

### Just the facts

- **who:** Up to 100 or so unschoolers ages 13 to 18 (at each session). An adult staff of approximately 22, led by Grace Llewellyn.
- **when:** *Oregon* Session 1, August 24-31, Session 2, Sept 3-10. *Vermont* Session 3, September 19-26, Session 4, Sept 30-Oct 7.
- **where:** *Oregon:* Camp Myrtlewood, approx. 120 miles SW of Eugene, *Vermont:* Farm & Wilderness Camp, approx. 40 miles SE of Rutland.
- **how much:** \$630 if you register by March 31, \$690 afterward. Automatic \$100 rebate if you get your forms and money in on time. Some worktrades available.
- **why:** To change ourselves and the world, teach each other great things, and sing under the moon....
- **how to reach us:** NBTSC Office, 212 Rachel Carson Way, Ithaca, NY 14850, 607-330-1201, [nbtsc@cheeber.com](mailto:nbtsc@cheeber.com)
- **web site:** [www.nbtsc.org](http://www.nbtsc.org)

Not Back to School Camp aspires to create a sanctuary

- that affirms, inspires, and mentors unschoolers...
- where campers and staff transform spiritually, emotionally, physically, creatively, intellectually...
- where profound friendships begin and grow...
- and where adventure, mystery, music, wild spontaneous fun, and magic prevail.

Start your unschooling year with  
**high hopes,  
new interests,  
a big bang,  
a loud splash,  
and a tribe of new friends!**

Don't miss the fourteenth annual  
**Not Back to School  
Camp 2009**  
for unschoolers ages 13-18.



Camp Myrtlewood, Oregon

Session 1, August 24-31  
Session 2, September 3-10

Farm & Wilderness Indian Brook Camp, Vermont

Session 3, September 19-26  
Session 4, September 30-October 7



#### Parents say:

“As a girl who comes from a diehard unschooling family where respect and freedom are the rules, [our daughter] was enthusiastically thrilled to find that Grace was able to uphold these same important values at camp, despite the lack of parental involvement and the diverse needs of teens from across the country. She loved a number of the workshops, was shocked by a few, and chose not to attend many, feeling completely free to decide as she saw fit. She was so impressed with the lack of coercion from the Grace and the other adult leaders.”

*“When [my son] appeared on our doorstep [after camp], he was radiant. He had had, in his words, a life changing experience. He had new friends, was exposed to new ways of doing and thinking, and was challenged by some of the accomplishments of the other campers to start making serious decisions of his own. I am so grateful for the existence of Not Back to School Camp, and hope that it continues to play a key role in the lives of other young people as they are figuring out who they are and what they want to do with their lives.”*

“My kids really love NBTSC and all of their new friends. It makes homeschooling a lot less lonely for them when they meet a diverse group of open minded homeschoolers. ...Thank you for your part in helping my children achieve strength, confidence, and independence.”

*“I have seen so many of the Vancouver kids come back from camp with subtle (or not so subtle) changes in maturity, confidence etc. I can't thank you enough for what you do by giving these kids the chance to be together and spread their wings like this.”*

More at the end of this brochure and <http://nbtsc.org/about/testimonies-parent.htm>.

## Hello!

This booklet contains lots of information about Not Back to School Camp, so you can make an informed decision as to whether you want to join the ruckus. We've had a blast in our years so far and plan to do so again next summer! If you have questions, please check first to see whether we've already answered them in this booklet or on our website. If we haven't, feel free to phone, write, or email, and we'll get back to you ASAP.

Cheers,

*Grace Llewellyn* (the “I” in this brochure and the person who is ultimately responsible for NBTSC)

### key changes for 2009

- The new Session 4! Wild card week! See “What we're gonna do.”
- Fees change, except not so much. It *looks* like we're raising camp fees significantly. But the pricetag doesn't go up at all if you register by March 31 and get your paperwork, information, and money in by our deadlines. **In effect, for the third year in a row we're not raising basic camp fees at all.** But we do need to create a serious incentive for people to get their stuff in on time, hence a higher initial price tag and then a rebate for timeliness. And, of course, our own costs continue to rise, so we're raising certain fees a wee bit here and there—it costs \$10 more now to register late, etc. Also, our payment deadline is now June 1. Details under “Money.”
- We remain committed to creating a healthy camp experience, in which campers and staff fully and energetically participate. Please read “an important note about being sick at camp,” below.
- Grace is thrilled to report that she plans to be present for every second of NBTSC. (A [Soul Motion](#) dance teacher training program required her to miss part of Vermont for the past 2 years.)
- Our insurance companies and policies continue to change, and we may no longer be able to provide coverage for run-of-the-mill athletic accidents and such that take place during camp. In practicality this probably means nothing as we've never had an insurance claim of that sort anyway, but in the interest of keeping our fine print complete, we're letting you know that the waivers we require you to sign this year may be a little stricter.

## important reminders for 2009

- We always say in our camp information that we are open to Session 2 project proposals from campers. So far we've never gotten any. And it's true that we are picky, because we want to offer well-planned, high quality opportunities. But we know there are campers who would be capable of putting together such a thing, and who might enjoy the challenge and adventure of doing so. If you have an idea and want to know whether we'd consider it, email Grace.
- Please don't assume that you can attend a partial week of NBTSC (arrive late or leave early to accommodate family vacations, sports tournaments, etc.). *Please clear this with us in advance, thank you.*
- In Oregon, people who ride trains that are typically very late (such as the Coast Starlight coming from California) need to arrive in Eugene a day early.
- In Oregon, you must have parental permission to smoke cigarettes or use tobacco. For this reason, we don't recommend attending camp if you have a secret addiction. (Vermont is even less suited to cigarette smokers; see below.)

## Not Back to School Camp is unique.

We come together to savor and support each person's gifts, and to build and celebrate community. Together, campers and staff co-create a week-long smorgasbord of workshops, spontaneous events, and special evening gatherings. We seek unschoolers who are excited about life, eager to share in what NBTSC offers, enthusiastic about offering their own workshops and other contributions, and willing (even if also terrified) to be themselves and to bravely reach out and connect with the rest of us. Most days, most of the time, campers make their own decisions—whether to attend a workshop or talk with a new friend, whether to go to sleep at 11 p.m. or stay up till 1 playing games, whether to linger over lunch or hike up the mountain or have a nap in the sun or start a soccer game. We come to camp to change ourselves and the world, teach each other great things, and sing under the moon....

## who

**You:** Unschoolers/homeschoolers from anywhere on this planet are invited, if they speak English and are between the ages of 13 and 18. Can you still come if you go to school part time? Or if you're not yet a homeschooler, but are thinking about becoming one? Or if you've

“graduated” from homeschooling and now attend college or hold a job? Sure. We have approximately 100 campers at most sessions of NBTSC.



## Can people who are younger than 13 or older than 18 come?

We sometimes let 12-year-olds in when they and their parents understand and accept and feel ready for the fact that this is a teenage camp, full of all kinds of lovely, wild teenage energy. We also occasionally make exceptions for folks who are 19+. Again, we want to know that *you* understand that this a camp geared for teenagers, all campers are expected to live with the same agreements and policies, and we expect older campers to not only be cooperative, but also to be proactive, positive leaders. If you are under 13 or over 18, after you begin your online registration, you will receive an additional application form.

**Your staff:** Your hostess is Grace Llewellyn. She is best known as the author of *The Teenage Liberation Handbook: how to quit school and get a real life and education* and the founder of NBTSC. At each session she is joined by a terrific staff of approximately 22.

**(Non) religious orientation:** NBTSC is a non-denominational, non-religious camp. We strive to honor each person's religious beliefs or lack thereof, and ask that all campers do likewise.

**Not Back to School Camp loves diversity.** We welcome campers of all races, ethnic backgrounds, genders, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, economic backgrounds, political affiliations, and physical capabilities.

## where

*Oregon:* We meet in Eugene, Oregon. Our buses deliver you to our home for the week, and back to Eugene at the end of the week. Camp Myrtlewood is near the tiny town of Bridge, Oregon. It's about 120 miles Southwest of Eugene, in the coastal mountain range.

*Vermont:* We hold NBTSC at Farm and Wilderness camp, a Quaker camp approximately 40 miles Southeast of Rutland.

**Lodging and facilities:** You stay in a clean, simple cabin. Girls and boys have separate cabins; all ages are mixed together. Bathrooms (outhouses in Vermont) are in separate buildings nearby. Staff generally stays in separate cabins. Both of our sites have all the facilities we need for a great week, plenty of room for eating, workshops, dances, games, sports, hiking, and enjoying nature. Camp Myrtlewood offers a pretty creek with a swimming hole; Farm and Wilderness has a gorgeous lake we sometimes canoe on and occasionally swim in.

***Prospective Vermont campers should know that Farm and Wilderness is a very rustic site*** -- the cabins have only 3 walls and many open-air windows on those 3 walls. (A lot of people appreciate the clean open feeling, and you can see the lake from many cabins.) Also, instead of indoor flush toilets we have outdoor composting outhouses. Again, many people appreciate the opportunity to live a little closer to the land and give something back to F&W's organic farms, but others find the outhouses a little *too* back-to-nature.

***Prospective Vermont campers should also know: you can't use tobacco, and you may see naked people.***

1) Farm and Wilderness has a strict no-tobacco policy, so smokers need to walk half a mile to the edge of the property. However, after dark our NBTSC boundaries do not extend that far and we don't make exceptions for smokers—hence, NBTSC Vermont is not a good choice for someone with an active tobacco addiction, unless you can manage it via a nicotine patch or something along that line.

2) Although we run our own event, Farm and Wilderness is not a neutral site that simply rents out facilities. It's a Quaker camp with many longstanding traditions, one of which is not requiring swimsuits. Because the lake is a little chilly by mid-September, we don't typically see anyone swimming, but it could happen. As for Not Back to School Camp, we continue our own practice of keeping things simple by not

having any kind of nudity amongst campers and staff (except of course in the gender-segregated showers).

**Weather:** Chances are good that in both Oregon and Vermont we'll have warm days and coldish nights. In the past we've occasionally had rain or other interesting weather. Regardless, we just keep on playing. (You'll need to bring *very* warm bedding--and preferably a hot water bottle too--especially to Vermont.)

## what we're gonna do

Swim; talk; sing; drum; dance; hike; stare at the sky; play volleyball and softball and soccer; take creative, emotional, and intellectual risks; encourage each other to do amazing things; have talent shows; teach and learn from each other. Each camper is encouraged to contribute both creatively (teach a workshop, lead a sport or group singing, etc.) and not-quite-so-creatively (wash dishes, cut vegetables, pick up trash, etc.).

**Daily schedule:** Each day we have a morning meeting and an evening meeting; everyone is required to attend both, during which we sit together enjoying each others' presence, sing together, important announcements are made, and campers and staff are able to raise concerns. The morning meeting includes half an hour or more in advisee groups, where you'll spend time getting to know and sharing with about 10 other campers and a staff advisor. All of these meetings are an essential part of camp and ensure that everyone is connected to the group and up to date on activities, camp issues, policies, etc. (If you think you will resent spending an hour or two, daily, in large and small group meetings, NBTSC is not a good choice for you.)

Everyone is encouraged, but not forced, to participate in evening group activities. And we share mealtimes, of course. Beyond this, there are many scheduled daytime activities, sports, and workshops--led both by staff and by you and your peers. Usually, you can choose among these daytime activities--or nap, talk with a new friend, or create your own fun.

**Oregon Session 2 projects:** For a few hours on five mornings (about 9 hours total), campers cluster in groups and collaborate on nifty projects. We don't choose specific projects until late spring, but you can expect a wide array. In past years, options have included art projects, wilderness skills, conscious communication, cob building, an elaborate underwater robot, unschooling statistics, a collaborative music project, primitive skills, theater, contact improvisation dance, and girls' empowerment projects. You'll have the opportunity to sign up before camp, but at the beginning of the week leaders will give brief presentations, at which time

you may be able to change your mind, depending on availability. Some projects are limited in size, so you may not get your first pick, but there are always enough inspiring choices to go around. (Most campers have gotten their first choice in the past.) Project leaders are usually drawn from NBTSC staff, but we welcome serious, well-thought-out proposals from campers—contact us if you're interested.

While some projects are open only to campers who commit to being present for all sessions, others are designed so that people can drop in but not necessarily attend all sessions.

Here are a few comments from recent Session 2 participants:

- *“The cob project was the most inspiring thing I've ever done.”*
- Projects are like a cross between workshops and advisee groups—you get to know the people in your project really well by working with them for two hours each morning on something you're all excited about.
- It's a nice balance between open and structured time—the afternoon is free; the mornings you have a “home.” After the first 4 mornings, projects are over, but that's OK because by that time you've gotten to know quite a few people pretty well.



**Evening events:** are special—sometimes simple, sometimes elaborate... a campfire sing-along, talent shows, dancing, music jams, a bonding night, and other good stuff.

**Workshops—a sampling:** Workshops reflect the talents and interests of all staff and campers. We usually have about 100 workshops to choose from every session--examples from past years include breakdancing, solar cooking, kung fu, orienteering, yoga, cob-oven building, Zimbabwean singing, college applications, website design, surrealist games, co-counseling, VW engine fixing, drama, poetry, getting published and self-publishing, human digestion, origami, art booklets, swing dancing, youth rights, tree identification, conscious communication, beading, and photography. Most days, most of the time, you can decide what you want to do. We do offer a lot of really good workshops and we expect that each of you will go home with new skills you're excited about. But the point is not to be frantically busy, and it's fine if you don't want to participate in lots of these organized activities. The sun and the forest will have plenty of suggestions of their own.

**Your workshop or sport:** Each camper is encouraged to lead a workshop or organize a game/sport. Most workshops run 1 hour, and many groups make plans to get together again later or to continue a discussion over lunch. You do not have to be an expert in your field to teach a workshop. As many campers have discovered, an enthusiastic beginner often makes an excellent teacher. If you need supplies, we can provide some basic art and office supplies, a boom box, sports equipment, but you will need to provide most other materials.

**Sports:** We typically play volleyball, basketball, soccer, ultimate frisbee, and softball--whatever campers and staffers organize. If there's another sport you want to play, volunteer to start a game.

**Unscheduled activities:** Most of the time you're free to make your own fun if you don't feel like participating in a group activity. You can hike on trails, talk with new friends, read, nap, swing, practice a new skill... In Oregon, and occasionally in Vermont, you can swim.

**Talent Shows:** Talent shows are a great highlight of camp. You can play music, balance on a ping pong ball, dance, sing, show your artwork, do stand up comedy, turn cartwheels, juggle forks, tell us the wildest thing that ever happened to your family, swallow a sword, read your poetry or a very short story, or just stand up and tell us what makes you tick. You might consider getting up and performing or sharing something related to your workshop. Your act should be 4 minutes or less; on rare occasions we do make exceptions so talk with us if you want more time.

## Vermont Wild Card Week

Session 4 is our opportunity to re-interpret the essentials in a fun, creative way. We will hold onto the heart of NBTSC: small family-like groups that meet daily. A schedule designed to encourage campers and staff to share their skills and passions with each other. An event in which we are encouraged to express ourselves vulnerably to each other and to give and receive compassionate support. Loud celebrations and quiet epiphanies. We most likely *won't* have: randomly assigned advisee groups, the trust circle, the workshop schedule in the same daily-grid format, etc. Each year, Session 4 will be a fresh experimental laboratory. Perhaps some of our experiments will turn out so stunningly that we incorporate them into other sessions as well. Most will be ephemeral sparks of magic. For Grace's thoughts about this year, see <http://nbtsc.org/about/wildcardweek.html>.



## staff

Our multi-faceted, skilled, caring, funny, altogether delightful staff is one of the best things about NBTSC. They teach outstanding workshops and coach sports, lead group singing, facilitate discussions, wrap twisted ankles, support people who are feeling challenged in any way, cook great food, and those who aren't exhausted sometimes stay up late and join in the after-midnight revels. For the most part, our experience is that the

staff adores the campers and the campers adore the staff.

Our staff comes from a wide background, and NBTSC does not endorse or affiliate with any of their particular religious, political, lifestyle, or other beliefs or practices.

One staff person is your **advisor**. You'll meet with your advisor and about 10 other campers each morning to check in, raise and discuss concerns, play games, and get to know each other. You are also welcome to talk with any of the rest of us about concerns or questions.

For more about staff roles and the specific individuals who have worked on staff (and are likely to do so again), see our staff bio page, <http://nbtsc.org/who/index.htm>.

## food

Three yummy vegetarian meals each day—we prepare our own food and use mostly organically grown ingredients. Vegan alternatives for people who request them in advance, and we can usually accommodate wheat-free diets too. Simple snacks are usually available--homemade bread, peanut butter, fruit, trail mix, etc. People with numerous allergies or other special diets may need to supply some of their own food, but we can work with most special needs if they're not elaborate. Our cooking staff is very skilled; some of them have cooked professionally at retreat centers famed for their good food, run catering businesses, or have cooked for several seasons at NBTSC. Moreover, they prepare our food with love and creativity, and over the years they have refined a basic menu plan that seems to please most of the people most of the time. Many campers say that a highlight of the week is the time they spend helping prepare meals in our sweet-smelling, laughter-filled kitchen.

People who need meat to be happy physically or emotionally can bring their own small supply. Sorry, we can't make cooking or refrigeration space available, so the best options are jerky or other dried or smoked meat or fish, or canned fish or seafood. (Bring your own can opener.)

## money

The cost of NBTSC is \$630 per person if your registration is complete by March 31, \$690 after. However, if you get your money, paperwork, and complete information in on time, you'll receive an automatic \$100 rebate, prior to camp. The camp fee includes just about everything: hearty meals, lodging, almost all activities.

What's not included:

- Camp T shirts, which are optional.
- occasional workshops with a small additional materials fee
- Oregon Session 1 we offer an optional \$25 day trip to the coast.
- In Vermont, \$10 (each way) to have Farm & Wilderness staff pick up or drop off a camper in Rutland or White River Junction.
- If staff drives you to town for personal reasons, you'll need to reimburse our mileage costs. Sometimes a round trip—say, to Eugene, from Camp Myrtlewood—can cost us over \$50, and we can't take that out of the general camp budget.
- Staying at Camp Myrtlewood between Sessions 1 and 2 (\$90).

We offer a \$75 discount for attending both Oregon sessions or both Vermont sessions.

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is due with your registration. The balance is due June 1 (if mailed from within the U.S., it's okay as long as it's postmarked by then). It really is important that you get it in on time. If both your money and all of your paperwork and information is sent in on time, we send your \$100. If it's late, we will contact you to see if you simply forgot, but if you don't respond promptly we may need to drop you from our roster and give your spot to someone else. If you prefer, you are welcome to pay the whole camp fee at the time of registration.

If you register after our June 1 payment deadline, you can still get the \$100 rebate—if you pay in full when you register, and if you get your information in by the July 1 deadline. Sorry, but if you register after the July 1 information deadline, no rebate is available.

We do accept payments via PayPal. You can pay part or all of your fees by going to [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com), and following the instructions to “send money.” Send your money to [NBTSC@aol.com](mailto:NBTSC@aol.com), and be sure you specify clearly who and what it's for. Because PayPal charges us a fee, **you must add 3% to each payment you make.** Also, if we need to refund any of these payments, there will be a small deduction made by PayPal.

**Please read our** refund policy (<http://nbtsc.org/join/refund.htm>) carefully to prevent misunderstanding and frustration for everyone.

### work trades

For campers with special skills, for families (campers and occasionally parents) who would like to help with the work of putting on camp, and for families who couldn't otherwise afford NBTSC, we offer a variety of trade opportunities. Information and applications can be found on our website (<http://nbtsc.org/about/scholarship-worktrades.htm>). The **deadline to apply is March 31.**

### Lifeguarding

While most worktraders are used mainly in the kitchen -- dishwashing, food prep, etc. -- we also have a few worktrade positions in Vermont for American Red Cross certified lifeguards. Lifeguard positions are not dependent on financial need. Look for information on the worktrade page of our website (see above).

### Don't give up before you try!

This may not always be the case, and we can't predict how things will go in the future, but in the past, most people who have applied for financial assistance (by the deadline) have received one. *We really want you to know* that if (lack of) money stands in the way of your attending NBTSC, you shouldn't give up without trying!

On the other hand, please don't apply for a worktrade if you don't need one. I (Grace) look at the applications as requests from one human being (you) to another (me), and as such I take them very seriously. I try to say yes whenever I can, even when there are consequences for me or other aspects of camp. So, I prefer that you take your end of it seriously also.

### rules

An overwhelming number of past campers have commented that with our policies and attitudes they felt free, trusted, and yet also safe and well cared for. The rules we do have are important—designed to protect everyone's safety and peace, and to ensure that we can continue to have NBTSC, yet without limiting freedom unnecessarily. Please be aware that for any serious rule infractions, we usually contact parents, and we reserve the right to send campers home if that feels to us like the best course of action. Our past experience has been that for the most part, we get along superbly and people respect each other and the rules.

Our rules are lax compared to those of most camps and youth activities. We have few required activities, and we do not have a set bedtime or normally require you to sleep in your assigned bed. Instead, we ask you to use your time well according to your own values, and we ask you to create, and then use, a “bedtime policy” that serves your own particular needs and goals at camp, and regardless of where you sleep, we expect you to honor our “no sex at camp” rule.

We often refer to our rules as agreements. Camp is not something we, the government, your parents, or your friends require you to do—it is something you choose to do. (In fact, our most important rule is that you cannot come to camp unless it is your own free choice to do so.) In choosing to be there, we expect you to agree to act in the way that we ask you to, in order to help co-create the best possible camp for you and

everyone else.



## what parents should know about NBTSC

The vast majority of feedback we get from parents is glowingly positive, and we do our work in the hope that it contributes to the health and happiness not only of our campers, but also of their relationships with the families that they return to. But it is possible that some of the things we do may not be consistent with what you want for your family, or they may not be right for a particular individual because of her maturity level or background. It is never our intent to mislead anyone about what happens at camp. Here are a few things you may want to consider:

Like other teenagers, many of the people who come to camp are interested in learning about **sexuality**. The majority of campers are not sexually active, but naturally they experience themselves as sexual beings. So, they initiate workshops and discussions on various aspects of relationships and sexuality. Most of these are pretty serious in nature; a few are silly. It is not our policy to censor any of these. Sometimes staff attends and participates in discussions, adding an adult leadership dimension. Other times, campers prefer to talk amongst themselves without adults present. We honor their preferences.

Also, occasionally staff offers workshops related to sexuality. The most common scenario is for female staff to give a workshop on women's sexuality and body image, with an empowering, feminist slant. Staff have also offered workshops on birth control, relationships, and on larger topics--such as conscious communication--that can include sexuality. We do not, as a camp, endorse any particular expression of sexuality; nor do we encourage campers to seek out sexual experiences with other people. We also have a clear and firm expectation that campers not have sex while at camp, and we stay in dialogue about this issue with the group as a whole and with individual campers who get into intense-looking romances during camp. We promote an overall atmosphere that is group-oriented, affectionate, uplifting, and wholesome.

Some parents may also wish to know that some of our workshops and evening activities tend toward the realm of **personal growth** and even somewhat therapeutic processes. Sometimes staffers offer workshops in topics such as Radical Honesty, emotional intimacy, meditation, peer counseling, learning to love and accept oneself, etc.

Some **Session 2 projects** also incorporate personal growth activities, or information about sexuality. In the past we made some effort to get parental permission for participation, but we no longer do that--it's easier for campers to finalize their project decisions at camp (and a headache for us to try to contact parents at that point), and there are other workshops at camp that are similar in nature anyway.

Also, at most sessions of camp, one evening we typically do a personal growth exercise (the "trust circle") in which people share intimate details about their lives if they choose to. This evening's activities are not mandatory, but most campers and staff usually participate.

The majority of the time you'll find most people making music, sitting in relaxed groups talking about traveling or favorite foods or how to make the world a better place, learning to juggle or make zines or write poetry, applauding enthusiastically during talent shows, hugging, laughing, playing Frisbee, laying in the sun, or helping in our fragrant, peaceful kitchen. But we do have intense moments too, and we talk about just about everything at camp. Campers tend to find their own appropriate level; for instance, when male campers initiate a "men's group" to talk about issues related to masculinity, most who attend are older campers. But sometimes younger campers come and listen out of curiosity. Overall this seems healthy and appropriate to us, but we want to make sure we're not misleading you as to the nature of what goes on.

Please also see “an important note for parents and campers on bedtimes and sleeping arrangements,” below.

Finally, on a rather different note, we want parents to be prepared for their kids to get **sent home if they break rules** repeatedly or in any way that the staff deems serious or likely to undermine others’ camp experience. Bringing or using illegal drugs, having sex with another person at camp, abusing another person physically or verbally, or lying to staff about their own involvement in such activities are a few possible roads to being asked to leave. The people who do such things at camp are a tiny minority, but their activities erode morale for everyone. We look at each situation individually, and make a great effort not to shame anyone, but it is also important to us to protect the NBTSC environment, as well as our own peace and happiness. (We tend to resent having to spend a lot of our time tracking down 1 or 2 people who are breaking serious rules, and thus not having time to do the jobs we have prepared for, and looked forward to, all year.) Thanks for reading this paragraph and we’re sorry to have to include that sour little note here!

**If you have questions about anything** in this brochure, or anything else, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We’ll gladly talk with you on the phone, or respond via email, whichever you prefer.

## **an important note for parents and campers on bedtimes and sleeping arrangements**

We want to clarify a few things in light of some questions and concerns expressed by parents, and in light of some (rather different) questions and concerns expressed by campers. We are always carefully considering and reconsidering our goals for camp, and at least for now, this is where we continue to stand:

As in the past, we do not plan to enforce a general bedtime at camp. We will continue to require lights out/quiet in cabins from approximately midnight to 8 a.m., but allow people to stay up later in communal buildings and outside at the campfire circle or other designated areas.

We do, however, ask each camper to write a policy that they will use to decide when to go to bed each night, based on what they understand about themselves and what is important to them. Overall this program, while a bit cumbersome, has been effective and received good reviews from campers. We do this because while we don’t want to unnecessarily limit freedom, we do want campers to take good care of themselves and get enough sleep. And, we want to encourage participation in daytime

workshops and activities. We find that campers who are intentional about setting camp goals (and about getting enough sleep to support those goals) generally feel good at the end of the week about the way they have used their time. We don’t breathe down campers’ necks about this (or much of anything else) and those who want to can certainly “get away with” writing a halfhearted policy and then proceeding to ignore it anyway, but we recommend that campers take the process seriously and use it to help shape their week the way they truly want to.

Also (and as in the past), we do not plan to generally require campers to sleep in their assigned beds. (We don’t allow girls in boys’ cabins or vice versa, though.) Most campers sleep in their beds most of the time. Some campers, however, sleep in groups (which are often mixed-gender) in public spaces or outside. Sometimes these groups are affectionate and cuddly. To be a little more blunt, at times they are just heaps of people--to those of us on staff, they sometimes look quite uncomfortable. While we firmly expect campers to observe our “no sex at camp” and “no nudity” rules (and initiate plenty of dialogue when that seems called for), we do not police these groups. Our observation (borne out by many candid reports from individual campers) is that while occasionally there is some mildly sexual behavior, by and large these “people piles” are innocent. We feel that while they do make it possible for people to bend the rules, there are other ways for people to bend the rules who have decided to do so, and that to tighten our policy in this regard would be more of a detriment than a benefit to camp and campers.

We thought you might be interested in this comment from a 2005 camper who at the time was in a long-distance relationship with someone she had met at camp several years prior. (Forest Dell is a building in Oregon which we usually make available as a group sleeping space.) “Thank you for Forest Dell! Being able to sleep with my partner greatly improved my attitude for the week. Having a social, not private, place to sleep as a couple is really cool but also feels respectful of camp agreements. The lack of privacy keeps us well behaved.”

Because we know that some campers may not be ready to make their own healthiest choices about sleeping (and other) matters, and because you know your kids better than we do, we suggest that you talk about these subjects as a family, and perhaps clarify your own expectations or agreements independently of camp rules and policies. In other words, we do stand behind the rules that we set, and take reasonable steps to ensure that they are followed, but we cannot be responsible for making sure that your kids behave the way that you think is best for them.

In the past, we have swung to different sides of the pendulum--tightening things up at parents' requests, then seeing (and hearing from campers) that we've caused more harm than good, preventing innocent affection more than anything else, and swinging back to a looser stance. We're trying to strike a better balance, in part by asking you—parents—to get involved by having your own family discussions. (It might also be helpful for you to talk, as a family, about the bedtime policy.) In our handbook –provided in the spring to all registered campers—we include examples of successful previous policies.)

Our experience at camp has always been that most campers are extremely mature—that is, cooperative, beyond the need to rebel for rebellion's sake, and kind and empathetic to staff as well as to each other. When we envision our policies at future camps, it is always with this kind of maturity in mind. In the event that we ever find ourselves with a different quality of camp community, we will need to shift the way we do things. We are committed to creating the best possible balance of freedom and caretaking, given the particular group of human beings that we find ourselves serving.



### **an important note about being sick at camp**

At some sessions of camp, quite a few campers and staffers get sick. For years we have puzzled about the variables involved—a large group coming together after traveling through public airports, bus stations, etc.

This group being a very physically affectionate one. Not a lot of sleep. People being busy and excited and not stopping to drink enough water. Some people not bringing warm enough bedding or clothing. Each year we do what we can to encourage people to arrive healthy and to take care of themselves once we are together. Each year, we scratch our heads at the end of the season and wonder what piece of the puzzle we are still missing. In our staff meetings we often discuss, and then reject, the possibility of instituting a camp-wide bedtime. At this time, that's not a step we want to take.

One thing we have observed is that people who do have contagious illnesses at camp—over the past 14 years that has included lice, pinkeye, various coughs and colds, and other diseases—do not always honor our requests to take care of themselves or to avoid contaminating other people. It is easy to understand that in an extremely affectionate community such as ours, it can be difficult to stop hugging other people, to go to bed early, etc. But, we are committed to creating change in the NBTSC health department, and we need our 2009 campers to understand: if you are sick at camp, the staff may require certain things of you, such as:

- Going to bed by a certain time
- Sleeping in your own bed or in an assigned infirmary bed, rather than in a public space
- Not participating in bonding night or other activities that are mainly focused on hugging.

We will, as always, consider each situation individually, but we will be proactive. We want to support people in getting over illnesses quickly, and also in not getting sick in the first place.

(As usual, we are also looking for other ways we can support wellness. One of our plans for 2009, for instance, is to cut down—a little bit—on the number of night time activities, and to schedule some of them to end a little earlier. Also, on several evenings we may close public buildings a little earlier than in the past, so that people can go to bed without worrying that they're missing out on all kinds of good stuff.)

### **how to register**

Please go to our website (<http://nbtsc.org/join/index.htm>) and follow the instructions there. If you don't have internet access, please phone Sarabeth at 607-330-1201.

**Checks** should be made out to Not Back to School Camp.

**Your email addresses are crucial.** Provide accurate, legible email addresses—for the camper and a parent or guardian—that will be valid through the start of camp. (If your addresses change, you must let us know.) Unless you tell us that you are not able to receive information via email, this is how we will confirm your registration, remind you of deadlines, and provide updates.

**Signing up as a host family:**

A “yes” indicates that your family is willing to have, as a houseguest, pretty much anyone from any session of camp—not just your personal friends. (Only during times that are convenient for you, of course.) Many campers travel quite a bit to visit other campers during the year, and this can be a great opportunity for both hosts and travelers.

**Online travel directory:** If you say yes to this one, we make your name, phone number, email address, and street address available on our password-protected directory so that other campers can connect with you to discuss the possibility of shared travel.

**What happens after you register?** We’ll confirm your registration, and in the spring you’ll hear from us again. At that point we’ll provide you with detailed information—what to bring, how to prepare for camp, etc.—and will also ask you for information (health history, what workshop you want to teach, dietary restrictions, etc.). In the meantime, hang onto this booklet.

## The Fine Print

**Responsibilities:** Each person contributes to the spiffiness of camp in two major ways:

- 1) fun, possibly creative work which draws on your unique talents. Please watch for ways to let your light shine: coach a game or sport, lifeguard for an afternoon at the swimming hole, teach a workshop, lead a song, or some such.
- 2) You’ll get to perform a few grungy, possibly even disgusting menial chores too! We help prepare meals, clean up after them, keep the bathrooms clean, and sweep our cabins before we leave. You may have to scrub a toilet or 2, but you’ll have partners and you can whistle while you work. Each camper has up to 4 hours of chores during the week.

**Travel information**

In the spring, we provide all registered campers with detailed guidelines for arrival and departure (and many other aspects of camp). However,

knowing that some people like to make their plans far in advance, we provide you with a sneak preview here:

*Oregon travel arrangements:* You can drive, train, bicycle, fly, or bus into Eugene. Eugene has a small commercial airport serviced by a few airlines including United; many campers fly into Eugene directly. Others fly into Portland, 100 miles north, and take the bus or train to Eugene. Our buses pick campers up at the Greyhound bus depot, the airport, the Amtrak train station, and Monroe Park near downtown. You should arrive by 2:30 if possible, and 3:30 at the latest. (If driving to Monroe Park, definitely plan to arrive by 2:30.) On our last day, we’ll return you to your pick of those same locations by approximately noon. You can also drive yourself, or have someone else drive you, directly to Camp Myrtlewood. (Please don’t plan to arrive at Camp Myrtlewood early without contacting us; we can usually accommodate a few people a few hours early but you *must* make arrangements in advance.)

People who ride trains that are typically very late (such as the Northbound Coast Starlight) need to arrive in Eugene a day early if they want to be guaranteed a bus ride to camp.

*Vermont travel arrangements:* If you are driving, please meet us at Farm and Wilderness Indian Brook Camp between 4:30 and 5:45 p.m. (We can also take a limited number of campers as early as 2 p.m. if you bring your own snacks and are willing to help get camp set up--let us know if you’d like to make arrangements.) If you’re riding a Greyhound bus or taking Amtrak, you can either arrange with another camper to pick you up, or for \$10 we will have you picked up by Farm & Wilderness staff in Rutland or White River Junction. For air travel, you’ll want to fly into a larger nearby airport (such as Albany, NY) and then take the bus or train or catch a ride with another camper. On the last day, your parents can pick you up at Farm and Wilderness Indian Brook Camp between 10 and 11 a.m. (We may be able to accommodate a few campers who stay later, help clean up the site, eat a possibly-pathetic lunch of scrounged leftovers, and are picked up by 1 p.m. at the latest. You must make advance arrangements.) Or, for \$10 we can return you to Rutland or White River Junction where you can catch the bus or train--more details on those options provided in the spring.

*All sessions:* if you have a car with you during the week, you absolutely may not drive it--no matter how old you are--and we may ask you to turn your keys over to us until camp is over.

*Travel complications:* If you can’t arrive early enough on the first day, or leave late enough on the last day, we can make arrangements for you to

stay in a hostel or hotel room with other campers and/or staff people; and to be transported as necessary by a taxi or an NBTSC staffer. Cost will be approximately \$40 in Oregon (likely more in Vermont). *Please do not take advantage of this offer unless your travel schedule really requires it!* It is a pain for us to orchestrate these arrangements and arrange taxis or other transportation. Be aware that hostel or hotel rooms may be supervised (sometimes in the past, a hotel we have worked with has required that) and we do enforce a curfew.

**Attending both Oregon sessions:** in the interest of starting Session 2 with a healthy group, we require “bothies” to do one of the following:

- stay at Camp Myrtlewood and follow a mellow schedule with lots of sleep and other take-good-care-of-your-body rules. (This year we plan on a specific bedtime.) The cost for food and lodging is \$90, and each camper also does approximately 6 hours of meal prep and other work. We can host a maximum of 40 campers. Or:
- return to your own home with the intention of recuperation, or
- stay at the home of another camper, *if* a parent in charge vows solemnly that the main event will be rest and relaxation, or
- submit another recuperation-oriented proposal that makes us happy.

If you stay at Camp Myrtlewood for the 3 extra nights, you’ll need to be mellow—staff will be in long meetings and deep comas--and perhaps move into a different cabin. We’ll do your laundry and feed you. The campers who stay in between usually have a great time and lots of long conversations, though they sometimes feel a little hurt that the staff doesn’t pay more attention to them.

**Attending both Vermont sessions:** Sorry, we cannot host campers between sessions. As in Oregon, we do expect you to take good care of yourself and get lots of rest so that you can return rejuvenated and ready to help create an unforgettable session of NBTSC.

**If you have special needs:** Both Camp Myrtlewood and Farm & Wilderness can accommodate wheelchairs, though like any outdoor setting they can pose challenges to anyone (including people in “normal” physical condition). Educate us about your needs, and we’ll do our best to make your week comfortable, safe, and exciting.

**Health and safety:** We usually have no camp nurse or equivalent medical person on staff, but there is always staff present with first aid and CPR training. (We usually have one or more person with higher-

level training, such as wilderness first responder or EMT, but we make no promises about this.) In case of emergency, you will be taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital. You must basically be responsible for your own health, bring any (regular) necessary medications with you, etc. Camp insurance covers some accidents and injuries that take place on the camp grounds; you and your family need to be responsible for anything not covered by this insurance.

### **What if you get sick when it’s time to come to camp?**

Please notify us! Depending on how sick you are and what you have, we may ask you not to come. In that case, we would return all but \$100 of your fees. (Before sending a refund we may request that you send a signed statement from a healthcare provider.)



*the end!*

### **Parents say:**

“I’d like to tell you how wonderful was our experience with nbtsc. My 13 year old son is something of a recluse, so this was his first experience being all on his own, away from anyone or anything he knew. I was sure he’d be ‘fine’ but, of course, had reservations. He’s not been exposed to much even in the way of media, as we have tended to err on the side of ‘conservative’ to a certain extent. Anyway, he certainly gained heaps of confidence in himself and a great deal of open-mindedness he didn’t have before. I realize part of this is his age, but I also

think his week at camp sort of lit the fire. He didn't come home with tons of friends to call or write, but he's better friends with himself and more likely to make friends now than he's ever been."

*"[My son] has never experienced such openness, such honesty and such love—and he is renewed. He feels accepted, uplifted, empowered and, above all else, valued! ...You are working magic at NBTSC....nurturing wings. I applaud you and thank you."*

"The camp was fabulous for [my daughter] and the kids were too -- very different from her high school friends, in maturity, drive, self-assuredness, openness and vulnerability."

*"Just a quick note of appreciation from a very pleased parent! ...I know [my son] had one of the best weeks of his life and he's had a lot of excellent weeks in his 17 years... back he comes from camp with a zillion new friends—he promptly hooked us up to email and in the last 3-4 weeks has written well over 100 letters!"*

"My son returned from your camp with renewed enthusiasm for life and learning! Thank you so much for having this get-together of, apparently, some of the most gifted and interesting people on earth!"

*"[Our daughter] returned to us full of self-assurance, excitement, and positive loving energy. The revelation that there are other teenagers out there with her unschooler ideas was a delightful awakening for her."*

"I should tell you that [my son] had a wonderful time at NBTSC. It's resulted in some significant changes in how [he] approaches life, and he's enthusiastic about going back next year."

### **Campers say:**

*"I feel genuine kinship and community here. I'm going back to my usual home with feelings of hope and inspiration and a clearer vision for my horizons."*

"This camp was by far the best thing that ever happened to me.

*"The only thing I don't like about camp is leaving at the end. I mean I know that we have to leave at some point, but I wish we didn't. I just love camp that much."*

"I had never been in such a big group of people that were so open, nonjudgmental, loving, honest, and just wonderful to be around! The energy of it all was so incredibly awesome! It was the best experience I have ever had.

*"Overall, I think this was the best week of my life. The energy of vibrant, thinking, life-loving people is the most intensely powerful thing I can imagine."*

"Camp is good for me. It's good for my spirit. It totally rejuvenates me, and inspires me. This is partly who I am, camp affects everyone a little differently, of course. Don't send your kid here thinking they'll come home some kind of superkid. Camp isn't for the parent. It's for the kid. It's an experience they won't forget. But everyone processes differently, and every kid may NOT come

home totally inspired. The majority will, I suppose...."

*"Never before has a camp had such an effect on me as this one. I was so at peace with myself and others, it was incredible. I never wanted to leave."*

"This camp gives you the feeling that no matter who you are or wherever you're from, you will always be welcome!"

*"Camp has been the best three weeks of the last three years of my life. Some of my very favorite people are the people I've met here in the last three years."*

"Every year it continues to amaze me how so many wonderful, accepting people there really are. I've made more lasting friends at camp than in the whole rest of my life put together."

*"I'm writing to say again how thrilled I am with camp. You get together such a great group of wonderful, talented people. I'm really amazed at your ability to make it work so well." "I feel like a different and better person! I haven't even fought with my sister who also went to camp. Or my other siblings for that matter."*

"Camp is the high point of my unschool year. Each time I make new friends, learn new things, and leave with a beautiful feeling."

*"To be at NBTSC is a life changing experience. It sounds like a cliché but it's never been more genuine than in this case."*

"This was the funnest camp I've ever been to and everyone was so nice!"

*"Not Back to School Camp has consistently and persistently demanded that I try new things and challenge the way I look at the world. I have come across so many amazing people with amazing talents, I think I have a new family of 120 people!"*

"I was thrilled by everything: the idea, the staff the campers, the openness, the inspiration that lasts all year. Thank you."

*"Like last year, I came home totally inspired. I feel like the days are not long enough for all the things I want to learn/study now. I feel like I can change the world. I know I can change the world. 120 campers and advisors felt the same way that week, I think, and many of them have carried that feeling home. It was worth every bit of money and time, I love camp. I highly recommend it, especially to those who are wondering if they're doing the right thing and to those who feel apathetic and unenthusiastic about learning, life, whatever. There is a joy in life at camp. A warning however: you can't get much out of camp if you don't put much in. The more you participate in things, try talking to new people, and explore, the better time you will have. And personally, I find that by the end of camp, what energy I put into being there has come back, multiplied, a hundredfold."*

"This camp totally changed my life. I feel confident and proud to walk the path I chose."

For more comments, see <http://nbtsc.org/about/testimonies.htm>.