



Tamarack Camps

outdoor education

Established in 1963, Tamarack Outdoor Education is committed to providing safe, quality, educational experiences for people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and learning styles. We encourage everyone to use what they learn to
Live The Experience!

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Adventure Challenge

Intro to Initiatives

1h-1h 30min

-up to 25 people per facilitator

A series of cooperative games and easy teambuilding initiatives, this fun program is used as a prerequisite to the teambuilding/group initiative programs or for something fun and educational for the younger participants. This program is designed for children 4th grade and younger.

Group Initiatives

2h 30min-3 hours

-up to 15 people per facilitator

Also known as 'low ropes' or 'teambuilding', participants involved in Group Initiatives have a series of challenges presented to them that they must work as a team to complete. After each challenge the group has a discussion on what they did well as a team and where they could use improvement. They take a close look at what makes a team work, as well as how these dynamics come into play back at work, school and in everyday life. Themes for Group Initiatives include but are not limited to:

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Group Dynamics
- Trust & Reliance
- Leadership
- Productivity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Community Building
- Appreciation of Differences
- Bullying Prevention
- Professional Development

Rock Climbing

2h 30min-3 hours

-up to 32 people per class

Our custom built rock climbing wall has nine faces on which to climb and stands over 33 feet tall. From the slab walls for the beginner to the over hang walls for the advanced climber, this structure has something for everyone. Up to 32 participants can use the rock climbing wall simultaneously. With the use of "Just-Right Descenders", participants are able to belay each other, adding an increased level of participation from everyone in the group. This program is available to 3rd grade and up. Groups that are 6th grade and below must be belayed by staff and/or adults.

High Ropes

2h 30min-3 hours

-up to 32 people per class, 16 on each course

High Ropes programs offer groups an opportunity to explore and push their personal comfort zones 20-25 feet above the ground. We have two static high ropes courses built in a beautiful pine tree setting that can accommodate up to 16 per course. There are 15 different challenges on each course offering each participant a different course that fits his or her needs. This program is available to Spring 5th graders and up.

Advanced High Ropes

2h 30min-3 hours

-up to 16 people per class

These dynamic high ropes courses stand 40 feet above the ground and are more physically demanding than the static courses. Two different standalone courses blend together to create this program. Up to 16 participants can use the advanced high ropes course at one time. The Giant's Ladder is a partner activity that focuses on strategy, reliance, and an increased gradient of difficulty. The pamper pole is an individual challenge that focuses on personal achievement, facing fear, and motivation. Available to 8th grade and up.

Adventure Challenge, cont'd

Tango Tower

2h 30min-3 hours

-up to 32 people per class

There are five different vertical challenges and eight different routes to the top of this 55 ft. monster! The Tango Tower offers both the novice and experienced climbers an extreme challenge course experience. The “Just-Right Descenders” group belay system offers participants the chance to stay active and involved throughout their program. The Tango Tower program has the option for the entire group to end with a thrill ride on our Giant Swing described below. The Tango Tower experience is available for 8th grade and up.

Giant Swing

1h 15min-1h 30min

-minimum 12, maximum 16 people per class

The Giant Swing requires the group members to hoist a partnership (2 participants) 45 ft. in the air. Once ready, the partnership controls when they begin their swing that sends them traveling down a 62 ft. arc in 1.7 seconds and reaching up to 33 mph. before being swung back up into the air. The swing slowly pendulums to a stop and the group resets for the next partnership. This activity can be utilized as an addition to the Tango Tower or as its own activity. Available to 8th grade and up.

Zip Line

2h 30min-3 hours

-up to 32 people per class

The Zip Line at Tamarack is one of the longest continuous zip lines around, standing over 100 feet high and stretching over 1500 feet across Phipps Lake. The Tamarack Zip Line sends participants racing across the lake at speeds over 45 M.P.H.! This program is typically used in conjunction with other teambuilding programs or as a recreational supplement to a visit to Tamarack. Up to 32 participants can use the zip line together, but there is only one rider at a time. Available to 8th grade and up.

Indoor Programs

2h 30 min-3 hours

-up to 15 people per facilitator

Whether it's too cold outside or your group would just prefer the indoors, our staff will provide a teambuilding program in any building or office. Any teambuilding/group initiatives program that you would like to be done indoors can also be done at our facility. 5th grade and up.

Extended Debrief Session

2h 30min-3hours

-numbers vary per group

The transfer of experience is one of the most valuable pieces of a teambuilding program. To go above and beyond the normal debrief session and examine on a deeper level the experiences that took place on the course, you may wish to add an extended debrief session.

Portable Programs

2 hours-6 hours

-up to 15 people per facilitator

Don't let issues such as time, transportation, or cost stop you from having a teambuilding session. We can set up teambuilding programs in almost any setting to fit your group's needs. Portable programs can be set up at any park, hotel, school, office building, or anywhere with an open space. Available for 5th grade and up.

Corporate Level teambuilding information is available upon request.

Camp Classics

Capture the Flag

1h 15min

-up to 100 people per class

A longtime camp standard and favorite! Groups are broken up into two teams with the goal of capturing the other team's flag. Tamarack's extended version includes some fun props and a great playing field! Who will get taken prisoner? Who will make a successful jailbreak? The real question is: who will ultimately capture the flag?!

Recreational Games

1h 15min-2 hours

-up to 100 people per class



Once upon a time, a long before there were handheld electronics there was...Tug of War! Help us remind kids of the excitement of playing games with friends outside. This program can include classic games like Ultimate Frisbee, Red Rover, Freeze Tag, Tug of War, and Capture the Flag. Adults are always welcome to join in the fun!

Cabin Call!

1h 15min

-whole group activity



Let Tamarack help get your students in the camp spirit! Our facilitator will arrive in your village with everything each cabin needs to make a cabin sign and will guide your students through the process of naming their cabin, choosing a cabin mascot, and creating bunk rules. Once all cabins have completed their projects they'll have an opportunity to share their creativity with the rest of the group. This activity is designed to promote cohesiveness within each cabin and be a fun kickoff to camp!

Skit Trunk

1h 30min-2 hours

-whole group activity



What's going to camp without skits? Students will create their own skits using the props and costumes provided by Tamarack. Tamarack staff will be on hand to help guide the students and organize the planning, practice, and performance times- the rest is up to the students and how creative they can be. Get ready for a hilarious good time! This works great as an evening activity.

Mock Olympics

2 hours

-up to 100 people per class

Pit your athletic abilities against your classmates in this competitive evening program featuring a host of "Olympic" events – Tamarack style. You will have lots of fun & laughs! This is an indoor program with groups divided into smaller competing teams. A popular evening activity choice.

Hayrides & Campfire*

20-30 min per ride + campfire

-up to 25 people per ride

Take a relaxing tour through camp on our tractor-drawn hay wagon and enjoy a campfire built by Tamarack staff when you're done! This is a great way to conclude a busy day. Twenty-five people may ride in the hay wagon at a time. The rest can wait for their turn around the campfire in your village. Large groups may move to "Jeff's Fire Circle" that accommodates even our largest groups. Please plan on having an adult present both on the hay wagon and at the campfire.

* Hayrides and campfires are each available as separate programs if preferred

Environmental Science

Living Science

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Visit our menagerie of live animals! This class is your chance to literally get your hands on Living Science. Learn about mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, invertebrates and more by meeting them up close. This is a great class for learning about the differences between types of creatures and the amazing amount of biodiversity in our worldwide ecosystem.

Forest Trek

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Discovery through observation makes each walk in the woods a unique learning experience. This class contains activities with an emphasis on different types of forests and the biological reasons of why they are different. Students will examine often overlooked forest life, as well as learn through guided exploration. This class is excellent paired with Pond Expedition!

Pond Expedition

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Water and wetlands form a vital part of the ecology of Michigan and the world. Students use nets, buckets, magnifiers, and other equipment for hands-on investigations to reveal the fascinating life within a pond. Our facilitators interpret the findings to teach concepts of succession, aquatic insect stages, and food chains, while illustrating the importance of water to all life on earth. Available April through October.

Microscope Lab Session

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class



Available as an addition to either Pond Expedition or Forest Trek, the microscope lab option gives students the opportunity to look more in depth into these ecosystems. Students will examine microscopic life that plays an integral part within the miniscule world that oftentimes isn't addressed when looking at the big picture. Concepts such as niches and biodiversity are addressed in this fun, hands-on exploration of some of our smallest wild creatures! Available May through September.

Bird Investigation

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

This class stresses the diversity of the bird class by identifying differences of form, song, and behavior. Fun interaction with real birds and a bird walk get students excited about birding! Students will be instructed on how to enjoy bird watching on their own as a hobby as well as address responsibility for concerns regarding proper habitat and protection for birds.

Environmental Science, Cont'd

Michigan Critters

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Here at Camp Tamarack we are surrounded by a host of interesting mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians and insects. We will give students a chance to explore these living things, view their tracks and signs, and become familiar with their needs and adaptations. All of the "critters" explored and experienced will be native to Michigan. If we're lucky we may even spot some of them in the woods!

Nature Crafts

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

This activity is an interesting way to explore our environment by discovering the art in nature. Using simple materials, students make artistic creations which relate to our natural world. This class is recommended for grades 1-4.

Experiential Team Games

Tamarack Survivor

1h 15min

-up to 32 people per class

We have all been captivated by the popular television series "Survivor". Students will have fun in this team-oriented version of Survivor, where no one gets voted off the island. Instead, students participate in team challenges, gaining rewards in the form of advantages for their team. Good sportsmanship and fair play are a focus of this class. Survivors ready?

T'Amazing Race

1h 15min-2h 30 min

-up to 32 people per class

Teams of students face a competitive challenge against time, attempting to find clues to complete the race challenges before the other teams. The longer version of this program is appropriate for 6th grade and older. Canoeing and Map & Compass training are recommended for the long version. Tamarack may require chaperone participation for younger groups. This activity is excellent as a culmination program.

Instincts for Survival

1h 15min

-up to 100 people per class

Instincts for Survival is a simulation game where students become herbivores, omnivores and carnivores and experience using strategies such as camouflage, freezing, speed and distraction. The purpose is to create an awareness and appreciation of the importance of all animals in the food chain and what it truly does take to survive! This is a very active game with a great message. Most effective with groups of 30 or more.

Nature Games

1h 15min

-up to 50 per class

A variety of games are used to illustrate concepts such as ecosystems, life cycles, limiting factors and different characteristics of the creatures in our world. Complex concepts are addressed in a way that is both fun and new for students. A high-energy educational good time!

Guided Recreation and Sports

Archery

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Come to the edge of the medieval forest by the lake. Our archery range will test your skills amongst ye band of merry men and women. Students will be instructed on the different parts of the bow and arrow, stance, and shooting techniques. All equipment is provided.

Canoeing

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Glide gently among the lily pads or sing the hearty song of the paddle, as did the voyagers in search of furs. You will hardly need a reason to enjoy canoeing on beautiful Phipps Lake during your stay at camp. Paddles and life jackets are provided. Maximum occupancy: three per canoe. Instructors for this class are American Red Cross certified lifeguards. Available Spring through Fall.

Fishing

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

It was THIS big! Don't just tell fishing tales, learn how to actually land that monster fish! We'll teach you the basics of how to set up a rod and reel, casting, and how to not have to tell the story of 'the one that got away'. All equipment and bait provided. Our lake is catch and release only, so be sure to bring a camera! A fishing license is not required.

Nature Hike

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per facilitator



Not every learning experience has to be highly structured! Our facilitator will begin with a short introduction about responsible hiking including touching on some of the Leave No Trace principles. Following this the group will head out into the woods to go exploring on one of Tamarack's many hiking trails. Let your students enjoy being outside and letting their natural curiosity guide them. Get ready for teachable moments!

Kayaking

1h 15min

-up to 15 people per facilitator



For years Tamarack campers have enjoyed canoeing around our lake. Now they have the opportunity to test out their paddle sports skills in a kayak! An American Red Cross Certified Lifeguard is always with this class which is available Spring through Fall.

Mountain Biking

1h 15min

-up to 15 people per class



Enjoy the miles of trails at Tamarack while riding a mountain bike! Each class will get a basic introduction to mountain bikes and how they function, and then they'll helmet-up and hit the trails. This class is designed for beginners and features a moderately challenging ride. Each group must have an adult willing to ride along!

Waterfront

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per lifeguard

Come enjoy our waterfront with swimming, water games, fishing, or other water sports. All activities are supervised by one of Camp Tamarack's Red Cross Certified Lifeguards. Available Spring through Fall.

Social Studies

Smoklerville

2h 30min

- groups must meet the chaperone requirement for this activity
- up to 60 students per class

Smoklerville is a role playing activity that simulates the trials and tribulations of an American homesteading family in the 1860's. Students are grouped into small "families" of 4 or 6 and attempt to live a typical year in a pioneer's life, carrying out the various practical duties to survive the year. Our mayor will train your adult chaperones (min. of 10) to play the roles of the various townspeople. Don't miss this valuable lesson in living history and cultural development. This program is suitable for 2nd grade and up.

Pioneer Skills

2h 30min

- groups must meet the chaperone requirement for this activity
- up to 60 students per class

The Smokler family's generous donations have enabled Tamarack Outdoor Education to build and maintain an authentic re-creation of a Michigan pioneer settlement village of the 1800's. Here students may engage in a variety of hands-on activities, including candle making, rope making, pioneer crafts, and more. Students take home their handmade treasures to remind them of this incomparable experience. Our mayor will train adult members (min. of 6) of your staff to run the various stations. Additional chaperones are needed: one per small group to help guide them.

Native American Games



1h 15min

- up to 25 people per class

Native peoples lived on this land centuries ago and continue to do so today. In this class students will learn about the diversity of Native American cultures. Traditional games like 'Buffalo Robe' and 'Hunter Hunted' teach students what values and skills were shared by various tribes and nations. Foster a better understanding of Native American cultures of our country through educational game play!

Native American Crafts

1h 15min

- up to 25 people per class

Native Americans have long been admired for their beautiful crafts. Learn to make a variety of Native American crafts such as talking sticks, ceremonial rattles, bear-claw necklaces, mandalas, armbands, and story skins. A general appreciation for Native Americans is shared through crafts.

World Crafts

1h 15min

- up to 25 people per class

Experience world cultures through art! Students will select and make two or three projects specific to different cultures using a variety of techniques. Crafts may include Mayan pictograph writing, Japanese origami, Egyptian paper beads, and Australian aboriginal dot painting. This is a great class for grades 5 and up.

Wilderness Skills

Map and Compass Junior Course

1h 15min

-up to 50 people per class

Designed for students that are 3rd grade and younger, this is a very basic but fun course to get a compass in the hands of our younger campers. The course works on both compass bearings and visual clues to help the students gain confidence when thinking about direction and navigating around an area.

Map and Compass Short Course

1h 15min

-groups must meet the chaperone requirement for this activity
-up to 100 people per class

This is a shortened version of the Challenge Hike, where students are taught how to use the compass and follow basic bearings. Accompanied by **one adult chaperone per group**, small groups of students hike a shortened course which takes them to various clues. This activity works well for groups with limited time or groups who have participants with more limited mobility.

Map and Compass Challenge Hike

2h 30 min

-groups must meet the chaperone requirement for this activity
-up to 100 people per class

Simulating an orienteering course, the compass Challenge Hike requires small groups of students to use a series of bearings and clues to travel on trails around the lake at Tamarack. Following a brief compass class, students take turns setting and walking nearly three dozen bearings. Allow a full morning or afternoon for this activity as the course is approximately 2 miles. **Each group** must be accompanied by one of your adults.

Map and Compass Lost and Found

2h 30min

-groups must meet the chaperone requirement for this activity
-up to 100 people per class

This 2 1/2 hour hike allows students a realistic opportunity to refine their orienteering skills while exploring some of the more remote areas of Tamarack's 1500 acres. Small groups, **each accompanied by a chaperone**, are given compass instruction and then directed to their starting point. Using their map and compass they find their way through the winding trails, forests and unknown wilds to their destination and back, making this a challenge- and an adventure- for all!

GPS Orienteering

2h 30min

-groups must meet the chaperone requirement for this activity
-up to 45 people per class



GPS is one of the newest and most intriguing navigational tools! While many operate with street maps and audible directions, our GPS units are designed to help you navigate where there are no roads. Learn the basic science behind the fun, and then set out on our routes, finding waypoints and eventually your way back to civilization. Each group must be accompanied by an adult chaperone.

Wilderness Skills, cont'd

Camping Skills

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Students have the opportunity to participate in setting up a campsite! They will set up a tent, build a campfire, purify water, and much more. These are skills that every camper can use when backpacking into unknown territory or simply staying at a campground. Inquire about our advanced camping/orienteering class for older students.

Outdoor Cooking

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

This outdoor cooking activity will give students some hands-on experience at cooking over a campfire to prepare some delicious campfire specialties such as pizza pockets, fruit pies, S'mores, and more. Campfire safety and fire tending are also lessons learned in this class. Camaraderie, cookin', and campfires equals fun!

Outdoor Cooking as a Meal

1h 30min

-up to 25 people per facilitator

Learn everything taught in our Outdoor Cooking class, but get more to eat! Typical campfire fare such as hot dogs, beans, fruit pies, S'mores and more. Enjoy a stress-free campfire cookout where Tamarack brings the food! A vegetarian option is available upon request.

Wilderness Survival

1h 15min

-up to 25 people per class

Having knowledge of basic survival needs instills confidence in an outdoor emergency situation. Proper attitude and information makes anyone more comfortable in wilderness pursuits. Find out what you can do before you head out to help you survive later! Learn about shelter building, finding water, lost proofing, avoiding hypothermia, and what really comes in handy if you're thinking about building your own personal survival kit.

Advanced Wilderness Survival

2 hours-2h 30min

-up to 25 people per class



This class is for those serious about roughing it! Learn everything covered in basic Wilderness Survival class and more. Put your survival skills to the test when we need to build fires both with and without matches, purify water without a filter, and stay nourished without a grocery store. Learn how garbage, worms, and insects can be your best friends in a survival situation.

Leave No Trace- Backcountry

3 hours

-up to 25 people per class



Pack up your tent, food and equipment and head for the backcountry right in camp. Our facilitator will help you make decisions that follow the 7 Leave No Trace principles. Prepare for your trip, select the right site for your tent and set up camp, find water and purify it, tie a bear bag for safety, find firewood and build a fire to cook your lunch, and -yes- even what to do when nature calls when you're out in nature! This is an advanced camping/survival class that allows students the opportunity to have hands-on experience for a full morning or afternoon living in the great outdoors—rain or shine. Come and join us for a complete outdoor experience.

Evening Specific Programming

While many of Tamarack's programs can be enjoyed in the evening hours, these programs specifically require some measure of darkness to be enjoyed by our campers fully.

Going Batty

1h 15min

-up to 50 people per class

This program will explore this very common and misunderstood mammal. Activities emphasizing environmental impact, adaptations, life history and myths will follow an interesting slide presentation and discussion. Games emphasizing the echolocation concept and predator-prey relationship will be a part of this activity. Students will gain an appreciation for this valuable animal and learn how to attract bats and provide adequate protection and habitat for them.

Birds of Prey

1h 15min

-up to 50 people per class

Indoor exploration of actual feathers, talons, and more, paired with a slide presentation introduces students to many of our more common birds of prey. PLUS meet 'Pat'- Tamarack's own Barred Owl! Following the indoor presentation evening groups may venture outdoors for a short foray into the darkness- no flashlights allowed!

Dark Sky

1h 30 min-2 hours

-up to 50 people per class

Take an in-depth look at the night sky away from the lights of the city. Our facilitator will guide students through the night sky by providing a wonderful opportunity to explore and define moons, planets, stars, and constellations with the help of a PowerPoint presentation and hands-on activities. In favorable weather the group may go outdoors for direct observation and instruction. This class has a 3-D presentation option!

Night Hike

45min-1 hour

-up to 15 people per facilitator

Students in small groups will be guided on a hike in the dark where they will gain confidence in learning to walk through the woods without the aid of a flashlight. This very popular activity teaches students about the nocturnal world and allows them to explore the use of their own nighttime senses while doing the activities. Educational fun in the dark!

Flashlight Orienteering

1h 30min

-groups must meet the chaperone requirement for this activity

-up to 100 people per class

This is a simple, short orienteering course done at night using a flashlight to read the clues and take bearings. Each small group of students **must be accompanied by an adult** from your group. Recommended group maximum- 6 students: 1 adult. Since this activity requires darkness it is available in the Fall only. Remember, students must bring their flashlights to do this activity.

About Tamarack Outdoor Education

Our History

Tamarack Camps' Outdoor Education program is part of the Fresh Air Society; a non-profit organization established in 1902, dedicated to getting children out of doors and into the fresh air. For 106 years the many programs within our agency have never lost sight of our common goal: getting children outside in a physically and emotionally healthy environment. We believe every child should have the opportunity to go to camp. Whether it be at a camp field trip, 6th grade overnight camp, summer camp, wilderness outpost camp, or family camp, the staff of Tamarack Camps is dedicated to the continuation of the legacy handed down to us for over a century; fostering the growth and health of children and young adults through safe, fun, and meaningful experiences at camp.

Our Facility

Camp Tamarack is located on 1300 gorgeous acres in northern Oakland County. We have 3 private lakes and miles of trails through the woods, where the abundance of Tamarack wildlife can be viewed regularly. Our facilities include 7 residential villages, each with a capacity of (on average) 100 guests. Every village has its own central Lodge, cabins, grounds, and fire pit, which are all for the exclusive use of the group staying in that village. Our newly renovated dining hall sits overlooking our largest lake and its three beach areas. Basketball, tennis, baseball, volleyball, hockey, and field sports areas are located throughout camp and visiting groups are more than welcome to make use of them. Also on site is the Butzel Conference Center, which is being renovated January-March, 2009. Guests staying at the conference center can expect fresh linens, privacy from main camp, exclusive use of the buildings and grounds, wireless internet, and more in this hotel-style camp environment.

Our Programs

With one of the largest challenge courses in the country, our own 1862 pioneer village, and hundreds of acres of natural classroom and recreational areas, the abundance and variety of programs available at Camp Tamarack is unmatched. As members of the Association for Experiential Education, we are committed to reaching all types of learners and levels of capability. Curriculum content is of course in line with current educational standards, but more importantly that content is delivered in an engaging, entertaining, and individualized way. Safety throughout all of our programs is of the utmost concern, so our challenge courses meet and exceed the Association for Challenge Course Technology standards, and all waterfront activities are run by American Red Cross certified lifeguards. Guests are encouraged to communicate with us regarding what their current focus of study and/or goals are so that we can customize each schedule and program to best meet the needs of our groups.

Our Staff

We at Tamarack Outdoor Education take our roles as educators seriously, and are fortunate to be able to reach our community's youth in such an informal and innovative way. Each Facilitator is chosen only after an extensive interview process, with a portion of the interview spanning over the course of an entire weekend. Every staff member is trained on how to recognize and address different learning styles and what it means to truly facilitate a group experience- not just instruct a class. Special needs participants are always welcomed as our staff's methods center around addressing the individuality of each group- not cookie-cutter instruction. We require all of our program staff to be American Red Cross First Aid and CPR certified, as well as carry additional certifications appropriate to the programs they are teaching. Each one of our staff members is exceptional, and through their own education and life experience they contribute something unique and positive to the Tamarack Outdoor Education team. We look forward to welcoming you to camp!