



2026 VINS Nature Camp

Returning 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. Additionally, VINS Nature Camp runs week-long sessions of overnight camp at VINS' Old Pepper Place Nature Reserve in Washington, VT. LIT volunteer opportunities are available at both these camp locations.

VINS Nature Camp serves children ranging from 4-13. Campers are divided into four different age groups: *Peeps* (children 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 returning LITs must attend a mandatory training to review general VINS Nature Camp policies and procedures. 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 discuss your availability.

Acceptance into the LIT program for another summer will be based on your application, availability, and past performance as an LIT. We look forward to welcoming you back to VINS Nature Camp.

Application Instructions

- Please print clearly.
- **Application Deadline: May 1, 2026.**
- Make sure pages 3-5 are filled out completely, including a parent/guardian's signature in the Acknowledgment section.
- 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



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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:

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

Check the types of camps you are interested in volunteering with:

Day camps run 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. (Overnight camps vary from 1-night and week long overnight options at Old Pepper Place in Washington, VT.)

☐ Day camps only ☐ Day camps and Overnight camps ☐ Overnight camps only

Check the camp week(s) you are available to volunteer: (you may choose more than one):

☐ 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 – 31

☐ August 24 – 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.)*

What is your most memorable experience from your LIT experience last summer?

What was the most important lesson you learned about working with children last summer as an LIT?

Please explain one thing you learned about yourself last summer while volunteering as an LIT?

How did your experience last summer as a VINS LIT help you grow as a leader?

What skills would you like to build upon this summer as an LIT?

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 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: _____