



## Plan & Organize Your NatureBridge Program

For assistance, please contact: [princewilliamplanning@naturebridge.org](mailto:princewilliamplanning@naturebridge.org)

Required Information	Date Due to NatureBridge
Final Numbers (aka 90-day Numbers)	90 days prior to program start
*Participant Registration Forms	60 days prior to program start
Planning Questionnaire	60 days prior to program start
Teacher Workbook (Learning Groups & Lodging)	30 days prior to program start
<i>*Submitted electronically, can be viewed &amp; tracked in the Teacher Workbook</i>	

### Getting Started

**Initial interest meeting:** Arrange a meeting with students, parents and faculty to present the benefits of an Outdoor School program. Print the Packing List and Student Expectations for each family. If applicable, ask parents to come to the meeting with a portion of the payment for the trip. A financial commitment will help determine an accurate participant count. Items to address in the initial meeting:

Consider using the [NatureBridge Informational PowerPoint](#) and/or distribute the [handout](#)

- Introduce the program: a unique, hands-on, overnight, science-based learning adventure that will incorporate the lessons your students learn in the classroom into an outdoor education experience.
- Identify program benefits: an opportunity to learn outdoors with Prince William Forest Park as a classroom. Interdisciplinary curriculum focuses on inquiry-based science and cooperative learning.
- Discuss the costs, fundraising ideas and preferred method of payment. You may choose to propose an installment plan for families unable to pay in one lump sum. Collect a deposit from parents that evening (optional, if applicable).

**New to our program?** Schedule a virtual chaperone meeting with NatureBridge staff. Contact our Operations Director at [princewilliamplanning@naturebridge.org](mailto:princewilliamplanning@naturebridge.org) to set up a time to chat.

**Reserve transportation:** Methods most commonly used include school buses and charter services. Unsure about arrival and departure times? Contact the Operations Director at [princewilliamplanning@naturebridge.org](mailto:princewilliamplanning@naturebridge.org) for more information.

**Integrate Prince William Forest Park into your curriculum:** Incorporate your upcoming experience into teaching goals and objectives for the year.

**Develop a fundraising plan:** Visit the [Fundraising Ideas page](#) on our website.

**Scholarship Application:** Submit a scholarship application as soon as possible in order to maximize the potential funds for your group. NatureBridge has scholarship funds available to offset costs for



qualifying schools. It is possible to submit this application with your best estimate. If your participant numbers increase or decrease, the scholarship award may change accordingly. For applications or questions regarding scholarships, please reach out to our Director of Outreach and Enrollment, Katie Couch, at [kcouch@naturebridge.org](mailto:kcouch@naturebridge.org).

## Preparing for your Program

### Prepare your students:

- Academic readiness. Present your NatureBridge program as an academic experience. Prepare students to engage in scientific inquiry and other hands-on learning opportunities.
- Physical readiness. Ensure that students and chaperones can walk two to five miles a day (on varied and sometimes steep terrain). (Contact the Operations Director to discuss the availability of NatureBridge's trail wheelchair if applicable.)
- Participation and behavior expectations. Emphasize cooperation and universal respect. Present and review the required Student Expectations.
- Personal readiness. Stress to parents and students the importance of strictly adhering to the NatureBridge Packing List so students are safe, comfortable and prepared to learn in the field.
- If a student has shown any symptoms of gastrointestinal illness within 48 hours of the start of their NatureBridge program, we suggest that you do not bring them on the program.

**Participant Registration Form:** Email the registration form link to students, teachers, and other chaperones. Students and adults, including your school staff, must have a completed and signed Registration Form to participate in a NatureBridge program!

- Your registration form link can be found on the right side of your portal page once you have selected the correct program.
- Please note that each program date has a unique registration form link
- You can view which of your participants have turned in their forms by toggling to the "Registrations" tab in your NatureBridge portal.
- There is no need to print any registration forms once they have been submitted.

**Select chaperones carefully.** Refer to the [Guidelines for Selecting Chaperones](#) document.

**Execute fundraising plan:** Emphasize group cooperation in the fundraising efforts. Successful collaboration on your fundraising plan increases student, parent, and community investment in the program's success. For more information, please visit the Funding Ideas page at [naturebridge.org/fundraisingideas](https://naturebridge.org/fundraisingideas).

## Three Months in Advance

**Final numbers (90-day numbers) due:** You should receive an invoice you can use to confirm or update your final participation numbers. The invoice will show the confirmation due date.

- What does this due date mean?
  - At that date, we lock in your participant numbers with our food and lodging vendors, as well as complete our staffing assignments. We hold groups to a guaranteed minimum participant number past this point, which is calculated as 95% of the participant number provided.
  - For example: You confirm your final participant count as 100 participants (adults and



students combined) at 90 days. Your guaranteed minimum is now 95 total participants. If only 93 can come on the program, you'll still pay for 95.

- If at any time you need to increase your student or adult numbers, you must ask us if we have the staffing and cabin capacity. Our ability to accommodate increases may be limited. Please consider this when deciding on your Final Participant Number.

## Two Months in Advance

**Initial Planning Phone Pall:** Schedule a phone call with our Operations Team to discuss the details of your trip. You will receive an email reminder and link to schedule a time to connect. Your attending coordinator must be present for this phone call.

**Participant Registration Forms are completed online.** Please use the portal Registrations tab to check which adults and students are missing forms.

**Planning Questionnaire due.** Please complete this via the Planning Questionnaire tab in your planning portal.

**Parent Meeting:** Organize a parent meeting to distribute and/or collect paperwork and answer any questions. Consider using the [Informational Powerpoint](#) and the [handout](#).

**Finalize transportation:** Double-check your transportation times, dates and locations both to and from NatureBridge.

**Chaperone training:** we recommend the school's group coordinator facilitate a chaperone training before arriving on site. Training should include:

- An outline of the role of the teachers, chaperones and NatureBridge staff during the program.
- The school's and NatureBridge's expectations of adults on the trip. Refer to the [Chaperone Responsibilities and Expectations](#).
- The school's academic, social and personal goals for students.
- Program logistics from arrival through departure.
- Sample discipline scenarios and how to handle them.
- Double check that all chaperones have completed their Participant Registration forms (Teachers and other schools staff members too!).

## One Month in Advance

**Learning Group lists due.** Click the "Manage Learning Groups" button in the top right corner of your portals page to access your Learning Groups and assign participants. Please note that each Learning Group can have a maximum of 16 students and up to 2 adults. Your number of Learning Groups is subject to change based on participant numbers.

**Organize your free time** Use our [recreation time activity planner](#) to help organize what students will do when not with their educators.

**Submit final payment.** Send balance due to NatureBridge, 1033 Fort Cronkhite, Sausalito CA 94965 at least 30 days prior to your start date.



## Two Weeks in Advance

**Final Logistics Phone Call:** Schedule a phone call with our Operations Team to finalize the details of your trip. You will receive an email reminder and link to schedule a time to connect. Your attending coordinator must be present for this phone call.

## One Week in Advance

**Arrival Day Email:** Our Operations Manager will email you important reminders for your program including things to double check, driving directions, reminder of dorm assignments, and more.

## Arrival Day

**Travel logistics:** Make sure each driver types in the following address (Googling Prince William Park will send you to the wrong entrance):

**16450 Pleasant Road  
Manassas, VA 20112**

**Travel Communication:** Sonia's phone number is 315-214-9455. Please let her know via call or text when you leave your school, so we can best be prepared to welcome you. Also, reach out for any support needed on your way!

**Student preparedness:** Confirm that each student has the necessary items for the trip, including lunch for the first day, medication, and rain gear that is easily accessible. *Daypacks should be packed separately from personal overnight gear so that they are ready to take it on the trail after the luggage is dropped off.*

**Upon arrival,** NatureBridge staff will greet you and provide directions for unloading luggage and moving into cabins. Your group will also participate in a brief orientation at this time.

**Check in:** The Attending Coordinator will check the group in with a NatureBridge staff member. During check-in, you will:

- Confirm final student and chaperone/adult numbers.
- Confirm all Participant Registration Forms are accounted for.
- Complete your Sign Off invoice confirming all participant numbers.
- Finalize Learning Group lists and lodging assignments to ensure they are 100% accurate.
- Go over the general schedule for your program and some important contacts

**Hiking Day:** After checking in, your school will split into its learning groups with our educators and start their day. Everyone should have their own lunch packed from home or have eaten them before arrival.

**Adult Afternoon Meeting and Orientation:** On Arrival Day, there will be a 3:30pm chaperone meeting with the Evening Team to learn more about what to expect outside of the field day. Students will continue participating in activities with their Educators during this time, often doing activities with other schools to get to know who may be on campus with them.

**Activity time:** After the adult orientation and end of field day at 4pm, the chaperones will be fully in



charge of supervising students during Activity time. This runs from 4-7pm with an hour at either 5 or 6 for dinner (depending on your assignment). Students may do calm activities in the dorm (nap, play cards, read books, chat with friends) or more active activities outside. They must be supervised by an adult at all times and the school decides what the options are for this time.

**Evening Program:** After dinner your group will attend an evening program. Afterwards your chaperones will be responsible for helping students settle into their dorms. Quiet hours begin at 9pm and students must be in dorms by 8:30 pm and have lights out at 9:15 pm.