

Youth Backcountry Camp Participant Handbook



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LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANT

Hello fellow adventurer,

We are so glad you have made the exciting decision to join the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA) this summer for one of our epic Youth Backcountry Camps (YBCC)! Together, we are going to accomplish some amazing things over four days. This camp is about exploring the outdoors, challenging yourself, making new connections, and having fun.

Put on your sturdiest adventure shoes and put down your cell phone for this immersive adventure in the Tahoe backcountry. We'll travel through meadows full of wildflowers, cook delicious meals over tiny backpacking stoves, turn lake water into Gatorade, and learn to thrive in the wild. We'll play games, stare at the brilliant night sky, make connections with our fellow adventurers, and even get to know ourselves better. These magical moments take place on the indigenous lands of the Washoe people, so you'll learn and practice skills to respect and protect the natural and cultural history of the Tahoe region. Concepts include Leave No Trace wilderness etiquette, ecology, biology, geology, backcountry living skills, teamwork, and leadership skills.

To prepare for these jam-packed days on trail and in nature, read through this YBCC Participant Handbook to get familiar with your adventure details and expectations. This includes pick-up and drop-off information, gear lists, behavioral expectations, and medical care information. If you or your guardian have any questions or concerns after reading this handbook, please contact the Tahoe Rim Trail Association using the information provided below.

With excitement from your trip leaders,

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Drop-off and Pick-up Location and Times

The camp will begin and end at the picnic space north of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency office and parking lot in Stateline, NV ([128 Market St, Stateline, NV 89449](#)). Take your first right into the parking lot. A TRTA flag will be displayed next to the meeting location.



Drop-off: Please arrive at the meeting location by **8:30 AM** sharp on the first day of camp for drop-off. Be punctual so that your child/ward will have time to meet other participants and instructors, prepare the trip gear and meals, cover the itinerary and expectations for this exciting journey, transport to the trailhead, and still have time to hike to camp before dinner.

Pick-up: Please arrive by **4:00 PM** at the same meeting location on the last day of camp for pick up. If any of the above details change, we will contact you as soon as possible.

Transportation to Trailhead

The TRTA will transport participants to and from the starting and ending trailheads. Participants will ride in the TRTA's fully insured 15-passenger van, driven by the TRTA's Shuttle Driver.

NON-NEGOTIABLE RULES

To ensure a positive experience during the trip, it is essential and non-negotiable that participants read and agree to obey the following behavioral expectations and camp rules:

The group atmosphere is very important to every YBCC trip. Campers are expected to be motivated, respectful to peers and instructors, positive, willing to shoulder responsibilities, and participate in activities. Participants agree not to act in a way that could be potentially harmful to themselves or others. All group members agree to respect the personal space, property, identities, and opinions of others. Participants also agree not to bring any of the following items on a YBCC Program:

- **Weapons** (including pocket knives and slingshots)
- **Medication of any kind** (unless it has been documented on registration forms and turned over to an instructor)
- **Alcohol, tobacco, electronic nicotine (vaping), or illegal drugs**
- **Electronics of any kind** (except for a camera – no cell phones)
- **Incendiaries** (matches, candles, lighters, etc.)
- **Perfume**

Participants agree to always remain in the program area unless an instructor permits otherwise. Campers agree to listen to and abide by all rules stated by instructors. Participants also agree not to engage in any kind of sexual activity during the program. Breaking any of these non-negotiable rules, or exhibiting actions detrimental to the group or a healthy atmosphere as described above (including being in the company of those violating the rules) may result in dismissal from the trip.

If the above-stated rules are not strictly abided by, the offending participant will be asked to leave the program and will neither be refunded any fees paid nor be compensated in any way for any expenses incurred.

By adhering to these rules, we can create a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. Please join us in this endeavor!

GEAR AND SUPPLIES

4-Day Packing List

This list includes the items participants will be wearing

- ☐ 2 wicking t-shirts (Tank tops are not recommended. Sleeves assist with sun protection and backpack straps. One wicking t-shirt will be provided.)
- ☐ 1 warm long-sleeved pullover/jacket (fleece or wool)
- ☐ 1 warm, light jacket (fleece or down)
- ☐ 1 rain jacket or rain poncho
- ☐ 1 pair long athletic pants (synthetic recommended)
- ☐ 1 pair athletic/hiking shorts
- ☐ 3 pairs of underwear
- ☐ 1 pair sleepwear (upper and lower body long underwear)
- ☐ 1 pair warm socks and 3 pairs of sturdy socks
- ☐ 1 swim suit
- ☐ Broken-in, durable athletic shoes – please do not purchase hiking boots specifically for this trip, as new, unbroken-in shoes are often painful and can cause blisters
- ☐ Camp shoes (lightweight water shoes, sandals, slip-ons, or Crocs)
- ☐ 2 (1L) water bottles (Nalgene or wide-mouth bottles) or 2L Camelbak and a small water bottle
- ☐ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Medications (as needed – must be recorded on Health History Form)
- ☐ Face mask or buff
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Lip balm with SPF
- ☐ Beanie
- ☐ Baseball cap or wide brim hat (for sun protection)

Optional Items:

- ☐ Warm gloves
- ☐ Playing cards
- ☐ Small book
- ☐ Camera

Provided Equipment

The TRTA will provide the following equipment for each participant and the group. Participants are expected to care for the equipment and return it in the same condition in which it was received.

- 1 backpack – 60L size
- 1 sleeping bag – rated for 20 degrees
- 1 sleepin bag liner
- 1 sleeping pad
- 1 mess kit (bowl/spoon/cup)
- Camp stoves, pans, and cutlery (to be shared with fellow campers)
- Water treatment systems (to be shared with fellow campers)
- Bathroom kits
- 1 headlamp (flashlight)
- 1 long-sleeve YBCC wicking shirt (to keep!)
- 1 day-pack (to keep!)
- 1 safety whistle (to keep!)
- Sunscreen (at least SPF 50)
- Bug spray
- Lunch and dinner for the first day; breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks for all days out in the backcountry; and breakfast and lunch for the final day

Instructors will carry a group first aid kit with many non-prescription remedies, including aspirin, ibuprofen, antidiarrheals, band-aids, anti-itch cream, antibiotic ointment, and additional items to aid in the success and comfort of all group members.



HEALTH AND TREATMENT

Health History

Thank you for submitting your child/ward's health history information in the YBCC Registration Packet. **If any submitted information changes prior to your child/ward's YBCC trip, you must immediately inform the TRTA.** The TRTA is not a medical facility, and TRTA staff are not medical professionals. Therefore, the TRTA has no responsibility regarding medical advice, medications, or inoculations you and your doctor may deem necessary for your child/ward's participation in this trip.

Medications

All medications must be recorded accurately and given to an instructor at the beginning of the program. TRTA policy states **no medication can be kept in the possession of a participant**, including prescription and non-prescription drugs. Exceptions are inhalers, epinephrine, and insulin pumps, which the participant must keep at all times. Place non-prescription and prescription medication labeled in a clear Ziploc bag or original bottle with your child/ward's name.

Permission to Treat

By signing the YBCC Registration Packet, you give TRTA and trained, qualified instructors permission to provide your child/ward with routine health care, administer prescribed or non-prescription medication, provide emergency medical and behavioral assistance within their level of training (Wilderness First Aid or higher, CPR, Epinephrine Auto-Injector Administration, and Youth Mental Health First Aid), and to turn over medical care to appropriate medical professionals if necessary.

Inclusivity Statement

The YBCC Program is committed to fostering an inclusive environment for all campers during the YBCC Program. TRTA Instructors will acknowledge the unique identities of each camper to uphold our commitment to supporting the mental and physical wellness of youth.

Emergency Contacts

Michelle Witte (she/her)
Youth Programs Manager
michellew@tahoerimtrail.org
(775) 298-4493 (direct line)
(775) 298-4485 (TRTA main line)

Lindsey Schultz (she/her)
Executive Director
lindseys@tahoerimtrail.org
(775) 298-4491 (direct line)
(775) 298-4485 (TRTA main line)

COMMON QUESTIONS

Q: What's included in the program fee?

A: *All food, backpacking gear, permits, transportation between trailheads and pick-up/drop-off locations, curriculum, and backcountry instructors are provided by the TRTA. Youth will also receive a YBCC tech shirt, drawstring bag, journal, TRT segment map, whistle, and sticker to keep.*

Q: What is the YBCC Cancellation Policy?

A: *In the event that you cancel your child/ward's registration 41 or more days prior to the trip start date, you will receive a full refund less a \$65 Administrative Fee 15-40 days prior to the trip start date, you will receive a 50% refund; 14 or fewer days prior to the trip start date you will not receive a refund. The full YBCC Cancellation Policy is provided at registration and can be found [here](#).*

Q: Can my child/ward bring their own backpacking gear?

A: *Yes. Your child/ward can bring their own backpacking gear, although this is not required or expected. At the beginning of the program, instructors will determine if the gear is appropriate for the program based on size, style, etc. If the gear is deemed unfit for the program, the TRTA will store the gear in the TRTA's secure gear locker and outfit your child/ward with TRTA-owned gear.*

Q: How heavy are the backpacks?

A: *The weight of gear and food is distributed among the group based on participant size. Participants can expect to carry 25-30lbs.*

Q: Does my child/ward need hiking boots for the program?

A: *No. Any close-toed athletic or sturdy walking shoes will work for the program. Do not purchase new shoes specifically for the program unless there is ample time to break them in. New shoes that aren't properly broken in (which require weeks of constant wearing) can be painful and cause blisters.*

Q: Can my child/ward bring their own food or snacks?

A: *No. The TRTA will provide all meals and snacks for the duration of the program. The TRTA meticulously plans meals and snacks in accordance with participant food allergies and food storage capacity in TRTA-provided bear canisters.*

Q: What are the sleeping arrangements for campers?

A: *All campers will sleep outside under the stars, arms-length apart, providing each camper personal space. Tents are not allowed on the YBCC Program. The group sleeping arrangement will include YBCC Instructors positioned within sight at all times. The TRTA will provide full sleep systems, including sleeping pads, sleeping bags, sleeping bag liners, footprints, bug nets, and group tarp shelters to support comfort and safety.*

Q: Is sleeping outside safe?

A: *Risk management and the safety of youth are of the most important aspects of the program. TRTA staff analyze and plan around potential dangers from trees, animals, and weather on each camp through campsite assessments, proper food storage, and gear and clothing preparation.*

Q: What about bears?

A: *Black bears in the Tahoe region are very familiar with humans and primarily motivated by food. To prevent close encounters with bears, the program follows strict food management guidelines. This includes storing unattended food in bear-resistant containers and setting up campsites in which sleeping areas are 100ft away from the camp kitchen and 100ft away from properly stored food and scented items.*

Q: How can my child/ward practice hygiene during the camp?

A: *Each trip is outfitted with a first aid kit and bathroom kits which include feminine products, sanitation bags, toilet paper, and hand sanitizer. The main camp area is set up with baby wipes, a hand shower, and biodegradable soap, to be used after the restroom, before meal times, and as needed. Campers are encouraged to rinse off in nearby water sources.*

Q: Can I call or contact my child/ward during the program?

A: *In our experience, homesickness and other issues are worsened when participants call home, therefore, we do not allow participants to call home while on YBCC. TRTA staff will get in touch with the emergency contact or parent/guardian if behavioral, medical, or other issues warrant emergency communication. However, please do feel free to get in touch with us using the TRTA's contact information if you have questions during the program.*

Q: How do I contact my child/ward if there's an emergency?

A: *If in an emergency you need to contact your child/ward during this program, please use the TRTA's emergency contact information. TRTA office staff will then contact instructors by phone and satellite communication unit to communicate the emergency and determine an action plan. Please note that non-program emergency communications may be delayed up to 12 hours.*

Q: How will the TRTA contact me if there's a situation requiring communication about my child/ward?

A: *Non-emergency and emergency communications may be transmitted by cellular phone or satellite communicator. Satellite communication messages have character limits that may require multiple messages to communicate the situation. Communication can be delayed between messages or calls.*

"Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond."

— Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer



Thanks for joining us this summer to grow, explore, and have fun!

Tahoe Rim Trail Association