

Outdoor Adventures

Supporting School-Age Accreditation and Quality Programming

Outdoor Adventures can be webbed into many School-Age program activities. Many curriculum activities are designed as long-term projects where children and youth improve their skills as they do more hiking, camping and backpacking. *Outdoor Adventures* strongly supports the National AfterSchool Association keys for human relationships, activities, outdoor environments, health, safety and nutrition.

Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Development and Cross-age Teaching

A successful *Outdoor Adventures* project requires youth to take on a lot of responsibility for planning as well as the activity itself. Youth can learn to be leaders and team players. Once they've mastered some skills, they can help younger children learn to appreciate the outdoors. Youth can also develop leadership skills by organizing service-learning projects. Some youth will be attracted to careers in the outdoors, such as park rangers, camp counselors, teachers, youth development professionals, and arborists.

Ideas! Ideas! Ideas!

The *Outdoor Adventures* Project offers more opportunities for field trips than many other projects and it's especially important to use outside resources in researching and planning the outings.

Brainstorm with children and youth for ideas, such as inviting a naturalist or park ranger to meet with the group. Websites for more information include: www.sierraclub.org and www.n4hccs.org/projectsonline.

Summary

Everyone who participates in the 4-H *Outdoor Adventures* project will learn from the experience. The curriculum and additional resources provide enough information to make good judgments that insure everyone's safety. The adventures planned with the children and youth will be fun – and the memories will last a lifetime.

Providing Quality Middle School and Teen Programming

Outdoor Adventures should appeal to teens who are looking for noncompetitive physical challenges that can be done in a group. Teens will enjoy the opportunity to plan the outings and take responsibility for their success. They'll be excited by the chance to build lasting friendships, as well as develop skills that will be useful in adulthood.



Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

Through 4-H, youth know they are cared about and feel a sense of BELONGING; they exercise INDEPENDENCE by using decision-making and action to influence people and events; they develop a sense of MASTERY by learning skills needed in making positive career and life choices; and they experience GENEROSITY by helping others through community service. These elements support the Army Youth Development Components of Belonging, Success, Service and Independence.

THE Army 4-H EXPRESS GUIDE TO

Outdoor Adventures



Is there anything better than spending a beautiful day outdoors with a group of happy youth? *Outdoor Adventures* teaches youth ways to enjoy and be responsible for the outdoors.

Project Goals

Outdoor Adventures is designed so children and youth can learn to live more simply, explore the environment, and build a lasting love of the outdoors. They'll develop life skills while becoming proficient at hiking, camping, and backpacking using a variety of outdoor equipment.



Four Fun Activities

1 Food always gets kids' attention. No matter what, everyone needs to eat and drink to be healthy and have energy. Start with a lunch that will be good on the trail. Gather all the ingredients, have the youth prepare the food, and then discuss their choices while eating. Use one of the lunch or dinner suggestions in **Backpacking Expeditions, page 19.**

2 Pitching and striking a tent is a great team-building activity. It should be fun and can help build interest along with useful skills. Use several different types of tents borrowed from Outdoor Recreation or from the families and staff in the program. Use the suggestions in the **Helper's Guide, pages 18-19.**

3 Accidents happen, so youth and staff need to be prepared for them. Gaining basic first aid skills is fun for youth of all ages. Making their own first aid kit is a great activity. See **Backpacking Expeditions, pages 20-21,** for ideas on preparing a personal first aid kit.

4 Outdoor cooking equipment is not the same as an everyday microwave. It's fun to create meals and learn to use a camp stove safely before going into the wilderness. Have the youth decide what to cook, and as a group do the shopping, preparation and eating. Don't forget cleanup and group reflection. See the **Helper's Guide, pages 20-21,** for tips.



Life Skills

"Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life" are identified as life skills (Hendricks, 1996). The skills that can be developed in this project include decision-making, communicating, leading self and others, planning and organizing. Only one life skill is targeted for each activity, but youth have the opportunity to practice several.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning engages children and youth while they learn, share, and grow through their 4-H experiences. The focus is on them as learners with an adult as the coach. First comes the "doing" or exploring. Next, youth share what they did and discuss the experience with their peers. After they've identified the skills and knowledge gained, help then determine how to apply these to other situations in their lives.

Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups

The *Outdoor Adventures* materials include three **Activity Guides** and a **Group Activity Helper's Guide**. The **Activity Guides** are designed to be used sequentially; youth can begin the series at any age based on their skills and experience.

Hiking Trails - Level 1, Children, grades 3-5 will explore the natural world seen when hiking. Learn how and what to pack for a safe, enjoyable trip.

Camping Adventures, Level 2, Youth, grades 6-8, will learn how to eat, sleep and live in the outdoors on a camping trip. Learn about equipment, meals, and camp sites. Practice decision-making, problem-solving and communication skills.

Backpacking Expeditions, Level 3, Teens, grades 9-12, will use the hiking and camping skills learned in **Levels 1 and 2** as campers experience challenging multiple-day backpacking trips.

Group Activity Helper's Guide This **Guide** serves as a resource for adults helping with the project. It includes numerous outdoor group activities, provides information about stages of youth and group development and shares tips for insuring that youth and adults will all have fun with this project.



Related 4-H Projects

Other 4-H projects that contain information for *Outdoor Adventures* include: nutrition, fitness, outdoor living, environment, bicycling and science. Youth and adults who enjoyed *Outdoor Adventures* might like to complete projects in some of these areas.



Integrating Technology

Although the focus of *Outdoor Adventures* is learning to safely enjoy the natural environment, blending in technology can make the experience more pleasant and rewarding. The Internet is a resource for research and planning. Check out new fabrics for clothing, tents, and packs or learn how camp stoves, types of fuel, and water treatment equipment have evolved. GPS/GIS equipment keeps everyone on course. And digital photography can help document the experience.

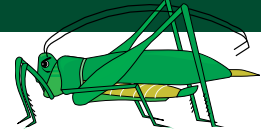
Character Connection

Being people of character is always important. Encourage youth to:

- Respect everyone's right to enjoy the outdoors
- Promote environmental stewardship

Additional character resources can be found at www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org

Linking to the Army's Four Service Areas and Baseline Programming



Sports, Fitness and Health Options

Whatever the experience level, *Outdoor Adventures* can be healthy and enjoyable. **Backpacking Expeditions, Train for the Trail, page 26-27,** help youth become fit and healthy for their camping adventures.

Arts, Recreation and Leisure Activities

Hiking, camping, and backpacking are all recreational activities that can be done during leisure time and can last a few minutes or a few days. **Hiking Trails, Happy Hikers, pages 26-27,** participants learn how to enjoy this leisure activity while appreciating and respecting nature.

Life Skills, Citizenship, and Leadership Opportunities

Outdoor Adventures focuses on group activities where the fun is in working together and developing skills necessary to lead or support the team. To have safe, natural environments for future enjoyment, it's important to practice responsible citizenship and leadership. **Hiking Trails, Leave No Trace, page 24-25,** helps children and youth understand the importance of responsible camping and hiking.

Academic Support, Mentoring, and Intervention Services

Project members can share what they have learned and mentor other youth by conducting skillathons. **Group Activities Helper's Guide, Skillathon Fun, page 26-27,** describes how to run a skillathon and gives a number of station examples.

Community Service Service Learning Opportunities

Preserving and protecting the environment for current and future enjoyment applies to many service-learning projects. Service should be a part of all 4-H projects as well as all Army activities. Find a project that youth will enjoy and has value for the community.

