



2026 VINS Nature Camp

Leaders-in-Training

Information & Application

About VINS Nature Camp

The mission of VINS Nature Camp is to help young people develop the life skills necessary to be a positive force for their community and the environment. By exploring the diversity of nature's living creatures and habitats, VINS Nature Camp nurtures each child's curiosity and helps them to build respectful, caring relationships with themselves, others, and the natural world.

VINS Nature Camp operates weekly camp sessions throughout the summer. Day camps are offered at the VINS Nature Center in Quechee, VT and at Storrs Pond Recreation Area in Hanover, NH. Additionally, VINS Nature Camp runs overnight camps at VINS' Old Pepper Place Nature Reserve in Washington, VT. LIT volunteer opportunities are available at our VINS Nature Center and Old Pepper Place Nature Reserve camp locations.

VINS Nature Camp serves children ranging from 4-13. Campers are divided into four different age groups: *Peeps* (ages 4-5), *Fledglings* (grades 1-3), *Falcons* (grades 4-6), and *Eagles* (grades 6-8). Visit website at www.vinsweb.org/nature-camps for a full listing of camp descriptions by week and the camp schedule.

Leaders-in-Training (LIT) Program

VINS Nature Camp's Leaders-in-Training program involves teens in our camp community by offering the opportunity to work closely with children, peers, and adults in a fun, recreational setting while providing experiences for participants to develop their leadership skills. Whether or not participants attended VINS Nature Camp as campers, our LIT program offers a fun summer option for teens who love the camp experience or who want to gain experience leading groups in the outdoors.

LITs work closely with VINS Nature Camp staff who mentor them during their week(s) of volunteering at camp. LIT responsibilities are assigned by the VINS Nature Camp Instructors they are working with and may include leading group games, assisting specific campers, or helping to prepare lessons/activities for the week. VINS Nature Camp believes that the LIT program is a valuable learning experience for all and hope that many of our LITs will eventually return as VINS Nature Camp Instructors.

Upon successful completion, all LITs will receive official acknowledgment of their volunteer hours at the end of the summer. Those who complete a minimum of 40 volunteer hours will also receive a year-long membership to the Vermont Institute of Natural Science.

LIT Requirements

- To volunteer for day camps, applicants must be entering or returning to high school in the Fall 2026, at least 14 years of age (as of June 2026) and younger than 18 years of age.
- LIT volunteers are required to volunteer for at least **one** week of camp but may volunteer for as many weeks as they are able.
- All LIT applications must be submitted by **May 1, 2026**. Due to the popularity of this program, late applications may not be considered.
- All new LITs must attend a mandatory training to review general VINS Nature Camp policies and procedures and for an introduction to the LIT program. Participants accepted into the program will be contacted regarding the date of this training.

Application Process

Once you have submitted your application it will be reviewed and VINS Nature Camp staff will contact you to schedule an interview. Interviews help us get to know applicants and can be conducted in person, via Zoom, or over the phone based on your preference.

Acceptance into the LIT program will be based on your application, character references, interview, and availability. We look forward to reviewing your application to determine if VINS Nature Camp's LIT program is a good fit for you.

Application Instructions

- Please print clearly.
- **Application Deadline: May 1, 2026.**
- Make sure pages 3-5 are filled out completely, including your and a parent/guardian's signatures in the Acknowledgment section.
- Ask two different adults to fill out the Character Reference Form and have them return the form to VINS by May 1, 2026. Character references can be provided by teachers, school counselors, previous/current employer, or other community members that know your work ethic and ability. Please try to avoid using family members or close personal friends for references.
- Send completed application to:

Mail: VINS Nature Camp
Vermont Institute of Natural Science
PO Box 1281
Quechee, VT 05059

Email: camps@vinsweb.org
Fax: 802-359-5001

- For questions, contact camps@vinsweb.org



2026 VINS Nature Camp Leaders-in-Training Application

LIT Information

Name: _____ Gender: M F Non-binary

Entering Grade: _____ Age: _____ Birth Date: _____ Pronouns: _____

Shirt Size: _____ Shirt Style: Mens/Unisex Womens

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Home Phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone: _____ Relationship to Applicant: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Interest and Availability

Check all age group(s) you are interested in volunteering with:

The regular camp day runs from 9am-4pm Monday – Thursday and 9am-3:30pm on Fridays. Camps for our Peeps age group are half day sessions and run from 9am-1pm Monday – Friday.

Peeps (Pre-K & K) Fledglings (grade 1-3) Falcons (grade 4-6) Eagles (grade 6-8)

Check the camp week(s) you are available to volunteer: (Check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> June 22 – 26	<input type="checkbox"/> July 6 – 10	<input type="checkbox"/> August 3 – 7
<input type="checkbox"/> June 29 – July 3	<input type="checkbox"/> July 13 – 17	<input type="checkbox"/> August 10 – 14
	<input type="checkbox"/> July 20 – 24	<input type="checkbox"/> August 17 – 21
	<input type="checkbox"/> July 27 – July 31	<input type="checkbox"/> August 22 – 26

Indicate the number of weeks you are interested in volunteering: LITs must commit to at least one full week of volunteering.

Minimum Number: _____ Maximum Number: _____

Note: Given the popularity of our LIT program, we cannot guarantee that you will be placed in all the weeks you are interested in volunteering but will do our best to accommodate your schedule.

Background

Please answer the following questions about you and your experiences as completely as possible. (Use separate sheets if necessary.)

Why would you like to volunteer as a VINS Nature Camp LIT?

Describe skills and/or past experiences that you think will help you be successful as an LIT.

Please list any hobbies and/or special interests:

Please list any other extra-curricular activities you are involved in:

Please describe any previous experiences you have working with children:

Are you a previous VINS Camper? Yes No

If **Yes**, what is your favorite or most memorable experience from camp? If **No**, what is one of the most memorable experiences you have had in an outdoor setting? Why do you think this memory has stuck with you?

How do you think an experience as a VINS Nature Camp LIT will help you with your future goals?

Is there any other information you want to provide that will help us to accommodate you in our VINS Nature Camp LIT program?

Acknowledgement

Please read and sign below.

I am aware that the statements I make on this volunteer application will be reviewed and may be verified by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS). I hereby authorize VINS to contact my references provided. I understand that misrepresentation or omission of facts called for is cause for immediate dismissal from the VINS Nature Camp LIT Program. I understand that, if I am accepted as a VINS Nature Camp LIT, I am making a commitment to volunteer for at least one full week of camp during the allotted hours of the camp day.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

As the parent/guardian for the above signed applicant, I understand the above statements and give my permission for the applicant's participation in the VINS Nature Camp Leaders-In-Training Program.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____



VINS Nature Camp Leaders-in-Training Application Character Reference Form

For Applicant:

I certify that this reference is someone who knows me in an educational or professional manner, **not** a relative or friend. I authorize the release of information and I waive the right to examine this document once it has been given to the appropriate person of reference.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Applicant's Name (Please Print): _____

For Person of Reference:

The above applicant is applying for a volunteer position as a Leader-in-Training (LIT) with VINS Nature Camp, a summer camp for youth ages 4-13. This position entails working closely with children in an outdoor recreational setting. The candidate must be committed to the care, safety, happiness, development, and well-being of our campers.

We want to make the best decision possible in accepting LITs and we appreciate your thoughtful and candid comments about the applicant's character and abilities. All information on this form will be kept confidential.

In each category please circle the number which you feel best describes the applicant:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor	N/A
Common sense	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Even tempered	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Patience	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Flexibility	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Ability to relate to children	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Ability to manage emotions	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Sense of responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Energy	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Willingness to work hard	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Ability to work with others	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Adaptability to new situations/people	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Leadership ability	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Ability to work under pressure	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Capacity to work independently	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Acceptance of supervision	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Receptiveness to feedback	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

How long and in what capacity have you known this applicant?

What are the strengths of this applicant?

What areas need improvement?

How does this applicant respond to feedback and in what form do they best receive this information (e.g. written, verbal)?

Would you entrust your own child to this applicant's leadership?

Additional Comments:

My recommendation for this applicant: (Please check one)

Highly recommend

Recommend

Recommend with reservations

Do not recommend

Reference Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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