

Travel Club Is An Introduction to Wander

Travel Club, Wander Wisconsin's popular week where campers visit a different state attraction and return home each day, gives kids a chance to try out a Wander Wisconsin experience.

"It gives them a 'window' into Wander," said Program Coordinator Cheri Wilson. "It's a chance for

them to see what it's like to travel with a group and try out new things."

Travel Club used to be scheduled for one week each summer but because of its popularity it has been expanded this summer to four weeks for ages 8-13 and one week for ages 13-16.

"We go to large water theme parks, museums, the Milwaukee Zoo," said Wilson. "We pick places where there is plenty to do for a whole day."

Another consideration in the choice of where to go is distance.

"We go to places not more than one to two hours away," said Wilson. "That way we

don't spend too much time on the road."

Wilson said she also tries to build in one day that's more relaxed so campers don't get too tired.

Travel Club also features a visit to one of Wisconsin's state parks. This year trips will go to Devil's Lake twice and Governor Dodge three times.

All the travel clubs will also canoe, tube, kayak or boat one time.

"Wisconsin is such a great state and travel club is a perfect way to experience it," said Wilson.



One of the 2010 Travel Club adventures included canoeing and exploring on the Wisconsin River.



www.wanderwisconsin.org

Whereabouts

A seasonal newsletter from Wander Wisconsin

SPRING 2011

Wander to Be Based Out of Marshall Park

Wander Wisconsin will be based out of Madison's Marshall Park this summer. For the past 13 years the program has been based at the Wisconsin Youth Company's administrative offices on Madison's southwest side.

"We wanted the Wander location to be a true trip outpost, not an office building," said Jason Anderson, Camps and Enrichment Programs Division Director.

"When parents pull in to Marshall Park they will see a lake and trees and get the feel of a camp."

Marshall Park is located on Madison's west side at 2101 Allen Blvd. It's on Lake

Mendota and has over 37 acres with a sandy beach for swimming, boat launch, fishing docks, shelters, water and restrooms.

The Wander program will rent a former beach house on the property from the City of Madison Parks Department. It has bathrooms, electricity and storage space for equipment. It will provide a place for parents and children to sign-in and meet staff. Campers will be able to canoe, fish, hike and have plenty of space for games at the park.

"It will provide a more natural setting for what is primarily an outdoor environmental program," said Anderson.

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The beach house, top, will be used as a base for Wander Wisconsin this summer. The shelter will be used by an Outdoor Immersion Camp.

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Small Group Size Helps Kids Build Social Skills

Wander Wisconsin camping trips are special for the outdoor fun they offer but parents may not realize that they are also ideal for building social skills.

"It's not just about where we go and what we do," said Cheri Wilson, Wander Wisconsin program coordinator. "It's about being a part of the group."

Most Wander trips are small with eight to 12 campers and two staff.

"You ride in the van together. You spend five nights with the same kids and you have to learn to get along," said Wilson.

Wilson said that trip leaders begin building a sense of community on the first day.

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Making good friends is easier with adult support and Wander's small group size. These kids went on a Youth Trek to Black River Falls last summer.

Unique adventures and camping experiences for youth.



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Wander to New Places and Old Favorites This Summer



Greetings from Wander Wisconsin! We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of spring and are busy finalizing the summer schedule. We will explore a few new places this summer as well as some of the old favorites. I

thoroughly enjoy searching for and planning new adventures for our Wander campers. Each summer we strive to offer new experiences and create exciting and memorable trips to help our campers grow and learn about themselves and the natural environment.

As spring approaches, there are many ways to get outdoors as a family. We are fortunate to have so many wonderful

nature centers in our area that offer a variety of inexpensive or free family outdoor programs. One of my favorite web sites is Nature Net (www.naturenet.com). You can find nature centers, family programs, on-line activities and environmental education information all on this site. Don't forget to check out the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, MacKenzie Environmental Center, and the U.W. Arboretum websites for upcoming spring programs.

I have enjoyed my time with Wander immensely and have loved getting to know our campers and their families. I will not be running the Wander Wisconsin program this summer as I am returning to school to further my education in the medical field. I wish all of our Wander families well, good health and a happy summer!

Cheri Wilson
Cheri Wilson

Teen Day Trips Offered for First Time

Three day-long trips for ages 13-16 are being offered this summer for the first time. Trips will go to a Milwaukee Brewers game on June 22, the Experimental Aircraft Association AirVenture on July 27 and to the Wisconsin

State Fair on August 10. "We wanted to get more teens involved with Wander," said Camp and Enrichment Programs Director Jason Anderson. "The feedback we've gotten from talking to

them and to parents is that teens are too busy to commit for a whole week or they prefer not to be away from their friends for that long." Anderson said the choice of where to go was easy.

"Wander is all about Wisconsin," said Anderson, "and these three trips are uniquely Wisconsin."

Marshall Park to Be Summer Home for Wander

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The park will also be home for the new Outdoor Immersion Camp which is two weeks of nature activities and outdoor skill building.

Campers can also visit Lakeview Park which is located across Allen Blvd. in Middleton and Pheasant Branch Conservancy which is a short hike across Century Ave.

Anderson also anticipates that some of the outdoor related classes offered through Wisconsin Youth Company's Middle School U program will use the Marshall Park location.

"I could see some of our AFTER SCHOOL Summer Day Camps coming over for a day at the park too," said Anderson.

Anderson said the Marshall

Park location will be easier for parents to find, it will be easier to load gear and will be safer because the check in is located away from the parking lot and traffic.



It's covered in snow and ice now but this summer this lagoon at Marshall Park will be used for canoeing and fishing by Wander, Outdoor Immersion and summer day camp campers.

Wander 2011 Highlights Announced

A new park, a new vendor and an old favorite will all be a part of Wander Wisconsin 2011.

For the first time a Wander trip will visit Big Foot Beach State Park on Lake Geneva.

"We chose Big Foot because the water is very clear and clean and it has a good swimming beach," said Cheri Wilson, Wander Wisconsin program coordinator. "We'll be there in August so we can have a break from the heat and swim."

The Big Foot Beach trip is a Kid Campout for ages eight to 10 and is planned for August 15-19. Campers will spend two nights at the park tent camping. In addition to swimming at the park they will also get a chance to fish and hike.

The trip also features tubing on the Sugar River and visits to the Toy Train Barn in Argyle and the MacKenzie Environmental Center in Poynette.

The Teen River Adventure trip will visit a new Wander Wisconsin vendor: Kosir's Rapid Rafts in Silver Cliff, WI.

"Campers will get to raft the Peshtigo and Menominee Rivers," said Wilson. "If we've had enough rain they should see some nice white water."

"If we've had enough rain they should see some nice white water."

This trip which is July 18-21, is for youth age 13-16. Campers will tent camp at Kosir's for three nights. If the water levels are too low to raft, they will use funyaks (inflatable kayaks), tubes or regular kayaks.

Another Wander trip will return to a favorite park, Willow River State Park.

"We haven't been to Willow River in a long time and it's such a nice park," said

Wilson. "It's one of the most visited parks in Wisconsin."

Wilson said she also chose the park because motorized boats are not allowed on the water which makes it safer for campers and because it has beautiful waterfalls.

The location is convenient because right across the river is St. Paul and the Science Museum of Minnesota. The trip will include a visit there to see the exhibit "Tutankhamen: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs."

Willow River is a Youth Trek for ages 11-13. It is scheduled for June 26-July 1. The trip is for five nights and includes tubing on the Apple River and a visit to Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center. Campers will take part in a lumberjack program at the nature center.

"There's a lot of action on this trip," said Wilson. "Except for the King Tut exhibit it's all nature oriented."



Paddling, fishing and biking are traditional activities on Wander Wisconsin trips.

Small Group Size a Feature of Wander Trips

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"They talk with the kids about what it means to respect each other, respect the equipment and respect others who may be camping nearby," said Wilson.

Wilson said kids need opportunities to practice social skills in a safe setting. Wander trips allow them to

do that. "A Wander Wisconsin trip has distinct value in helping children learn team work and problem solving skills they will need for future success."

Trying new outdoor challenges like kayaking or backpacking combined with social skill building can mean a lot of learning for campers. "They end up doing a lot of

growing and self discovery," said Wilson.



Wander campers learn to work together to set up camp, cook, clean up and have fun.