

# OZARK WILDERNESS BOYS CAMP



Issue #4, Spring 2024

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## Wildlife

The Ozark Camp property has proven to hold abundant wildlife.

Evans Mountain stands on the south side, the Saint Francis River lines the western corner. A beautiful pond marks the center. Thick woods, rolling fields, overgrown pastures, and brushy edges make up the rest. All are havens for a great many species.

Observing wildlife is good for character development. If you don't believe that, read Job Chapter 39.

Let me start with the less desirable creatures. Armadillos and feral hogs root in the fields at night. Being invasive species, neither of them seems to belong. Rats take up residence in any abandoned building, vehicle, or lumber pile. Our copperhead sightings outnumber our black snake sightings. Isaiah 34:11-15 comes to mind.

Raccoons prowl the whole place, as does the occasional skunk or opossum. Woodchucks abound. Coyotes often work up their eerie chorus in the evening.

At least two bobcats frequent the area. We saw an average-sized one several times, mousing in daylight hours. And a tiny one commonly appeared along the lane where he'd scoot to the side and crouch in the weeds to watch as you went by. We affectionately named them "Bobby" and "Little Bobby".

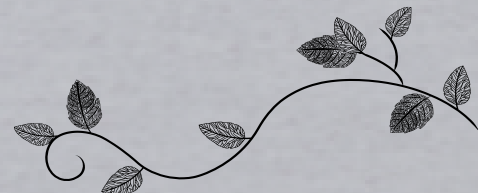
Whitetails, browsing the edges, keep us hunters alert and talking.

Gray squirrels. Fox squirrels. They're here, and they're busy.

Beavers circle the pond on calm mornings and manage the course in the creek beside the pond.

Basking turtles line up on the muddy banks with little regard for each other's personal space.

Bass. Crappie. Frogs. They're lurking below.



It's a birder's paradise. Great Blue Herons, Little Green Herons, egrets, and kingfishers take up their posts around the pond each day in the summer, wading and waiting.



Owls speak up from the dark woods, reluctant to show themselves in the light of day.

Almost every morning through the fall we'd hear the cry of Bald Eagles from the cliffs above the river and for several days there seemed to be a territorial war among them. Once, we watched as one eagle pursued another, gaining slowly with heavy wingbeats. Suddenly, from high above, another appeared. Like a growing dot in the sky, with wings locked back, it dove with incredible speed and hit the pursuing eagle hard. Talons locked, beaks together, they spun dizzying circles, falling, and falling... For hundreds of feet they fell, spinning, and just before they hit the ground they parted and flew away.

There's waterfowl. A flock of geese dropping in for a landing on the shining water on an October morning... Who doesn't love the sight?

One morning we watched two male Hooded Mergansers flashing their crests, vying for attention, and swimming circles around a female that would dive under when their loop closed too tightly. She'd reappear several yards away, only to have them come scooting after to resume their parade of scrapping with each other and showing off to her.

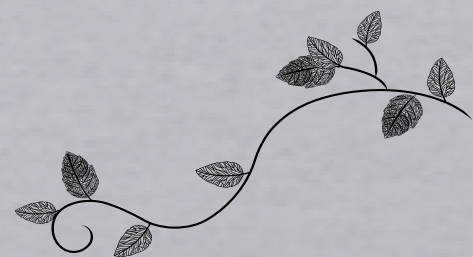
A Northern Harrier hunts the fields here nearly every day. He hovers low, watching the ground. Then, gripping the breeze with a strong wing, he drifts sideways as the breeze pulls him along, the nearby ground now a motion picture for him. Just as that breeze has pulled him recklessly off course, he releases and wings his way off to hang on another. Hovering. Watching. Drifting. Looks like fun.

Now, in the cold of winter, the little birds are still here. Juncos, finches, sparrows, Tufted Titmice, and cardinals visit the feeder on our porch rail.



And we're thinking of the day when the woodcocks will perform their "sky dance" over the marshy fields at twilight. When the first spring peeper will speak up at night, holding forth until he's joined by others. And the wild turkeys will gobble from the roost at daybreak. Each proclaiming that "Spring Is Here!"

From the foot of Evans Mountain,  
Albert Stoltzfus, Camp Director



# 2023 Project and Financial Report

Total Income for 2023: \$367,020.97

Projects Completed in 2023:

- 1/2-mile Camp Lane cleared and built
- 56'X80' Maintenance Building with 24' lean-to ¾ completed
- Multiple improvements made to existing house
- 1/3-mile primary electric line buried to main camp building site
- Rough grading for several service lanes completed
- Property improvements and cleanup
- Basic supply of equipment and tools donated or purchased



There were numerous items donated to camp in 2023. The list includes: a Skid-steer (\$40K value), ¾-ton Pickup, Utility Trailer, Chainsaw, Jobsite Generator, Printer-Copier, Slide Projector and more.

Many man-hours of labor were cheerfully given. We thank God and each one who has contributed to the abundant blessings we experienced.

## 2024 Financial Budget

### Camp Operating Expense

Camp Operating Expenses.....	\$126,469.30
Loan Repayment for Land Purchase.....	\$215,000.00
Total Camp Operating Expense.....	\$341,469.30

### Building Projects for 2024

Maintenance Building Completion.....	\$50,000.00
Commercial Well.....	\$50,000.00
Office/House.....	\$210,000.00
Stone House Remodel.....	\$163,725.00
Shower House.....	\$100,000.00
Total 2024 Building Projected expense.....	\$573,725.00

### Funds Raised as of 1/1/2024

Cash on Hand/Funds raised for Office/House.....	\$270,000.00
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**Funds Needed in 2024.....\$645,194.30**

**The Budget shown above reflects estimated retail values of the projects planned for 2024. We anticipate donations of labor and materials that should significantly reduce the actual costs.**

The completion of these projects will mark the establishment of the basic facilities needed for the initial phase of enrolling boys.

# Camp Updates

## Staff

Ryan Troyer returned home to Leon, Iowa after serving as a Maintenance Man and Builder for 6 months. Thank you, Ryan, for all your hard work and skill in operating equipment.

Lee Yoder from Auburn, Kentucky arrived in February to serve as a Maintenance Man and Builder. Welcome, Lee, we are glad to have you here.

## Open House

On June 15 we're planning for an open house day on the Camp property. A dinner will be served on the grounds. More information will be posted on the Camp website closer to the date.

Three items that have been donated to Camp in 2024 are a new pressure washer, a 2010 Dodge Caravan, and a 2010 Bobcat Mini Excavator. Each of these will be very useful in the work. Praise God for these generous gifts!



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### Camp Contact Info

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