



# MAGPIE NATURE CAMP



## HANDBOOK

### Welcome to Magpie Nature Camp!

We have put this handbook together as a guide to help prepare you and your child for our very special camp. Even if your child is a returning camper, please take the time to review this information prior to camp.

#### **Cohorts**

We are adhering to Alberta Health Services (AHS) Guidelines for summer camps. To help numbers small we have developed a cohort model, which will include 8-12 campers and two staff. *More on our COVID-19 guidelines are discussed in the "Health and Safety" section of this handbook.* Cohort Schedules are:

Cohort 1	9:00am-12:00pm; August 10-14th.	7-8 year olds
Cohort 2	1:00pm-4:00pm; August 10-14th.	9-10 year olds
Cohort 3	9:00am-12:00pm; August 17-21st.	8-10 year olds
Cohort 4	1:00pm-4:00pm; August 17-21st.	11-12 year olds

# What to Expect at Camp

Magpie Nature Camp helps kids find joy in the great outdoors, teaching activities that empower them to connect to nature and find value in stewardship. Campers will learn about wilderness safety and awareness, edible and medicinal plants, fish and wildlife, and survival skills like shelter building, fire starting, and bow and arrow making. We will deepen our connection to nature, build confidence and resilience outdoors, learn ancient skills, and have fun!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Orientation and introductions; Pleasure Island site safety and exploration	Getting wild for wildlife; mammals, tracking, and exploring.	Native plants and exploring medicinal and edible plants	Creating community: the bigger picture and how it all works together.	Celebrating together: sharing what we've learned and practicing new skills!

Every day of camp you will receive an email with details of what your camper did that day, key themes, and some activities or a "home mission" to complete before the next day. We encourage you to ask questions about what your child experienced and learned that day with genuine curiosity. Questions deepen your campers experience and show them their knowledge is important.

**Absent Campers:** If your child will be away from camp on any particular day(s), please notify Nathalie in person, by email, or phone/text before the camp begins.

# What to Bring to Camp

Your camper's belongings should be well packed in a backpack that is comfortable and not too heavy to carry. Campers will move throughout the site on a regular basis and will carry their bags with them.. There is some shelter on site but we will always be outdoors- please dress accordingly. Campers are recommended to wear comfortable and supportive footwear for staying active. Please label everything!

Suggested packing list:

- Water bottle and snack
- Hat
- Sunscreen/Bug Spray

- Small Towel
- Hand sanitizer and travel tissue packet
- Closed toe shoes (Sandals are not great in long grass with thistles!)
- If chance of rain: Rubber Boots, rain pants and jacket, layers.
- Spare set of clothes: Bring a full change of clothes in a LABELLED bag or container on Monday to leave at camp for the week. If not used, these will be returned on Friday.

What not to bring: Toys, money, camping/Swiss army knives, anything of significant emotional or financial value, electronics, or card games of any kind, These items will be confiscated and returned to the camper's parent/guardian at the end of the day. We cannot be responsible for any valuables brought to the camp.

## Packing Snacks

Each day your camper will require snacks, and water in a reusable bottle. Snack periods are typically informal in the field and will be supervised by camp staff. To avoid loss or confusion, please place your camper's name on his/her lunch bag and containers. Please do not use glass thermos bottles or glass juice containers.

Please make an effort to send healthy foods with your camper. Children who eat healthy meals and snacks will have more energy to participate in camp activities! If you need assistance providing snacks for your camper, please talk to us.

## Lost and Found

Lost and found items will be collected and stored in a box located at your child's pick up and drop off location each week. At the end of the week the items will be inventoried and moved to storage until the end of the summer. Unclaimed articles are given to a charitable agency at the end of August.

# Meet our Team

Magpie Nature Camp places a strong emphasis on hiring mature, enthusiastic and qualified staff. All staff are required to be certified in Standard First Aid and have a Vulnerable Positions Screening police check. Mackenzie and Steve will be working with the campers. Nathalie is on hand at camp to help with check-in, sanitation, and any camper health concerns.

**Nathalie Olson**, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Battle River Watershed Alliance. Magpie Nature Camp Supervisor. Nathalie has been working with the BRWA since 2011. She has a Masters in Environmental Education and Communication and loves to be by water.

**Mackenzie Durocher**, Education Program Lead, Battle River Watershed Alliance. Magpie Nature Camp Counselor. This is Mackenzie's second year with the BRWA and second Magpie Camp. She brings joyful enthusiasm for all things nature and an eye for safety.

**Stephen Olson**, Wildlife Biologist and Nature Educator, Magpie Nature Consulting. Magpie Nature Camp Counselor. Steve has run his own nature programs for the last ~5 years plus participated as a leader in the Art of Mentoring camps and other nature programs. He brings a wealth of knowledge about the nature world and skills to reimagine our connection to it.

# Magpie Nature Camp Principals

## The 3 Agreements

Our camp uses these agreements to guide our actions throughout the week.

1. **Commit to take care of ourselves.** This includes ensuring we drink water and have a snack if feeling "hangry", watching for hazards and being aware of our surroundings, taking responsibility for our personal items and not leaving things laying around, and keeping up our hand hygiene.
2. **Commit to take care of others.** This includes keeping our shared spaces clean, including everyone in activities, learning everyone's names, using our best words with each other, giving others space when needed.
3. **Commit to take care of the Earth.** This includes how to interact with plants and animals, not leaving any garbage behind, being kind and showing respect to nature.

## Child Guidance Policy

A positive approach is used to guide all children, especially in difficult or frustrating situations. We guide and assist each child to feel competent in their abilities and also help them to learn social skills that enhance their self-esteem so they feel competent and secure. We encourage children to express their ideas and feelings, and also help guide their behaviour through our acceptable child guidance principles:

1. Modeling
2. Logical and Natural consequences
3. Limit Setting
4. Redirection & Providing Choices
5. Reflection Time

Please contact us If you would like to see the full Child Guidance Policy. Our camp program strives to serve all children but sometimes the regular program cannot meet a child's needs. Magpie Nature Camp reserves the right to withdraw children for disruptive behavior, or if our programming and staff supervision is insufficient for the child.

## Camp Inclusion

The Battle River Watershed Alliance is taking steps to ensure nature is accessible and enjoyable to people of all backgrounds and abilities. We strive to ensure all people are treated with respect and equality in all aspects of our work. Campers with special needs are welcome to attend Magpie Nature Camp with a qualified support worker.

Parents/guardians of a camper who has special needs should identify their needs upon registration. All information is treated with strict confidentiality and professionalism. We require this information in order to increase staff awareness and assist us in making your child's camp experience as safe and rewarding as possible.

# Health and Safety

Now more than ever, health and safety is our number one priority.

## COVID-19 Safety Considerations

The Government of Alberta has provided recommendations for day camps to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of campers, their families, and camp staff. The full list of recommendations can be found [here](#). Please be aware that:

- Campers showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated from other campers and must be picked up from camp within one hour of the guardian being contacted.
- Campers MUST have a parent/guardian, as well as TWO additional emergency contacts to act as authorized pick-up persons.
- Campers with symptoms will be expected to self-isolate as per the Chief Medical Officer of Health order.
- Upon arrival, campers are asked to stay in their vehicle until Nathalie can greet them. We will complete a quick COVID-19 screening checklist and take temperatures using a contactless thermometer. Campers with temperatures exceeding 38.0°C will be asked to return home.
- Our staff will be sanitizing the washroom and all equipment after each use.

## Medications and Allergies at Camp

Before your child attends camp, you will have to complete a "Camper Health and Safety Information Form". If anything changes after completing the form, please send an updated copy. If sending medication to camp:

1. Upon arrival to camp on the first day, please notify Nathalie that your child needs to take medication during camp hours. Together staff and parent/guardian will confirm the type of medication, dosage and dispensing time.
2. Send the medication in the original prescribed container.
3. Please send enough medication for the full week on the first day.
4. Medication should be given directly to the Nathalie by an adult.

If your child carries an ANA KIT or Epi-pen, please be sure that you've included this information in your Camper Health and Safety Information Form and that the kit is in the camper's backpack.

## Safe Arrival/Pick up Procedures

To ensure the safe arrival and departure of campers we ask that parents/guardians or designated Emergency Contacts accompany campers to and from camp. Only those listed

as Parent/Guardians and Emergency Contacts on your child's Participant Information form are permitted to pick up your child from camp. You must phone Nathalie ahead of time if your camper will be picked up by someone other than those you have listed.

It is Magpie Nature Camp's policy to ask for photo identification for parents and guardians at any time until counsellors get to know legal guardians by sight. Always be prepared to present photo identification when picking up your camper.

Drop-off/Pick Up Policy: Please respect our staff and tight schedule by being on time. Arrive within 10 minutes of start and end times. Repeated occurrences will result in your child being unable to return for the camp.

## Payment/Membership

The camp cost \$75 per child plus \$50 per family for a Camrose Fish and Game Association Membership. Payment can be done online (BRWA will send an invoice via Square), or paid by cheque made out to the Battle River Watershed Alliance. If your camper develops COVID-19 symptoms prior to camp, we ask that you contact us to unregister. A full refund will be provided.

Membership: Your \$50 Family membership gives you access to Pleasure Island and provides insurance coverage for your family while on site. You may also attend and vote at the Camrose and District Fish and Game Association meetings. [Join them on Facebook!](#)

## Contact

Camp questions or concerns can be directed to:  
Nathalie Olson, [nathalie@battleriverwatershed.ca](mailto:nathalie@battleriverwatershed.ca)  
Office: 780-672-0276 Ex. 1 | Cell: 780-678-6857

If your questions or concerns are not addressed, you may also contact the Battle River Watershed Alliance, General Manager:  
David Samm, [david.samm@battleriverwatershed.ca](mailto:david.samm@battleriverwatershed.ca)  
Office: 780-672-0276 Ext. 6 | Cell: 780-781-2972

**We look forward to meeting you and your child(ren) at camp!**



*Magpie Camp is financially supported by Cargill*