OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

At Orkila, we offer a variety of classes to meet your program goals. Almost all learning takes place outside utilizing our beautiful outdoor learning areas, from forests, to beaches, to open fields. Some classes meet in the Marine Salmon Center on the waterfront.

Marine Ecology Classes

Beach Walk
By hiking on our beautiful beach, students observe and examine the shore ecosystem (including tidal pools, invertebrates, marine algae, and coastal wildlife) and show understanding of concepts related to tides and tidal zones. At the different coastal habitats, students explore the physical features of the beach and organisms living there. In this course, students are active participants in their own learning: they question, explore, and identify their living surroundings.

Marine Investigation
Students can participate in a variety of investigation options on the beach or in the Marine Center. The level of inquiry in the investigation will depend on the prior experience of the students in scientific investigation. During this class, students can collect data about species presence and potentially contribute it to a Nature Mapping database.

Plankton
Students collect samples of ocean water and discover a universe through the guided use of microscopes. They play games to learn the role of plankton in the marine food web, invertebrate and algae life cycles, and in the production of the world’s oxygen. This class provides a solid foundation of what plankton are through hands-on exploration and reinforcing ideas in fun activities.

Marine Invertebrates
Students meet creatures from the saltwater ecosystem. Through hands-on activities, students explore how marine invertebrates have adapted to different habitats and why these critters are suited to their habitats. Depending on the tides, students will identify and get to know creatures on the beach or in the Marine Center’s touch tanks. Through interactive lessons, students will uncover the interconnectedness within the marine community.
Super Salmon
Students have the opportunity to explore Orkila’s hatchery and, seasonally, see salmon develop at different stages of their lives. Through active role-playing and lessons, students experience the life cycle of the salmon, learn of salmons’ physical adaptations, and understand salmons’ role in the food chain. As our hatchery and Marine Center grow, students can become more involved and informed in the lives and experiences of salmon. Students also discuss the cultural impact of Salmon and the different stakeholders involved in the conservation or Salmon in the Pacific Northwest.

Forest and Aquatic Ecology

Forest Ecology
In hiking through our majestic trees, students explore Orkila’s forests and woodland ecosystems. Along with seeing the forest as a whole, interdependent, ever-changing community, students play games and participate in activities to learn about individual species in the forest and how they live.

Forest Investigation
Students will ask a group question and perform an investigation in the Forest. Orkila instructors will guide the students through their testable experiments. The level of inquiry in the investigation will depend on the experience each group has with inquiry.

Pond Study
The pond allows students to see and explore a unique and vital ecosystem. Students use dip nets, magnifying glasses, and microscopes to identify the many kinds of plant and animal life in the pond. They might investigate seasonal changes of the pond and the life cycles of the insects that make it their habitat.

Life in the Forest
“Life in the Forest” is an advanced hide-and-seek game. Students role-play plants, herbivores, omnivores, and carnivores foraging for nutrition. After the game, there is a debriefing session to recognize and evaluate students’ animal-like strategies, their adaptations, and human impact in the food chain and forest.

Garden and Sustainability

Garden & Sustainable Living
The farm and garden at Orkila are used as models for the energy cycle. Students will be able to explore the sustainability of plants, animals, and people living together. They will learn what sustainable living means by using our farm and garden as examples for discussion. Students will participate in hands-on activities such as planting, harvesting, composting, and recycling in the garden.
Earth Science

Geodesic Dome
The Geodesic dome is a fantastic structure developed by Buckminster Fuller in the late 1940’s. Today, students can build one with teamwork, logs, and rope. In addition to building a Geodome, they learn the history behind it and important geometric principles that enable all the students to climb on the structure.

Rope Bridge
The title really explains the class: the students build a bridge from heavy ropes. The students also learn several knots used to anchor the bridge between two trees. Through teamwork they get to walk across the bridge they made together.

Outdoor Living Skills
Students play games and participate in practicing outdoor living skills. This class helps to inform students about what materials they need in order to be safe while camping outdoors and how to experience the outdoors with a minimum impact on their environment. If indicated beforehand, this class could be combined with map and compass skills.

Archery & Camp Skills
In this class, students have a chance to do one of their favorite camp activities in a small group. In addition to archery, instructors will pick some other camp activities including, but not limited to: Ga-Ga ball, arts and crafts, an obstacle course, a camp hike, survival skills. It is sure to be a favorite among students.

TEAMBUILDING, LEADERSHIP, and ADVENTURE
At Orkila we strive to build strong group dynamics, break down cliques, and build a strong community for your group. One way we accomplish this is by facilitating teambuilding, leadership, and adventure activities on our challenge course. You can choose the activities that fit the goals for your experience.

Safety: Our staff are expertly trained and certified to facilitate our challenge course. Our facility is held to highest industry standards for safety. Our equipment is inspected with each use and careful logs are kept to ensure all equipment is in safe and working order. While there is inherent risk involved with all activities at camp, our staff aim to minimize that risk in order to keep participants safe.

Each class is designed to take 90 minutes with a group of 15 students. You may choose which classes you want to take based on the goals and age range of your students.

Initiatives
In this class, students work together to solve physical and mental challenges. The group starts with simple problems requiring basic communication and problem solving skills. Groups work up to more difficult problems requiring trust and strong reliance on each other. The instructor uses props to create problems that must be solved with teamwork and group participation. We require groups to take this class in order to best prepare them for their time at Orkila. Initiatives allows each group to build a solid foundation in working as a team as well as gives the Orkila instructor the opportunity to get to know the students.
Initiatives II
This class advances students in group-building activities past the basics of Initiatives I. Most groups progress to the low element initiative course in the forest. The course is composed of obstacles that require the groups to cooperatively problem solve and devise safe and effective solutions. Progression through the elements is dependent on the group’s ability to work together safely.

Traditional High Ropes
Students climb elements constructed of wire cable, logs, and rope that have been built from ground level to 20–30 feet high in the trees. There are four types of courses all with a different method of getting from one tree to the other—some with ropes, some with cables, and one with a log spanning the distance. Each group experiences one of the courses. In all courses, students climb up staples in a tree to get to the ropes or log.

All participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing safety gear. Staff also take care to minimize the physical and emotional risks inherent in these activities, allowing the activity to provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group both emotionally and physically. In most cases, we use a group belay facilitation which allows for more students to be involved even when they are not the one climbing. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help student’s process their experience and express their feelings.

Giant Swing
In the Giant Swing, the participant decides how far the class should pull the rope so that the participant is high in the air. The participant then releases themselves into a harnessed, free-fall swing. During this activity all participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing gear. Staff also take care to minimize the physical and emotional risks inherent in these activities, allowing the activity to provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help student’s process their experience and express their feelings.

Climbing Tower
Students climb an outdoor climbing wall consisting of various hand and foot holds to a height of up to 50 feet. Staff also take care to minimize the physical and emotional risks inherent in these activities, allowing the activity to provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. The climbing wall, for some students, is a physical challenge, while for others it provides more of a mental challenge to overcome. The climber is in a harness and belayed by an instructor or a group of students. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help students process their experience and express their feelings.
**Zip line**

After receiving an orientation and safety gear, participants can choose to soar over fields with sweeping views of our property. The adventure begins at the top of our 75 foot climbing tower. While in a harness and helmet, you are clipped to a cable trolley by a trained staff member. You walk off the tower into a gentle thrill ride for 1000 feet until you reach the landing tower.

**High Ropes Circuit**

Students climb elements constructed of wire cable, logs, and rope that have been built from ground level to 20-30 feet high in the trees. There are several parts to the circuit, each one providing a different physical challenge. The elements are connected forming a circular shape up in the trees. Students can participate by climbing up the tree with a traditional dynamic belay or completing the course through a more advanced static method. All participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing safety gear. These activities, while very safe, provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from a partner while moving through the High Ropes Circuit. Afterwards, staff facilitate a debriefing discussion to help students process their experience and express their feelings. *Please note that the High Ropes Circuit has a minimum age of 7th-grade and requires two class periods to run*

**Giant’s Ladder**

In the Giant’s Ladder, participants use teamwork to climb to the top of a ladder made for a giant. Three people must use each other to make the climb from one rung to the next. All participants use safety equipment: helmets, belay lines, harnesses, and other climbing safety gear. Staff also take care to minimize the physical and emotional risks inherent in these activities, allowing the activity to provide a sense of perceived risk for those who choose to take on this challenge. Each participant requires steady support from the rest of the group. Afterwards, staff facilitates a debriefing discussion to help students process their experience and express their feelings. *Please note that the Giant’s Ladder requires a minimum age of 7th-grade and requires two class periods to run*

**Sea Kayaking**

Schools and groups may also choose to have students explore the unique environment of the Salish Sea by kayaks. With participants working together in our fiberglass double-kayaks, staff guide the group in the process of getting ready to go out on the water, followed by an adventure in Orkila Bay. Groups can expect to be on the water for about 1-1.5 hours in an environment where they will likely get a little wet—shoes and synthetic clothing (i.e. no jeans or cotton sweatshirts) are a must in order to stay relatively comfortable! *Please note that sea kayaking has a minimum age of 7th grade and requires two class periods to complete. It also involved some moving and cleaning of gear before and after the program. It also has an added fee associated with it.*

**Hiking**

An off-site hike could be another way to add adventure into the programming you choose for your schools or group. Orcas Island has many beautiful trails to hike—Moran State Park being the best options for larger groups. Depending on your group and its goals you can choose to participate in a half-day hike around Moran State Park’s Mountain Lake or Cascade Lake or pack a sack lunch and spend the full-day hiking up to the highest point in the San Juan Islands— the challenging Mount Constitution! *Please note that off-site hiking involves an additional cost if Orkila transportation is needed*
EVENING PROGRAMS

Ork-Fire
This exciting campfire is usually done outside under the stars with a fire to keep warm. The Orkila staff leading this activity may arrange songs, stories, cheers, and skits and many more activities for your school to enjoy. There is no limit on size for this activity, which lasts an hour.

Combi-Fire
This campfire allows for students to shine as they perform their own skits either in cabin groups or class groups. Camp Orkila staff are there to announce for the students as well as perform a couple of their own skits. There is no limit on group size for this activity, which lasts an hour.

School-led Campfire
Your school group runs this campfire. A Camp Orkila staff member will light our gas fireplaces for you and then you are on your own to perform skits with your students, sing songs, and tell stories. This activity should last no more than an hour and a half.

School-led Trivia
Host a trivia night for your school! A Camp Orkila Staff member will set up the projector for you to use in the lodge and then you can lead your students through a fun packed trivia night! This activity can be any length you choose, most last for around one hour.

School-led Activity
Does your school have an Orkila Tradition or looking to start one? What about a fun game or something new and exciting for the students. Use this time to lead your school through any wild and fun idea you have. Orkila Staff can assist with set up.

School-led Dance
Have your students put on their craziest outfits and join the Camp Orkila staff as we lead your group in fun dances that get the whole group involved. Staff call the dances and use recorded music. Any size group can enjoy this activity. This is an activity that occurs in a covered space and is very active.

Orkila-led Astronomy Class
Orkila Staff will take your students on a journey through the stars. Using telescopes, star guides, and our large open fields students can explore the night skies and hear stories about humans’ connections and use of stars across different cultures and times.

Orkila-led Wreckage (Dodgeball)
Wreckage Ball is an Orkila staple! Orkila Staff will lead your school though many variations and twist on this classic camp game. This evening program is very active and can be adapted to different energy levels.

Orkila-led Life in the Forest (Late May and June)
Just like the class “Life in the Forest” is an advanced hide-and-seek game. Students role-play plants, herbivores, omnivores, and carnivores foraging for nutrition. After the game, there is a debriefing session to recognize and evaluate students’ animal-like strategies, their adaptations, and human impact in the food chain and forest.

**Orkila-led Avengers Academy**
Take your students on a quest throughout Camp Orkila as they seek to obtain the necessary skills needed to become a full-fledged Avenger. Throughout the program, students, teachers and Camp Orkila staff are all in character as groups work together to complete their adventure. This is a very active evening program.

**Orkila-led Night Watchers (March, April, Early May)**
The emphasis of this activity is for students to learn about nocturnal nature, to explore their own perception of darkness, to learn how senses are affected, and to take part in activities that have to do with all of these. This is a wonderful activity to get kids excited about exploring the night in a very fun and safe manner. Flashlights are not allowed in this activity.

**Orkila-led Color Competition**
Blue, Yellow, Green, Red! Students will start the Orkila Color Competition with team cheers, face paint, and coordinated clothing that represents their specific color-based teams. Your school’s teams will compete against each other to be the first to accomplish tasks at different stations. This is a high-energy evening program with obstacle courses, trivia, mind-teasers, and silly games. All teams will have opportunities to be challenged and opportunities to shine as students learn sportsmanship and friendly competition.

**Orkila-led Amazing Race**
Each cabin or study group will have less than an hour to race around camp completing different teamwork, physical and mental challenges to earn points for their group. Tougher challenges will earn them more points, while simpler problems will be faster to solve. When time’s up, the group that has the most points wins! Active participation from cabin leaders/chaperones is needed in order for all challenges to be run.