Aquatic Science Adventure Camps
Summer 2016 Information

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About the camps

Adventure camp
This is a 6-day resident camp with sessions available for age groups 9-11, 11-13, and 13-15. Campers learn about water resources and have opportunities to enjoy nature in the beautiful Central Texas Hill Country. The camp features a variety of educational and recreational activities. Educational activities include field collecting of aquatic organisms from ponds, streams and a flowing artesian well; microscope labs; water chemistry (measuring pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity) and viewing aquatic wildlife and spring systems from a glass-bottom boat. Other activities include cave tour, climbing wall, swimming, river rafting, and an introductory scuba lesson.

Mini camp
The mini camp is a two-day camp that emphasizes scientific discovery and hands-on learning. Campers will participate in a variety of educational activities including microscopy, water chemistry, collection and identification of aquatic invertebrates, and a glass-bottom boat tour over the crystal clear waters of Spring Lake. Campers will also have the opportunity to partake in a scuba lesson. Camp sessions run from 8-5 each day, participants should bring a sack lunch, overnight accommodations are not provided. Sessions available for children ages 9-15.

Camp sessions

Mini Camp I - ages 9-11
June 6-7

Mini Camp II - ages 9-11
June 9-10

Mini Camp III - ages 11-13
July 18-19

Mini Camp IV - ages 13-15
July 21-22

Adventure Camp I - ages 9-11
June 12-17

Adventure Camp II - ages 9-11
June 19-24

Adventure Camp III - ages 11-13
June 26-July 1

Adventure Camp IV - ages 11-13
July 3-8

Adventure Camp V - ages 13-15
July 10-15

Camp tuition pricing

Adventure Camp - $700

Mini Camp - $150

All camp sessions are limited to 24 campers per session
Camp goals for the Aquatic Science Adventure Camps:

1. Participants will gain self-confidence and appreciation of their own self-worth as unique individuals.

2. Participants will develop curiosity and critical thinking about the natural world.

3. Participants will obtain a greater appreciation and personal stewardship of the environment.

4. Camp staff will foster an atmosphere of fun, excitement, and camaraderie.

5. Camp activities will showcase and promote the educational, natural, and recreational assets of Texas State University and the San Marcos area.

Freeman Aquatic Biology Building (FAB)

Most of the scientific discovery sessions will be held at the Freeman Aquatic Biology Building on the main Texas State University campus. FAB was built specifically to be a center for cutting-edge aquatic biology research. The grounds surrounding FAB feature a spring-fed creek, an artesian well, numerous ponds, and is located directly across the street from the headwaters of the San Marcos River and Spring Lake. FAB is home to the EARDC offices and many active research laboratories. Campers will have access to high-quality equipment and facilities to investigate the natural world around them.

Texas State University Residence Halls

The residence halls at Texas State are air-conditioned and feature common rooms with a TV and pool tables, laundry rooms, vending machines, and a full kitchen. The rooms are equipped with 2 twin beds, desks, and chairs. Most also have a chest of drawers and a closet. Rooms are double occupancy with a shared hall bathroom. Boys and girls are separated by floor or wing depending on the hall layout. Teachers and staff will be assigned a private room on the same floor as the campers.
Camp safety

We take safety very seriously and all activities will be facilitated by experienced and appropriately licensed staff with certifications in First-Aid and AED/CPR. All swimming/aquatic activities are supervised by certified lifeguards. Campers are under counselor supervision at all times. Our staff have all been background and reference checked and are required by the State of Texas to take the Safe Camps child abuse prevention training.

Camp Staff

We pride ourselves in our awesome staff! We hire science teachers from around the state to come and work with our campers. Alongside our teachers, we also have fun and energetic counselors and activity facilitators that are there to help your child have the best, safest, and most educational camp experience possible. Our staff to camper ratio is one staff for every 5-6 campers.

General Camp Information

1. **CLOTHING** - Central Texas summers are hot and humid, so warm weather clothing will be appropriate for most occasions. Casual clothes and sportswear, such as shorts, “athletic fit” swim suits, cut–offs, tennis shoes, water shoes and sandals w/back strap are recommended. For all field trips old or inexpensive tennis shoes or water shoes are essential. There will be many water activities and wearing shoes or quality strap-on sandals (Chacos, Tevas, Keens, etc.) for tubing, rafting, sampling, etc., is much easier and safer on the feet. Flip–flops are fine for wearing around camp or to the showers but are not sufficient for outdoor activities. Several of the activities require extensive walking, so a good pair of rubber-sole walking shoes or light hiking boots is essential. A hat is recommended for outdoor activities. A sports strap to secure eyeglasses is strongly recommended to prevent their loss in the water while tubing or rafting. A sweatshirt or sweater is recommended for air–conditioned buildings (which can sometimes be quite chilly in the mornings!). You can never tell when it will rain during the summer so rainwear (such as a disposable poncho) may come in handy.
2. **SWIM TEST** - Each participant will be required to take a simple swim test upon arrival. **Due to the nature of the camp the ability to swim well and tread water is essential.** Campers who are poor swimmers will be required to wear a life jacket at during any swimming activities, or be required to sit out the activity, depending on the nature of the activity. The swim test consists of being able to swim 30 yards in a flowing river without stopping or touching the bottom and be able to tread water for 1 minute. It is required that all campers wear life jackets during the raft trip. Lifeguards will administer the swim test and be present for all swimming activities.

3. **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** - Although the level of physical activity at the camp is not excessively challenging for a healthy child, several of the camp activities do require a considerable amount of walking. We suggest that students who are enrolled in the camp be accustomed to at least a moderate level of physical activity.

4. **MEALS** - Tentative meal times are:
   - Breakfast: 8:00 - 9:00
   - Lunch: 12:00 - 1:00
   - Dinner: 6:00 - 7:00
Most meals will be served in the on-campus dining halls. Dining hall meals are buffet-style and feature a variety of healthy and delicious food. Picnic meals will consist of sandwiches, tacos, or other similar meals. We take food safety very seriously so please let us know if your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

5. **LINENS and LAUNDRY** - Linen services are not provided, however the dorms do have laundry rooms that are available for campers to use. Campers need to bring linens (twin size), pillow, blanket, bath towels and a swimming towel. Campers are asked to bring enough clothes for a full week. A sleeping bag may be used instead of linens if desired. Campers may also want to bring ear plugs if they are light sleepers.

6. **SPENDING MONEY** - Campers should bring enough spending money for snacks, souvenirs and occasional recreational activity (no more than $75 should be enough). Campers are expected to be responsible for keeping their own spending money while at the camp. **It is encouraged that each student bring a small lockable box (which should not be left out in plain sight) to store money.**
7. **FORMS** - Each camper must bring all completed consent and release forms and medical history form (these can be sent ahead of time, but may be turned in at check-in). Campers should also sign and return the camper behavior contract included in the registration packet.

8. **MAIL SERVICE** - Send mail to: (Camper’s Name), c/o Aquatic Sciences Adventure Camp, Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center, Texas State University, 601 University Dr., San Marcos, Texas 78666-4684. Campers who wish to send mail should give it to the camp director to be mailed. Note: Mail sent to all university departments is first routed through Texas State University Mail Services. All packages sent through United Parcel Service or Federal Express are delivered to Texas State University Central Receiving before being delivered to EARDC. Please allow extra time (2-3 days) for delivery, even if requesting next day delivery.

9. **TELEPHONE SERVICE** – Although we discourage cell phone use, campers will be allowed to make calls using their own cellular phone during the evenings. Campers will not be allowed to carry cell phones with them during the day. All camp staff carry cell phones at all times in case of emergency. An emergency number will be provided to you at camp check-in. For non-emergencies, call the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center front office at (512) 245-2329 to leave messages. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Texas State University Police Department number is (512) 245-2805.

10. **PERSONAL ITEMS** - Campers should bring soap and shampoo, hangers, beach towel and an alarm clock. **BRING OLD SHOES FOR THE RIVERS, PLENTY OF SUN SCREEN AND A HAT!**

11. **OPTIONAL ITEMS** - Campers might want to bring such items as an inexpensive camera, frisbee, board games, playing cards, puzzles or word games (for leisure time). Campers may bring cell phones, but this is not encouraged as cell phones can be a distracting and disruptive influence. Campers will not be allowed to carry cell phones with them during the day, they must be left at the dorm. Campers are responsible for their own cell phones. Equipment for all scheduled activities will be provided for each participant. Bringing expensive electronic equipment, iPods, digital cameras or other valuables/collectibles is strongly discouraged due to potential for loss, theft or damage.

12. **PROHIBITED ITEMS** - Spark-producing, flame-producing, or loud noise-producing devices, water guns, water balloons, personal TV sets, videos/DVDs, DVD players, musical instruments, skateboards, roller-blades, etc. are not permitted at the camp.

13. **SUPERVISION** - Campers will be closely supervised at all times by the camp directors, teachers and counselors. The teachers and counselors will live in the dorms with the campers, and will help supervise recreational activities and evening activities. Teachers and counselors will be assigned a separate room.
14. **SCHEDULE** - The general daily schedule will include classroom and field activities in the morning. Recreational activities will fill the afternoon and evening hours. Minor schedule changes may be necessary due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

15. **PARTICIPATION IN CAMP ACTIVITIES** – Campers will be expected to participate in all camp activities. Although it may be possible to opt out of swimming and/or scuba activities by sitting out at poolside, we are not able to provide alternate activities for campers who do not desire to participate in tubing, river rafting or cave tours. The ropes challenge course/rock climbing wall is adjusted by the facilitator to cater to each individual’s comfort level. No camper will be required to participate beyond their comfort level.

16. **DISCIPLINE** - Campers are expected to follow campus rules and regulations, to respect university property and facilities and to respect the persons, dignity and property of other campers. Parents/guardians will be billed for any damages caused by their children. Campers will be expected to participate in all scheduled class and recreational activities and to conform to acceptable rules of conduct. Failure to do so may result in the camper being expelled from the camp.

17. **CANCELLATIONS/REFUNDS** - There is a mandatory $100.00 cancellation fee ($50 for the 2-day sessions) if cancellation is made at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the session. Otherwise, the entire deposit is forfeited. Once the camp session has started, partial refunds may be given only in the event of illness or injury. Refunds will not be given in the event a camper is withdrawn due to homesickness, discipline or other reasons. EARDC reserves the right to cancel any session which does not have a minimum of fifteen (15) participants registered two weeks before the session start date.

18. **ARRIVALS** – Adventure Camp check-in is Sunday afternoon from 2-3pm at a residence hall on the main Texas State campus. Those arriving by car should take I-35 and exit at the off ramps marked “Texas State University” (from San Antonio) or “Aquarena Springs Drive” (from Austin). Maps and driving directions will be provided upon registration. Please contact EARDC if you have not received this information at least two weeks before your camp session starts.

19. **DEPARTURES** – Adventure Camp pick up is Friday from 4-5:30 p.m. at the residence hall. Campers must be picked up by 5:30. We are aware of the traffic nightmare that often exists on I35 so please allow extra time for traffic and if you are running late for pick up please call us as soon as possible so arrangements can be made for a later pick up!

20. **CLEANING/DAMAGE FEES** – Campers will be responsible for ensuring their room and surrounding area are clean upon check-out of the dorm. A cleaning fee will be charged to campers if their assigned areas are not properly cleaned at check-out. Any damage caused by campers to University facilities including dorms, classrooms, equipment, or vehicles will be charged to campers. Any lost keys will be charged to campers (fee $40).
1. **What kinds of science activities will my camper be doing at the camp?**
The camps are designed to introduce campers to the amazing world of aquatic science through a holistic, inquiry-based learning environment. We strive to make sure the entire camp is an educational experience and even our fun and games are designed to get campers to think scientifically. Campers are encouraged to ask questions and given tools to investigate those questions for themselves. Campers participate in hands-on learning activities in the lab and in the field facilitated by knowledgeable staff that are either active research scientists or teachers. Activities include sampling for aquatic invertebrates and plankton, a water chemistry lab, a cave tour to demonstrate how caves are formed, a glass bottom boat tour over Spring Lake, a snorkel scavenger hunt, stargazing, and much more!

2. **Can I come visit my camper during the sessions?**
We encourage parents to contact their camper with letters, emails, or care packages. We do not encourage phone calls and we do not allow visits during camp. We have found this disrupts the camp experience and can exacerbate homesickness issues. We are fully aware of our responsibility to care for your child and we take that very seriously.

3. **What kind of luggage should my camper bring?**
We recommend that your camper bring either a suitcase or a small trunk to keep their belongings in at camp. We encourage each camper to bring only one piece of luggage plus a small backpack or knapsack for day outings in order to ensure that the bunk rooms do not get overcrowded. We also suggest that you give your camper a plastic garbage bag in order to keep dirty clothes in.

4. **What hospitals or medical facilities are nearby?**
All of our staff are trained in first aid and CPR and are equipped to treat minor cuts and bruises. In the case that a camper requires medical attention, he/she will be taken to the Texas State University Student Health Center (SHC) for treatment if it is a minor injury or illness. In case of a more serious issue, he/she will be taken to the Central Texas Medical Center (CTMC) emergency room. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately by phone call in the event of any emergency involving their camper.

5. **What if my child isn’t a good swimmer?**
*Due to the nature of the camp, the ability to swim and tread water is essential.* See item 2 under General Camp Information for more details.
6. **Is there financial aid available for the camp?**

   There are a limited number of scholarships available for campers who meet the criteria for the scholarship. Please contact us for more information.

7. **What if my camper gets homesick?**

   Homesickness is most common in our younger aged campers, but can happen to anyone, especially if this is the first time they have been away from home for this long. We do our best to comfort and redirect their attention towards engaging in the camp activities and it usually fades within the first day or two. If your camper contacts you asking for an early pickup, please talk to our camp director first and we will provide you with a first-hand report of how your camper is doing and help you to make a decision in the best interest of your camper.

8. **Who should I contact about specific camp questions?**

   Please contact Aaron Swink, Assistant Director for Education at 512-245-3541 or aquaticscamp@txstate.edu

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Get ready for a summer filled with fun, learning and adventure!