



W. Alton Jones

Welcome to Earth Camp!

Dear Parents and Campers,

The Earth Camp Counselors and staff at URI's W. Alton Jones Campus are looking forward to involving you in an unforgettable outdoor experience.

We would like to help you understand and prepare for your week at Earth Camp by answering some commonly asked questions. Please take a moment to review the material together.

It will help to ensure the best possible camp experience.

In making preparations please keep these things in mind:

- ❑ The Confirmation Form and balance are due by JUNE 1st.
- ❑ The Health History Form and Medical Exam Form must be completed and brought to Check-In.
- ❑ The Parent/Guardian Agreement must be completed and brought to Check-In.

We hope that this packet will answer some of your questions. If you require further information concerning Earth Camp or payment please call our office manager, Cheryl Conti, at 401-397-3304 ext. 6043.

Thank you for participating in this safe, educational, and fun summer opportunity. We look forward to seeing you at camp.

Sincerely,

W. Alton Jones Campus
Earth Camp Staff



In This Document:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- When Important Health History and Medical Exam Forms need to be filled out
- Emergency phone numbers
- Camper contact information
- *Countdown to Camp* Timeline—How to make sure you are ready for camp
- Suggested Packing List
- Directions to W. Alton Jones
- Some Thoughts on Homesickness

Frequently Asked Questions From Parents

What is the W. Alton Jones Campus?

The University of Rhode Island's unique 2,300-acre campus is devoted to preservation, research, educational conferences, and year-round environmental education. Over 40,000 acres of state parks and forests adjoin the Campus, making this one of the largest preserved regions in southern New England. Special features of the campus include Lake Eisenhower, the historical Woodvale Farm, a 1,000-acre Environmental Research Area, and the botanically unique Nettie Marie Jones Nature Preserve.

What is URI's Environmental Education Center?

Located on W. Alton Jones Campus, the Center serves as a year-round outdoor school for more than 10,000 students each year providing experiences with nature as the subject, classroom, and teacher. We strive to help children develop a familiarity with our natural surroundings and an active concern for the quality of the environment.

What happens at Earth Camp?

Earth Camp offers children an opportunity to learn about the environment and each other in a safe and beautiful setting. Your child will be involved in their chosen theme in addition to a variety of camp activities such as swimming, canoeing, campfires, story telling, songs, arts and crafts, and games.

How are group assignments made?

You will find out your cabin assignment at Check-In. Friends and siblings of the same sex and similar age may request to bunk together. Campers are assigned to small co-ed learning groups by age and theme within which they spend most of their daytime hours. Many evening programs involve campers in large group all-camp activities. Upon request, every effort is made to include one similarly aged friend in the same field group. To preserve the experience for others, groups of more than 3 friends are sometimes separated. If your child is coming with a friend or sibling and you have not yet made a cabin or field group request please call the office as it can be difficult to switch children around at check-in.

The Same

Frequently Asked Questions *Camper Style*

What is Alton Jones?

Alton Jones is a large piece of land with plenty of space to explore and learn about nature. The next-door neighbors are state parks and forests, making this place seem even bigger. While at camp you may get to see places like Lake Eisenhower, the Woodvale Farm, and the Nature Preserve.



What is the Environmental Education Center?

A place where thousands of kids come each year to learn and have fun outdoors. It gives you room to explore, make friends, and learn cool things. Our goal is to get kids like you excited about the world around us.



What do I get to do at Camp?

Lots! During most of the day you will spend time exploring the theme you have chosen. Plus, you get to do other camp activities like swimming, canoeing, campfires, singing, games, and arts and crafts.



What group am I in?

You will be in a field group with other kids who chose the same theme as you. You will spend most of your days with your field group. You will also have time to get to know your bunkmates. Activities at camp will provide great opportunities to make new friends.



More Questions (From Parents)

Who conducts the program?

Earth Camp Counselors, chosen for their ability, enthusiasm, and dedication to children and the environment, lead the Earth Camp program. They receive on-site training and are sensitive to the needs and interests of children. The staff is composed of college graduates and undergraduates from throughout the United States as well as international counselors and high school age Junior Counselors. All staff are excited about being at camp and exploring nature with children.

What are the accommodations like?

Our kitchen is staffed with professionals from URI Dining Services including our cook, who has been serving children at the Environmental Education Center for 20 years. The knotty pine dining lodge with fieldstone fireplaces, hardwood floors, and five meeting rooms provide a rustic, comfortable learning environment. Six year-round cabins have bunkbeds, showers, and lavatory facilities. Each cabin sleeps 16, plus a counselor and junior counselors. Campers attending Outdoor Skills will stay in platform tents at the Poor Farm Base Camp when not backpacking.

How are severe discipline issues handled?

Earth Camp offers active and positive learning experiences in a well-supervised atmosphere, but if a camper's behavior is unmanageable, is adversely affecting others, or if a child is engaging in activities that are potentially harmful to themselves or others, we will regretfully send the child home. No refunds will be given.

What if medical help is needed?

During camp there will be a Registered Nurse on site part-time every day and on-call 24 hours each day. Our nurse has been caring for campers and students at the Environmental Education Center for 15 years. An EMT will be on site and available to campers 24 hours each day. Kent County Hospital, in Warwick, R.I. serves the Center. All Earth Camp Counselors are trained in CPR and First Aid. Parents will be called if their child becomes sick to his/her stomach, gets an imbedded tick, runs a fever, or becomes ill or injured in any way that may require more than just basic treatment.

More Questions (Camper Style)

Who are my counselors?

We have some really cool counselors from all over the United States and around the world. This summer we will have counselors from the United Kingdom, Australia, and the Czech Republic. Whoever your counselor is you can be sure that they are excited to be at camp having a great time with you.



Where do I sleep and what's the food like?

Unless you are on a campout, you will be staying in one of the cabins (or screen houses for Outdoor Skills). The cabins have showers and flush toilets. We serve the same types of food that you might eat at home or in school. The meals are prepared by our cook, who has been at Alton Jones for 20 years. He knows what kids like to eat.



What happens if I get in trouble?

We expect that you will be on your best behavior while at camp, but if your behavior is inappropriate, steps will be taken to correct it. If your behavior affects other campers or could be harmful, we may send you home.



What if I get sick or hurt?

You will most likely make it through your week without any injuries or illnesses. But just in case, there is a nurse or nurse's assistant on duty 24 hours a day. Our nurse has been caring for kids at the Environmental Education Center for 15 years. Your counselor is trained in first aid and prepared to help you on the spot.

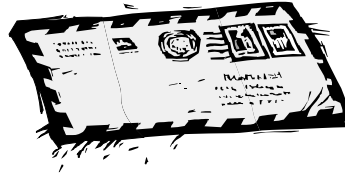
More Frequently Asked Questions



Is the camp accredited? The W. Alton Jones Camp is accredited by the American Camping Association, which requires us to uphold strict safety rules, regulations, and guidelines. All counselors are required to have first aid and CPR certifications and there is always a member of the medical staff available to handle special situations. We also adhere to the Principles of Operation set forth by the Rhode Island Association of Camps.

Can my child receive mail while at camp? Yes! You can send your camper mail during camp, ahead of time, or drop it off at check-in and the staff can distribute it throughout the week. The mailing address is:

Camper's Name
Session Number and Cabin (if known)
W. Alton Jones Campus
401 Victory Highway
West Greenwich, RI 02817-2158



Please allow plenty of time for delivery. Keep in mind that it may take 2 or more days for letters to reach your camper, even when mailed from nearby. So mail early, even before camp begins! Please refrain from sending food, candy, or electronic devices to your camper. While they might be fun they can be distracting and cause problems. You may also **email** your camper a brief message (no photos or attachments) at **altonjones@uri.edu**. These emails are printed out by the office staff and given to campers at their next cabin time. We do not have the ability to allow campers to send return emails. The best communications are upbeat and supportive (please refer to *Some Thoughts on Homesickness*).

What will happen at Check-In? Plan to spend about an hour for check-in and move-in. The majority of people check in during the 1st half-hour. If you would like to avoid the lines and you don't mind a bottom bunk, come between 2:30 and 3:00pm. When you arrive you will check in and receive your cabin assignment. Then you and your camper must visit the medical personnel. Have all medications and medical forms ready. If your camper has developed any communicable diseases, skin rashes, a fever, serious cuts or bruises, or sustains an injury please call during business hours the week before camp or you may be turned away at check-in. You may reach us during business hours at the numbers listed below.

Can I phone my camper? Calls to and from parents tend to make homesickness much worse or stimulate it in children who aren't experiencing it (please refer to *Some Thoughts on Homesickness*). You may call at any time to speak with the camp coordinator about how your son or daughter is doing. The coordinator may have to call you back after checking on them, but they will give you an honest appraisal of how they are getting along. If your child has persistent homesickness a call will be placed to you to let you know and seek advice. If you receive a letter from your child indicating that they are having difficulty, please call us so that we can address the issue and take steps to correct it. The following numbers are available; feel free to call at any time:

- (401) 397-3304 Ext. 6043, Main Office *Mon-Fri, 8:30am- 4:30pm (except holidays—July 4 & Aug. 8)*
- (401) 397-3304 Ext. 6045, Camp Office *Sun-Thurs, 8:00am- 9:30pm (People are in and out of the camp office so you may have to let it ring and/or call back.)*
- (401) 874-2121, URI Police, 24 hour emergency

How often will my child shower? Cabin counselors will have campers sign up for shower times at check-in and the schedule will be adhered to throughout the week. However, campers will not be forced to shower. To encourage showering among those who are self-conscious, campers may shower in their bathing suit.

What is the swim test? On Monday, the lifeguards review the rules and each camper finds a swimming "buddy". Campers who wish to swim in the deep end are given a swim test. The test consists of swimming one length of the swim area (about 75 feet) using a forward stroke, swimming a second length using any stroke (except dog paddle) and one minute treading water. Swim times last about an hour.

Is it possible that my child will get a tick? Frequent tick checks, groomed trails, and staff diligence greatly reduce the chances of a tick biting your child. You may also encourage the use of insect repellent. If your child does have an imbedded tick we will remove it and call you to let you know. At that time you may wish to consult with your family physician for further instructions. Additional information on ticks and tick-borne diseases is enclosed.

Countdown to Camp



As summer approaches, consult this list of things to do to ensure that you are ready for your Earth Camp experience. Customize the list with the dates that pertain to your session of camp.

DATE TO DO FOR CAMP

June 1st The Confirmation and Parent/Guardian Agreement Sheet with the remainder of your camp balance is due.

____/____ Arrange to have the Medical Exam Form completed. This may require a physical or simply having the doctor fill out the form.

1 week before camp Start to gather all the items on the packing list. Make sure to label important items.

____/____

Saturday before camp Double-check your packing list. Review the completed Health ____/____ History and Medical Exam Forms. Make sure everything is in order for check-in.

CAMP!!! Pack up and arrive at W. Alton Jones. Check-In is from 2 to 3pm. Parents and campers check in together. Have all of your completed forms and any medications (labeled) with you.

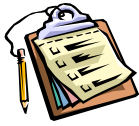
Sunday ____/____

Sunday – Friday WOW! An incredible camp experience in progress!

Friday Family Program begins at 2:00pm. Check-out follows immediately. Photo ID is required to sign out your camper. Please leave pets at home. Happy but tired camper falls asleep on drive home.

____/____





Packing List

Campers will spend the majority of their daytime hours outside in all types of weather. Don't pack things you do not want to get dirty! Light colored clothing is best. The following list should help you prepare for camp.

Clothing

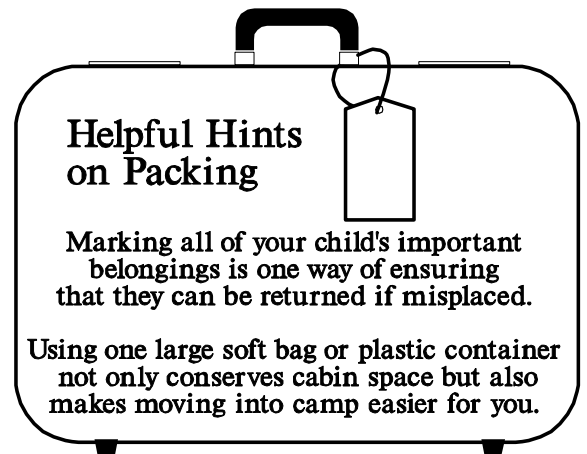
- Daily change of shirts, socks, underwear
- Extra socks
- Sweater or sweatshirt and light jacket
- Sleepwear
- 3 pairs of shorts
- 2 pairs of light pants
- 2 swimsuits (campers may shower with swimsuit on)
- 3 t-shirts or surfing shirts for swimming (tight fitting for sun protection—baggy shirts will not be allowed)
- 1 set of old clothes to get *really* dirty
- 1 waterproof rain jacket or poncho
- 1 50/50 plain white t-shirt to print on (except for Bay-Mania, Marine Madness and Outdoor Skills)
- 2 pairs of sneakers OR 1 pair of sneakers and 1 pair of all-purpose shoes (hiking boots, waterproof boots, etc.)
- 1 old pair of sneakers or watershoes for getting wet (Waterworlds, Marine Madness and Bay-Mania themes only)

Personal Items

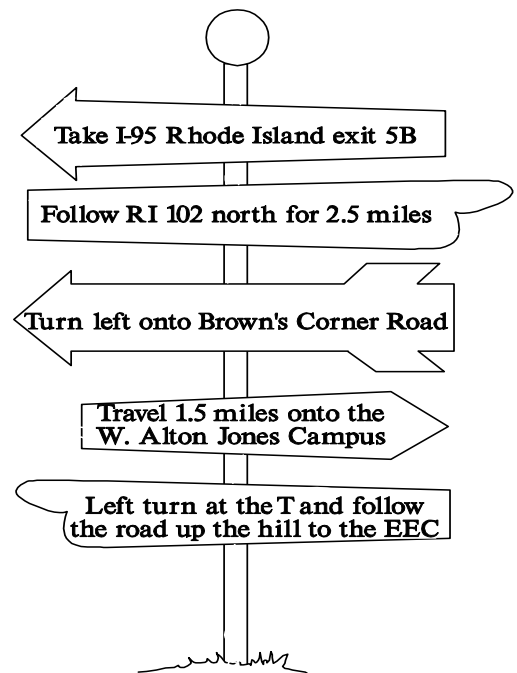
- Sleeping bag and 1 flat or fitted sheet
- Pillow and pillow case
- Toothpaste, toothbrush, and cup
- Soap in a container and shampoo
- Beach towel, bath towel, and wash cloth
- Insect repellent (stick or lotion please)
- Sun block (minimum SPF 15)
- Hat with visor
- Comb or brush
- Laundry bag/plastic bag for dirty clothes
- 2 Water bottles
- Stamped envelopes, stationary, and pen
- Flashlight with spare batteries
- Fanny pack (for carrying inhaler or epi-pen)
- Knapsack, daypack, or school-type backpack

Optional Items

- Camera with extra film
- Book or Journal for quiet time



How to Get to W. Alton Jones



ITEMS TO LEAVE AT HOME

Food, candy, gum, and soda.
baseball bats, knives, weapons, toy weapons, money, aerosol cans, electronic games, MP3 players, phones, and other electronic or battery operated devices.

SOME THOUGHTS ON HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is either a mild or severe form of anxiety, which can sometimes occur until a child becomes adjusted to the camp surroundings and social environment. It is a very real and natural emotion that can occur in anyone, child or adult, when they leave familiar people and places for a new adventure. Going away to camp is an experience in separation for parent and child. It is important that both are prepared for it before check-in day.

How can we help campers avoid homesickness?

Before Camp:

First time campers will benefit from having gone on other less threatening experiences away from home such as overnights with grandparents and friends or attending a day camp. Involving your child in as many decisions as possible about camp beforehand can also help. Pack the child's bags with familiar clothing and special mementos. A favorite stuffed animal can be very comforting, even for children who seem to be “beyond” that phase. It can provide a treasured reminder of home.

Talk to your child about the kinds of fun they will have exploring new camp activities and meeting new friends. Families should speak openly about the possibility of homesickness. Discuss what camp will be like well before your child leaves home and discuss any concerns. Don't tell children up front that you will “rescue” them if they don't like camp right away. Most homesickness fades away as the child becomes comfortable with their surroundings. Also, for some children overcoming homesickness can be a milestone in their development.

One suggestion is to send an encouraging letter that will be waiting for them when they arrive at camp. Camp Fire Boys and Girls conducted a study which concluded that a written message letting kids know they're important, loved, and appreciated can make a lasting impact on their lives. Letters should not include any bad news or stories about what the family is doing that may leave the child feeling left out. Also, don't dwell on how much you, the pet, or siblings miss them. We don't want campers to forget about home, we just don't want them to dwell on home to the exclusion of their current camp experience.

On Check-in Day:

Check-in day can be the most exciting yet most difficult for both parents and children. On check-in day, try not to dwell on the subject of homesickness prior to your arrival at camp. Direct your child towards thinking of the positive things they will be involved in during their stay. After checking in help them move their gear into their cabin and assist them in organizing their space, meeting their cabin leaders and a few other cabin mates. Try not to linger too long. Once they are settled, it is time to say goodbye. Give words of encouragement, say your good-byes, and leave them to their experience. Some children will jump enthusiastically into the fray. Some will ease in slowly. Some will attempt to make you feel guilty for “abandoning” them. It is all normal behavior. Soon they will be engaged in exciting activities.

During Camp:

Once the camp program is underway, we try to keep campers so busy that they will have little time to reflect on homesickness. Most child psychologists agree that telephone calls to or from home make homesickness much worse or stimulate it in children who are not experiencing homesickness. Because of this, we do not allow campers to call home except in cases of severe, persistent homesickness. Our approach is to get them involved and engaged as much as possible in what is happening around them. However, you may call at any time to speak with the camp coordinator and staff about how your son or daughter is doing. The staff may have to call you back after checking on them, but they will give you an honest appraisal of how they are getting along.

According to the experts, children overcome homesickness and adjust to camp within a day or two in the vast majority of cases. At camp, children learn to problem-solve, make social adjustments to new and different people, learn responsibility, and gain new skills to increase their self-esteem. The goal of camp is to provide a safe, fun, and educational experience for children, while assisting their positive growth and development. It would be unfortunate to have a child miss out on developing these life skills because of an early bout of homesickness. With support and encouragement, most children adjust very quickly to their new camp environment.

TICKS AND YOUR CHILD

Blacklegged ticks, also known as deer ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*), which can carry Lyme Disease as well as the less common Human Granulocytotropic Anaplasmosis (HGA) and Babesiosis, are prevalent in Rhode Island. Disease carrying ticks have been found in 43 states and are common in many parts of the Northeast. Caution is appropriate for anyone spending time in the outdoors. Here are answers to some commonly asked questions about ticks.

What is the likelihood of my child getting a tick-borne disease at Alton Jones? It is unlikely that your child will get a tick-borne disease from attending a program at the URI W. Alton Jones Campus. We work diligently to minimize risks and provide maximum protection for each child who attends our programs. We feel it is important to keep parents informed so that if a child displays symptoms, a prompt diagnosis can be made and proper treatment can be given.

What measures are taken to prevent tick bites? While the risk of getting a tick-borne illness at W. Alton Jones is low, we take a proactive approach. We teach children to be aware of ticks and methods of tick-bite prevention. We talk to them about ticks at their first orientation meeting. We teach them how to check themselves for ticks and frequently remind them to do so. We work to keep our trails trimmed back and we make every effort to avoid high-tick areas.

What if a tick bites my child? In the event that an embedded tick is found on a child, a trained staff member will promptly remove the tick. It is possible for an infected tick to be embedded for up to 48 hours before transmitting a disease. Prompt tick removal will reduce the likelihood of disease transmission. We call the parents of any child who is bitten by a tick so that they can help monitor the child for symptoms once they are home.

What are the symptoms of tick-borne diseases? We encourage all parents and children to become familiar with the symptoms since a tick bite can go undetected. If any symptoms occur, contact your doctor and tell them that your child may have been exposed to ticks. Many symptoms are flu-like while tick-borne diseases are most likely to occur outside of the normal flu season.

- **Lyme Disease:** Early symptoms generally appear within a week and include an expanding (often but not always bulls-eye shaped) skin rash that can be, but is not always, near the bite site. The rash occurs in 60% to 80% of all cases, appears 3 days to 1 month after the bite, and confirms a diagnosis of Lyme Disease. Also watch for chills, fever, headache, stiff neck, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, dizziness and aching joints and muscles. Another possible symptom is swelling and pain in the joints, especially the knees. These symptoms may not seem serious enough to warrant initial concern. Lyme Disease is the most common tick-borne disease and is treatable with antibiotics.
- **Human Granulocytotropic Anaplasmosis (HGA):** Symptoms include fever, headache, malaise, chills, sweating, muscle aches, nausea and vomiting. Symptoms may be severe and it is sometimes initially misdiagnosed as meningitis. This disease is rare but has been increasing in recent years. It is treatable with tetracycline derivative drugs (used with caution since some drugs will permanently stain children's teeth).
- **Babesiosis:** Symptoms are generally mild or go unnoticed and may require no treatment but can be severe in rare cases. Symptoms occur within 1 to 4 weeks and include a gradual onset of malaise, loss of appetite, and fatigue followed within a week or so by fever, drenching sweats, shaking chills, nausea, vomiting, headache, muscle pain, weakness, and depression. This disease is extremely rare particularly in children, however people with impaired immune systems or those who have had their spleen removed are at risk of severe and possibly fatal reactions.

What can parents do to help prevent tick bites? Insect repellents can be sprayed on clothing or skin to help prevent tick bites. Be sure that the label says it is effective against ticks and that it contains 30% or less of the chemical DEET since that is the maximum concentration currently recommended for children. Permethrin is highly effective against ticks but can only be applied to clothing. (Find pre-treated clothing at www.insectshield.com). Light colored clothing helps in locating ticks. Keeping ticks off children and removing them before they bite or transmit a disease are key to prevention.

Assist us in tick bite prevention by helping your son or daughter thoroughly check themselves for ticks as soon as they return home. Remove any embedded ticks with tweezers. Launder dirty clothing promptly and dry at high temperatures. Know and watch for symptoms of tick-borne diseases.

Please call 401-397-3304 ext. 6043 if you have further questions or if your child contracts a tick-borne disease and you believe it was from attending a program at Alton Jones (we try to keep track of cases). We welcome your comments.