



III. GETTING STARTED

Your Camp Charlie will have its own unique flavor based on the content of your programs and the spirit, imagination and skills of your mentors and volunteers. The experience you create will be a very personal and unique one, reflecting your needs and goals and the needs of your target audience. But, it will also share a common vision with other Camp Charlies across the state and will benefit by being a part of the greater Camp Charlie community.

You will need to brainstorm and plan your Camp Charlie to fit the resources in your area and to make the most of the skills and expertise of individuals in your local conservation community. Your participants will learn new skills in a safe and comfortable environment with expert instruction, but it is the personal example and commitment of your staff and volunteers to good stewardship and conservation that will send the strongest message.

Establishing Your Committees

When should you start planning? The sooner the better! To ensure success and avoid being completely frazzled, it is best to begin planning a year ahead for your first Camp Charlie program. This will allow time for adequate publicity and proper development of a quality program. Just remember: it will get easier with each subsequent Camp Charlie weekend. In order to maximize resources and ensure a successful program, you will need help.

Involving your partners from the beginning gives them a sense of ownership and pride in the program, and helps you in determining available resources and shared responsibilities. In the beginning, establish your committees and clearly define expectations for each.

The following is recommended only. Please adapt the committees to meet your specific needs.

At Camp Charlie at the Okefenokee, GWF Board Member Joy Campbell served as facilitator alongside GWF Director of Development Terry Tatum and Debbie Harris from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. They played an integral part of the planning process, as led camper activities throughout the weekend.



Joy and Chip Campbell, Owners, Okefenokee Adventures

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. Determine target audiences.
2. Determine theme or emphasis of Camp Charlie.
3. Decide on possible partners.
4. Determine funding needs.
5. Select site and dates.
6. Choose committees and oversee progress.
7. Publicize the program.
8. Check into insurance needs and other liability issues.
9. Review applications and choose participating families and mentors.
10. Survey campers and evaluate results.

FUNDING COMMITTEE

1. Work with Executive Committee on budget to determine needs for funding.
2. Prepare sponsorship package.
3. Recruit sponsors and donations as needed.
4. Keep accurate records and thank donors.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

1. Determine programs, activities and special events to carry out the theme and mood of your weekend.
2. Determine schedule and logistics.

FOOD COMMITTEE

1. Decide which meals/snacks will be provided and how they will be prepared and distributed.
2. Establish menus.
3. Acquire all food and kitchen equipment and develop food storage plan for weekend.
4. With help from volunteers, prepare meals/snacks and distribute as needed throughout the weekend. Make sure water is readily available.

VOLUNTEER/MENTOR COMMITTEE

1. Work with other committees to determine how many volunteers are needed for the weekend.
2. Determine mentor and volunteer qualifications and oversee the application process.

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3. Work with the Executive Committee to assign mentors to appropriate camper families. Make sure volunteers and mentors have clear assignments and directions for the weekend.
4. Train mentors and volunteers as needed.
5. Recognize and thank volunteers appropriately.

REGISTRATION AND LOGISTICS COMMITTEE

1. Develop and distribute camper registration and communications.
2. Determine promotional items to be given away.
3. Reserve needed equipment with GWF and coordinate setup and breakdown.
4. Work with mentors to welcome campers.
5. Direct campers as needed throughout the weekend and make sure supplies and equipment are set up and available for all activities and programs.

Planning Timeline

10-12 Months

- o Consult with GWF staff.
- o Consider potential partnerships and sponsors.
- o Establish Executive Committee.
- o Develop budget and submit to Georgia Wildlife Federation.
- o Determine program theme and target audiences.
- o Select site and commit dates. Check insurance coverage.
- o Begin spreading the word – talk to various groups from which you might draw members for your committees.
- o Select and confirm primary partners.
- o Actively seek funding, family sponsorships and in-kind donations.
- o Establish committees and begin recruiting volunteers.

6-9 Months

- o Determine final costs of Camp Charlie weekend for participants and be ready to advertise.
- o Complete brochure/email and send to prospective participants.
- o Advertise as needed.
- o Determine daytime and evening programs and recruit appropriate people to teach and entertain.
- o Continue to solicit funding.

- o Prepare registration materials.

4-5 Months

- o Committees continue to meet.
- o Continue to make contacts and promote.
- o Continue to solicit funding.

3 Months

- o Plan meeting of all committees at event location to test-run program and get to know site. (This allows committee members to see how their part fits into the big picture, work out kinks and adjust to new considerations or alter plans if necessary.)
- o Actively seek “freebies” for prizes and giveaways. Make preparations to order any promotional items.
- o Register participants.

1-2 Months

- o Continue registering participants.
- o Confirm site reservations. Verify final numbers attending and camp site assignments.
- o Send letters to volunteers verifying their responsibilities and giving clear instructions.
- o Purchase any needed supplies and materials.
- o Seek media coverage of the weekend.