



2019 Boulder Summer Camp “Camp Experience” Descriptions

This document contains descriptions for each unique “Camp Experience” offered by Thorne Nature Experience. Please use this document in conjunction with Thorne’s Summer Camp Brochure, to determine dates, rates, and locations. You can also use Thorne’s Online Catalog if you want to view all of this information in one place, plus determine current availability. The Brochure and Online Catalog as well as wealth of information including FAQ’s and registration information are available online at www.thornenature.org.

Parent and Child "Camp Experiences"

Ages 3-5

With Thorne's one-day, two-hour Parent and Child "Camp Experiences," you and your preschool-age child can enjoy the adventures of Thorne Summer Camp together. Thorne instructors experienced in early childhood education will be your guides to explore the diversity of Colorado's Foothills environments. These early experiences in a mini-camp setting are designed to instill awareness and wonder for the natural world and cultivate parents' and children's relationships with nature. Discovery happens through arts and crafts, free exploration, and age-appropriate stories and games. Be ready to get dirty, have fun, and safely explore the great outdoors with your child!

Critter Search

Look! A fish! A toad! A water bug! You bring your curiosity and we will bring all the tools needed to explore, catch, and learn about the amazing critters at Sawhill Ponds, one of Boulder's best kept natural secrets! Voted by Thorne campers as the best place to catch animals, join us in the search for all that lives in the water and along the shoreline of this pond habitat!



Forest Fairies & Gnomes

Campers and parents will go on a delightful journey into the fantasy world of forest fairies and gnomes! Everyone will learn lessons from tiny friends about nature's special gifts, their love of animals, and the magic that exists outside. Come take a close look at the miniature land at our feet and make fairy or gnome houses out of sticks, leaves, and stones.

I Dig Dinos

Campers and parents will explore the same Colorado land where dinosaurs once roamed! This camp will learn their stories while searching for dinosaur bones hidden in the earth beneath our feet. Discover prehistoric fossils and dig into the ancient world of dinosaurs through games and exploration.

Nature Builders

How do animals build in nature and what building materials does nature provide? Campers and parents will learn about and use natural building materials to expand upon nature's playground. Builders will explore animal homes and learn how to make dams, bridges, fairy houses.

Parent and Child "Camp Experiences" Ages 3-5 (cont.)

Nature Builders

Give a child a few sticks, a pile of rocks, some sand, and a shovel, and watch them build a masterpiece! Bring your imagination, and join us in building miniature worlds from nature's materials. Watch as your child creates complex water channels with pools and dams, and then delights as they "open the floodgates!" or builds a fairy house for a magical friend. Campers and parents will explore how animals build homes and then use their creativity to engineer their own special place!

Nature Play – NEW!

This "Camp Experience" is an ideal preview into Thorne's Nature Preschool, opening Fall 2019! Through storytelling, movement, songs, craft-making, and play, Thorne's Preschool Instructor will guide children on a journey to discover the magic of this place we call Sombrero Marsh. During the Nature Play "Camp Experience", we will start by activating campers' curiosity and excitement, then allow their interests and sense of wonder to inspire our adventures. This "Camp Experience" brings together all of our favorite activities to do with young children and is all about discovery, imagination, play, and letting kids be kids!

The Great Bug Hunt – NEW!

Grab a net, tune into your senses, and join us in The Great Bug Hunt at Sombrero Marsh! There's nothing more exciting than dipping a net into the marsh and finding the fascinating creatures you will pull up! Campers and parents will get a close up look at the crawlies that we catch and learn just how important insects are to our world! Activities also include crafts, stories, and an insect snack if you dare!

Woodland Wonders

Campers and parents will venture into the woods and see who lives in the tall trees, in leafy shrubs, and along creeks. Enjoy the beauty of Eldorado Springs while learning about some of the many animals that call Colorado home through hands-on activities and exploration.

First Time Campers

"Camp Experiences" - Ages 5 & 6

Thorne's six-hour, week-long Eco-Explorers "Camp Experience" for First Time Campers is a great way for children to transition into Summer Camp and begin to find joy in nature! Throughout the week, campers will search for critters and play games, all designed around a weekly theme like insects, reptiles, water, and more! Weekly themes ensure that the "Camp Experiences" remain fun and exciting, no matter how many times your little one has attended in the past. These camps have a small 10:1 camper to adult ratio to ease the transition into camp for our youngest campers. Parents can drop-off at 8:30am and pick up at 2:30pm. For parents needing full-day care for their child, Extended Care is available until 5:30pm.

In Boulder, camp is held at the Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center, where trail, boardwalks, and a mini-wetland have been carefully designed to allow young campers to safely get close to nature. The Center also has indoor learning and play spaces, so that campers can escape heat or inclement weather, and still have plenty of room to play and explore amongst our interactive nature-themed exhibits! Twice a week after campers have acclimated to being away from parents in a camp environment with their new friends, we will venture out on field trips to new ecosystems via a BVSD school bus. On these field trips, campers will explore the nearby Open Space locations of Walden Ponds and Chautauqua Park.

Eco-Explorers

This "Camp Experience" is the perfect introduction for budding naturalists. Campers will become eco-explorers by tuning in to observations and using all five senses. It's a great introduction to exploration using scientific tools like dip nets to collect water creatures and magnifying glasses to observe the miniature world of insects. Each week will have a different nature theme, so kids can return for multiple weeks and learn new things each time! Twice during the week, campers will take a field trip via BVSD school bus to the nearby locations of Sawhill/Walden Ponds and Chautauqua. A 10:1 maximum camper-to-instructor ratio will ensure your child receives all the attention and care they need while they get used to attending camp and learning and playing in nature.



First Time Campers and Wanderers "Camp Experiences" - Ages 5 - 8

Jeff & Paige Nature Music Camp

Oo-Ah-Ah, Oo-Oo-Ah-Ah it's Summer Camp! Jeff and Paige proudly unite with Thorne Nature Experience to present a unique day camp, available for two one-week Camps this summer. Thorne instructors team up with the dynamic duo for: nature explorations, music, field trips, science experiments, theater and concerts. Kids will spend time outdoors oo-ah-ah-ing their way through songs, skits, hikes, nature awareness activities and more, all connected through Jeff and Paige's original science and nature-based music. Campers will get the chance to dance, write songs with Jeff, and at the end of the week they'll have the opportunity to perform during the closing concert (participation in the performance is optional!). Jeff & Paige will visit camp throughout the week to engage in activities, a song-writing workshop, rehearsal, and more! Love Jeff and Paige? Love Thorne? You'll adore this week of camp. This "Camp Experience" is for campers ages 5-8.



The Ultimate Thorne Experience – Holiday Week Camp

First time campers and Wanderers unite for a holiday week (July 1-5, no camp on July 4) filled with excitement! With over 60 years of practice leading nature programs, The Ultimate Thorne Experience combines the very best of what kids love to do in camp! Curiosity is activated through an inspiring story, a lesson is taught through a lively game, then the real magic happens as Instructors guide campers into activities that integrate learning with "children's passions"- the universal stuff that kids the world over love to do. Tapping into our love of play, campers will go on epic adventures, explore new places through the eyes of an animal, build a dam in the creek, and catch any critter we happen upon. Because there is always more to discover in nature, and because children's passions are always thrilling, The Ultimate is a "camp experience" to enjoy again and again, getting a healthy dose of summer fun each time! This "Camp Experience" is for campers ages 5-8.

Wanderers "Camp Experiences"

Ages 6-8

Thorne's six-hour, week-long "Camp Experiences" for the Wanderers age group are packed with fun! These "Camp Experiences" are playful, experiential, and discovery-based. Experienced environmental educators will help your child foster a personal connection to the natural world through lively games, nature crafts, and exploration of different ecosystems each day. To accommodate the needs of some of our youngest campers, these "Camp Experiences" involve less than one mile of hiking per day and remain close to bathroom facilities, shade, and water. With a variety of themes for this age group, campers can focus on the aspect of nature that they love most, or spend an entire summer exploring diverse topics like bugs, amphibians, mammals, and more! The Wanderers age group even includes art-themed "Camp Experiences," as well as the ever-popular At Home in the Woods, which teaches campers how humans and other animals live safely in nature.

Wanderers "Camp Experiences" meet each day at Mapleton Early Childhood Center or Chautauqua Park in Boulder. Campers travel from Mapleton on a BVSD school bus to a different natural area each day including Chautauqua, South Mesa Trail, Heil Ranch, and Walden Ponds. Parents can drop-off at 8:30am and pick up is at 2:30pm. For parents needing full-day care for their child, Extended Care is available until 5:30pm at the Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center.

At Home in the Woods

Campers will cultivate their survival skills and put them to the test while exploring in the wilderness! Throughout the week they will practice introductory survival skills such as making mini debris shelters out of sticks, purifying drinking water, cooking with a solar oven, practicing plant and wildlife identification skills, and more. Campers will also focus on developing their skills of observation and learning important safety techniques to become both comfortable and confident as they go on wild adventures through the woods!



Nature Creations – NEW!

Creativity runs wild in our nature inspired arts camp! Kids who love to create, tinker, and invent will thrive as we delve into the magic of the great outdoors. Campers will share their experiences in nature through a variety of imaginative channels including fine arts, crafts, music, storytelling, and more. In this "Camp Experience," campers will also learn how to use natural art techniques such as nature rubbings, painting with natural dyes, and sculpting with clay & mud. Nature Creations will grow a camper's creative seedlings into a forest of new ideas!

Wanderers "Camp Experiences" Ages 6-8 (cont.)

Nature Superheroes

Each day campers will embark on a new superhero mission to learn about local plants and animals with real "creature power technology" in nature (think Wild Kratts)! The creatures and their adaptations that we study are the superheroes that teach us how they use their powers to sneak up on prey, escape danger, or survive through incredible feats of nature. Campers will also practice their own nature superpowers like being "invisible" by walking through the landscape undetected or using their "deer ears" and "owl eyes" to predict danger long before it arrives, all while exploring the magical trails at Chautauqua Park. This "Camp Experience" will be full of imagination, creativity, games, storytelling, and exploration of the natural world, while focusing on the extraordinary superpowers of nature's creatures.



The Ultimate Thorne Experience – Wanderers – NEW!

With over 60 years of practice leading nature programs, The Ultimate Thorne Experience combines the very best of what kids love to do in camp! Curiosity is activated through an inspiring story, a lesson is taught through a lively game, then the real magic happens as Instructors guide campers into activities that integrate learning with "children's passions"- the universal stuff that kids the world over love to do. Tapping into our love of play, campers will go on epic adventures, explore new places through the eyes of an animal, build a dam in the creek, and catch any critter we happen upon. Because there is always more to discover in nature, and because children's passions are always thrilling, this is a "camp experience" to enjoy again and again, getting a healthy dose of summer fun each time!

Pathfinders "Camp Experiences"

Ages 9-11

For the Pathfinders age group, Thorne's six-hour, week-long "Camp Experiences" focus on skill-building. These "Camp Experiences" build upon campers' earlier experiences with the natural world to develop new tracking, identification, and observation skills in areas like biking, fly fishing, photography, and outdoor survival. Our Pathfinders campers venture further from trailheads, on foot or by bike, so that they can see and experience more of the natural world. Campers in the Pathfinders age group also have the opportunity to participate in Adventure Camps, where they spend a Thursday night away from home camping with Thorne's expert instructors!

Pathfinders meet each day at various locations best suited for the skill-based camp in which they are enrolled. In some instances the camp will have the same drop-off and pick-up location for an entire week, Mapleton Early Childhood Center or Chautauqua, while other camps may meet at a different location each day. Parents can drop-off at 8:30am and pick up at 2:30pm. For parents needing full-day care for their child for their child, Extended Care is available for select Pathfinders camps until 5:30pm at the Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center.

Biking & Birding

There are some adventures that you can only have on two wheels! Campers will use their bikes to cover more ground as they pedal around Boulder's bike paths. They will stop to identify the birds soaring overhead, nesting in trees and shrubs, and searching for worms in the dirt. They'll study adaptations unique to birds found in the area and learn how to identify them by their song and flight patterns. Along with keeping a journal of birds identified each day, campers will learn how to use binoculars and field guides so that they can continue their learning at home. The average distance traveled per day is 6 miles. For the safety and learning of all our campers, this "Camp Experience" has a maximum camper-instructor ratio of 6:1.



Fly Fishing

This "Camp Experience" is for all levels, including the camper who has little or no experience in fly fishing and those with many years as an angler. Campers will split into two groups based on skill level and will explore the Boulder Creek watershed and tackle the lakes, reservoirs, and streams of Boulder. Those newer to fly fishing will learn first how to assemble, use, and care for fly fishing gear and then learn the fundamentals of fly fishing: casting, knot tying, and reading the river, while experienced anglers will spend more time on the water and will be challenged with more advanced skills like new knots, different casting techniques, and selecting the proper flies. All campers will get plenty of time to fish, but will also learn about the ecology of fly fishing, such as understanding hatches, the life cycles of insects and fish, and ethical approaches to interacting with the natural world. This "Camp Experience" is not eligible for Extended Care and is for campers ages 9-15.

Pathfinders "Camp Experiences" Ages 9-11 (cont.)

The Ultimate Thorne Experience – Pathfinders – NEW!

With over 60 years of practice leading nature programs, The Ultimate Thorne Experience combines the very best of what youth love to do in camp! This "Camp Experience" focuses on adventure, skill-building, teamwork, and both nature connection and social connection within the group. Middle childhood provides the opportunity to go deeper with learning, build lasting friendships, and tap into kids' universal love of play. A daily theme is woven through learning that is designed to inspire curiosity and engagement, but the real magic happens as Instructors guide campers into activities that follow the discoveries and interests of the group. Because there is always more to discover in nature, this is a "camp experience" to enjoy again and again, getting a healthy dose of summer fun each time!



Wild Skills

Campers will take on the wild as they practice essential survival skills and learn to live primitively! Track an animal through the woods, build a fire without a match using primitive technology, identify plants and local wildlife, all while knowing where to go using wilderness navigation skills. Campers will also build debris shelters, locate and filter water, and much more! Through interacting with nature to find the things humans need to survive, campers will develop self-confidence and an appreciation for the bounty that the natural world provides!

Wild Skills Overnight Adventure

Take your Wild Skills to the next level! Throughout the week campers will develop essential survival skills such as fire-building with bow drills, identifying life-saving plants, and building debris huts to sleep in! They will even learn how to track wildlife using the five senses and knowledge of native animals. The week will culminate in an overnight trip to Cal-Wood Education Center in Jamestown where campers will put their outdoor living skills to the test. They will build their own shelters at a mountain wilderness campsite, roast marshmallows on a fire they build, and bond over shared adventure. By the time they get back to Boulder on Friday afternoon, they will feel confident in their ability to brave the elements and excited to keep exploring! A list of suggested personal camping gear will be provided after registration. Campers are not required to complete the Wild Skills "Camp Experience" before signing up for Wild Skills Overnight Adventure, but consider taking both camps to grow your camper's survival skill knowledge.

Pathfinders "Camp Experiences" Ages 9-11 (cont.)

Wilderness Creations – NEW!

Nature is the inspiration for campers' creations this week as they develop their skills in fine arts and primitive tool building, and also learn how to utilize natural materials in creative projects. Campers will paint with natural dyes, sculpt in mud and clay, learn how to make primitive tools and accessories, and more! They will learn from native cultures of this region, tune in to nature's amazing patterns, and study nature artists to inspire masterpieces. Wilderness Creations is for campers who love to work with their hands, create, and share their nature experiences in inventive ways! This "Camp Experience" is for ages 9-15.



Trailblazers "Camp Experiences"

Ages 12-15

"Camp Experiences" for our Trailblazers age group enable campers to sharpen specific adventure and natural science skills. Beyond expanding knowledge and proficiency in activities like biking, fly fishing and bird banding, these "Camp Experiences" help campers deepen their connection to the natural world and learn how they can be stewards of nature. While these "Camp Experiences" offer no shortage of fun, we make sure that emphasis is placed on educating our most experienced campers to make informed decisions as stewards of the Earth. Campers in the Trailblazer age group have the opportunity to participate in Adventure Camps, where they spend a Thursday night away from home camping with Thorne's expert instructors! Campers meet each day at a different location best suited for the skill-based camp in which they are enrolled.

Birds and Bird Banding

Join Thorne's Founder and Master Bander, Dr. Oakleigh Thorne, II for a "Camp Experience" focused on one of his greatest passions - birds! Under the guidance of our founder and an additional Thorne educator, campers will develop knowledge of Colorado birds and gain skills in bird banding research. Highlights include identifying birds, catching and handling live birds using a variety of techniques, banding birds, and determining data about new and returning birds. This "Camp Experience" is the prerequisite for Advanced Bird Banding. We will be sharing binoculars and field guides with other camps, so if your child has their own, please send them along. If your family is in the market for a field guide, Sibley's and Peterson's are great options.



Advanced Bird Banding

After completing the prerequisite "Camp Experience" Birds & Bird Banding, campers are eligible for Advanced Bird Banding camp with Thorne's Founder and Master Bander, Dr. Oakleigh Thorne, II. The focus will be on banding and collecting data on as many Cliff Swallows as the group can catch before the birds migrate back to South America. We will visit a different culvert each day so that we can safely catch, research, and release many Cliff Swallows. Under the guidance of our founder and an additional Thorne educator, campers will hone in on their skills with the mist net, ensuring safe removal and handling of birds. They will develop a greater understanding of how to determine the age and sex of birds, as well as other important data points. Time handling and banding will be maximized as campers make predictions about new and returning birds.

Trailblazers "Camp Experiences" Ages 12-15 (cont.)

Fly Fishing

This "Camp Experience" is for all levels, including the camper who has little or no experience in fly fishing and those with many years as an angler. Campers will split into two groups based on skill level and will explore the Boulder Creek watershed and tackle the lakes, reservoirs, and streams of Boulder. Those newer to fly fishing will learn first how to assemble, use, and care for fly fishing gear and then learn the fundamentals of fly fishing: casting, knot tying, and reading the river, while experienced anglers will spend more time on the water and will be challenged with more advanced skills like new knots, different casting techniques, and selecting the proper flies. All campers will get plenty of time to fish, but will also learn about the ecology of fly fishing, such as understanding hatches, the life cycles of insects and fish, and ethical approaches to interacting with the natural world. This "Camp Experience" is not eligible for Extended Care and is for ages 9-15.



Survival Skills Overnight Adventure

Want to have what it takes to survive in the wild? Campers will spend a week developing their skills to survive overnight in the wilderness. Learn how to build a fire without a match using fire-from-friction methods, blend in with surroundings and move silently through the woods using stalking and natural camouflage techniques, and build a debris hut that is comfortable and dry enough to sleep in! Campers will also explore water purification methods, edible plant identification, tracking, and natural navigation techniques. Most importantly, campers will build confidence and strengthen their awareness in nature. The week will culminate in an overnight trip to Cal-Wood Education Center in Jamestown where campers will practice the skills they have honed throughout the week and will have a chance to test their comfort in nature by playing stealth glow in the dark capture the flag. A list of suggested personal camping gear will be provided after you register for this camp.



Trailblazers "Camp Experiences" Ages 12-15 (cont.)

Wilderness Creations – NEW!

Nature is the inspiration for campers' creations this week as they develop their skills in fine arts and primitive tool building, and also learn how to utilize natural materials in creative projects. Campers will paint with natural dyes, sculpt in mud and clay, learn how to make primitive tools and accessories, and more! They will learn from native cultures of this region, tune in to nature's amazing patterns, and study nature artists to inspire masterpieces. Wilderness Creations is for campers who love to work with their hands, create, and share their nature experiences in inventive ways! This "Camp Experience" is for ages 9-15.

Extended Care

Ages 5-11

Thorne's flexible, low-cost Extended Care option allows campers to spend the whole day with Thorne in a safe, fun, and educational environment. Parents can pick up their kids any time between 3:15 and 5:30pm, leaving time to run errands, work, exercise, or simply relax knowing that their children are having fun with friends.

Campers participating in Extended Care spend the first six hours of their day at their morning "Camp Experience," then get a healthy snack before they continue their nature explorations. Extended Care offers camper-driven outdoor investigations as well as respite from the elements in one of our environmental education centers which are chocked full of interactive exhibits and nature books and games. Extended Care campers explore nature, play games, tell stories, sing eco-tunes, and make nature crafts, all under the guidance of an experienced Thorne instructor.

Extended Care takes place at Thorne's Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center. Campers are transported by a BVSD school bus each day following their morning "Camp Experience."

