

PRE-CAMP

Introduction

At Up the Creek, our mission is to develop the whole person, enabling them to thrive as part of a living system in the Anthropocene. We believe that connecting with the more-than-human world is not only essential but more crucial than ever before for the sustainability of life on Earth. As the renowned naturalist David Attenborough once said, "The whole of life is coming to terms with yourself and the natural world."

Values and guiding principles are the foundation upon which our company is built. They serve as our compass, guiding our actions, decisions, and interactions with the world around us. By embracing these principles, we foster a thriving living system where humans and the more-than-human world coexist harmoniously.

This cultural policy document is a testament to our commitment to embody and uphold these values and principles. It serves as a guiding framework for our staff, ensuring that we consistently act in alignment with our mission, vision, and shared ethos. The document outlines our core values, guiding principles, and key areas of focus, reinforcing our dedication to creating positive change and leaving a lasting impact on individuals, communities, and the natural environment.

Before Camp Week: A Prelude to the River's Journey

Exercise 1: Immersed in Nature's Senses

Find a tranquil spot in nature, away from the rush of modern life. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. What scents fill the air? What can you hear, amidst the rustling leaves and distant songs of birds? Open your eyes and notice the varying shades of green around you. How many can you count? Let the serenity of this moment flow through you, much like a river's journey.

Exercise 2: Life's Reflection in the River's Flow

Sit by a river or stream, and watch the water's journey, its ever-changing pace. Imagine life as a river, flowing through twists and turns, encountering still pools and cascading falls. Reflect on how your life's journey mirrors the river's dynamic nature.

Exercise 3: Being a Small Human in a Vast Non-Human World

Gaze at the sky, the trees, and the vastness around you. Embrace your smallness in this grand tapestry. Consider your role as a caretaker of this Earth. How does it feel to be a small human amidst the vast non-human world? What insights might the natural world offer you?

Exercise 4: Embracing Curiosity and Intention

Imagine you're a curious explorer, setting foot in a realm untouched. What would you want to discover? Reflect on the value of curiosity as a tool for growth and discovery. How might this

trait help you on your journey through camp and beyond?

Exercise 5: Setting Intentions for the Camp Journey

An intention is a heartfelt goal that guides your actions and mindset. What do you wish to cultivate during camp? Find a quiet space, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths. Envision your camp experience. What intention arises? Craft a few words that capture this intention, holding it close as the river's current holds a secret.

During Camp Week: Echoes of the River's Song

Exercise 6: River's Rhythm and Nature's Song

Return to the river's side. Listen to its whispers and the echoes of life it carries. What patterns emerge in the river's flow? How does its rhythm connect to the greater pulse of nature? Reflect on how you resonate with this natural harmony.

Exercise 7: Curating Your Intentions

Gather with your fellow explorers. Share your intentions for camp, the guiding stars of your journey. What words did you choose? How do these intentions align with your aspirations for the week ahead? Notice the unity of shared purpose.

Exercise 8: Discovering the Unseen Through Absence

Up the Creek camps happen away from all the regular habits of life. Students are asked to leave their phones at home to be open to the opportunities that become available when we notice and engage the world around us. As you prepare to embark, how do you feel about leaving your phone behind? What might you gain from this intentional disconnect?

After Camp Week: Reflections Carried by the River

Exercise 9: Surprises Beyond the Screen

Reflect on your time without your phone. What did you discover in the absence of screens and the cadence of routine? What moments surprised you, those you might not have noticed if tethered to technology? Consider how disconnection led to deeper connection.

Exercise 10: Honoring the Lessons of the River*

Stand by the river once more, where your journey began. Observe how its waters continue to flow, embracing change. Reflect on the lessons of the river. How will you carry the wisdom of its dynamic currents into your daily life? How can you nurture your connection to the natural world and your own growth?

Engage in these exercises and let nature's rhythms guide your reflections. Much like the river's journey, your camp experience is a symphony of discovery, connection, and transformation, woven into the tapestry of your unique journey.