Students role-play plants, herbivores, omnivores, and carnivores foraging for nutrition. After the game, there is a debriefing session to recognize and evaluate students' animal-like strategies, their adaptations, and human impact in the food chain and forest.

Garden and Sustainability

Garden & Sustainable Living

The farm and garden at Orkila are used as models for the energy cycle. Students will be able to explore the sustainability of plants, animals, and people living together. They will learn what sustainable living means by using our farm and garden as examples for discussion. Students will participate in hands-on activities such as planting, harvesting, composting, and recycling in the garden.

Earth Science



Geodesic Dome

The Geodesic dome is a fantastic structure developed by Buckminster Fuller in the late 1940's. Today, students can build one with teamwork, logs and rope. In addition to building a Geodome, they learn the history behind it and important geometric principles that enable all the students to climb on the structure.

Rope Bridge

The title really explains the class: the students build a bridge from heavy ropes. The students also learn several knots used to anchor the bridge between two trees. Through teamwork they get to walk across the bridge they made together.



Geology

Students will study the geological make-up of the beach and surrounding areas of Camp Orkila. Through a thorough study of the erosion patterns of Chapel Rock, which is located along the coast on camp property, students will understand how this area has changed over time.

Outdoor Living Skills

Students play games and participate in practicing outdoor living skills. This class helps to inform students about what materials they need in order to be safe while camping outdoors and how to experience the outdoors with a minimum impact on their environment. If indicated beforehand, this class could be combined with map and compass skills.

Orienteering

Students learn to identify the parts of a compass. Students use the compass to move to different locations. To familiarize students with these materials, they will use compasses in playing games and hands-on activities.

Archery & Camp Skills

In this class, students have a chance to do one of their favorite camp activities in a small group. In addition to archery, instructors will pick some other camp activities including, but not limited to: Ga-Ga ball, arts and crafts, an obstacle course, a camp hike, survival skills. It is sure to be a favorite among students.

TEAM-BUILDING AND LEADERSHIP

At Orkila we strive to build strong group dynamics, break down cliques, and build a strong community for your school. We have one of the largest challenge courses in the region. You can choose the options that fit the goals for your experience.

Safety: Our staff are expertly trained and certified to facilitate our challenge course. Our facility is held to highest industry standards for safety. Our equipment is inspected with each use and careful logs are kept to ensure all equipment is in safe and working order.

Each class is designed to take 90 minutes with a group of 15 students. You may choose which classes you want to take.

New Games

Students participate in a variety of outdoor games. Games and activities may include: Everybody's It; Four Corners; Zip-Zap-Zoom; Crows and Cranes; Ha, Ha, Ha; Mingle; Spoke Tag; Barnyard; Giants, Wizards, and Elves.

Initiatives

In this class, students work together to solve physical and mental problems. The group starts with simple problems requiring basic communication and problem solving skills. Groups work up to more difficult problems requiring trust and strong reliance on each other. The instructor uses props to create problems that must be solved with teamwork and group participation.

Initiatives II

This class advances students in group-building activities passed the basics of Initiatives I. Most groups progress to the low element initiative course in the forest. The course is composed of obstacles that require the groups to cooperatively problem solve and devise safe and effective solutions. Progression through the elements is dependent on the group's ability to work together safely.

Initiatives III

For groups that want more team-building, but can't progress to high elements, you can spend more time on the low ropes course. We have over 10 elements, and many groups can use additional time on the course.



Traditional High Ropes



Students climb elements constructed of wire cable, logs, and rope that have been built from ground level to 20-30 feet high in the trees. There are three types of courses: a Pirate's Crossing, a Grapevine, and a Cat Walk. In all courses, students climb up an aluminum ladder and staples in a tree to get to the ropes or log. In the Pirate's Crossing course, there are three ropes: one across the top, and two crossing to make an X in the middle; students travel approximately 20 feet between two trees. In the Grapevine there is a series of ropes hanging for students to grab as they walk across a cable. The Cat Walk consists of a log suspended between two trees; students can travel across this log, which is approximately 25 feet.

All participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing safety gear. These activities, while very safe, provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. In most cases, we use a group belay facilitation which allows for more students to be involved even when they are not the one climbing. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help student's process their experience and express their feelings.

Giant Swing

In the Giant Swing, the participant decides how far the class should pull the rope so that the participant is high in the air. The participant then releases themselves into a safely harnessed free fall swing. All participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing safety gear. These activities, while very safe, provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help student's process their experience and express their feelings.

Climbing Tower

Students climb an outdoor climbing wall consisting of various hand and foot holds to a height of 50 feet. This activity, while very safe, provides a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. The climbing wall, for some students, is a physical challenge. The climber is in a harness and belayed by an instructor or a group of students. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help students process their experience and express their feelings.



Zip line

After receiving an orientation and safety gear, participants soar over the field of Orkila with sweeping views. The adventure begins at the top of our 75 foot climbing tower. While in a full body harness and helmet, you are clipped to a cable trolley. You walk off the tower into a gentle thrill ride for 1000 feet until you reach the landing tower.

High Ropes Circuit

Students climb elements constructed of wire cable, logs, and rope that have been built from ground level to 20-30 feet high in the trees. There are several parts to the circuit: Grapevine, Burma Buckets, Charlie Chaplin walk, and Floating Islands. Students may participate on several elements or just one given the amount of time allowed for this activity. The students can participate with a traditional dynamic belay or complete the course through a more advanced static method. All participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing safety gear. These activities, while very safe, provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help student's process their experience and express their feelings.

Giant's Ladder

In the Giant's Ladder, participants use teamwork to climb to the top of a ladder made for a Giant. Three people must use each other to make the climb from one rung to the next. All participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing safety gear. This activity, while very safe, provides a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help students process their experience and express their feelings.

EVENING PROGRAMS

Ork-Fire

This exciting campfire is usually done outside under the stars with a fire to keep warm. The Orkila staff leading this activity may arrange songs, stories, cheers and skits and many more activities for your school to enjoy. There is no limit on size for this activity, which lasts an hour.

Combi-Fire

This campfire allows for students to shine as they perform their own skits either in cabin groups or class groups. Camp Orkila staff are there to announce for the students as well as perform a couple of their own skits. There is no limit on group size for this activity, which lasts an hour.



School-led Campfire

Your school group runs this campfire. A Camp Orkila staff member will light our gas fireplaces for you and then you are on your own to perform skits with your students, sing songs, and tell stories. This activity should last no more than an hour and a half.

Ork-Dance

Have your students put on their craziest outfits and join the Camp Orkila staff as we lead your group in fun dances that get the whole group involved. Staff call the dances and use recorded music as well as some live instruments. Any size group can enjoy this activity. This is an indoor activity and is very active.

Flight From Mordor

Take your students on a quest through the forest of Camp Orkila as they seek answers and treasures from various characters they meet along the way. Throughout the program, students, teachers and Camp Orkila staff are all in character as groups work together to complete their adventure. This is a very active evening program.

Adventure in Oz

Take your students on a quest throughout Camp Orkila as they seek to obtain their courage, their brain and their heart. Throughout the program, students, teachers and Camp Orkila staff are all in character as groups work together to complete their adventure. This is a very active evening program.

Night Watchers

The emphasis of this activity is for students to learn about nocturnal nature, to explore their own perception of darkness, to learn how sense, specifically sight are affected, and to take part in activities that have to do with all of these. This is a wonderful activity to get kids excited about exploring the night in a very fun and safe manner. Flashlights are not allowed in this activity.

Telescope Astronomy Sponsored by REI! - As a component to Night Watchers, weather permitting, you can surf the stars with Student Use telescopes! Students can look at the details on the moon as well as learn basic constellations. The program is located in our farm area which provides stellar viewing and little light pollution.

Science Fair

Students participate in an evening full of scientific wonders as the magic of fire, silly putty, vision and the laws of motion are explored in a safe, fun and educational fashion. Students will have the opportunity to rotate around to different stations as Orkila teachers amaze them with the wonders of science all the while asking questions to constantly make your students question what is happening. This is a great first night activity! efforts.

Orkila Color Competition

Blue, Yellow, Green, Red! Students will start the Orkila Color Competition with team cheers, face paint, and coordinated clothing that represents their specific color-based teams. Your school's teams will compete against each other to be the first to accomplish tasks at different stations. This is a high-energy evening program with obstacle courses, trivia, mind-teasers, and silly games. All teams will have opportunities to be challenged and opportunities to shine as students learn sportsmanship and friendly competition.

Harry Potter Adventure

Camp Orkila has been magically transformed into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry! Groups of students will travel around the grounds of Hogwarts attending Quidditch, Potions, Ancient Runes and Divination classes. At each class, teams will be assigned a new challenge to complete. Will your team pass each exam and achieve their O.W.L. degree?