

OZARK WILDERNESS BOYS CAMP



Issue #5, Summer 2024

Restoration

Like a child who isn't sure if he wants his picture taken, the old stone house on our camp property attempted to half-hide behind three dilapidated outbuildings and eager brambles. Its once stately pillars crumbling, it stood, and listened to all the varying opinions about its value.

"That could make a Camp office. I can just see it."

"I don't know... If it was mine, I'd push it over."

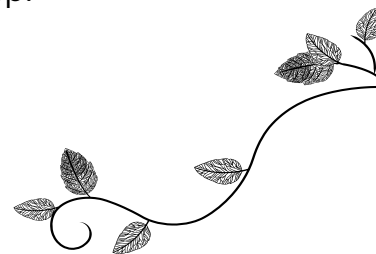
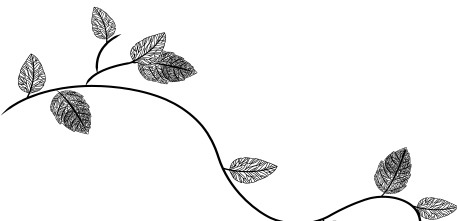
With its front door lock seized shut, it grudgingly allowed visitors to enter its back door after making them wade through straggly weeds and climb over scattered tools, shattered glass, and old magazines in the back sunroom. It listened as the strangers toured its interior, snooping about on the abandoned, half-gutted main level, where creaky kitchen cabinets and faded wall hangings hung on, remembering a life that once was.

"This thing is cool... Check this out."

The strangers would venture into the carpeted upstairs, peering into its dirty attic spaces where mounds of rat feces revealed the primary residents. Then they'd descend the rickety stairs into its musty basement where pools of water with scummy green and orange shorelines receded.

What would the verdict be? Worthy of salvation? Or condemned for good?

Our board chairman stated it well when he said, "If we're gonna save that thing, somebody has to have a vision for it." So true with any restoration project. Especially when we think of what it means to restore a broken and messed up life. Thank God, our Saviour has a vision for us. And as we look into the future of this camp and its mission of restoration in the lives of boys and families, it will mean the same thing: To see what could be. That's the first step.



What will it take? Is it worth it? Doug Yoder, our building overseer, and his brother David, a valued board member, spent more than an hour looking the place over from top to bottom and writing the figures. Counting the cost. That's step two.

The decision was made. A new blueprint for remodeling was drawn up. Planning. That's step three.

A spirited crew of youth from Heavener, Oklahoma spent two days gutting the interior: braving the dust, the itchiness, and the smells. Same with our lives. The bad stuff gotta go. That's step four.



Our builder, Chief Lee, removed the crumbling front porch. As much as we liked the stately look its pillars gave the house, they were fractured and as good as a façade. No facades. All part of step four.

A talented crew of men from Auburn Kentucky, dug around the basement and installed footer drains and waterproofing. Foundation Work. Protection. More necessary steps.

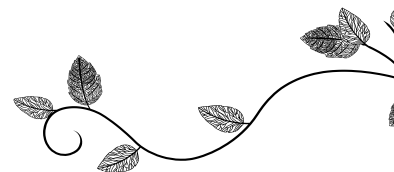
Now it stands in its vulnerable state, with tarps over parts of the roof, some parts looking better and some looking worse, waiting for the process of becoming a respectable home again to continue. That's part of restoration in our lives too. Patience. At every step.

Many people have expressed appreciation that we are salvaging the place. It is a landmark of the original sort, and one sentiment that folks have commonly shared is that "it belongs here", referring to the symbol it is of Camp lifestyle and values.

We've only started, but it's exciting. There is nobility in the very act of restoration. And it will be wonderful to see the beauty and the life that will come to be in an old house that is born again.

And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations... Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, And instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Isaiah 61:4a,7a NKJV

Learning life's lessons,
Albert Stoltzfus
Camp Director



Buckhorn Cabin



On May 7, a crew from Shawnee Structures in Bedford, Pennsylvania set up the house that was ordered from Buckhorn Builders in Ohio. In two days' time, it went from two halves on trailers to a place that looked attractive to live in. This house will serve as staff living quarters and as an office during the first stage of operation. Thank You to each one who has contributed to this project.



Proud Parents

Early in the spring, out of the dozen geese that were hanging around the pond, two claimed it as their own. Mike and Jane, as our children called them, provided lots of entertainment. In a flock, geese are known to have at least one “watchman” while the others feed, and we observed this to be true even with just a pair. We could always tell who had guard duty, as one’s head was usually erect while the other fed.



One day, when Jane spent the afternoon on the island plucking breast feathers and arranging things, we knew the time had come. For the next few weeks Jane faithfully kept the nest, while Mike, like an anxious dad-to-be, waited, floating in the shade along the edge or feeding in the nearby fields. But not all was down-time for him. Whenever another pair of geese would land in the field or on the pond, Mike was instant. With lowered head, loud warnings, and a direct flight, he would drive them off. Loyal, and fiercely possessive of the whole place. Sometimes it took long rounds of scrapping and yelling at each other till the intruders would finally resign and head along.

After weeks of this, seven goslings arrived, and the proud parents would take the family out for a swim or a stroll in the yard. A few days later they moved on, leaving us wondering where they went and grateful that, at least for a time, they had made their home beside ours.

Opportunities to Contribute

Stone House Remodel: The stone house described in this newsletter is being remodeled for staff living quarters and can only be redeemed with a cost. The estimated cost to expand the upstairs level and bring the whole place to a fully functional living space using retail figures is \$163,725.

Loan Payment: \$580,000 of the initial land purchase for the camp was through interest-free 2-year loans. Some of those loans have been extended or given as donations to the purchase. The loans that are due to be paid by November 2024 total \$215,000.



Mattress Purchase: Recently Camp purchased 3 dozen camp mattresses. These will serve as cots for work groups and will be used in the campsites when boys arrive. The total cost of the mattresses with shipping is \$3,732.03.

Canoe Order: Allegany Boys Camp is placing an order for more Old Town canoes and offering to combine an order for Ozark Boys Camp. Because of their outfitter status with the canoe supplier and the quantity of the order, they can purchase the canoes at approximately 2/3 the standard retail cost (saving about \$500 per boat). These orders are not placed every year, so this is an opportunity to save costs in the future. Purchasing 9 canoes will provide enough for two groups of boys to be canoeing and still have one spare boat. This order will total approximately \$9,000.

Operating Costs: As the camp work is growing and the momentum of projects is increasing, the costs of operation and materials are increasing as well. If the projects planned for 2024 are to stay on schedule, there is a need for a higher regular income. We are looking for supporters who will commit to regular donations toward the operating costs of camp.

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