

YMCA Adventure Bound TREKKER'S HANDBOOK

Greetings and welcome to the exciting world of wilderness trekking. We hope you are looking forward to joining us this summer as much as we are looking forward to having you with us. "Trekking" is a new name for an age old experience – grabbing everything you need to be self-sufficient, then heading off into the wilderness to travel and live for a period of time. Of course, by travel we mean either on foot, via canoe or raft, or by bike. Being self-sufficient, living outdoors, casting off such modern inconveniences as television, stereos, and computers, allows you to get closer than you have ever been to the real world. For many good reasons, it also gives you an unencumbered opportunity to learn things about yourself, and dig deeper into your soul than you have ever done before. Trekking can be fun – or it can be serious. It can be totally pleasant – or it can be physically and mentally tiring and challenging. It can be one single experience you will cherish and remember the rest of your life- or it can be the start of a new life-long hobby or pursuit. It can be merely an escape from the pseudo-civilized world of school, work, and media – or it can be a true opportunity to reconnect with yourself and get in touch with your inner feelings while uncovering your personal strengths. Most of all, trekking is, to a certain extent, about facing a challenge you may have never previously contemplated – meeting it head on – and being able to say "I can do that. I did that!"

This booklet is designed to help insure that the adventure is one you will remember in the fondest terms only. We ask that parents and trekkers read over this book as well as the packing list(s) very carefully. After doing that, if you have any questions whatsoever, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail us and we will be happy to provide what answers we can. Good luck- and have a great time!

Identity

Adventure Bound Treks is a program of YMCA Camp Mason in partnership with its 15 or so affiliated YMCAs. Camp Mason has been in this business for over 100 years, is American Camping Association accredited, and licensed and inspected by the State of New Jersey Division of Youth Camp Health and Safety. Participants come from a number of different areas – including overseas – and from a number of local community YMCAs. YMCA Camp Mason staff will lead all trips and Camp Mason will be your primary contact. **Trips will depart from and return to YMCA Camp Mason.** We've expanded our program to include Adventure Bound as more of a part of the summer camp community. We'll check in right along with Mason resident campers, and meet up from there.

Forms

Like it or not – paperwork is an essential evil – even for wilderness types like us. The forms in this packet should be completed and mailed back to the YMCA (c/o Adventure Bound, 23 Birch Ridge Rd., Hardwick, NJ 07825) as soon as possible. The sooner the better; June 19 is our official deadline. This allows us time to digest the paperwork and to prepare for your arrival. It also avoids any last minute errors and confusion resulting from lost or forgotten forms.

Trekker's Personal Conduct Contract – This should be read and signed by both parent/guardian and trekkers. Send one copy back by return mail as final acceptance into the program is not guaranteed until you both have read and agreed to these terms. Keep one copy for yourselves. If you cannot agree to these terms, we will refund your deposit.

Trekker's Acknowledgement of Risk – We don't expect anybody really to fall off cliffs or perish in quicksand – but this is New Jersey in the 21st century – so we are required to inform you of the inherent risks involved in hiking, canoeing, rafting, rock climbing, and camping. We neglected to mention the possibility of a moose stumbling over your small tent in the dark – ha ha, just kidding! Sign and return, please.

Health History Form – This must be completed in its entirety and signed. Please do not forget to mention any prescription medication you are sending along. Also please include details on your medical insurance or HMO process *and a copy of your card*. Part of this form is "permission to treat" in the event of an emergency. Another part is a health history that any treating doctor will want and need. This is a very important form and will be carried by the trek leaders anywhere they go. The form also includes includes a page to record the trekker's most recent health exam and physical. It is the law in New Jersey that a full physical must be done

within twelve (12) months of attendance. If your child has had a physical in that time, have their doctor simply complete and sign the form **or** attach a signed copy of the original exam report from his records. Note that this can often take several weeks so please plan accordingly. Failure to have this form completed and in the hands of the YMCA by the day of the departure will exclude participation.

Camper Information Form – provides us with important information about our trekkers. It helps us plan properly for their needs, and be sensitive and aware of potential situations before they might happen. We hope you will answer it honestly and fairly. The form will be shared with the trek leaders and Adventure Bound Director as they will be in close contact

Statement and Confirmation – confirms receipt of your enrollment and that a space has been reserved. Final acceptance only occurs when we receive back your Trekker's Personal Conduct Contract. This form will also indicate the amount of your balance still to be paid, and when it is due.

Release Forms – Some activities require a parent's signature on a release form. We will send these forms only if needed for your trek.

Fees and Payment

The balance of all fees are due in camp by May 1, 2009. Your final bill is enclosed in this packet. Failure to pay your fees by May 1 can result in your child's enrollment being forfeited, at the YMCA's option, and the spot being given to the next person on the waiting list. You may pay by check, money order, VISA, or Mastercard. Those enrolling after May 1 must submit payment in full at the time of registration.

Refunds and Cancellations

All deposits are fully refundable for any reason at all, upon written notice to the camp of intent to cancel, right up until May 1. After May 1, the deposit amount is no longer refundable for any reason. After May 1, the only acceptable reason for cancellation is a serious injury or contagious illness that is sufficiently limiting that your doctor provides the camp with written documentation. In this event, we will refund the balance of the total fee less the original deposit. This is always contingent upon your notifying us in a timely and effective fashion.

Dismissals

Any trekker sent home for a violation of the Conduct Code or for health or personal reasons will not be entitled to a refund of any amount and you remain responsible for the full fee. Further, parent/guardians should be aware that "evacuations" requiring a child to be pulled from a trek at any time, for any reason, are done at the expense of the family. You will be fully liable for all costs. God forbid, this hasn't happened in years and we hope it never will – but please keep in mind that this expense is yours, so such decisions should and will not be made lightly. A sixteen year old who "doesn't like it" and insists on coming home in the middle can ruin it for the other kids and cost you easily thousands of dollars in expenses.

Arrival/Departure

All arrivals and departures are from Camp Mason. Report to the office area at the designated time for check-in, health check by our nurse, and to give or get last minute instructions. Any outstanding fees or forms must be resolved here before you drop off your trekker. As trips are typically one week in duration and summer camp check-ins are every two weeks, some trekkers will experience the thrill and simplicity of a large check-in or check-out, while others will see the joy of a trip-only check in and check-out. Pick-up will be at Adventure Bound Base Camp which you will visit on check-in day. Please take heed to the arrival and departure times listed below and extend the courtesy to your campers and our staff to not arrive tremendously early or late. We have built in sufficient time for returning groups to unpack, debrief, and say good-byes. Should unforeseen circumstances delay a group for more than two hours of pickup time, we will call you as soon as we realize it. Communication will be facilitated by the fact each group leader will be carrying a cell phone (yes, we know, ah wilderness – but we must temper that with the safety of emergency communications – note we only said **emergency** use).

2009 Treks with their dates and times are as listed below.

	Departure Date	Drop-off time	Return Date	Pick-up time
Adventure Pack I	Sun, July 5	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, July 11	10:00-11:00 am
Spokes n Splash	Sun, July 5	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, July 11	10:00-11:00 am
Boots & Paddles	Sun, July 12	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, July 18	10:00-11:00 am
Mountain Adventure	Sun, July 19	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, July 25	10:00-11:00 am
Adventure Pack Plus	Sun, July 26	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, August 8	10:00-11:00 am
River Runners	Sun, July 26	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, August 1	10:00-11:00 am
Extreme Rock Climbing	Sun, August 2	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, August 8	10:00-11:00 am
Ropes & Boats	Sun, August 9	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, August 15	10:00-11:00 am
Adventure Pack 2	Sun, August 16	4:00-5:00 pm	Sat, August 22	10:00-11:00 am

Camp Mason Overlaps

The Adventure Bound and YMCA Camp Mason resident camps are two separate programs and require two sets of forms and separate enrollment. However, we recognize that many of the participants will have or still do attend Camp Mason. When youngsters are planning dual attendance and there is a reasonable overlap between dates and sessions, we will work with you in planning the logistics. Each situation will be considered on a case by case basis. If you have a question, problem, or proposed solution, please talk with Alissa Duffy, Adventure Bound Director. However, be aware that youngsters who arrive very late or leave very early do not do as well in a regular camp bunk situation as many bonds and friendships are formed in by the bunk group in the first couple of days of the resident camp session. Note that while we will try to work with you, in the end, we reserve the right to make the final decision subject to a number of factors related primarily to how the transition or stay over will affect your child and the established bunk group.

Health and Medical Care

At least one leader on each group will be trained in both in Red Cross Standard First Aid and CPR. They will provide basic assistance when called to, temporary emergency care until trekkers can be seen by a doctor or nurse. Note that when 3 days out on the trail, complaints about a simple sore throat, stomachache, headache, etc. will not likely be treated by a doctor who will simply agree to "fly in." Group leaders will consult with the Camp Mason registered nurse by cell phone, and he/she will determine if the situation is serious enough to order a detour for medical attention or evacuation. If not, take two non-aspirins, drink plenty of water, rest a little, then keep going. Of course, if it is serious, we will let you know right away and options will be discussed. But in general, evacuations are very intrusive, expensive, and doctors are not willing to parachute in. Let's be real. What would they/you do if you were at home? However, again, if it IS serious, we WILL get medical advice and if needed, treatment. All costs for medical treatment, etc. will be billed to the parents/guardians. You are responsible for fighting with your insurance carrier over how it will be handled. The YMCA does not provide any accident or medical coverage for campers. We hope you can depend on your insurance coverage. If you are with an HMO, check their policies. You may need to notify them in advance that your child will be travelling.

Legal Drugs

The trek leaders will carry the usual items – stomach remedies, non-aspirin aspirin, motion/air sickness tablets if applicable, etc. and a basic first aid kit. But, we cannot administer these without you or your doctor's specific written instructions on the health form we will be carrying with us. If you do not tell us, "Give an aspirin if they complain," we legally cannot. Trekkers themselves should pack no over the counter medications. These will be taken away during packing and left behind. *All prescription drugs must be in their original container and must be specified by the doctor in writing on the health form.* Please be sure you do this. If an Rx is given after the health form has been sent in, ask the doctor to write a short note specifying how and when to give the Rx. All medications must be in the original container, with date, camper's name, doctor's name, and identifications of the contents on it. Our leaders will hold and dispense them. Please, please count out the correct number of

pills needed, maybe one to spare, and take the excess out of the original container before sending it. Send only what is needed. The lone exception to this are inhalers required for asthma or breathing difficulties which trekkers may hold onto themselves. Medications needing to be injected (other than epi-pens for allergic reaction) or refrigerated, will pose a problem and you should discuss it with your doctor ahead of time. (and pre-test it please). If your trekker is extremely prone to motion sickness, please send along the necessary medications and let the leaders know. All treks require some sort of lengthy transportation. **SPECIAL NOTE ON MEDICATIONS:** *Some medications, such as those often prescribed for ADHD, lower campers' energy levels where they are unable to participate in more physical treks, such as backpacking. Our advice is to enroll such campers in less strenuous treks, not take them off the medication.*

Inherent Risk

Here we go with the New Jersey thing again. We must inform you one more time that hiking, backpacking, camping, canoeing, whitewater rafting, rock climbing, and horseback riding have inherent risks including but not limited to falls, bad weather, spills, rushing water, acts of God, wild animals, insects, scared horses, falling trees, etc. You get the picture. By agreeing to send your child, you are acknowledging and voluntarily sharing in these risks, and further, you are certifying that your child is capable of understanding and obeying instructions given by the leaders particularly for the purpose of protecting the participant's health, safety, and welfare. Accidents caused by a child's inability to do this or in the event they defy and refuse instructions, will not be the responsibility of anyone but the child. Please be sure your trekker is ready to understand such ramifications.

Photo Release

Unless you specify otherwise in writing, the YMCA is appending to these policies a photo release in that we may use all photo or video images of participants on our treks for YMCA newsletters, brochures, and future program promotions, provided that no identification of the subjects are made, the images are not sold, and all materials are kept and used exclusively for YMCA Camp Ralph S. Mason, Inc. If this is unacceptable, you must provide instructions to the contrary in writing, prior to departure. Such a prohibition will not affect your child's participation.

Swim Level

All trekkers will be tested for swimming ability prior to departure. We are not looking for technical skills, but mainly for those who will be comfortable and safe in the water. If this is going to be a problem, you should bring it to our attention now. All treks with the exception of Mountain Adventure and Extreme Rock Climbing require a reasonable intermediate swim level ranking. This does not mean 200 meter butterfly in perfect swim team formation. It means that if you fall in fast moving water you will be confident enough to stay calm and swim to safety. For Mountain Adventure and Extreme Rock Climbing, the leaders must be aware of swim levels and therefore supervise trekkers appropriately when they go to recreational swims while on the trip. Every trip will have a lifeguard where needed.

Telephone/Mail/E-Mail/Visiting

Obviously, due to the pace and style of these trips, visiting, writing, or communication with your child will not be likely. Please keep in mind that no news is good news! Trek leaders carry cell phones but these are for emergency use and/or necessary communication with camp. If we do receive an update from a trek it will be posted on our website.

Spending Money

A lot of spending money is not required. On most treks all we recommend bringing is a maximum of \$10 in singles and quarters in case we happen upon a vending machine. For Extreme Rock Climbing a maximum of \$20 is recommended as we may stop at a quickie mart. If a trekker decides to bring more than the recommended amount, we will not be responsible when it "disappears."

Valuables

The YMCA is absolutely not responsible for loss or damage to personal belongings. These are a responsibility of the trekker. We wish to make this clear – if they don't bring it, nothing can happen to it! Therefore, NO jewelry, fine watches, expensive fancy cameras, irreplaceable mementos, ipods, or cell phones are permitted on any trek. One of our goals of the Adventure Bound program is to disconnect from everyday tech-heavy world and instead connect with nature. Cell phones and ipods hinder this and will be confiscated if found, to be returned to a parent upon departure.

Laundry

There is no laundry service in the woods so send what is needed. Extra stuff can be safely left at base camp.

Packing Lists

We have included a packing list for the trek(s) your child is enrolled in. Please review these and pack accordingly. These are compiled from years' worth of knowledge and experience from trek leaders. You will be expected to bring your own personal items. The camp will provide community gear. Community gear will include canoes and kayaks (when called for), cooking gear, high quality tents, food, first-aid equipment, and repair kits. In the packing list we will discuss some of the gear needs for each trip specifically. Many people already have most of the items on the list or can borrow them from a friend. We have some gear available to loan out; these items are listed in the packing information. Please call Alissa to reserve these items.

Outdoor Gear Stores

The following stores sell quality outdoor gear and have knowledgeable and helpful salespeople. They can fit you properly, make adjustments, and give good advice. We get nothing back from any of them. We just mention them to help you if you are going to buy any piece of new equipment. *Most of our staff shop at CampMor.* They have great prices on top quality and closeouts. It's our semi-annual pilgrimage and walking through it makes outdoors people feel like they are in Santa's workshop!

CampMor -Route 17 North (4 miles north of Route 4 intersection), Paramus, New Jersey (closed Sundays)

Ramsey Outdoors -1039 US Highway 46, Ledgewood, New Jersey
-Route 17 North, Paramus, New Jersey

EMS -Route 17 North (next door to CampMor), Paramus, New Jersey
-Market Fair, 3535 US Route 1, West Windsor, New Jersey
-Woodbridge Center, 277 Woodbridge Center Drive, Woodbridge, New Jersey
-Plaza at King of Prussia, 160 North Gulph Rd., King of Prussia, PA

REI -500 Main Street, New Rochelle, New York
-Route 17 North, Paramus, New Jersey

Contact Information

Send all correspondence to:
YMCA Adventure Bound Program
c/o YMCA Camp Mason
23 Birch Ridge Rd.
Hardwick, NJ 07825

Alissa Duffy, Adventure Bound Director
Alissa@campmason.org

Don Jennings, Summer Camp Director
April Szekula, Registrar

YMCA Camp Mason Phone 908-362-8217
Fax: 908-362-5767
Camp Mason e-mail: campEmail@campmason.org

Additional Information for Trekkers

Journals

One of the things we ask you to do on the trek is keep a journal. Small notebooks and pencils will be distributed at the beginning (or you can bring your own if you want), and time each day will be set aside for you to record the sights, recall the experiences, or just jot down some thoughts. A few trekkers in the past even started doing sketches or writing poetry they were so inspired! Everybody is not Ernest Hemingway, but even for the worst writers among us, looking back on that journal a few months later is a wonderful experience. Time to record your wilderness thoughts, then time to come back and reread them at some point in the future has proven tremendously satisfying to even the most jaded trekker!

Community Living

By now you should have read the “Trekker’s Personal Conduct Contract.” If not, please do so now, and sign and return it. It is designed to ensure that everyone understands each other during the trek, and that the ground rules are common to each of you, leaders included. You will be living close and tight with 3-9 other people and even if you don’t end the trek loving all of them like a brother or sister, at least you will be able to get along.

Every trek group will emphasize teamwork. The first rule of teamwork is: No matter how quickly you finish your personally assigned task, you are never done until everyone is done. Everyone will share in the work tasks of the group- whether it be cooking, cleaning up, fetching and filtering water, tending the fire, putting up tents, assisting one of the leaders in helping a struggling member of the group. You will be asked, and you need enthusiastically pitch in every way you can. Work will get done more quickly – and you will all like each other better with no slackers around.

Suggested Reading List

Don’t worry- this isn’t like your summer reading list from school! The books below are simply recommended as great stuff to get you in the trekking spirit. The more you know about a place you are going to explore and what you’re going to do, the more interesting it will be when you get there and do it, and the more things you will know to look for when you pass through. There are also many, many good guidebooks on these subjects, trails, and locations. All of the stores listed before carry some good books in their retail and mail order sections. Look through the latest on hand when you visit the store. Other good titles are also available on the Internet, through such sites as Amazon.com. You may also enjoy picking a few copies of “Backpacker” or “Paddler” magazine (also available at above stores!) Also, the internet is a great resource for the outdoors. Most parks have websites with great information and pictures.

Backpacker’s Guide to the Appalachian Trail by Jim Chase, 1989, Stackpole Books

Walking With Spring, by Earl Shaffer, 1995, by Appalachian Trail Conference (a classic by the pioneer thru hiker!)

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson, 1998, Broadway Books (a Times Bestseller – not too serious!)

Backpacking – One Step at a Time, by Harvey Manning, 1986, Fourth Vintage Books

The New Appalachian Trail, by Edward Garvey, 1997, Menasha Ridge Press

The NOLS Wilderness Guide, by Peter Simer, 1991, Fireside Books

Rocky Mountain Adventure Collection, by T.J. Burr, Fithian Press, 1992

Appalachian Whitewater – The Southern States, by Bob Sehlinger, Menasha Ridge Press, 1997

The Thrill of the Paddle, by Paul Mason & Mark Scoirver, Firefly Books, Ltd. 1999

New Jersey Crags – Classic Rock Climbs, by Paul Nick & J.A. Sloane, Chockstone Press, 1998

In High Places – by Dougal Haston, The Mountaineers Publishing, 1972 (Climbing & mountaineering stories by premiere British climber of the ‘60s and ‘70s)

Adventure Vacations in 50 States – by Stephanie Orko, Carol Publishing 1995