

Ohio Forestry and Wildlife Conservation Camp Provides Teens with Lifetime Opportunities

There is a great opportunity approaching for high school kids interested in the outdoors. The Ohio Forestry and Wildlife Conservation Camp will be held June 10th-15th, 2012 at FFA Camp Muskingum, which is situated on beautiful Leesville Lake in Carroll County. The Camp is sponsored by the Ohio Forestry Association, Inc., a private, not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to promote the wise management of Ohio's forests and natural resources. It is also supported by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) divisions of Wildlife and Forestry, Ohio State University Extension, county Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's), and other private and government organizations which provide over 30 natural resource professionals who teach on a variety of subjects throughout the week.

The Ohio Forestry & Wildlife Conservation Camp is a week long resident camp that combines fun with learning about natural resources. Its goal is to reach the next generation of caretakers of Ohio's valuable natural resources. Programs at this year's camp include dendrology (tree identification), ecology, wildlife management, silviculture (forest management), wildlife tracking, tree farming and maple syrup production, forest industries, and arborist work, along with many others.

Campers spend the week learning about these subjects, making new friends, participating in fun camp activities, and learning more about the environment around us. The end of the week culminates with a comprehensive exam including multiple choice questions and a tree identification section. The highest scoring students compete for college scholarships to Hocking College and The Ohio State University!

Many of the returning campers (we see about a 50% return rate) tell us that Forestry and Wildlife Conservation Camp is their favorite week of the summer! Camp is open to all youth who have completed the 8th grade and are at least 15 years of age.

Jeremy Scherf has been camp co-director for several years. Scherf, a service forester with the ODNR Division of Forestry, promotes camp as a way to help students understand that trees are a renewable resource and that properly managing them benefits the environment in many ways. "I think kids enjoy camp because they get to be outside. We get them away from other distractions in life, help them make new friends, and have fun while learning about trees," said Scherf.

Marne Titchenell, OSU Extension Wildlife Program Specialist and camp co-director, believes the camp offers a wonderful conservation education experience. "Forestry isn't just about doing a timber harvest properly; it is about managing the resource and all aspects around those trees," said Titchenell. "I think camp does a good job of providing that education to these kids while making it fun and helping them develop lifelong friendships."

Camp fee is \$325, but there are scholarships available to assist interested students who need help covering the fee. These are offered through the local SWCD offices, sportsmen's clubs, forestry groups, and many private forestry-sector businesses. For more information, please contact the Ohio Forestry Association at 1-888-38-TREES, or visit the OFA website at www.ohioforest.org.

ODNR's Division of Forestry works to promote the wise use and sustainable management of Ohio's public and private woodlands. To learn more about Ohio's woodlands, visit www.ohiodnr.com/forestry.

