



# Camp Widjiwagan Summer Information Guide

**Please Note: This guide does not reflect programmatic updates in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Check the [COVID 19 Adaptations](#) page on our website for up to date information.**

[www.widji.org](http://www.widji.org)

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Phone numbers:  
612-822-CAMP  
218-365-2117

**WIDJIWAGAN**  

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**YMCA WILDERNESS ADVENTURES**

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# GREETINGS FROM WIDJIWAGAN!

We are very excited that your camper (or you) will be joining us this summer at Widjiwagan! At Widjiwagan, our Mission is "to develop in young people, respect for self, community and the environment through wilderness travel and environmental education." Our mission is reflected in the meaningful, challenging and sometimes downright silly memories that our groups make while traveling in the wilderness.

This booklet is your guide to a summer of adventure and fun! Please read this booklet thoroughly and keep it as a reference. It will explain transportation to and from camp, what to bring, what to expect and much more. We also explain the forms that are **important** for you to return so we can provide every camper with the best possible experience.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions that you aren't able to answer by reading this guide. We know preparing for camp is a large undertaking and we hope to facilitate that process as much as we can. Thank you for choosing YMCA Camp Widjiwagan for summer adventure!!

Happy Trails,  
Camp Widjiwagan

**[www.widji.org](http://www.widji.org)**

## **New Camper Orientation**

New campers and their families are invited to join the Widjiwagan Administration at one of our New Camper Orientation Sessions. This is a great opportunity for new campers and families to ask all of the questions that they might have and to meet their fellow campers.

**Visit**

**[https://www.ymcamn.org/camps/camp\\_widjiwagan/summer\\_camp/new\\_camper\\_orientations](https://www.ymcamn.org/camps/camp_widjiwagan/summer_camp/new_camper_orientations) for scheduling information about upcoming New Camper Orientations.**

**JOIN US!!**

**KEEP THIS BOOK HANDY UNTIL YOUR  
CAMPER RETURNS FROM CAMP!**

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# Code of the Community

## Parents/Guardians & Campers: Please read this together

Widji's mission is to develop in young people respect for self, others, equipment, and the environment. **We expect that all members of the Widji community will behave maturely, responsibly, inclusively, and respect the rights and dignity of others.**

All actions at Widji will reflect the YMCA Four Core Values: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.

### Examples of Behavior that you agree to not engage in as a Widji Camper

- Using abusive or vulgar language, name-calling or shouting at others in anger;
- Physical contact with another person in an angry or threatening way;
- Any demonstration of sexual activity or sexual contact that impacts others;
- Exclusive relationships;
- Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body language or any other menacing behavior;
- Theft or behavior which results in the destruction of property or the natural environment;
- Carrying, concealing or using devices or objects as weapons (We make an exception for standard camping knives that have blades less than three inches long and fillet knives. These need to be used a respectful and appropriate manner or they will be confiscated);
- Using or possessing illegal chemicals, alcohol or tobacco including nicotine gum, vapes and e-cigarettes on YMCA property and throughout the experience;
- And engaging in intentionally risky behavior that endangers the wellbeing of self or others.

### Bullying Policy

At YMCA Camp Widjiwagan, bullying is inexcusable, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying. Each camper is expected to treat all other campers with respect, and to help each other achieve the best possible experience. Failure to meet Widji's standards of respectful behavior may result in communication with Parents/Guardians for assistance and potentially the dismissal of the camper.

Our leadership addresses all incidents of bullying. We train all camp staff to identify bullying and to promote honest communication between themselves and campers. Our goal is to work together as a team to ensure that campers gain self-confidence, make new friends and go home with fond memories of their camp experience.

### Behavior Expectations

**YMCA Camp Widjiwagan reserves the right to dismiss any camper who does not follow respectful behavior expectations as outlined above. In the event that a camper is dismissed, there will be no refund of session fees and the parent or guardian of the camper will be held responsible for the camper's early transportation home from camp.**

Our staff works as hard as possible to help campers with homesickness or other behavioral issues. We do not issue refunds for campers that leave early due to those reasons.

## Preparing for Camp

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### What to expect

At Camp Widjiwagan, we delight in telling our campers that we have one rule and that is “respect!” As soon as campers arrive at Widjiwagan, they are invited to the steps in front of our dining hall where they learn more about this rule and its four component parts: “respect for self, others, the environment and Widji property.” We view all of the wonderful parts of camp, the fun, the memories and the friendships as products of groups who successfully practice this rule! All campers can expect to be treated with respect, listened to and valued within our community.

Widji campers can expect to get away from civilization! At Widji, most of a camper’s time will be spent away from Camp on a wilderness trip, canoeing or backpacking daily to new campsites, portaging (carrying canoes from lake to lake), sleeping in tents, and cooking meals with their trail group.

Campers can expect to spend the first few days of their session (2 or 3 depending on your session length) and the last night of their session at Widji proper. While staying at Widji, campers sleep in log cabins that are rustic in the true Northwoods fashion. They are situated along the beautiful shores of Burntside Lake. Each cabin has an affiliated outdoor toilet, or Biffy, that is equipped with a cold water sink for hand washing. Our own Finnish sauna offers an occasional evening treat and chance to clean up. Campers have the opportunity to take a shower and a sauna before heading home at the end of their session.

Campers can expect to learn a lot and be challenged! Widji counselors will teach and review how to paddle a canoe, how to carry a backpack and the other necessary wilderness skills. Widji trips can be physically strenuous at times. Working hard to get in shape and build strength before coming to Widji will help campers enjoy each activity that much more. Walking at a solid pace, going for a run and playing group sports are all great ways to get in shape for Widji.

A Widji trip is an adventure! Expect fun days, rainy days, sunny days, easy days, hard portages or mountain passes, bugs, gorgeous sunsets, and just about everything else imaginable. A positive attitude and lots of enthusiasm are the best things you can bring to camp!

This is **your experience!** Campers can expect to learn a lot and make memories that will last a lifetime as they work with their group and counselor to plan and execute all aspects of their wilderness experience. Campers will help plan the route and the menu, and share in the paddling or hiking, cooking, campsite responsibilities and FUN!

### Program Accessibility

Please let the YMCA know if you or your camper has a disability requiring accommodation. This information enables the YMCA to better meet your needs or those of your camper, within available resources and to the extent reasonable.

### Forms

We want to get to know each camper **before** they arrive at Camp Widjiwagan. It is important that we have a good understanding of every camper’s needs, strengths, desires, and expectations so we can better provide a fantastic Widji experience!

Below is an explanation of each of the forms that we need you to complete prior to the camper’s session. As you complete each form, try to include as much pertinent information as possible.

<b>All forms are due by May 15</b>
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## Forms required for every participant

### Contact Information & Agreement Form

This form should be **read and signed** by both camper and parent/guardian.

### Physical Examination Form

Per ACA regulations, each camper must have a physical examination within **12 months** of arrival at camp. If your camper has had a physical within this timeframe, it is not necessary to have another physical, **but you must have the licensed physician sign the form.**

## Additional Forms

### Camper Questionnaire

This form provides us with insight into the camper's interests, skills and desires. This information also assists us in making group assignments and planning the camper's experience.

### Passports

Campers traveling to Canada\* will be required to have a passport. These campers **MUST** send a copy of their passport to the office with their other required paperwork **and** bring to the original to camp with them. This will help ensure that all campers have the appropriate documentation. Once at camp, passports will be collected by the counselor and kept secure until campers go on trail. When on trail, passports will be kept with the counselor in the First Aid Kit.

**\* Campers participating in Quetico, Explorer Canoe, Advanced Explorer Canoe, Voyageur and Advanced Explorer Backpack will be crossing the Canadian Border MUST have a valid passport in order to participate.**

### Out-of-State Transportation Form

If you are coming from outside of the Twin Cities area and are unable to make housing arrangements, Widji staff can meet you and arrange housing accommodations for a fee. *Please complete and mail this form as soon as possible, but no later than May 15.* For further information, please refer to the "Out-of-State Transportation" section in this booklet.

## Payments

- Payments are due in installments on February 15, March 15, April 15 and May 15.
- If you register your camper after one or more of the installment deadlines, you will be charged the deposit for your trip as well as the amount due for all installments to date.
- Credit Cards – Your camp fee may be put on your VISA, Discover, MasterCard or American Express by phone or mail.
- There is a \$25 service charge for all returned checks and credit card payments.
- If your child earned part of his or her fee by selling products through one of the other YMCA of the Twin Cities branches, please indicate this with the name of the Branch and amount credited (not sold) when you return the payment card and payment.
- Any changes made to session dates or type of session will require a \$25 service fee.

**All fees are due by May 15**

## Cancellations

Cancellation and Refund Policy:

1. Cancellations must be in writing
2. Cancellations submitted before May 15 - Widji will refund all fees except the registration deposit
3. Cancellations submitted after May 15 - all fees are non-refundable.\*  
\*Exceptions may be made in the case of documented illness, injury or family emergency and for campers who opt to withdraw because they do not feel that their scholarship award does not meet their financial needs.

## Scholarships

Scholarships are available for qualified campers and can be applied for by following these steps.

1) Review Widjiwagan's Scholarship page:

[https://www.ymcamn.org/camps/camp\\_widjiwagan/about/scholarships](https://www.ymcamn.org/camps/camp_widjiwagan/about/scholarships) . This page contains a link to the YMCA Scholarship Application and information on volunteer credit opportunities.

2) Complete the Initial YMCA Scholarship Application online or by paper form:

<https://www.ymcamn.org/scholarships> . The initial application considers your annual income and the number of adults and dependents in your household. Scholarships are awarded to align with your individual circumstances. This initial application applies to all YMCA programming including Camps. You will receive an email notification from the YMCA Customer Service Center indicating the initial scholarship amount available to you.

3) If the initial scholarship award does not meet your family needs, we encourage you to reply to that email with a request for an "exception" and indicate Camp Widjiwagan as your program of interest. You will receive a follow up email asking for a narrative that explains your need for additional assistance. You will be asked to answer the following questions:

- Are there any additional circumstances that we should be aware of and take into consideration? Please include unusual expenses or debts that affect your monthly budget as well as any financial changes that may have happened over the last two years.
- If applicable; please have your camper share why they want to attend camp this summer.

Widjiwagan's Camper Services Committee will receive and review these requests in an anonymous format and consider additional scholarship awards. Please note, committee review can take up to 14 business days. You will be notified of the outcome via email. We recognize that Widji trips stretch the financial resources of many families. The Widji Administrative Team and Board raise funds annually to ensure that these experiences are accessible. We encourage enthusiastic, committed campers to register and apply for a scholarship. The majority of families who apply for a scholarship receive some assistance.

## What to Bring

Don't forget to bring your sense of adventure as you head to Widjiwagan! This is your opportunity to experience a different way of life – enthusiasm and excitement are the key ingredients for success. Separate **printable packing lists** for pathfinders, backpackers and canoers are available at [www.widji.org](http://www.widji.org) under the "forms and publications" tab. These lists will explain, in detail, what to pack for your Widji adventure. If you have questions, please give us a call at 612-822-CAMP or 218-365-2117. We would be happy to help! You may find many of the items on the "What to Bring" list in your own closet. However, if you have difficulty finding things, we have listed some stores below that may be helpful.

Store	Website	Twin Cities Location?
Dick's Sporting Goods	<a href="http://www.dickssportinggoods.com">www.dickssportinggoods.com</a>	Yes
Hoigaards	<a href="http://www.hoigaards.com">www.hoigaards.com</a>	Yes
Joe's Sporting Goods	<a href="http://www.ioessportinggoods.com">www.ioessportinggoods.com</a>	Yes
Midwest Mountaineering	<a href="http://www.midwestmtn.com">www.midwestmtn.com</a>	Yes
Nokomis Shoe Shop	<a href="http://www.nokomisshoes.com">www.nokomisshoes.com</a>	Yes



REI	<a href="http://www.rei.com">www.rei.com</a>	Yes
Mills Fleet Farm	<a href="http://www.fleetfarm.com">www.fleetfarm.com</a>	Yes
Cabela's	<a href="http://www.cabelas.com">www.cabelas.com</a>	Yes
Repair Lair	<a href="http://www.repairlair.com">www.repairlair.com</a>	Yes
Campmor	<a href="http://www.campmor.com">www.campmor.com</a>	No
Sierra Trading Post	<a href="http://www.sierratradingpost.com">www.sierratradingpost.com</a>	Yes
Backcountry	<a href="http://www.backcountry.com">www.backcountry.com</a>	No

## What NOT to Bring

- Anything prohibited by the code of conduct including but not limited to: alcohol, tobacco, vape pens and illegal drugs.
- We encourage campers to leave all electronics at home. If an electronic device is brought to Camp, it will be collected along with your camper's other valuables and kept in the office until the end of their Camp session.
- Please do not bring a knife with a blade longer than three inches. Large knives are unnecessary for a Widji trip and a hazard. Exceptions are made for fillet knives brought by campers who plan to fish on their Widji trip.
- Finally, do not bring candy or pop to camp. They create an attraction for Northwoods critters! Any food brought to Camp will be collected along with your camper's valuables and stored in the office until the end of their Camp session.

## Transportation to and from Camp

### Getting to Camp Using Widjiwagan Transportation

A coach style chartered bus and/or van(s) leaves from Lakewood Hills Park. Located at 2110 Orchard Lane in White Bear Lake on the opening day of each camp session according to the schedule below. The bus returns campers to the White Bear Area YMCA on closing day of the session. The bus stops in Cloquet for the convenience of campers living in that area.

**Directions to the Lakewood Hills Park behind the White Bear Area YMCA:** From I-694 go North onto White Bear Avenue. Continue down White Bear Avenue for ¼ mile. Turn Right onto Orchard Lane. Past the YMCA and take a right into Lakewood Hills Park. The Bus Coordinator will be at each arriving and departing bus and can be reached at: **651-245-2332**.

Please make reservations to ride the bus to camp. If you did not reserve a bus or van seat on the registration card and you plan to use our transportation, please call the camp office immediately and let us know. Any change to transportation selections made at least one month prior to the start of the session will be made for no additional charge, space permitting. Transportation change requests received less than one month prior to the start of the session are charged a \$10 change fee. Any change requests must be made at least one week prior to the start of the session.

#### White Bear Lake Stop

Round trip: \$140

To or from Camp one way: \$70

#### Cloquet Stop

Round trip: \$90

To or from Camp one way: \$45

### Bus Drop-off and Pick-up

At the drop-off location, campers are greeted by Widji staff. Each camper is checked in by a staff member as they get on the bus. This same process occurs at any stop that is made on the way up to camp. Campers returning from camp at the end of their session are met at the bus by their parents/guardians. A Widjiwagan staff member will remain at the pick-up location until all campers

have been picked up. It is imperative that parents/guardians arrive at the pick-up location on time, as the Widjiwagan staff need to proceed to the airport to drop off out-of-state campers. Safety procedures for both bus and van travel are reviewed by the driver, staff, and campers prior to departure on all trips.

## Bus Departure and Arrival Times

### To Widji from White Bear Lake YMCA

07:45am – Load  
08:00am – Depart  
10:15am – Arby’s Restaurant, Cloquet Bus Stop  
01:30pm – Arrive at Widjiwagan

### From Widji to White Bear Lake YMCA

09:00am – Depart Camp  
11:15am – Arby’s Restaurant, Cloquet Bus Stop  
02:30pm – Arrive at White Bear Lake YMCA

## Lunch on the Bus

Buses traveling to and from the Twin Cities will stop for lunch. Campers should plan to either purchase or pack a lunch as lunch is not provided. \$10 will be enough to cover the cost of lunch for those who wish to purchase.

## Out-of-State Transportation and Housing

Many campers come to Widji from outside of the Minneapolis/Saint Paul metropolitan area. Most are able to arrange their own housing in the Twin Cities and transportation to the Widji bus. When this is not possible, Widji will provide transportation and housing for campers en route to or from Camp for an additional fee. To request this service, please complete the enclosed “Out-of-State Transportation and Housing” form and send to the Widji office by May 15.

### Fees for this service

Transportation from airport before session, one-night housing and meals and bus ride to camp - \$185  
Transportation from camp to airport, including bus ride, after session only - \$115

### Logistical considerations

- We ask that campers arriving from out of state who plan to be transported by Widji staff **arrive between 2:00 and 7:00 p.m.** the day before their session begins.
- Please make return trip reservations for no earlier than **5:30 p.m.** on the last day of the camp session.
- In the rare event that you are unable to schedule your return trip for that day, we may be able to accommodate an extra night of housing and meals for an additional \$185 (this would also include the cost of the bus ride to the cities). This is not always possible. Please contact us if you are unable to schedule your camper’s return trip on the last day of their camp session.
- If there is a last minute change in travel plans, **PLEASE** call the Widji Administrative Office ASAP at 612-822-CAMP, Monday – Friday. If you do not reach anyone at the Administrative Office, then contact camp directly at 218-365-2117 or the Bus Coordinator at 651-245-2332.

\*In case of bus breakdown or roadside emergency, Widjiwagan campers and staff will be instructed by the Northfield Lines bus driver to follow the protocols set by Northfield Lines vehicle breakdowns. Northfield lines will determine if a replacement bus is necessary and will make the appropriate arrangements to unload/load campers and staff in a safe manner and area. The Widjiwagan bus staff will contact camp and notify administration of the situation. Widjiwagan will contact parent/guardians to inform them of the situation and plan to continue with the transportation to or from camp.

## Getting to Camp by Automobile

You may also drop off and/or pick up your camper. If you are bringing your camper to Camp, please plan to arrive between 12:30pm and 1:30 pm. *Lunch is not provided on the day that campers arrive.* There are many great eating establishments in Ely for those looking to eat near Widji before dropping their campers off at camp.

If you are picking up your camper, please arrive at camp between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. on the morning their session ends. Staff will not be available to supervise campers after 9:00 a.m. *Pets are not allowed at camp.*

Due to limited parking availability at Camp, campers are prohibited from driving their own vehicles to Widji.

### Directions to Ely from the Twin Cities

Take I-35 north to Cloquet exit. Take Highway 33 north through Cloquet to Highway 53. Take Highway 53 north past Virginia to Highway 169. Go east on Highway 169 to Ely.

### Directions to Widjiwagan from Ely

Travel east out of Ely 1.5 miles. Just past the entrance to the International Wolf Center, turn left onto 88. Go 2.3 miles to 116, which is the Echo Trail. Turn right on the Echo Trail and go 9.1 miles to the North Arm Road (less than 1 mile past Fenske Lake Campground). Turn left onto 644, which is the North Arm Road. Follow North Arm Road for 1.5 miles to the camp entrance, which will be on your left. Turn left into camp and proceed to the office in the Sigurd Olson Center.

From St. Paul to Camp Widjiwagan: approximately 260 miles, 5 hours driving time. Camp's telephone number is 218-365-2117

## At Widjiwagan

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### Money and Valuables at Camp

We recognize that campers may wish to bring certain small electronics such as cell phones with them as they travel to and from camp. Once campers arrive at camp, money and valuables will be checked into the Trading Post and stored in a secure location for the duration of each camper's session. We collect money and valuables to prevent loss and to promote living in harmony with the natural world. Please leave large electronic devices such as laptops at home. *We do not have enough room to securely store large numbers of these items.*

Widji campers may want to bring money for our camp store called The Trading Post. Campers can purchase items such as bandanas, pens, stamps, batteries, as well as Widjiwagan hats, shirts, sweatshirts, etc. Purchases are made by subtracting the cost of the item from the original amount deposited. The remaining balance is returned to the camper the morning of their last day in camp. These are approximate prices and are subject to change:

- Nalgene bottle \$15
- Sweatshirts \$30-\$48
- T-shirts \$15

### Basic Trip Schedules

Day 1:	All campers arrive at Widji, meet their counselors and their trail group, check in with our health professional and begin group building. In the evening, campers will enjoy games and a campfire with silly skits performed by counselors.
Day 2 and 3:	Campers will prepare for their trips. Preparation includes learning new skills, collecting and packing food and gear and familiarizing themselves with trail procedures and group equipment. All campers will practice swimming with boots on as we swim on trail and learn right a canoe in the event that it is overturned. Campers will also have a chance to sauna. Pathfinders will depart for "trail" on the morning of their 3 <sup>rd</sup> day.
Day 4 and on:	Most campers depart for "trail" on the morning of their 4 <sup>th</sup> day at Widji. While on trail, schedules can vary wildly. Most groups will wake up early in the morning, eat breakfast, pack up camp and hike or paddle for a few hours before stopping for lunch. After lunch, groups may decide to continue traveling or make camp. Schedules on trail can be determined by the group's needs, weather, and counselor assessments.

2 <sup>nd</sup> to last day:	Groups will return to camp. Returning groups will check in with the health professional and receive mail that has arrived while they were away. In the evening, campers will celebrate their accomplishments with a Closing Celebration including a banquet dinner, sauna and closing campfire. <b>Families are invited to join us for the closing campfire.</b>
Final Day:	Campers will arrive at breakfast at 8am with their bags packs and cabins swept. Campers will depart at 9am from the Sigurd Olson Center either by bus or parent transportation.

## Food at Widjiwagan

We can accommodate most food allergies and other dietary needs. Please contact us with any concerns.

Before and after going on trail, campers will eat in our beautiful Kirby dining hall. Meals often include classics such as spaghetti and meat balls, tacos and lots of delicious homemade bread!

Campers are involved in the menu planning for their trip and can tailor their trail menu to suit their tastes. But generally, meals are made from scratch out of common grocery items and specialized dehydrated goods.

Common menu items include:

- Breakfast: granola, pancakes, oatmeal, cinnamon rolls, Grape Nuts.
- Lunch: cheese, sausage, raisins, gorp (trail mix), crackers, peanut butter, and tortillas.
- Dinner: macaroni and cheese, calzones, burritos, soups.
- Groups are mostly limited by their own imaginations!

## Lost and Found

Yes, items get misplaced at Widji! We make every effort to return lost items while campers are at camp. **To facilitate this, please mark all items brought to camp with your child's first and last name.** With so many campers coming with the same items, often the only distinguishing mark is the camper's name.

All lost and found articles are brought to the office, so if a camper loses something while at camp, they can check the office. After each session ends, we gather all "found" items in our camp lost and found. If you're missing something you can check in at the office until September 30. After that date, all unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

## The Widjiwagan Progression

Grade	Trips Available
Entering 6 <sup>th</sup>	Pathfinders Canoe Trips
Entering 7 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	Intro to Canoe Trips
	Intro to Backpack Trips
Entering 7 <sup>th</sup> - 11 <sup>th</sup>	BOLD and GOLD Trips
Entering 8 <sup>th</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup>	BWCA Canoe Trips
	Bighorn Backpack Trips
Entering 9 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup>	Quetico Canoe Trips
	Rocky Mountain Backpack Trips

## The Advanced Camper Program

The Widjiwagan progression of challenge culminates with the advanced trips programs, which gives experienced, qualified campers the added challenge of traveling in more remote areas for a longer duration. Qualified campers refine their skills in wilderness travel, group dynamics and leadership.

Campers must receive invitations to register for Widji Advanced Trips. This process is not competitive. We simply want to ensure, as much as possible, that the campers who we send on these trips are prepared for the remote and rugged nature of the areas that we travel through and the extended time on trail. We invite campers to participate in our advanced trip programs who are currently in 10th, 11th and 12th grades and who have demonstrated the technical competence, interpersonal aptitude, judgement and enthusiasm for wilderness travel necessary to be successful on wilderness expeditions.

Grade	Trips Available
Entering 11th	Explorer Canoe
	Explorer Backpack
Entering 12th	Advanced Explorer Canoe
	Advanced Explorer Backpack
High School Graduates	Voyageur
	Mountaineer

All of Widjiwagan's trips, from the five day Pathfinder Canoe to the Mountaineer and Voyageur expeditions, provide a meaningful wilderness experience that develops respect for self, community, and the environment.

## On Trail Together

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### Group Size and Structure

A typical Widji group will have three to six other campers and one-two experienced, well-trained, and enthusiastic counselors. Trail groups are created based on grade in school and experience at camp.

### Gender and Trail Groups

The YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities Camping Programs welcome all participants into our programming including transgender, gender non-conforming, gender non-binary, and other gender expansive campers. We hope that our camps will provide a safe space for all of our campers to explore their identities and discover their life path. We value identity exploration as an integral part of adolescent development.

In striving to create a welcoming community for all campers, the YMCA Camps uphold the nondiscrimination statement of the YMCA of Greater Twin Cities which includes "gender identity." As an institution, we do not tolerate discrimination and bullying of campers based on their gender identity and their perceived gender identity.

Our current practice is to organize campers into trail groups according to the female/male gender binary. We invite campers who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming to group themselves where they feel most comfortable.

On Site Implementation:

- 1) We do not disclose participant medical information with other participants or their families.
  - a. We recognize information related to a participant's gender identity, sex assigned at birth, and transition status as medical information. As such, we will not share this information with other participants and families.

2) The YMCA Camps will work with transgender or gender non-conforming participants and their families, in the case of participants who are under 18, to meet each participant's unique needs as we are able.

3) YMCA Camp Staff will not assume a participant's pronouns (He, she, they etc), gender identity, or name. YMCA Camp staff will ask all campers how they wish to be addressed at camp, including name and pronouns.

4) Camps will provide transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) participants access to programming and facilities in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity and does not stigmatize them to the extent that we are able. Facilities that TGNC campers will be able to access based on their gender identity include but are not limited to bathrooms, changing rooms, saunas and cabins.

- a. At Widji, most campers use outhouses to go to the bathroom. All of our outhouses are gender neutral. We offer a few flush toilets and these are located in gendered bathrooms. We empower campers to use the gendered bathroom that aligns best with their gender identity.
- b. We offer gendered and gender neutral shower options.
- c. Camper in groups traveling to Canada will have their identifying documents reviewed when crossing the border and should be aware that this can be a sensitive time.
- d. Please feel free to connect with Amy Hadow, Summer Program Director, at [amy.hadow@ymcamn.org](mailto:amy.hadow@ymcamn.org) for more information on our practices related to gender.

5) In the event that a YMCA Camp is not able to meet the needs of a TGNC camper or family due to current limitations in our programming and facilities, YMCA staff will be open and transparent about these limitations with the TGNC camper and family.

6) We will accommodate any participant who expresses a need or desire for increased privacy by offering them access to alternate bathroom, showering and changing spaces as long as these accommodations do not result in stigmatizing TGNC participants.

7) We cannot not change the registration of a participant who is under 18 without the written consent of their parent or guardian.

## Friends at Widjiwagan

While some campers come to Widjiwagan with a friend, most first-time Widji campers come without knowing anyone else. A big part of what makes Widjiwagan special are the strong friendships campers make on the trail. Therefore, we encourage you to come to camp ready to meet new people and make friends.

If you plan to come to camp with a friend, we can try to place you and **one** friend in the same trail group. We will not place groups of three or more friends together. This can create a difficult social situation for other members of the group. **Both** friends must request each other in order to be placed in the same group. At the advanced trip level, we do not honor friend requests.

We will not place siblings in the same trail group. Siblings wishing to attend camp during the same session can be placed in the same cabin. Groups share cabins while at Widji during the first three days of their session and on the last night of their session.

## Staff

Leadership is the key to a quality wilderness experience. Widji Trail Counselors are teachers, role models, and mentors. All Widji counselors have participated in our extensive staff training and hold current lifeguard, CPR and Wilderness First Responder certifications. We select staff members based on their personal and professional experience and interest in wilderness trips and working with teens as well as their judgment and leadership ability.

## Fishing at Camp

Campers are welcome to fish on their Widji trip. Campers need to consider size and weight of fishing tackle so that it fits in their portage packs or backpacks along with the rest of their personal gear. Flat, compact tackle boxes are suggested, preferably no larger than 12-14 inches long. **Widjiwagan requires that the barbs be flattened on all treble hooks.** We ask this for the safety of the fish and the campers. Barbless hooks allow for greater ease in the release of fish that are inedible and might otherwise be seriously injured by improper removal of a barbed hook.

Although fishing is not the primary focus of Widjiwagan trips, time is available on layover days, as well as in the morning and evening of travel days when time allows. Good Luck!

## Fishing Licenses

If your camper is interested in fishing while on their trip, please read the following! Our trip leaders do not have fishing licenses so campers are required to carry their own fishing license as required by the state where they are traveling. This email outlines the fishing regulations in Minnesota as well as how to purchase a fishing license for your camper. If your camper is traveling to another state as part of their Widjiwagan trip, please look up the fishing regulations for that state below.

### Minnesota fishing regulations

Any person younger than 16 who is a MN resident can fish without a license. Any person younger than 16 who is NOT a resident of MN may fish without a license IF a parent or guardian has a valid MN non-resident fishing license. Otherwise they need their own MN non-resident youth fishing license. All persons 16 or older need to have their own fishing license.

### MN fishing license info

MN youth fishing license is \$5 and information can be found here:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/fishing/index.html>.

You can purchase a MN fishing license online. If you do so, please forward the confirmation email as well as the PDF of the actual license to [info@widji.org](mailto:info@widji.org). We will make sure the license gets to your camper!

### Ontario

All non-residents (including under 18) are required to hold a valid Outdoors Card and fishing license unless accompanied by an adult who carries their own. Our staff do not hold valid Ontario Outdoors Cards or fishing licenses. Ontario website with information about a fishing license for non-residents: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/fishing-licence-non-residents-canada>. An Outdoors Card must be purchased first. Then you add a fishing license to the Outdoors Card. An Outdoors Card costs \$9.68 and more information about Outdoors Cards can be found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-outdoors-card>. People who are traveling as part of an organized group (which includes Widji) are restricted to Conservation licenses and limits. The annual conservation fishing license for a non-resident is \$56.17. The website that has the various fees is here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/fishing-licence-fees-non-canadian-residents>. Both the Outdoors Card and the License can be purchased online.

### Other Areas

- Information about fishing in Montana: <https://fwp.mt.gov/buyandapply/fishinglicenses>
- Information about fishing in Idaho: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/licenses>
- Information about fishing in Wyoming: <http://www.eregulations.com/wyoming/fishing/licenses-fees/>
- Information about fishing in Michigan: [https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119\\_79146\\_82448---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79146_82448---,00.html)
- Information about fishing in Alaska: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=sportlicense.main>

# Health and Wellness

## Risk Management

Widjiwagan has a proven safety record that spans more than 90 years. While we cannot guarantee accident-free travel, our priority is the health and well-being of all our campers. Our attitude and investment in accident prevention and incident response enables our staff to respond appropriately and situationally. We train our staff members in professional-level wilderness first responder skills, provide them with a thorough knowledge of the areas we travel through, and have established policies and procedures designed to reduce the likelihood of illness and injury. In addition, we provide communication devices to our trip leaders to allow them to access additional resources whenever technology and the environment allow. In the event of an illness or injury, it is important for parents and campers to acknowledge that communication with emergency medical services is not always possible due to the remoteness of our trips. Please see the "Communication with Camp" section on page 17 for more information about how and when parents are notified in the case of their camper experiencing an injury or illness on their wilderness trip.

On Widji trips we work and play in remote wilderness areas. Prepare for your trip by working on your fitness level. You do not need to be an athlete to enjoy the wilderness, but conditioning is important for your safety, the safety of others and the success of your experience. Increasing your muscle strength, flexibility, and aerobic fitness will help make your trip more enjoyable.

- Increase muscle strength with sit ups, pushups, or weight lifting
- Remember to stretch before and after you work out to maintain and increase your flexibility.
- Aim for at least 3-5 aerobic workouts each week – jogging, hiking swimming, etc for 30-45 minutes per workout.

To help you identify the skills you will need to successfully participate in a Widji experience, we have developed the following Essential Eligibility Criteria for campers:

- Canoers should be able to:
  - Enter and exit a canoe independently or with moderate assistance from a companion
  - Right themselves and remain face up in the water with the aid of a Personal Flotation Device (lifejacket).
- Backpackers should be able to:
  - Hike with a backpack weighing up to 45-55 pounds.

## Health Service Office and Medications

- Widjiwagan's Health Service Office is staffed by volunteer Health Professionals who rotate on a weekly basis. Widjiwagan's advising physician oversees the Health Service Office.
- Ely has a well-equipped hospital located 15 miles from camp.
- **All medication needs to be in the original bottle** when it arrives at Camp. This includes both prescription and over the counter medications.
- You must have written instructions on dosage and frequency from your doctor, either on the bottle or on a separate piece of paper, for all prescription medications. Dosage and frequency information for over the counter medications should be indicated by the parent/guardian on the Health History Form.
- Be sure that there is enough medication for the entire session, plus a few days' extra supply.
- In case of an accident or serious illness, parents/guardians or the emergency contact will be notified.
- Because of the isolated nature of Widji trips, all campers **must** have had a tetanus shot or booster within the last ten years. Campers who have not had a tetanus shot or booster within the last 10 years will not be allowed to go on their trip.



## Communication with Camp

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### **The Widji Administrative Office**

The Twin Cities Widji office is open year-round.

It is located at:

The Douglas Dayton YMCA at Gaviidae

YMCA Camp Widjiwagan

651 Nicollet Mall, Suite 500

Minneapolis, MN 55402

Phone: 612-822-CAMP

Fax: 612-223-6322

### **Widjiwagan operates on the policy of "no news is good news."**

In order to preserve every camper's wilderness experience, groups only make contact with Camp if they are in need of assistance.

We will contact parents/guardians if a camper violates the Widjiwagan *Code of the Community*, experiences an illness or injury requiring medical attention at a hospital or clinic, or if they have been evacuated from their wilderness trip for any reason. You might also be contacted by Widji if we have questions about forms, medications and/or travel arrangements. To expedite this process, it is important that we have the correct contact information for the parents/guardians throughout the camp session.

### **The Widji Camp office in Ely**

**Phone 218-365-2117 and Fax 218-365-2018**

If no one is in the office to take your call, we have voicemail which is checked frequently throughout the day and evening. Campers are not allowed to make or receive calls while at camp except in emergencies.

### **Mail at Camp**

Letters from family and friends are always appreciated! **Please** do not send or have your camper bring "care packages" with food, beverages or candy. Having food in cabins attracts animals and any food brought or sent to Camp will be stored with your camper's valuables and returned at the end of their session.

### **Our Summer Mailing Address**

Camper Name, Camper Session

(i.e. Amy Hadow, Quetico, 6/15- 6/29)

YMCA Camp Widjiwagan

3788 North Arm Road

Ely, MN 55731-8441

### **E-mail at Camp**

Please do not e-mail your child while they are at camp. Widjiwagan is not equipped to handle e-mails to campers. Any e-mails that are sent will not be forwarded to campers or trail staff.

### **Social Media**

We will try to keep the YMCA Camp Widjiwagan [Facebook](#) page updated with photos of groups and any important all camp information.

*Please keep in mind that Widjiwagan is a wilderness camp and sometimes Internet connectivity is limited. We will do our best to upload photos in a timely manner.*

## Closing Celebrations

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Parents/guardians and friends are welcome to visit their camper at the end-of-session Closing Celebration. This is a fantastic opportunity for parents/guardians to share in the trail experience and participate in a reflective closing camp fire. We invite you all to attend and join in the festivities!

### Schedule

Closing Celebrations are always the day **before** the session ends. For example, if the session dates are July 12-23, the Closing Celebration is July 22.

#### Closing Celebration Schedule

5:30-6:00 p.m.	Welcome at the Sigurd Olsen Center
6:15 p.m.	Dessert and Songs in Kirby Dining Hall
6:45 p.m.	Social time
7:00 p.m.	Camp Tour (starts from Tripping Center Circle)
7:30 p.m.	Closing Campfire (at Amphitheater or Kirby Dining Hall depending on weather)

#### Departure Day Schedule

8:30-9 a.m.	Arrive to pick-up campers
9:00 a.m.	Campers Depart

### Meal Options for Visitors

Due limited space in our dining hall, Widji will not be offering banquet dinners and breakfast the following day to guests. However, we do invite camper families to join in the celebration after dinner to enjoy dessert, singing songs and attending a reflective campfire.

Visitors may choose to eat at one of many delicious restaurants in Ely or have a picnic in the beautiful Superior National Forest that surrounds Widji before arriving at camp.

### Accommodations in Ely

Widji is not able to accommodate overnight guests. If you need information regarding accommodations in the Ely area call the Ely Chamber of Commerce at (800) 777-7281 or visit their Web site at [www.Ely.org](http://www.Ely.org). Campground such as Fenske Lake, Fall Lake, or south Kawishiwi River are popular places to stay. The town of Ely also offers a number of hotels such as Grand Ely Lodge and Burntside Lodge among others.

**Camp Widjiwagan has a policy that there are no pets allowed in camp.** If you are visiting camp and have a pet with you, the alternatives are:

- Use the kennel service available at the Ely Veterinarian Clinic, (218) 365-5911.
- Stay at one of the nearby public campgrounds that may allow pets, such as Fenske Lake.

**Thank you for reading the Summer Information Guide. We can't wait to see your camper at Widji!**