

About Echo Hill Outdoor School

Founded on Maryland's Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay in 1972, Echo Hill Outdoor School is a private non-profit educational organization. Echo Hill's outdoor classes and Residential programs are grounded in our desire to have students live and learn closely with nature. From sensory exploration classes, to canvas platform tents, from the outdoor dining hall, to the dorms surrounded by forest, the philosophy of immersion is present. Interactions between staff and students in the tent areas, during meals, and in class groups focus on fun, creativity, respect, awareness, understanding, and learning. During the trip, students will also have an opportunity to learn aboard the Elsworth. Built in 1901, the 40-foot skipjack Elsworth is one of a handful of skipjacks remaining on the Chesapeake Bay. The boat dredged for oysters Commercially between 1901 and 1996; the last seven of these years were with Echo Hill Outdoor School, which acquired the Elsworth in 1988. The Outdoor School began rebuilding the Elsworth in 1996, and the boat is now used solely by the School for educational programs, helping students connect to the ecology and history of the Chesapeake Bay.

Our Philosophy

Echo Hill's outdoor classes and residential programs are grounded in our desire to have students live and learn closely with nature. From sensory exploration classes, to canvas platform tents, from the outdoor dining hall, to the dorms surrounded by forest, the

philosophy of immersion is present. Our small, hands-on classes provide opportunities for all students to become engaged and participate. Interactions between staff and students in the tent areas, during meals, and in class groups focus on fun, creativity, respect, awareness, understanding, and learning. As teachers and naturalists, we believe that students learn best when they are curious and interested.

Our Method

Trained and qualified Echo Hill teachers use the surrounding outdoor environments as their classrooms. Students explore the forest, meadows, ponds, streams, swamps, marshes, beaches, fields, farms, towns, and the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. In Echo Hill's unique setting, students make personal connections with the subjects they are studying. As students smell, touch, see, hear, and taste to learn, abstract concepts become real, tangible, and visible. With the guidance of the Echo Hill teachers, students learn to observe, incorporate previous knowledge, formulate questions, and draw conclusions.



Washington College 2008 pre-orientation trips

Echo Hill Outdoor School

Echo Hill Outdoor School, “Experience the Chester River Eastern Shore Style”

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 - TUESDAY, AUGUST 19

Have fun, challenge yourself, and connect to the ecology and history of the Chesapeake Bay alongside your classmates at Echo Hill Outdoor School. Ice breakers, new games, field initiatives, and low-challenge course elements help students get to know each other; build confidence, communication, and trust with peers; and learn different types of leadership and fellowship.



Students also participate in the Giants Ladder/ Zipline, a high element on the challenge course. Students also have the opportunity to participate in Echo Hill Outdoor School's 50 ft. Alpine Climbing Tower. Participants focus on individual and group challenges including: climbing, learning and tying their own climbing knots, and learning and implementing two different belay techniques.

Students spend a full day on one of Echo Hill's historic Chesapeake Bay wooden boats, the skipjack *Elsworth* and the buyboat *Annie D.* This trip down the scenic Chester River will include discussions about estuarine ecosystems, life in and around the Chesapeake Bay, and lore of the Chester River and the Eastern Shore. The *Elsworth* and *Annie D.* both

travel towing a wooden bateau—a small boat with an outboard motor—which allows students to travel ashore to explore the Chester River's many sandy beaches and marshes. Students have the chance to fish; crab; use a seine net to catch smaller fish, soft shell crabs, grass shrimp and other creatures; hunt for artifacts; marsh muck; swim; and look for fossils. Other highlights include a performance by Chesapeake Scenes (songs and poetry depicting life on the Eastern Shore), an Eastern Shore Crab Feast, and spending time on the beaches of the Chesapeake Bay.

Sunday, August 17

Adventure 1
Adventure 2
Betterton Beach Activities
Social Time

Monday, August 18

Day on the Chester River
Elsworth Skipjack Day
Campfire

Tuesday, August 19

Alpine Tower Experience
Kent County Scavenger Hunt
Eastern Shore Crab Feast
Chesapeake Scenes Performance

Wednesday, August 20

Return to Washington College

This program is limited to the first 20 participants, on a first-come, first-served basis. Cost is \$250 (covers

meals, accommodations, transportation and all activities). Scholarships are available. For information, contact Beth Anne Roy at broy2@washcoll.edu <mailto:broy2@washcoll.edu>

Residential Life at the Outdoor School

Life at the Outdoor School is rustic but comfortable. Platform tents with bunk beds house students and staff in most seasons. Bathrooms and showers with hot and cold water are nearby. A heated lodge serves as a meeting place, library, and nature center. Meals are prepared by the School's cook and served family-style by Echo Hill teachers in a spacious outdoor dining hall—a large 19th-century screened gazebo with seating for 200 people. The resource office is central to the campus and overlooks the Bay from the top of a high bluff. The School has heated facilities for use during colder weather. Two dormitories and a dining hall are situated in the forest and become headquarters for late-fall, winter, and early-spring residential programs. This dining hall seats 100 and also houses administrative offices. The dorms are equipped with bunks, showers, common rooms, and fireplaces. Each dorm can accommodate 40 people.