



# **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](http://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](mailto:camps@vinsweb.org)  
**Fax:** 802-359-5001

- For questions, contact [camps@vinsweb.org](mailto: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):

☐ June 22 – 26

☐ July 6 – 10

☐ August 3 – 7

☐ June 29 – July 3

☐ July 13 – 17

☐ August 10 – 14

☐ July 20 – 24

☐ August 17 – 21

☐ July 27 – July 31

☐ 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return completed form no later than May 1, 2026**

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

**Fax:** 802-359-5001

**Email:** [camps@vinsweb.org](mailto:camps@vinsweb.org)



## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return completed form no later than May 1, 2026**

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

**Fax:** 802-359-5001

**Email:** [camps@vinsweb.org](mailto:camps@vinsweb.org)