

North Winds Institute Invites Homeschool Families to Explore Dry Tortugas National Park

ORLANDO, FL, UNITED STATES, July 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- North Winds Institute launched its latest experience-based learning opportunity last month, embarking on a two-day exploration of Dry Tortugas National Park and the historic waters around it with a group of homeschool students and families. Discovered by Ponce De Leon in the 16th Century and named for their abundant sea turtle population, the Dry Tortugas are 70 miles west of Key West and represent the nearest U.S. islands to the intersection of the Gulf and Atlantic waters.

The Dry Tortugas Adventure program includes a trip on the [Yankee Freedom Ferry](#), a narrated educational tour that is one of the only ways to access the National Park. The same guide, a local expert on the history of the Dry Tortugas, then provides a walking tour of Fort Jefferson, the largest brick masonry structure in America and the third-largest fort built by the U.S.

During the Yankee Freedom narrated tour, the ferry passes over many shipwrecks, as many as 200-300, including the Atocha (Nuestra Señora de Atocha), as well as abundant sea life such as sea turtles, dolphins, and migrating birds. This serves as a rich educational opportunity that cannot be experienced any other way.



North Winds Institute students learn about nautical archeology as they examine artifacts from the Santa Clara shipwreck at the Mel Fisher Museum in Key West, Florida.



North Winds Institute's Dry Tortugas Adventure program includes a tour of Fort Jefferson, the largest brick masonry structure in the Americas, covering 16 acres and incorporating more than 16 million bricks.

“After years of running educational experiences in Key West, I’m thrilled to add Dry Tortugas National Park as one of the national treasures we can share with our students and families,” said Laura Islas, founder of North Winds Institute. “The Dry Tortugas have a rich military history and an iconic marine environment. These waters house the most vibrant coral reefs in U.S. territory. It is fitting to make our first trips there during our summer of celebrating America’s 250th birthday.”

The Dry Tortugas were conveyed to the U.S. as part of the transfer of Florida

from Spain. Due to the strategic value of the location in protecting southern coastlines, construction of Fort Jefferson began in 1846. The Union held the Fort throughout the Civil War and used it primarily as a military prison. In 1865, four co-conspirators of President Abraham Lincoln’s assassination, including Samuel Mudd, were incarcerated at the fort. Mudd, the doctor who treated John Wilkes Booth, eventually volunteered his expertise to combat a Yellow Fever outbreak at Fort Jefferson, prior to his presidential pardon in 1869.

Established as a national park in 1992, the Dry Tortugas also have a rich ecological history. Famously, the islands are the only regular nesting site in the continental United States for several tropical seabirds, including the sooty tern, brown noddy, masked booby, and magnificent frigatebird. Additionally, the islands act as a crucial first-landfall stopover for dozens of migrating neotropical songbirds.

NWI will offer another Dry Tortugas experience next month. Potential activities include the fort tour, a shipwreck adventure, saltwater fishing, and snorkeling. Students receive curriculum materials and books for pre- and post-study of maritime history, nautical archeology, and marine ecology.

In addition to the upcoming Dry Tortugas adventures, NWI has partnered with Gatorama in Palmdale, Florida, for an educational experience on August 21. Students will have the chance to see baby gators hatch, witness an alligator feeding show, see a tortoise and pythons, and more.

NWI is an approved direct pay provider for Step Up for Students in Florida. Step Up is a state-approved, nonprofit scholarship funding organization that helps administer scholarships for Florida schoolchildren. NWI has similar relationships in several other states, including its recent approval as a provider for the newly launched Texas Education Freedom Accounts. These



The Tortugas Harbor Lighthouse, formerly the Garden Key light, was first built in the 1820s and was rebuilt on one of the bastions of Fort Jefferson in 1876 following damage to the original structure from multiple hurricanes.

scholarships can provide funding for most educational expenses associated with NWI programs for participating students.

To reserve a spot in an upcoming program or view a full schedule of upcoming NWI experiences, visit northwindsinstitute.com.

The NWI Adventure Club is designed to bring families together in a shared pursuit of adventure, resilience, and building faith. The club nurtures curiosity, grit, and growth through hands-on experiences and calculated risks. Families connect deeply with the world and each other. Whether scaling a mountain, navigating a river, uncovering hidden histories, or building a rocket, families build character and bonds that last a lifetime.

NWI also exhibits at the nation's preeminent homeschooling conferences, including the upcoming [Tampa Bay Home School Conference](#). In addition to having an exhibition booth, NWI will teach a workshop titled "Developing Resilience Through Adventure." The Tampa Bay Home School Conference is Saturday, July 18, at Innisbrook Resort, 36750 U.S. Highway 19 North, Palm Harbor, FL 34684. Conference attendees who pre-purchase admission online at tbhcgroupp.com can receive a \$5 discount with the coupon code NORTH26 at checkout.

For more information about North Winds Institute and its programming, please visit northwindsinstitute.com or email info@northwindsinstitute.com.

About North Winds Institute

North Winds Institute promotes the vigorous pursuit of knowledge through adventure, with hands-on activities and unique experiences forming the foundation of its programs. NWI aims to instill a love of learning while teaching how to learn, encompassing the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of each individual.

Laura Islas

North Winds Institute

info@northwindsinstitute.com

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/926378679>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.