

Wilderness Weddings - Information for Couples

The following information has been developed from several sources to help couples gain a better understanding of the wedding basics. Doug and Jack are available to help you on your special day.

There is no particular format or ceremony required for a couple to be married. The manner in which the ceremony is conducted is for the couple and their minister to determine. There are a few key elements that make the marriage legal.

- The couple has a valid marriage license
- An authorized public official or authorized member of the clergy performs the marriage ceremony
- The couple must state in the presence of at least one other witness that each takes the other as his or her spouse. This is also known as the **vows**.
- The officiant pronounces the couple as married
- The completed marriage license is returned for recording

The Marriage License (New York)

If you are getting married in New York State detailed information can be found at <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/4210/>

Where to get a marriage license

The couple who intends to be married must apply in person for a marriage license to any town or city clerk in the state. The application for a license must be signed by both applicants in the presence of the town or city clerk. See Appendix A to help you find a town office in the Adirondack counties where Wilderness Wedding is located..

Valid time period of the marriage license

The marriage ceremony may not take place within 24 hours from the exact time that the license was issued. The marriage license is valid for 60 calendar days, beginning the day after it is issued.

Cost of the marriage license

A marriage license issued by a town or city clerk outside of New York City costs \$40. This fee includes the issuance of a Certificate of Marriage Registration after the officiant returns the completed license. This certificate serves as notice that a record of the marriage is on file.

Authorized Member of the Clergy

Both Doug Fitzgerald and Jack Drury are non-denominational ministers ordained by the Universal Life Church and can legally marry couples in all 50 States.

Vows and the Pronouncement of Marriage

As noted above, couples need to exchange vows and be pronounced as married. Doug or Jack will work with you to plan a ceremony that will be special for you.

Developing Your Unique Ceremony

Broadwing Adventures - Wilderness Weddings wants to help you develop a ceremony that is meaningful to you.

Other components:

- Location – choose a place that appeals to you and that your guests will enjoy. Wilderness Weddings can perform your ceremony in an outdoor or indoor location. Be sure to secure permission to use the venue that you choose. We are not wedding planners, but we can suggest locations that might work for you.
- Length of the Ceremony - The simplest ceremony can be completed in about 5 minutes, but most will take about 20 minutes while some may even last up to 45 minutes if there are a number of components to it. If you and your guests are comfortable and dry then you can make the ceremony as elaborate as you like. If there is no seating, it is too hot or too cold, it might rain, or you are in a busy location, then you should keep it fairly short.
- Making the Ceremony Special – To be legal a ceremony only needs to include vows and pronouncement of marriage, but you will likely want it to be more than that. Here are some additional components to consider.

Typical Ceremonies have most of these components:

- A Welcoming with Gathering Words
- An Opening Prayer or Blessing
- Support from Families
- Charge to the Couple
- Consent
- Vows (required)
- A Blessing of the Couple
- The Giving of Rings
- Marriage Pronouncement (required)
- Benediction
- Presentation of the Couple

Additional parts - think about if any of these will be special for you or not.

- Affirmation of the Community
- Candle, wine or sand ceremonies. Remember that candles probably won't work outside.
- Ribbon ceremony, Dove/Butterfly Release, Breaking of Glass

There are many useful resources available to help you determine what will be special for you. A book we enjoy using is The Ultimate Wedding & Ceremony Workbook, by Reverend Amy E. Long, it is a step-by-step guide for all the little details. To purchase this book use the link on the Wilderness Weddings page of our website.

<http://www.broadwingadventures.com/5weddings.html>

After the Wedding

It is our responsibility to return the completed license to the town office that issued it. We will do so either in person or by registered mail. You should receive the Certificate of Marriage Registration in about two weeks. If it does not arrive, please contact the Town that issued the license and let us know if there are any issues we can help resolve.

Appendix A – Finding a Town Office

A couple who intends to be married in New York State must apply in person for a marriage license to any town or city clerk in the state.

Listed below is information for finding a town office in the communities near the location of Wilderness Weddings. Each county lists the offices of the towns in that county in a different manner, you can use the links here, but you may be better off calling the county for specific information.

- Clinton County – 518- 565-4700
 - <http://www.clintoncountygov.com/Departments/CC/CountyClerkCertificates.html>
- Essex County – 518- 873-3600
 - <http://www.co.essex.ny.us/downloads/townvillageclerks.pdf>
- Franklin County – 518- 481-1681
 - <http://franklincony.org/content/CommunityCategories>
- Hamilton County – 518-548-6385
 - <http://www.hamiltoncounty.com/search/node/Town%20clerk>
- Herkimer County - 315-867-1129
 - <http://herkimercounty.org/content/Generic/View/5:field=documents:/content/Documents/File/2171.pdf>
- St. Lawrence County - 315-379-2237
 - <http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Departments/CountyClerk/Certificates>

If you need information for other counties in New York, let us know and we will help you.