

Watershed Education

Parent & Teacher Handbook



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Your partner in natural hazard management, resource conservation, and stewardship

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Preparing for your visit!

This handbook applies to everyone participating in an MVCA facilitated education program at a conservation area

Watershed Education Programs

Our programs welcome schools and groups to visit our beautiful Conservation Areas for a day of outdoor learning and fun. We also offer custom activities and presentations directly on-site at client locations.

When your group comes to our space, we focus our activities based on your learning goals and curriculum targets.

Activities may include (but are not be limited to): stream studies, nature ID scavenger hunts, animal tracking, hiking, survival skill-building, themed games, and more. Seasonally, activities will change.

We will be spending most of the day outside and we cannot stress enough how important it is for children to be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions.

Contact Information:

Emma Higgins, Education Program Coordinator

Field Phone (after 7:00am on program dates): (613) 277-5398

MVCA Main Office (after 8:30am): (613) 253-0006

Email: programs@mvc.on.ca



Location

Most programs take place at our Mill of Kintail Conservation Area.

- 2854 Ramsay Concession 8, Almonte
- The entrance is 1 km north of the intersection of Ramsay Concession 8 and Bennies Corners Road. Enter the main parking lot, pass through the gate, and keep to the right. You will reach a brown building, play structure and picnic shelter – along with staff waving at you! You have arrived!

If you book a program at an alternate location, you will receive different instructions for “Location Information” via email.

Parking and Drop-Off

All attending teachers, volunteers and/or parents can park for free. Please make use of the front parking lot and walk to the Education Center to reduce the number of vehicles parked in the Education area - especially in the winter.

Bus Arrivals

Buses will arrive, and drive past the main building, through the front gate. They will stay right at the fork in the road and drive until they come to our roundabout at the Education Center building. This is where drop-off and pick-up occurs. They will be given parking instructions.

Facilities

The camp is run out of the picnic shelter and Education Center. We will move around the site to utilize the trails, stream and field areas as required for your itinerary.

Backpacks and lunches can remain in a closed building during our activities.

A Typical Program

This schedule is flexible and will change based on your group's individual program. For groups over 40 participants, groups are split for activities.

- 9:30 am – Arrival – Welcome Orientation & Snack
- 10:00 am – Program Block 1 – Forest focus if applicable
- 11:30 am – Lunch
- 12:00 pm – Program Block 2 – Water focus if applicable
- 1:30 pm – Closing game
- 2:00 pm – Clean up & Free Play until departure

In winter months, this will be adapted to include indoor breaks in a warm space based on temperatures.



Booking Information

Invoicing and Attendance

Invoices will be sent out 30 days ahead of scheduled bookings. Changes to attendance can be made up to 2 weeks ahead of your booking date.

It is mandatory to provide a certificate of insurance ahead of your visit (naming MVCA as being added to the General Liability Insurance Policy).

Proof of insurance must be received no later than 3 days ahead of your scheduled program. Please let us know if you need support or have questions.

Generally, a certificate can be requested by contacting the school board and requesting an update. This can sometimes take a few days. For private facilities, contact your insurance directly.

Payment is due 2 weeks ahead of your visit, unless otherwise discussed.

Postponement and Cancellation Policy

Postponement

We are happy to reschedule due to severe weather, but our programs operate in reasonable amounts of rain or snow. In the case of weather concerns or extreme circumstances requiring a re-booking, please notify the Program Coordinator within 24 hours of your program whenever possible. Causes of postponement include (but may not be limited to): unsafe driving conditions, severe weather warnings, extreme heat (+30), extreme cold (-30), air quality issues, high winds, tornado watches, staff illness, or public safety warnings. Should postponement be required, you will be re-booked to the next available date.

Cancellation

Cancellation requires at least 30 days notice to receive a full refund, minus a \$40.00 administrative fee. Cancellation outside that time frame may not receive a full refund, unless the date can be filled with another booking.



Health and Safety Guidelines

Food and Water Policies

Nut-Free Zone: we ask that participants refrain from bringing nuts to our location. We are in a public location and cannot promise a fully allergen-free premises, but we do our best.

Low-Waste Lunches: We encourage participants to try to bring lunches that are waste-mindful.

Hand Washing and Drinking Water: Participants will have access to soap, water and hand sanitizer, to handwash before eating. Potable water is available on-site

Emergency Procedures and First Aid

The Mill of Kintail has written emergency procedures. A copy of these procedures is available at every doorway/entrance on-site.

Teachers are responsible for their students. This includes being aware of any medical conditions and allergies. They are to provide first aid care and emergency response as needed for their group.

MVCA staff will assist as appropriate.

MVCA staff will always have a mobile first-aid kit on-hand (emergency blankets, bandages, blister-care, extra rain ponchos, hot paws and more). Depending on the site, there will be additional First Aid Kits in each building.

The M.O.K has an AED on-site.

Supervision of Students

Teachers are supervisors of their students. We ask that you abide by your organization's policy for supervision ratios on field trips.

We welcome you to bring volunteers to support your group.

The MVCA staff are present as program facilitators. We guide your group through activities and games on the program itinerary. We love our job and enjoy working with your students. We will give safety guidelines, program briefings, and instructions.

Ultimately, you, the Educator, will have the final decision on any activities. Let your MVCA facilitator know if you want an activity adapted or changed. We are here to help YOU and your class have the best experience.

We ask that your students, volunteers, and staff abide by the following principles:

- No Violence or Harassment (physical, verbal or otherwise)
- Respect all living things (people, animals, plants)
- Use items with care
- Listen and respond to safety instructions

It is important to note that outdoor activities carry inherent risk. Our activities and programs may involve:

- Exploring around or near a stream
- Using natural items or equipment to explore and create (sticks, shovels)
- Walking on slippery surfaces and tripping hazards (wet rocks, mud, ice, snow)
- Encountering natural hazards: poisonous plants (poison ivy), insects (ticks, mosquitos, wasps/bees), wildlife (bears, snakes)

Please let us know of any safety concerns you have ahead of your visit.

MVCA and local Health Unit recommend the following for visits to any natural space as appropriate:

- Long, light colored pants and long sleeve lightweight breathable 'sun shirt' (warm weather – breathability and sun protection are of the utmost importance, especially on hot days). Long pants aid in preventing rashes or scratches in brushy areas and reduce bug bites or ticks.
- Closed-toed shoes
- Insect repellant with child-safe levels of DEET or Icaridin (as required seasonally)
- Sunscreen and hat (as required seasonally)
- Checking for ticks upon coming home (let us know if you want a pamphlet with this information – seasonally, ticks can be more or less prevalent)
- For more information on enviro. Health, visit <http://www.healthunit.org> or contact the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.

After your visit we recommend changing all clothing and doing a thorough 'tick check'. Washing with soap and water (or having a shower) is ideal.

Packing List – 3 Season

A separate list will be provided for winter sessions.

☐	Backpack
☐	Nut-free Lunch
☐	Water bottle/ drinks
☐	Change of clothes (essential for wet days, or after any stream play)
☐	Rain gear (boots, pants, jacket as needed for weather)
☐	Closed-toed Shoes
☐	Sun hat, sunglasses (with “chums”)
☐	Breathable/athletic Base Clothing (see recommendations below)
☐	Towel
☐	Insect repellant/sunscreen
☐	Water Shoes, Rubber Boots or old Running Shoes (for water time)
☐	Layers for cooler days – fleece, wool (avoid cotton)

We recommend not bringing:

- Gum,
- Candy,
- Electronics,
- Money,
- Valuables,
- Special belongings that can become lost damaged

DO NOT bring knives or multi-tools.

We are not responsible for damage or loss of these items.

Privacy Policy

Any personal data shared with us, including photographic images, will be processed strictly in accordance with privacy legislation and will be used for the purposes that you have consented to. We will ensure to acquire permission directly from Educators before sharing any media of students/attendees.

References

This handbook was inspired by the following documents:

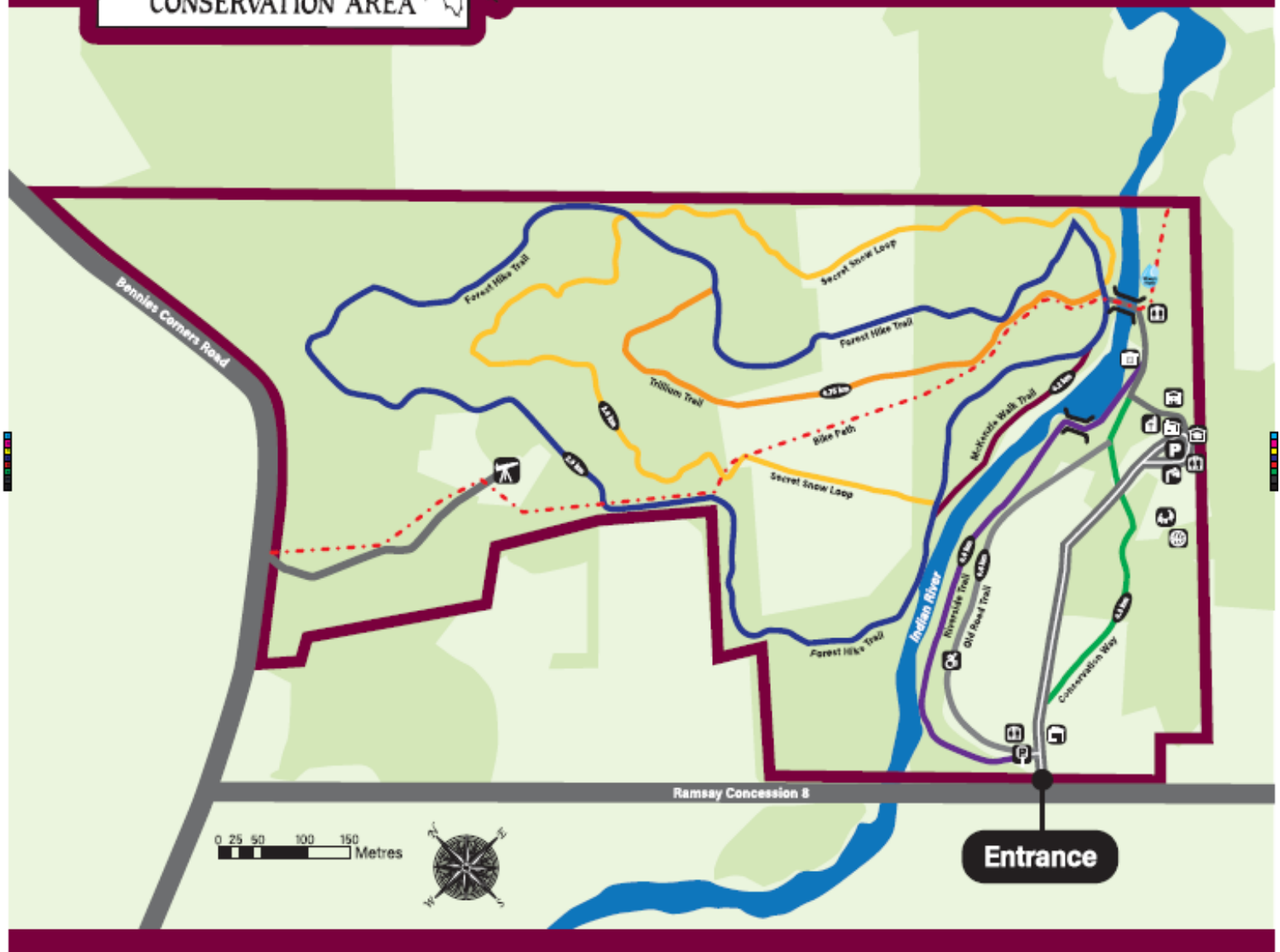
- Mill of Kintail Day Camp Handbook (June 1st, 2022 Update), RVCA, Rebecca Whitman.
- Parent Teacher Handbook, (2017), Ottawa Forest and Nature School.
- Parent Handbook, Natural Pathways Forest and Nature School.
- The Nature School Parent Information Manual, Kortright Centre for Conservation.



Site Map



Mill of Kintail Site Map



Legend

- Cloister on the Hill
- Parking Meter
- Water Fountain
- Education Centre

- Stream Study
- Bridge
- Gatehouse
- R. Tait McKenzie & James Naismith Museums

- Fred Lossing Observatory
- Parking
- Play Area
- Picnic Structure

- Washroom
- Basketball Court