

# Benefits of 4-H Youth Camping

At the **W.E. Skelton** 4-H Educational Conference Center

## What is the purpose of 4-H camping?

- ✿ 4-H camping is cooperative group living in a natural environment that focuses on developing life skills, social, spiritual, mental, and physical development in young people.
- ✿ 4-H camping emphasizes experiential learning; campers “learn by doing.”

## Who participates?

- ✿ More than 10,000 youth ages 5-18 are involved in the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center programming annually.
- ✿ 1,000 4-H teen and adult volunteer leaders support, supervise, and teach those youth.

## How are youth involved?

- ✿ The W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center provides opportunities for youth in four ways: 4-H residential camping, 4-H specialty/day camping, 4-H school enrichment (based on Virginia Standards of Learning), and adventure education.

## What type of educational programming is provided?

- ✿ Leadership development, environmental/aquatic science, performing arts, shooting education, forestry, outdoor adventure, computer science, low ropes course, climbing, primitive skills, arts/craft, horsemanship/animal science, multimedia, robotics, wildlife, canoeing, fishing, outdoor sports, ceramics, skateboarding, mountain boarding, backpacking, rock climbing, caving, whitewater rafting, and swimming

## How do youth benefit from 4-H camping?\*

- ✿ Youth have the opportunity to learn and have fun in a safe environment while surrounded by caring adults.
- ✿ A recent study of the impacts of Virginia 4-H camping conducted with 11,000 youth campers (ages 9-13) from across the state of Virginia found that 4-H camp participation helped youth learn to:
  - Make new friends
  - Develop new skills
  - Become more independent and able to take care of themselves
- ✿ A recent study of parents/guardians of Virginia 4-H campers found that 4-H camp participation changed youths' behaviors in the areas of:
  - Taking care of their own things (self-responsibility)
  - Becoming more independent /Taking initiative
  - Sharing



## For more information:

- Contact your local Extension office
- Contact the W.E. Skelton 4-H Center at (540) 721-2759 or [www.skelton4H.ext.vt.edu](http://www.skelton4H.ext.vt.edu)



\* Garst, B.A., and Bruce, F. A. (2003). Identifying 4-H Camping Outcomes Using a Standardized Evaluation Process across Multiple 4-H Educational Centers. *Journal of Extension*.

\*18 U.S.C. 707