



## Plan & Organize Your NatureBridge Program

For assistance, please contact: Jim Serfass, Operations Manager, 570-439-1795, [jserfass@naturebridge.org](mailto:jserfass@naturebridge.org)

Required Forms	Date Due to NatureBridge
Final Numbers (aka 90-day Numbers)	90 days prior to program start
Planning Questionnaire	3 weeks prior to program start
Learning Group Lists (with medical & dietary info)	3 weeks prior to program start
Lodging Assignments	3 weeks prior to program start
Participant Registration Forms	Paper Forms Upon arrival

### Getting Started

**Review this checklist:** identify the steps you need to take in order to make your program happen. All of the paperwork referenced can be found at [naturebridge.org/princewilliamprep](http://naturebridge.org/princewilliamprep).

**Initial interest meeting:** Arrange a meeting with students, parents, and faculty to present the benefits of a residential environmental science program. Print the Packing List, Student Expectations and Participant Registration Form for each family. Ask parents to come to the meeting with a portion of the payment for the trip. A financial commitment will help determine an accurate participant count. Items to address in the initial meeting:

Consider using the [NatureBridge Informational PowerPoint](#)

- Introduce the program: a unique, hands-on, residential, science-based learning adventure that will incorporate the lessons your students learn in the classroom into an outdoor education experience.
- Identify program benefits: an opportunity to study in the field with Prince William Forest Park as a classroom. Interdisciplinary curriculum focuses on inquiry-based science and cooperative learning.
- Discuss the costs, fundraising ideas and preferred method of payment: You may choose to propose an installment plan for families unable to pay in one lump sum. Collect a deposit from parents that evening.

**New to our program?** Located within 50 miles of our campus? Schedule a Parent Meeting with NatureBridge staff at your school. Contact our Operations Manager for information.

**Reserve transportation:** methods most commonly used include carpooling, school buses, and charter service. Unsure about arrival and departure times? Contact the Operations Manager for more information.

Look over the **Planning Questionnaire** and identify the educational outcomes for your program. Information about our Areas of Study can be found on the Prince William Forest School & Group Environmental Science page.



**Integrate Prince William Forest Park into your curriculum:** incorporate your upcoming experience into teaching goals and objectives for the year.

**Develop a fundraising plan:** visit the [Fundraising Ideas page](#) on our website.

**Scholarship Application:** submit a scholarship application as soon as possible in order to maximize the potential funds for your group. NatureBridge has scholarship funds available to offset costs for qualifying schools. It is possible to submit this application with your best estimate. If your participant numbers increase or decrease, the scholarship award may change accordingly. The application can be found at [naturebridge.org/princewilliamprep](http://naturebridge.org/princewilliamprep).

## Preparing for your Program

**Prepare your students:**

- Academic readiness. Present your NatureBridge program as an academic experience. Prepare students to engage in scientific inquiry and other hands on learning opportunities.
- Physical readiness. Ensure that students and chaperones can walk 2-5 miles a day (on varied and sometimes steep terrain).
- Participation and behavior expectations. Emphasize cooperation and universal respect. Present and review the required Student Expectations.
- Personal readiness. Stress to parents and students the importance of strictly adhering to the NatureBridge Packing List so students are safe, comfortable and prepared to learn in the field.
- If a student has shown any symptoms of gastrointestinal illness within 48 hours of the start of their NatureBridge program, we suggest that you do not bring them on the program.

**Participant Registration Form:** Students and adults must have a completed and signed Registration Form to participate in a NatureBridge program! Registration forms should be sent at least three months in advance of the program.

**Select chaperones carefully.** Refer to the *Guidelines for Selecting Chaperones* document.

**Execute fundraising plan:** emphasize group cooperation in the fundraising efforts. Successful collaboration on your fundraising plan increases student, parent and community investment in the program's success.

## Three Months in Advance

**Final numbers (90-day numbers) due:** You should receive an invoice you can use to confirm or update your final participation numbers. The invoice will show the confirmation due date.

- What does this due date mean?
  - At that date, we lock in your participant numbers with our food and lodging vendors, as well as complete our staffing assignments. We hold groups to a guaranteed minimum participant number past this point, which is calculated as 95% of the participant number you give us by August 15th.
  - For example: You confirm your final participant count as 100 participants (adults and students combined) by August 15th. Your guaranteed minimum is now 95 total



participants. If only 93 can come on the program, you'll still pay for 95.

- If at any time you need to increase your student or adult numbers, you must ask us if we have the staffing and cabin capacity. Our ability to accommodate increases is very limited. Please consider this when deciding on your Final Participant Number.

## Two Months in Advance

**Schedule a 60-day phone meeting with NatureBridge's Operations Manager.** You should receive a phone call invite.

**Program information:** Send parents to the Prince William Forest School & Group Environmental Science page and begin collecting registration forms (this can be done earlier as well).

**Parent Meeting:** Organize a parent meeting to distribute and/or collect paperwork and answer any questions.

**Finalize transportation:** double-check your transportation times, dates and locations both to and from NatureBridge.

**Chaperone training:** We recommend the school's group coordinator facilitate a chaperone training before arriving on site. Training should include:

- An outline of the role of the teachers, chaperones and NatureBridge staff during the program.
- The school's and NatureBridge's expectations of adults on the trip. Refer to the [Chaperone Overview](#), [Chaperone Responsibilities & Expectations](#), & [Guidelines for Selecting Chaperones](#).
- The school's academic, social and personal goals for students.
- Program logistics from arrival through departure.
- Sample discipline scenarios and how to handle them.
- Double check that all chaperones have completed their Participant Registration forms (Teachers, too!).

## One Month in Advance

**Submit final payment.** Send balance due to NatureBridge, 28 Geary Street, Suite 650, San Francisco, CA 94108 at least 30 days prior to your start date.

## Three Weeks in Advance

**Planning Questionnaire due.** Please submit via the online form.

**Lodging assignments and learning group lists with dietary, medical and behavioral alerts due.** Please accurately list the dietary and medical needs of your students and chaperones. Your number of Learning Groups are subject to change based on participant number decreases. If you are unsure how many learning groups you will have, please contact the Operations Manager. Increases in participant numbers cannot be guaranteed and are based on staff and lodging availability.

## Two Weeks in Advance

**Two-week Pre-Arrival Phone Call:** schedule a phone call with our Operations Manager to finalize the details of your trip.



## Arrival Day

**Travel logistics:** make sure each driver has a map, [clear printed directions](#), and important phone numbers.

**Travel Communication:** clearly communicate accurate information about planned stops along the way.

**Student preparedness:** confirm that each student has the necessities for the trip, including lunch for the first day, medication and that rain gear is easily accessible. *Daypacks should be packed separately from personal overnight gear so it is ready to take on the trail after luggage is dropped in dorm rooms.*

**If you are running late, please call the Operations Manager:** Jim Serfass, 703-634-9041 or 570-439-1795, [jserfass@naturebridge.org](mailto:jserfass@naturebridge.org). This will help us be prepared to welcome you.

**Upon arrival:** NatureBridge staff will greet you and provide directions for unloading luggage and moving into cabins. Your group will also participate in a required outdoor orientation at this time.

**Check in:** The Attending Coordinator will check the group in with a NatureBridge staff member. During check-in, you will:

- Hand in Participant Registration forms
- Confirm all Participant Registration Forms are accounted for.
- Confirm final student and chaperone/adult numbers.
- Finalize learning group lists and lodging assignments to ensure they are 100% accurate.

**Evening Program:** After dinner your group will attend an evening program. Afterwards your chaperones will be responsible for helping students settle into their cabins. Quiet hours and lights out begins at 9:30pm.