



San Juan Mountains Association

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Summer Camp Lottery FAQ

(Updated 2026)

1. What is the Summer Camp Lottery?

Due to high demand, camp spots are awarded through a weighted lottery system to ensure fairness. Each child is initially eligible for one camp week, with additional weeks assigned if space remains. This system helps ensure that as many families as possible have access to camp.

2. Which camps will have a lottery?

At this time, we are only implementing the lottery system for our most popular camp, La Plata County Junior Naturalist Field Camp. You can find more details about this camp [here](#).

3. How does the lottery process work?

Here is a breakdown of how this system will operate:

1. Parents and guardians complete the Google Form application before the deadline (Lottery is open Feb 1-14).
2. After the lottery closes, campers are each assigned a number and sorted based on top two camp choices and categories (e.g., members, locals, volunteers, scholarships).
3. A random number generator selects participants within each category, prioritizing those who have not yet received a camp placement.
4. On March 1st, families selected will receive a registration link via email and must complete registration by March 10th to confirm their spot.
5. Unclaimed spots will be offered to waitlisted families

4. What are the different categories (aka buckets) and how many spots are in each?

Each camp week has 35 spots available, divided into the following buckets:

Supporters ([Super Steward \(\\$50\) or above](#)) - 10 spots

Volunteers (at least 12 hours with SJMA per household) - 2 spots

Locals - 10 spots

Scholarship recipients - 3 spots

General - 10 spots

5. What if my child is not selected?

Families who are not selected will be notified via email and placed on a waitlist. If openings become available, waitlisted families will be contacted in the order of selection.

6. How will I know if my child has been selected?

Families will receive a confirmation email with camp assignments and registration instructions on March 1st. If you do not receive an email, check your spam folder or contact Education Director Adriana Stimax at astimax@sjma.org. All families will be notified whether they are placed in camp or on the waitlist.

7. Who counts as a local?

Those whose main place of residence is in one of the following zip codes: 81301, 81122, 81137, 81303, 81326, 81328, 81323, 81321, 81330, and 81334.

8. How many hours do I need to volunteer to be eligible for the volunteer bucket?

Your household must have volunteered for at least 12 recorded hours within the last calendar year with SJMA. If you are unsure of how many hours you volunteered, you can reach out to our volunteer coordinator at volunteer@sjma.org. If you are interested in volunteering, check out opportunities [here](#).

9. Do I get a benefit from being an SJMA supporter?

Yes! If you are a [Super Steward \(\\$50\) or above](#), your name will be placed in the supporter bucket (formerly the membership bucket) as well as the general bucket, increasing your chances of selection. If you are also a local, your name will be in three different buckets.

10. Do I still get a discount as a supporter?

Yes! [Super Steward \(\\$50\) or above](#) receive:

- 10% discount for camp registration fees
- 15% discount to our store
- other perks including exclusive events, gifts, and more

11. What if I have siblings that need to be in the same week of camp?

If you have multiple children in your household, please indicate in the lottery form if they need to attend together. If one child's name is drawn, the other(s) will automatically be included.

12. Can I enter the lottery for multiple camp weeks?

Yes, but initially, each child will be awarded only one week to allow more families to participate. If additional spots remain after all families have been awarded a spot, we will re-run the lottery for extra weeks. You can specify your preference for weeks on the lottery form.

13. How do you make sure the lottery is truly random?

Each person in the lottery is assigned a number, and we use a random number generator to select names fairly.

14. Why did you switch to a lottery system?

We received feedback that it was difficult for families to register when camp spots filled up within minutes of opening. In past years, registration opened at 7:00 am on March 1st, and most camps were full within an hour, leaving over 100 people on the waiting list. The lottery system ensures a more equitable opportunity for families who have struggled to register in previous years.

15. Are you doing anything else to increase capacity?

Yes! In 2023 we added a third van to our fleet (thanks to our donors and members!) and increased our summer camp capacity by a third. We are exploring options to add a fourth van to our fleet.

16. How can I increase my chances of getting picked?

If you want to increase your chances of being picked you can become an SJMA supporter, [Super Steward \(\\$50\) or above](#) or volunteer with SJMA for at least 12 total hours in a calendar year.

17. Will you still have a waiting list?

Yes. If demand exceeds capacity, we will maintain a waitlist. Families who are not selected in the lottery will automatically be added to the waitlist unless they opt out. If spots open up, we will randomly select campers from the waitlist. If you missed the lottery deadline, you can add your name to the waitlist via our website.

18. What are the important dates to mark on my calendar?

February 1st - lottery opens
February 14th - lottery closes
March 1st - camp placements are announced
March 10th - deadline to accept the spot, register, and pay

19. What happens if I miss the registration deadline?

If a selected family does not complete registration by March 10th, the spot will be offered to the next family on the waitlist.

20. How do I know if I'm in the lottery?

After submitting the form, you will automatically receive a confirmation email at the email address you provided. If you don't see the email, please check your spam or junk folder. If you still can't find it, contact us to confirm that your email address was entered correctly.

21. Will I get preference if I submit my form on February 1st?

No. All families who submit their lottery forms during the open window (February 1st at 7:00 AM – February 14th at 11:59 PM) will have an equal chance at camp placement.

22. What if my plans changed and I want to cancel my spot?

Please reach out to Education Director Adriana Stimax at astimax@sjma.org or 970-715-1092 as soon as possible so we can award your spot to someone on the waitlist. If you cancel more than two weeks before camp, we will issue a refund minus a \$20 processing fee. If it is less than two weeks before camp, we do not offer refunds.

23. Who can I contact if I have other questions or concerns?

Please reach out to Education Director Adriana Stimax at astimax@sjma.org or 970-715-1092.