



JANUARY-MARCH PROGRAMS BELOW!

605.394.2310 | tocwest@state.sd.us



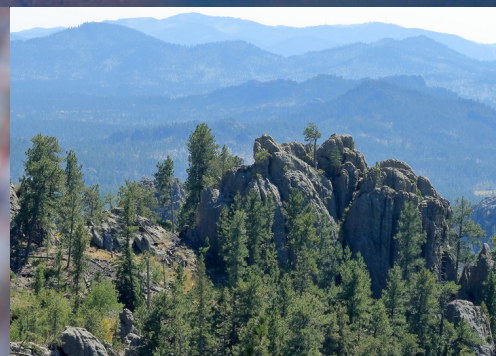
TURKEY OUTLOOK

The turkey population is looking good for the spring so this should provide some excellent experiences for the spring turkey season Page 3



DEERFIELD LAKE TROUT

Lake trout are really fun to catch through the ice. Checkout this new opportunity GF&P staff provided at Deerfield Reservoir Page 6



OPPORTUNITIES IN CUSTER STATE PARK

New to our newsletter, we have listed programs happening at Custer State Park this winter. Check out this list on Page 6

JANUARY - MARCH PROGRAMMING

With the start of a new year and a new addition to our staff, we have a host of new and exciting programs to offer. Throughout the year you will find introductory classes that will direct you to another opportunity that dives a little deeper. This will give you or your family the opportunity to try something new and then take it to the next step later on. This is designed to give insight on a new skill or technique related to hunting, fishing and our state parks. Classes will be either family focused or adult only. See the fliers below to see this quarters class opportunities.



MEET OUR NEW NATURALIST BRETT JOHNSON

by *Clint Whitley (naturalist)*

Brett was born and raised right here in Rapid City, SD where he graduated from Central High School. He then continued his education to become a nationally registered paramedic and received an associates in applied science from Western Dakota Tech. Bret recently retired from the fire department and now has joined us at The Outdoor Campus. Brett shares everything South Dakota has to offer outdoors with his wife and daughter. They also enjoy traveling together and experiencing other outdoor adventures.

When I met Brett, I learned that he likes a little bit of everything when it comes to the outdoors. A good outdoorsman can look around and see an abundance of ways to connect with and enjoy our natural resources. Brett is no stranger to seizing each opportunity he gets. “There just isn’t enough time to do it all” he told me in a recent conversation. With that I quizzed him on what he most wants to do in each month of the year in South Dakota. Let this list serve as a great motivator and reminder that Brett wants everyone to know. South Dakota is rich in diverse activities to get you and your families outdoors year round.

January - ice fishing and trapping
February - ice fishing
March - beaver trapping
April - turkey hunting
May - turkey hunting
June - spring walleye fishing
July - fly fishing
August - spearfishing
September - elk hunting
October - pheasant hunting
November - deer hunting
December - trapping and
muzzleloader hunting

Welcome to the team Brett!



INDOOR PINECONE EXPERIMENT

by *Cheyenne Parke*

Supplies:

- Pinecones
- Water
- Jars/Cups
- Notebook
- Writing Utensil
- Timer

Activity:

The first thing you will do in this activity is go on an adventure to find pinecones. You want to find more than a couple.

Humidity plays a large role in whether pinecones are open or closed. Come up with your own hypothesis to test. Do you have opened or closed pinecones? Will a closed pinecone open if you put it in an empty, dry jar? Will an open pinecone close if you put it in a container filled with water? Does it matter if the water is cold or hot? What happens if you put a lid on the container? What else can you test with your pinecones? Can you time how long the changes take?

Pinecones are very interesting and so neat to dissect. If you have the proper tools and safety, feel free to break your pinecones open and find the seeds. Look at the differences between your pinecones.



TURKEY HUNTING

by Clint Whitley (Naturalist)

April and May can arguably be the best time of the year to get outside. It's the time of year when we start to see green again, new life is popping up everywhere, the days are long and the turkeys are gobbling.

Turkey hunters have lots of options for spring turkey tags. The application deadline is Feb. 15th for the first turkey drawing. This is a great choice for hunting turkeys out on the prairie in the river bottoms. An archery turkey and Black Hills turkey (shotgun) can be purchased at anytime. Not only are those all options, but you can get all three of those tags and more if you dig into the application process further or look at leftovers. Make sure you reference the 2023 spring turkey application for further details.

Turkey tags can be purchased for just \$25-35 making for an affordable spring activity.

If you are interested in learning how to turkey hunt, checkout our turkey hunting classes we have coming up.

Your best chances for success are to follow these simple tips

- Find a bird in the roost the night before and setup a safe distance away
- Sit down, be quiet and DO NOT MOVE. Patience is key.
- Don't over call. If you don't know what your saying, don't say it at all.



TIME TO BE A TURKEY HUNTER: SPRING TURKEY OUTLOOK

by Clint Whitley (naturalist)

Turkeys in the Black Hills have had a wonderful turn of events for them and as long as we have a mild winter, the bird numbers in the hills are going to be impressive.

In the last two years our spring harvest has been the best it has been in 10 years. In 2023 there was a 40% success rate among hunters which is outstanding. The 2023 brood counts are better than average making turkey numbers doing really well and it can be contributed to a few good weather events or lack of certain weather events.

This last year we have had really good amounts of moisture leading to optimal nesting cover and allowing those bred hens to hide from predation. Believe it or not but hail and cold spring rains can be detrimental to the turkey poults (baby turkeys). The poults aren't big enough nor insulated enough to survive some of those events. With a mild hail year in 2023 and lack of those cold spring rains, things are looking up for the Black Hills Turkey.

In the spring of 2023 season there was a structure change of pushing the season back a couple weeks. This may have impacted the outcome of that season. The turkeys were given a chance to break up and change from their winter groups, jakes and toms had established their hierarchy and hens were getting bred all before hunters hit the field. By the time hunters were out, the birds were gobbling and responsive to calling. This may have led to a fun and exciting season for many.

As long as the winter is warm and dry allowing for successful winter survival, this coming spring turkey season is going to be one for the books.





INTERNING AT THE OUTDOOR CAMPUS

by Samantha Skaare (previous intern)

Working with and through Game, Fish and Parks, I expanded my knowledge, interpersonal skills and love for the outdoors. The people I worked with were truly delightful and will forever have impacted the way I see and interact with the environment.

This was an experience where I was able to push my limits with extremely knowledgeable and passionate leaders. I was provided ample opportunity to learn more with the flexibility to move at my own pace. We, as interns, were provided with creative freedom allowing us to intertwine our passions with the outdoors.

One of my favorite experiences was teaching wild game cooking classes. I blended my love for cooking, desire to try wild game and job of teaching all into one experience. Other fantastic experiences included fish anatomy, wilderness first aid and learning how to unhook a fish. This was an experience I will not take for granted and has impacted my view of the natural world.

If you are interested in applying for an internship or know someone that may be a good fit, the applicants must be enrolled in a post-secondary school at the time of application. Click below to see what is currently available.

[APPLY HERE](#)

WINTER FLY FISHING OPPORTUNITY

by a local fly-fisherman

The winter solstice is Tuesday, December 21 2023 and for many people the shortest day of the year in South Dakota brings on a mindset limited to cold gray days, dreams of Hawaii and the vampire look of vitamin D deficiency. However, for those who study the weather forecast and understand the mental health benefits of getting outside as much as possible this time of year, winter fly fishing is something to be excited about. Our terrestrial insect fly patterns are generally in the fly box that has settled like gold to the bedrock of our sling bags and vests this time of year, but not all of them.

On winter days when the 11:00 - 2:00 combination of sun and just above freezing temps meet, the dry fly fisherman rejoice about the small things in life. The excitement is powered by the tiny, but mighty midge. The midge is mimicked in sizes 18,20 and 22. Plenty big enough for the eyes and digit dexterity of all ages and their multi layered focal lenses. Thin tippets paired with clear skinny water stalking skills will put you in place to watch the rings of joy made by rising winter trout. On those days when the hatch doesn't happen or just before it does, the midge nymph pattern can produce enough fish to net action to never have you thinking about putting the fly gear away until spring again.

At the Outdoor Campus West, beginner fly casting lessons are being provided all winter long. Along with those gear and casting classes, some beginners fly tying classes (some being at an accommodating local brewery) and on the water trips will be available for those who feel they're ready for their public debut. The point being, lets get practicing this winter right here at the Outdoor Campus. Feel free to call us with questions or sign up online under the education tab at the SDGFP website.



TURKEY SAUSAGE

by Clint Whitley (Naturalist)

Ground turkey sausage is another great option for utilizing the entire bird and is an easy way to incorporate in any meal.

- 3:1 ratio of turkey meat to pork fat
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- 2 tablespoons dried sage
- 2 tablespoons dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon rosemary
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- Finely chopped apples

1. Remove as much meat as possible from the bones.
2. Grind the turkey and pork.
3. Cover the meat with all the seasonings and apples and mix well.
4. Grind a second time
5. Make small thin patties so they cook evenly.
6. pan fry until cooked through and serve with eggs and toast.



SPATCHCOCK TURKEY

by Clint Whitley (Naturalist)

With turkey season approaching, it's important to know what you want to do with that turkey as soon as you go to process it. Spatchcock turkey is a fun way to utilize the entire bird but takes a few steps to help it turn out right. This method helps evenly cook an entire bird.

To prepare the bird you need to cut right up the back on either side of the spine with a sheers. You can then open up the entire bird and lay it flat.

To keep turkey from being dry you can dry brine the thawed bird. Apply even coating of salt to baking powder, with a ratio of 3:1. Cover and put in the fridge for 48-72 hours.

After the allotted time, rinse and dry the bird. Apply your favorite seasoning.

Stock your smoker with a fruitwood of your choice such as applewood and set to a low temp of 180-225 degrees. Place a pan of water under the bird and lay the bird our flat, breast up on the second rack so it's not getting direct heat. Put a temperature probe in the breast and the thigh.

Check the bird every hour and make sure the wings are not cooking too quick. If they are cooking quickly put tinfoil over the wings. Baste turkey with butter and honey often.

Cook until a safe temperature and let the bird rest until juices quit flowing from the temperature probe holes. Slice and enjoy on potatoes, in a sandwich, or just as is.





2023 HUNTING 101 RECAP

by Clint Whitley (naturalist)

As I am writing this, our 101 season is not quite complete but I confidently can conclude it has been a successful season. I measure that success not just in filled tags but in awesome stories and hooked on hunting experiences. I am proud to say that our success rate in filled tags was very high if not 100% of the rifle hunters we were able to take out and 50% of our bowhunters. I'm even more proud of the stories that are coming from those hunters. We have folks that first came to an introductory class that sparked their interest. Others with an affinity to where their food comes from and wanting to be apart of it. These are just the beginning of these hunters stories. The amazing thing about hunting is the continuation of that story and what it does for us as an individual. I can't tell those stories in a short article but talk to a hunter and ask for their why, even if you are already a hunter it makes for great conversation.

During the 2023 101 program we started in June with bowhunters starting the bow setup and practicing. In July we started hunting 101 with an in class portion and firearm handling/safety. Later, our hunters scouted, setup tree stands, went to the gun range, learned what properties they could access, how to buy a tag and as much info as we could fit into a few hands on sessions as possible. In September we began the hunts. Archery, apprentice tag, youth and mentor hunters all got first crack at it. For most of the fall, we had absolutely beautiful hunting weather. Some hunters filled their tags the first time out and others took multiple trips. No matter the situation each participant walked away with lessons learned, stories to tell and even a few "shoulda, coulda, would have situations" All of which helped each participant fulfill their goal. I noticed a common theme that everyone was very concerned in making a good shot, being safe with the firearm and looking forward to cooking up their game.

If you are interested in learning how to deer hunt and want to apply for this free program, email clint.whitley@state.sd.us to be contacted in the spring when applications are available. This is a free program provided by hunting and fishing licenses as well as excise taxes on firearms and ammunition.

DEERFIELD LAKE TROUT

Game, Fish, and Parks fisheries staff recently stocked Deerfield Reservoir in the central Black Hills with 536 Lake Trout to provide additional angling opportunity as we move into the winter ice fishing season. These particular fish were not your ordinary stocked fish by any stretch of the imagination!. These Lake Trout were recently retired from service as federal broodstock for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, providing eggs to other federal hatcheries throughout the country and were housed at the Saratoga National Fish Hatchery in Saratoga, WY.

Many of these fish were over 10 years old and weigh on average about 12 lbs. Retired Lake Trout from the Saratoga facility were previously stocked into Deerfield Reservoir back in 2015 and 2016, some of which still remain in the reservoir 8 years later. These fish have already been providing an exciting catch for those anglers willing to brave the late fall weather in the Black Hills and will likely be a hot target for ice anglers throughout the winter. So get out and enjoy what remains of the open water period or start making plans to target some Lake Trout through the ice in the coming months!



CUSTER STATE PARK WINTER PROGRAMS

Register for any event by
calling Custer State Park at
605-394-2693

First Day Hikes Jan 1st

- Little Devils Tower 8am
- Stockade lake Trail 10am
- Creekside Trail 2pm

Forest Health

- Visitor Center-Jan 19th - 1pm

Star Crossed Lovers Astronomy

- Sylvan Lake day use area -
Feb 9th - 7pm

Wildlife Loop Caravan

- Visitor Center-Feb 10th - 9am

Lover's leap Snowshoe Hike

- Lover's leap trailhead-Feb
10th - 1pm

Nature's mating game 21+

- Event Barn-Feb 10th - 6pm

Frozen Waterfalls Hike

- Spearfish natural area -Feb
24th - 10am

Bluebird Box Workshop

- Peter Norbeck Center - March
23rd and 24th - 10am

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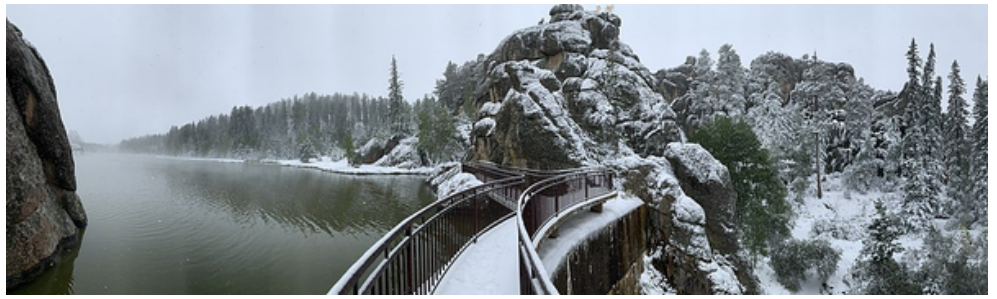
[@outdoorcampus_rapidcity](https://www.instagram.com/outdoorcampus_rapidcity)



[Game, Fish & Parks Outdoor
Campus-Rapid City](#)



[South Dakota Game, Fish &
Parks-Education](#)



TRACK CHAIRS

by *Clint Whitley*

SD GF&P is expanding opportunities for everyone to experience the outdoors. If there are physical limitations to hunting, fishing, or exploring our state parks, GF&P wants to help mitigate that. With approximately 12% of South Dakota's population being mobility challenged, GF&P is working with SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation on Operation: Mobility. Operation: Mobility is a fundraising campaign to purchase 30 all-terrain track chairs and trailers to be distributed throughout South Dakota's Game, Fish and Parks system. Currently GF&P has 2 all-terrain chairs, "Track Chairs", available for individuals to utilize. (Soon to be 3 with the addition of a chair at Custer State Park).

These chairs are available for use free to the disabled public. Both Outdoor Campuses, Rapid City and Sioux Falls have chairs available for check out. If you would like more information on how to check out the chairs, please contact the Outdoor Campus closest to you. If you are interested in learning more about Operation: Mobility or donating to this fundraiser visit the Parks and Wildlife Foundation website or click the link below.

Check-out information: [CLICK HERE](#)
[PARKS AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION WEBSITE](#)





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

JANUARY PROGRAMS

Wild Game Cooking Series

Do you have some wild game and don't know how to cook it? This series of classes will provide cooking tips that are useful when cooking wild game. Youth must be accompanied by an adult.

Designed for attendance at all 3 classes

*January 2, January 9, January 16,
5:30 – 7:00 PM*

Dutch Oven Cooking

Learn how to cook with and care for cast iron Dutch ovens. You will be making food so come hungry! Closed toed shoes are required for safety. Children must be accompanied by adult.

January 6, 10:00 – 12:00 PM

Bobcat & Coyote Trapping

Are you ready to test your new trapping skill set out on bobcats and coyotes? This class will talk about techniques, legal parameters and reading the landscape to use your time effectively.

January 6, 10:00 – 12:00 PM

Introduction to Archery

Learn the basic techniques of archery, learn the parts of a bow, range safety and how to safely shoot a compound bow. Ages 8 and up, must be accompanied by registered adult.

January 10, 6:00-7:30 PM

January 13, 10:00-11:30 AM

January 26, 6:00-7:30 PM

Fly Casting Basics

The Black Hills is an amazing place to learn how to fly fish. Join us to learn the basics of a fly cast

January 17, 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Family Firearm Safety

We will teach you how to safely handle and use a firearm. Youth must be accompanied by a registered adult.

January 28, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

DIY Pheasant Skinning and Display Class

The pheasant's beauty is truly a work of art. This class will teach you how to skin and preserve it with some creative options of display. No taxidermist needed. Bring your own bird, or one can be provided. Ages 10 and up, must be accompanied by a registered adult.

January 19, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

January 25, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Introduction to Pellet Rifles and Gun Safety

Learn basic gun safety and how to shoot with pellet rifles.

January 23, 6:00-7:00 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

JANUARY PROGRAMS

Date Night Archery

Are you interested in spending time getting to know that special someone a little better, all while learning a new skill? Date night is right on target with that, maybe even a Bullseye of a memory.

January 24, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Ice Fishing – Location TBD

Ice fishing is a great way to spend those cold winter months. Bring your family to experience ice fishing with our Naturalists at a local Black Hills lake. Location TBD

January 26, 8:00 – 12:00 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

3-D Archery

Learn how to shoot and practice on our 3D animal targets. Equipment provided, but you are welcome to bring your own. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Ages 8 and up.

February 1, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Beginners Fly Fishing Date Night

Are you interested in spending time getting to know that special someone better, all while learning a new outdoor skill set in a fun class setting. Intro to fly fishing date night may help you land that catch of a lifetime, or practice catch and release. Come learn the basic principles of fly casting and equipment

February 2, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Plinker's Club: 22 Rimfire fun shooting and fundamentals

The 22 rimfire is a no recoil, low sound, inexpensive way to shoot. Learn the fundamentals of marksmanship and safe gun handling. The 22 caliber rimfire is the heart of being a Plinker and its also great for small game and varmints. If interest grows the class may lead to small game hunts and prairie dog shoots. Ages: 10 and up, youth must be accompanied by a parent. Class held at Fall River Gun Club

February 3, 10:00 – 12:00 PM

Fly Tying for Beginners

21 and up! Meet at a local brewery to learn a beginners fly tying patter for year round successful trout fishing.

February 5, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Fundamentals of Firearm Safety Pellet Rifles

Learn basic gun safety and shooting with pellet rifles.

February 6, 10:00 – 11:00 AM, 6:00-7:00 PM

Intro to Archery

Learn the basic techniques of archery, learn the parts of a bow, range safety and how to safely shoot a compound bow. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Ages 8 and up.

February 7 6:00 – 7:30 PM

February 8, 11:00 – 12:00 PM

February 13, 6:00-7:30 PM

February 15, 12:00--1:00 PM

Introduction to Fly Casting

Come take your lunch break with us. We will open up the Hunter Education Building to practice fly casting.

February 7, 11:00 – 12:00 PM

February 21, 12:00-1:00 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

Dehydrated Meals

Replace those expensive freeze-dried meals with your own dehydrated ones. The instructor will show you how to dehydrate and assemble meals.

February 8, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

February 28, 6:00- 7:30 PM

Meal Prep-Jerky

Have game meat you don't know what to do with? Come learn about dehydrating food and how to extend the shelf-life.

February 12, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Catch it, Clean it, Cook it

Learn how to safely use fishing equipment to catch, clean and cook your catch. Children must be accompanied with a registered adult.

February 15, 6:00 – 7:30PM

Ice Fishing--off site

Ice fishing is a great way to spend those cold winter months still being active in the outdoors. Come join the staff at a local lake to learn the basics of ice fishing.

February 16, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Learn to Snowshoe

Come learn the basics of snowshoeing while exploring the Outdoor Campus Trails..

February 17, 10:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00-1:00 PM

Learn to Turkey Hunt

Spring time in the Black Hills is a fantastic time to pursue the Black Hills Merriam's Turkey.

February 20 6:00 – 7:30 PM

SD Fish ID

Bring the family and the little ones to learn how to identify many of the fish species we have in SD.

February 21, 6:00AM – 7:00PM

Introduction to Small Game hunting field day

Are you interested in small game hunting? Squirrel hunting is a great way to learn to hunt, enjoy the beauty of the Black Hills and secure something for dinner.

February 23, 8:00 – 12:00 PM

Beginners Fly Fishing “on the water day”

The Black Hills is an amazing place to learn how to fly fish. Join us to use your new fly casting skills on the water. Location of Canyon Lake

February 24, 11:00 – 2:00 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

MARCH PROGRAMS

On the Water Fly Fishing

Have you taken the basics to fly casting class and are ready to try it on the water? Come join a Naturalist for a hands on on the water experience. Ages 12 and up.

March 6 11:00 – 2:00 PM

March 27 11:00-2:00 PM

Target Archery

Learn the basic techniques of archery, learn the parts of a bow, range safety and how to safely shoot a compound bow. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Ages 8 and up.

March 8 6:00 – 7:30 PM

March 22 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Intro to Fly Casting

The Black Hills is an amazing place to learn how to fly fish. Join us to learn the basics of a fly-casting and try your hand at fishing our pond. Ages 10 and up

March 14 11:00 – 12:00PM

Learn to Turkey Hunt

Spring time in the Black Hills is a fantastic time of year. Come learn proven hunting techniques for pursuing the Black Hills Merriam's Turkey.

March 5 6:00 – 7:30 PM

March 14 6:00 – 7:30 PM

March 19 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Smoked Trout Sushi

Utilize the abundant trout resource that we are so blessed to have here in the Black Hills. This class will provide some brined and smoked rainbow trout along with all the supplies needed to make a delicious and fun meal experience. This is sure to impress your dinner guests and get you excited to pursue more trout fishing opportunities. Any age group, youth must be accompanied by an adult.

March 15 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Introduction to Shotguns

RC Trap Club

Shotgun shooting is a great way to spend time with your family outside while developing safe firearms competency and marksmanship.

March 13 1:00 – 3:00PM

March 16 10:00 – 12:00PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

MARCH PROGRAMS

Family Adventure Series

Family Adventure Series Come learn some outdoor adventure skills. We will be doing archery, Dutch oven cooking, and learning winter camping tips and tricks. This is a series, so please plan to attend all three classes.

March 4, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

March 11, 6:00-7:30 PM

March 18, 6:00-7:30 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>

