

OZARK WILDERNESS BOYS CAMP

Issue #6, Fall 2024



Evans Mountain

As you enter our camp lane, you can see a mountain in the backdrop. Our camp is nestled at its base. A topographical map of the area tells us that this is Evans Mountain: elevation 1,232 feet. Not a very high mountain, but nonetheless, a significant mountain.

Throughout history, mountains have served as landmarks. Both geographical and spiritual.

In Exodus 3, when God called Moses to his lifework as a leader, he was in the back of the desert at Horeb, the mountain of God. When Moses told God how overwhelming this calling was, God told him that the sign of His presence would be his serving God on “this mountain”.

Fascinating. It’s as if, as He’s talking, God is nodding over his shoulder to Mount Horeb.

Long later Moses returns. He’s now leading a multitude. He looks across the desert, and on the far horizon, he can see the mountain. A geographical waypoint for the traveler.

They near the mountain. Now, amid the noise and tumult of the multitude, when Moses looks at this mountain, surely, it’s a reminder in his heart of the day when it was just him and God alone in this awesome place. A spiritual waypoint in the journey of his life.

What kind of landmark is Evans Mountain?

From a fire tower north of here it is noteworthy that, geographically, while looking south, this mountain is the first one in a range that lies beyond it.

We have found evidence that long before we set up camp here, the Native Americans did the same. I believe this mountain was a landmark along their travel routes. They climbed to the crags along its rim and watched the eagles soar. They fished the Saint Francis River below. They drew water from the streams. They sat beside their campfires, shaping new spear points, planning new hunts, and telling tales of hunts from the past. Their children roamed what now is our camp, laughing and playing. All this and much more under the constant watch of this mountain.

In more recent history, it received the name that it now carries. Local history records show the presence of an Evans family, so it seems to be named after a family rather than an individual.

Is it a spiritual landmark? When Allegany Boys Camp was established, Brian Martin, the camp director, had a theme as he told others about the work of Camp. From a scene in Psalm 73, he would explain that we were establishing a sanctuary. His words were true. To many boys and families, the camp became a sanctuary.



It is the same here at this camp. We're establishing a sanctuary. A boy's world. A place like home. When I look at our property map and see that little summit of Evans Mountain reaching toward the sky, I see it as a monument of the plans that God has had all along for this place to become a sanctuary.

And maybe, in some way, what is experienced here can reflect these beautiful verses from Isaiah:

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.

Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths."

Albert Stoltzfus
Camp Director

ENROLLMENT FOR BOYS

Our target date for enrolling the first boys into Camp is in the spring of 2025. While we are not yet prepared to complete the process of interviews and pre-placement visits, we would like to establish a waiting list for families who are interested in enrolling their sons when the camp opens. If you are interested in enrolling a boy, or know someone who is, please contact us.



The old stone house featured in our last newsletter has undergone more transformation in the last few months. Several crews from Auburn, Kentucky have volunteered their skills: laying blocks for the front porch and back entryway; completely reframing the upper story; and shingling the roof.



BENEFIT AUCTION

On August 2, a spirited crew of folks from Kalona, Iowa held a benefit auction for Ozark Boys Camp in their community. The event was very successful. They served excellent food to more than 500 people. The supper and auction combined brought a significant contribution of funds for our camp. Thank you to each one who worked to host this event and to each one who contributed.



STAFF UPDATES

Brandon and Ruth Bowman and their son Forrest moved to Camp in June. Brandon is serving as our first camp supervisor and Ruth is taking a part-time secretary role. Welcome to Camp, Bowmans.

August 17 was the wedding day for Lee Yoder and Krista Petersheim. Chief Lee has been working at Camp for a while already. Now he is bringing his new bride to make their home here. Welcome to Camp, Miss Krista.

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