

A person is seen from behind, walking away on a narrow dirt path through a dense forest. They are carrying a green and yellow canoe on their back. The path is flanked by thick green undergrowth, including large-leafed plants. Tall evergreen trees line the path, with sunlight filtering through the canopy. The overall scene is a lush, green forest setting.

CAMP CHIPPEWA

Precamp Staff Guide
2026

The Adventure Begins

Welcome to Camp Chippewa's 91st Summer, The Year of the Woodsman! We are beyond excited to welcome you to your home for the summer. The Northwoods are full of adventure, and this guide is all about helping you feel ready for what lies ahead.

Your job this summer: Be there for your campers. Our job this summer: Be there for you. We're ready to welcome you with open arms to your summer home! Please read each section of this guide carefully and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions along the way!

Table of Contents

Dates & Contacts | 3

The Camp Program | 4

Staff Portal | 5

Forms & Resources | 6

Payroll | 8

Packing | 9

Travel | 10

Healthcare & Medications | 11

Communication | 12

Staff Packing List | 14

Canadian Gear List | 18

Dates & Contacts

2026 Staff Dates		
Session	Start Date	End Date
Precamp Forms Due	<i>Date of hire</i>	April 30
Wilderness First Aid*	June 1 @ 17:00	June 3
Lifeguard Training	June 3 @ 17:00	June 7
Staff Training	June 7 @ 17:00	June 17
First Session	June 17	July 13
Second Session	July 15	August 10
Staff Depart	August 11 @ 12:00	<i>See you in Summer 2027</i>

*By invitation only

Contact Us			
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Camp Office			
Main	Fax	September - May	June - August
+1 (218) 335-8807 office@campchippewa.com	763-575-8117 <i>When was the last time you sent or received a fax?</i>	7359 Niagara Ln N Maple Grove, MN 55311	22767 Cap Endres Rd SE Cass Lake, MN 56633

The Camp Program

Camp Activities

Camp Chippewa offers a wide variety of activities in athletics, waterfront sports, wilderness skills, shooting sports, and large group activities. Part of your training will be learning how we teach our activities and how to keep campers safe. Check out our [website](#) for more details on each activity we offer.

Camping is a risky business! Healthy risk helps people grow, and the kind of risk we offer is carefully balanced with supervision and instruction from qualified staff—you! As we said, your job this summer is to be there for your campers, and that means for everything from swimming or shooting archery to making beds or reading aloud each night.

Wilderness Trips

Trips are designed to be both fun and challenging. Nothing builds character, resilience, and self-confidence like [wilderness canoe trips](#). Rain, wind, cold weather, muddy trails, and mosquitos are some of the best teachers. Their lesson? Building grit to overcome life's many hardships. Many Chippewa alums nurture a love for the outdoors for the rest of their lives. They look back at their trips with Chippewa as some of their richest memories, memories that are often forged in the most challenging and rugged of circumstances.

All campers and counselors at Camp Chippewa go overnight camping. Campers in elementary or middle school go on trips ranging from 1-4 nights. Campers in high school go on trips ranging from 6-20 nights. Trip leaders for our longer wilderness trips are selected based on backcountry experience and wilderness medicine certifications.

We provide campers and counselors with a paddle and PFD, and we provide every trip with canoes, tents, packs, food, cooking equipment, and first aid kits. Part of your training will be learning canoeing and backcountry skills so you are not only comfortable in the wilderness, but you can help your campers grow to enjoy camping as well.

Staff Portal

Use CampInTouch (CIT) in your browser or Companion on your phone for your online connection to camp forms and resources. When you completed your staff application, you created a CIT/Companion account. The great news is they use the same email and password, so you only have to remember one! Log in to [CIT here](#), and download the Companion app through the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

CIT and Companion are home to all your camp forms and resources. The resource documents are there with all the info you need to come to camp feeling prepared. The forms are where we need a little more information from you to make sure we've got everything we need to give you the best summer experience possible.

Some forms can be completed entirely within CIT or Companion. Hooray for convenience! Other forms need to be downloaded, printed, completed by hand, and then uploaded using Companion. It's a little extra work, but technology hasn't quite been able to replace good old fashioned pen and paper.

Please remember that all forms are due on April 30.

Forms & Resources

[Canadian Gear Buyers Guide \(resource\)](#): If you're not too sure on the pros and cons of a synthetic fill versus down sleeping bag, or you maybe can't recall the best kind of footwear for extended wilderness canoe trips, then this guide is for you. Almost every question about gear is answered, and you'll walk into your local store with confidence.

[Counselor Job Description \(resource\)](#): The essential functions of a camp counselor. Give it a read and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

[Health History \(online form\)](#): We take our camp community's health and safety seriously, and having complete and accurate medical information is the essential first step. This form can be described as somewhere between comprehensive and downright beefy. It saves information year to year, so please double check that everything in there is up to date and matches what your medical provider puts on your *Physical Exam* form. Pro tip: Save after completing each page.

[MVR Disclosure \(resource\)](#): If you are a US citizen and will be 21 or older at some point this coming summer, you will be asked to drive camp vehicles. As such, we need your drivers license information to perform a motor vehicle report through our insurance. This disclosure explains the MVR process. Road trip!

[Precamp Staff Guide \(resource\)](#): You're reading it right now! Thank you! I do a small dance of joy each time you find the answer you're looking for in here!

[Staff Authorization \(paper form\)](#): This form gives our medical staff permission to treat any minor injury or illness within their scope of practice. We need legible copies of your health insurance card and prescription insurance card, if you have them, in case you have to go to a clinic in town for further care.

[Staff Contract \(online form\)](#): The agreement between you and us for the upcoming summer. Your contract has important dates, conditions, requirements, and your compensation for the summer. Slap on a signature!

[Staff Manual \(resource\)](#): In here you'll learn about our mission, vision, and values; a brief history of camp; and Camp Chippewa policies and procedures. Long story short, it's a manual. For staff.

[Staff Physical Exam \(paper form\)](#): Please have your medical provider complete this form at your next visit (or based on a recent visit done no more than 18 months before you arrive at camp this summer). It is crucial that the medications listed on this form match what is entered in your online *Health History* form.

[Staff Travel Form \(online form\)](#): How are you getting to camp? Car, plane, hitchhiking (yes, it's been done before)? Check out the Travel section on page 10 to see how we can help you get to camp.

***Non-US citizens:** You may be required to obtain a Canadian visitor visa alongside your passport to enter Canada. The Canadian visitor visa process can be months long, and it may require submitting certain biometrics, such as fingerprints. Visit the [Canadian government website](#) to see exactly what is required for your camper to enter Canada. Not all staff go to Canada, so please ask us if you should look into getting a Canadian visitor visa.

Payroll

We use the company Gusto to handle our payroll. Gusto operates entirely online, so you can complete all your payroll paperwork from either their [website](#) or the Gusto app. Download that guy from either the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Gusto will collect information from you in order to complete four forms: the I-9, W-4, W-4MN, and direct deposit authorization. If you have questions about how to complete these forms through Gusto, a trusted adult or financial advisor are your best options. If these forms are not completed correctly, your payroll and tax withholding may be impacted.

We will submit payroll on the first business day after staff depart from camp at the end of the summer. Any purchases from the Camp Store will be deducted from your salary (yes, staff do get a discount from the Camp Store).

US Staff

We require all US staff to use direct deposit. You may request up to \$200 of your bonus in sweet, sweet cash at the end of the summer.

International Staff

We recommend all international staff get paid via pay card and NOT cash, check, or direct deposit. There have been more than a few folks who mistakenly thought they could cash an American check once they got home.

If you already have a social security number, please complete the W-4 and W-4MN through Gusto by April 30.

You can complete your I-9 at camp after entering the US on your visa. If it's your first summer working with us, you will apply for a social security number sometime during staff training. Once your social security card gets mailed to camp—usually in early July—you can complete your W-4 and W-4MN.

Packing

Please follow the Staff Packing List on page 14. It has been tested and tuned for over 90 years, and it will serve you well. Extra items are both tough to fit in your luggage and make storing everything in your cabin somewhere between a real challenge and downright impossible.

Pro tip: Pack in one or two soft-sided duffel bags and one backpack. Suitcases and trunks are quite difficult to store in the cabins during the summer.

We provide weekly laundry service (not all camps do), and your clothes will be washed with your campers'. The company we go through doesn't provide any special handling options, so please only bring clothing that can go through a standard wash/dry cycle.

Please double check that every single item you pack from socks to sunscreen is labeled with your name. It's our dream to have an empty Lost & Found at the end of the summer. Unlabeled and unclaimed items in the Lost & Found get donated to local thrift stores at the end of the summer. Believe it or not, we don't want to keep your socks.

Feel free to bring some personal electronics to camp. Camp is technology-free for the campers, so everything must be kept in the Staff Retreat. We have a TV and a wide range of DVDs (does anyone use DVDs anymore?), and many staff have brought gaming consoles to use during time off. Internet connectivity will be discussed in greater detail in the Communication section on page 12.

Travel

Travel to camp is your responsibility. We provide assistance in certain areas, but it is ultimately your job to get yourself to camp. Depending on which training you are participating in, you'll need to get to camp on a certain day. Refer to the Dates & Contacts section on Page 3.

Car

The best way to get to camp by far is to drive. Whether it's a solo road trip or you drive with another counselor, having a car at camp is incredibly convenient. We will also give counselors a \$100 travel stipend to drive their car to camp.

Plane

If driving is not an option, then you'll need to fly to either the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) or the Bemidji Regional Airport (BJI). If you fly into or out of BJI, we can pick you up or drop you off at any time.

If you fly to MSP, we provide a shuttle service up to camp at specific times. It is your job to make sure your flight lands in time to get to the shuttle before it departs. **The shuttle leaves MSP at 13:00 on June 3 and June 7.** We recommend booking a flight that lands at MSP no later than 12:00 if you land on the same day that the shuttle leaves.

If your flight gets in a day or two early, feel free to find a hotel, hostel, or airbnb in the area and tour the Twin Cities.

If you plan on flying out of MSP at the end of the summer, we offer shuttle service from camp to MSP on August 11. **The shuttle leaves camp at 12:00 on August 11.** We recommend booking a flight that leaves no earlier than 18:00 that day.

Bus

If cars or planes aren't your thing, there are a few public transit options that go through Cass Lake and Bemidji. Just let us know when you'll be arriving, and we can come pick you up at any time!

Healthcare & Medications

The health and safety of our campers and staff are very important to us. Every day at camp offers lots of outdoor physical activity, three nutritious meals, and a good night's sleep. Our kitchen cooks whole-food, balanced, and delicious meals from scratch. There are no freezer meals at Camp Chippewa!

Please list all allergies and medical dietary restrictions, such as lactose-intolerance or celiac disease, on the online *Health History* form. There is also a section to list any dietary preferences. We will do our best to accommodate you and will reach out if your preferences are beyond the capacities of our kitchen.

Healthcare

We have medical staff who live onsite in our health center throughout the summer. Our job is to do our best to prevent injuries and illnesses during the summer so they can enjoy their time in the Northwoods and be available for any true emergency.

In the event of serious injury or illness, the Bemidji Hospital/ER is 25 minutes away. If you become injured or ill to the point where our medical staff cannot treat you, you'll have to to Bemidji for treatment.

Back on the topic of prevention, we advise all campers and staff be immunized in accordance with CDC and Minnesota Department of Health recommendations. If you will not be up to date with tetanus specifically, we require an immunization waiver be signed because of how much time we spend outside. Please help keep our community safe by arriving to camp healthy!

Medications

In accordance with American Camp Association guidelines, we cannot keep any meds in the cabin. We advise either keeping your meds in the Staff Retreat to be taken as needed during your time off, or to keep them in the health center with our medical staff. If you take meds daily, our medical staff will bring them to the Dining Hall during meals and before bedtime. Camp is not the place to explore changing your meds.

Communication

Camp is an amazing place to unplug from technology and really live life in the present. We encourage you to experience the summer fully engaged with your campers and coworkers.

Mail

When was the last time you wrote a letter? Staff have found writing letters to family, friends, and partners to be incredibly rewarding. Plus you get to receive mail after lunch just like your campers. We highly recommend sharing your summer mailing address to anyone who may want to send you a letter. Your mailing address is:

[Your Name]

Camp Chippewa for Boys
22767 Cap Endres Rd SE
Cass Lake, MN 56633

Internet

We are doing our best to get reliable internet brought into camp. At the moment, the company laying fiber is not quite there. We provide internet via mobile hotspot to staff for work/school purposes in the Camp Office during time off. We also provide internet via mobile hotspot to international staff for voice calls home (no video calls, please) in the Camp Office during time off.

Phone service around camp is about as hit-or-miss as it gets. Verizon has the best service at camp, and we recommend using them if possible. Other providers have incredibly inconsistent service. Please plan on using your own cell phone data plan for browsing the internet and communicating with family and friends.

Social Media

We regret to inform you that vlogging the entirety of your summer or putting together the greatest reel of your life won't be an option while at camp. The amount of time we spend

away from our phones while working makes staying continuously connected to social media an impossibility.

Before camp, please look through your posts and make sure they are positive, professional, and wouldn't be a cause of embarrassment for yourself. Delete posts that are not positive and professional. Campers and parents will search for your profile, and you'd be surprised how far down they will scroll.

Our biggest recommendation is to switch all of your social media accounts from public to private for the summer.

Staff Packing List

Clothing

The absolute best protection against rain, sun, heat, cold, and bugs—The Great Outdoors. Here are the clothes you should have for an excellent summer.

- ❑ **Undershorts (12)** - We want to avoid running out before laundry gets back.
- ❑ **Socks (12 pairs)** - We recommend crew length to deter those ankle-biting insects.
- ❑ **T-shirts (8)** - Camp is a great place to wear out old shirts.
- ❑ **Long sleeve shirts (2)** - Long sleeves are perfect for chilly mornings/evenings, and they help keep the bugs off.
- ❑ **Pants (3)** - Jeans, sweats, and lightweight joggers are a winning combination.
- ❑ **Shorts (3)** - Athletic shorts with pockets for tennis.
- ❑ **Sweatshirt (1)** - For cold mornings or general lounging.
- ❑ **Jacket (1)** - Go for a warm top layer like a windbreaker or a fleece pullover.
- ❑ **Trainers/court shoes (1 pair)** - Good for running and various sports.
- ❑ **Sandals (1 pair)** - We've found that sandals that fully attach to the foot—Crocs, Chacos, Teepas, Keens, etc.—work better than flip flops.
- ❑ **Canoe shoes (1 pair)** - What shoes do people wear for canoeing? Sturdy for walking through the woods. Breathable and quick-drying for when they get wet. An old pair of running shoes is a perfect place to start. We do not recommend waterproof boots.
- ❑ **Swimsuits (2)** - We get in the water at least once a day at camp.
- ❑ **Rain jacket (1)** - Waterproof and big enough to fit over a PFD while canoeing.
- ❑ **Rain pants (1)** - Paddling in the rain can be fun! And it's even better when wearing waterproof pants
- ❑ **Hats (2)** - A cap for sports and a beanie for cold mornings.
- ❑ **Pajamas (2 pairs)** - Or whichever sleepwear you fancy.

FYI: T-shirts, shorts, sweatshirts, and hats can be purchased at the Camp Store.

Linens

Nothing beats getting into bed at the end of a long, fun day at camp. Staff sleep on twin mattresses. The following linens will make sure you stay warm, dry, and comfortable.

- ❑ **Fitted sheets (2)** - One is ready to go when the other goes in on laundry day.
- ❑ **Flat sheets (2)** - Ditto.
- ❑ **Pillow cases (2)** - Ditto (again?).
- ❑ **Pillow (1)** - Pillows are a commonly forgotten item; don't let it happen to you.
- ❑ **Blankets (3)** - Relatively lightweight for ease of packing. Wool or fleece are best.
- ❑ **Towels (3)** - Go for a thinner fabric so they dry faster. Plush bath towels are a mistake.
- ❑ **Laundry bag (1)** - It helps with wrangling all that dirty laundry into one place.

FYI: We provide international staff with fitted sheets, flat sheets, pillow cases, a pillow, blankets, and towels upon request.

Toiletries

Only the essentials. You might have a forty-minute skin care routine at home, but camp is all about maximizing time outside with your campers and coworkers. Here's what we've found every staff member needs to stay clean and healthy.

- ❑ **Toiletry bag (1)** - A shower caddy may work as well, but a toiletry bag packs down nicer when taken on a canoe trip.
- ❑ **Toothbrush (1)** - Camp Chippewa is proud to support the cause in eliminating gingivitis.
- ❑ **Toothpaste (1)** - It's hard to brush your teeth well without it.
- ❑ **Floss (1)** - Have you ever lied to your dentist about how much you floss? Here's your chance to start up (or continue) this healthy habit.
- ❑ **Deodorant (1)** - Thank you.
- ❑ **Nail clippers (1)** - We love to wrestle in the water during free swim, and short nails are required for entry.
- ❑ **Biodegradable soap (1)** - We do our best to keep our lakes clean and clear, and the following brands are easier on the aquatic ecosystem: Dr. Bronner's, CampSuds, WilderWash.

- ❑ **Sunscreen (1)** - Maximize your skin health. Lotion works best. SPF 30+
- ❑ **Lip balm (1)** - We encourage sharing at camp, but this is something you should have for yourself. SPF 15+
- ❑ **Bug repellent (1)** - The best bug repellent is long sleeves, pants, and socks, but a bug repellent lotion is another option.

FYI: Select toiletries can be purchased at the Camp Store.

Miscellaneous

A few extra items to make sure you have everything you need.

- ❑ **Sleeping bag (1)** - Get a mummy-shaped bag rated between 25 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit that packs down to about the size of a toaster oven or smaller, and don't forget the stuff sack! Our favorite brands are REI, Big Agnes, Marmot, Mountain Hardwear, NEMO, Sea to Summit, and The North Face.
- ❑ **Headlamp (1)** - LEDs are best, and don't forget spare batteries.
- ❑ **Water bottle (1)** - At least 1 liter in size. We recommend the tried and true Nalgene.
- ❑ **Good books (2-4)** - Depending on how fast you read, you may need to bring extra.
- ❑ **Backpack (1)** - It's best to have this be your carry-on if you are flying to camp, and no need for a fancy pack, a school backpack is fine.
- ❑ **Wrist watch (1)** - We keep a pretty tight schedule at camp, and this will help make sure you and your campers are where you need to be when you need to be there. No smart watches, an analog or digital is what you want.
- ❑ **Passport** - And all other documents necessary to complete Form I-9 and cross the US/ Canada border. US citizens may cross into Canada with a government photo ID and an original birth certificate.

FYI: Flashlights, batteries, and water bottles can be purchased at the Camp Store.

Optional

The following items are nice to bring if you are already into these activities. Please don't feel the need to purchase any of these things for the summer.

- ❑ **Fishing rod and small tackle box (1)** - Buck Lake is full of pan fish, and a patient angler can even land a rare northern pike.
- ❑ **Water shoes (1 pair)** - A little foot protection from rocks and shells goes a long way.
- ❑ **Swim goggles (1)** - Sometimes it's nice to see underwater.
- ❑ **Tennis racquet and balls** - If you play at home, you will love hitting on Bear Paw tennis court.
- ❑ **Baseball and glove (1)** - The Ivy Bowl boasts a handful of fine sporting events throughout the summer, and softball is a camp-favorite.
- ❑ **Camera (1)** - Don't forget a spare battery if it's digital.
- ❑ **Combination lock (1)** - The Staff Retreat has a small set of lockers for your personal items.
- ❑ **Fun clothes** - We have a semi-formal awards ceremony and banquet at the end of each session. We also do themed large group activities. If you have some fun costumes, they will be a hit at camp.

Canadian Gear List

Below are items needed if you are leading a wilderness expedition to Canada. In general, returning staff with backcountry experience lead these trips, so go ahead and skip this section if you will be new to Chippewa or don't have much backcountry guiding experience. Items marked with an asterisk are already on the Staff Packing List. Don't double up, but please make sure they meet specifications listed here.

- ❑ **Sleeping bag (*)** - Please make sure it is rated to at least 35F and has a good compression/stuff sack. Bulky bags are a nightmare to pack.
- ❑ **Sleeping pad (1)** - A good sleeping pad makes a huge difference in the backcountry. Go for one suited for backpacking; the other ones don't pack down small enough.
- ❑ **Rain gear (*)** - Make sure it is indeed waterproof and large enough to be worn over a PFD while canoeing.
- ❑ **Canoe shoes (*)** - Feet will get wet on the trail, and having shoes with good traction and that dry quickly are what's important. We don't recommend waterproof boots because of how long they take to dry after getting wet. Go for old running shoes!
- ❑ **Campsite shoes (*)** - Old trainers or sandals are perfect.
- ❑ **Wool socks (2-4 pairs)** - Cotton is the enemy in the backcountry. Please make sure your trail socks are made of wool. *Guiding 9th grade: 2 pairs; 10th-11th grade: 3 pairs; 12th grade: 4 pairs.*
- ❑ **Undershorts (2-4)** - Do not fall for the skullduggerous allure of cotton! Go for a polyester spandex blend. *Guiding 9th grade: 2; 10th-11th grade: 3; 12th grade: 4.*
- ❑ **Trip shirts (1-3)** - Long sleeves are a must for sun and bug protection. Try to find a lightweight, quick-drying material. NO COTTON. *Guiding 9th grade: 1; 10th-11th grade: 2; 12th grade: 3.*
- ❑ **Trip pants (1-3)** - Which material would you guess we recommend avoiding? It's denim. And cotton. Try to find a lightweight, quick-drying material. *Guiding 9th grade: 1; 10th-11th grade: 2; 12th grade: 3.*
- ❑ **Jacket (*)** - A fleece or puffy are a welcome layer on cold mornings. We've had more than one trip wake up with frost on the ground.
- ❑ **Sun hat (1)** - One that covers the entire face and neck helps prevent sunburns.

- ❑ **Sunglasses (1)** - Sunglasses sink! Pro tip: A safety strap will keep them high and dry.
- ❑ **Bug net (1)** - Either a head net or a full jacket. *Head net for sale in the Camp Store.*
- ❑ **Pack towel (1)** - Towel specific for camping that is super lightweight and packs down to the size of a small envelope.
- ❑ **Base layer, beanie, gloves (1)** - These are only if you are leading a trip to Hudson Bay. Synthetic gloves tend to work best when paddling. Avoid cotton like the plague. *Beanies for sale in the Camp Store.*
- ❑ **Journal (1)** - Memories fade over time, but a trip journal will allow you to look back on some of the greatest adventures of your life. *For sale in the Camp Store.*

Optional

The following items are nice to have on extended wilderness trips. None of them are absolutely required, and we will note which ones are recommended more than others.

- ❑ **Pack pillow (1)** - Find one suitable for backpacking. Full-size pillows just won't fit in a portage pack. A jacket rolled up in a stuff sack is a dandy substitute.
- ❑ **Dry bags (1-3)** - These are amazing for keeping gear dry and organized. We highly recommend one around 35 liters in size and another around 20 liters. A 100-150 liter bag will line an entire portage pack. *Required if guiding 12th grade.*
- ❑ **Day pack (*)** - This can be a school backpack or one specific to backpacking or water sports. Canoe partners share a pack and use it to store sunscreen, cameras, bug nets, fishing tackle, and rain gear.
- ❑ **Tent (1)** - Only bring a tent if you already have one or will be camping for many years to come. We use 2-3 person tents suitable for backpacking.
- ❑ **Fishing rod and small tackle box (*)** - Canada boasts some of the best fishing in North America. A spin casting reel, 2-piece rod, and tackle box full of jigs and tails are all you need to catch heaps of walleye and pike. *Tackle for sale in the Camp Store.*
- ❑ **Compass (1)** - Backcountry navigation is an invaluable skill. *For sale in the Camp Store.*
- ❑ **Camera (1)** - Photos from these trips are some of our alumni's most precious possessions. A small, digital, and waterproof camera with extra batteries will be the best investment your ever make.
- ❑ **Playing cards (1 deck)** - A layover day is the perfect setting for a Hearts tournament. *For sale in the Camp Store.*