

# Saving Summer



## Summer Camp

For millions of children across the United States, summer camp is a long-awaited tradition after the school year ends. From water balloon fights and scavenger hunts to swimming, hiking, and team-building games, summer camps give kids the opportunity to spend time outdoors, build friendships, and develop confidence, resilience, leadership, and communication skills. The summer camp industry also plays a major role in the U.S. economy, generating roughly \$70 billion annually and supporting nearly one million jobs.

But climate change is increasingly threatening the safety of outdoor summer camp activities. Air quality isn't just worsening in urban regions, but also in places where people used to go to escape pollution, like summer camp.

## Poor Air Quality Puts Children at Risk

Children are especially vulnerable to air pollution. Compared to adults, children breathe more air per pound of body weight, have developing lungs and immune systems, and often spend more time outside during the summer months.

Today, nearly half of children in the United States are exposed to unhealthy levels of air pollution. As temperatures rise and wildfires become more frequent and severe, summer air quality is worsening across much of the country. Because of federal efforts to dismantle bedrock air protection policies, children spending time outdoors in summer camp may face greater harm.

Smoke pollution, ground-level ozone, and fine particulate matter can trigger asthma attacks, breathing difficulties, headaches, and other respiratory illnesses, particularly during strenuous outdoor activities common at summer camp. Asthma already affects nearly 4.5 million children in the United States, making poor air quality especially dangerous during the summer months.



Visit [NWF.org/Climate](https://www.nwf.org/Climate)

# Saving Summer



## Summer Camp

### Extreme Heat

Extreme heat has been the leading cause of weather-related deaths in the United States for more than 30 years. And heat waves – prolonged periods of unusually high temperatures – are becoming more frequent, intense, and long-lasting because of climate change.

For summer camps, rising temperatures can make outdoor activities dangerous. Long days spent running, swimming, hiking, or playing sports increase the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke – especially for children, whose bodies heat up faster than adults than adults and are not as capable of regulating temperature.

Some camps have had to adjust schedules by moving activities earlier in the morning, shortening outdoor recreation periods, or increasing cooling breaks and hydration stations. In extreme cases, camps may cancel outdoor programming altogether during dangerous heat conditions.

Rising temperatures are also affecting ecosystems and wildlife around camps and recreation areas. Heat and drought stress forests, dry out streams and wetlands, and reduce habitat quality for many species. Animals that rely on cooler temperatures and predictable seasonal conditions may struggle to find food, water, and shelter during increasingly hot summers.

### Save Our Summers

Summer is more than a season. It's a collection of experiences, traditions, and places that allow us to connect with nature and each other.

The choices we make today will determine whether future generations inherit the same summer we know or a season fundamentally transformed by a warming world.

We must by reduce pollution, conserve habitats, expand clean energy, and practice responsible recreation.

Visit [NWF.org/Climate](https://www.nwf.org/Climate)