



OZARK WILDERNESS BOYS CAMP

Issue #10, Fall 2025

Boys - They're Here Now

We've been waiting for this day for a long time. The day when we could enroll our first campers and join them in many pursuits. The pursuit of goals. The pursuit of new patterns. The pursuit of nature. The pursuit of wisdom. The pursuit of manhood.

Many other things have been waiting for them too. Trails, waiting to be blazed. Tents, waiting to be built. Fish, waiting to be caught. Conversations, waiting to be had. Skills, waiting to be learned. Plants and creatures, waiting to be identified. Adventures all over the place... Waiting.



In August, we welcomed our first two boys to Camp. They were both thirteen years old. With them, we established the Ranger group.

I remember when I was thirteen. I had great plans to live in a cabin with no electricity. Plans to “live off the land”. It was all going to work out.

I remember trying to navigate the complexities of relationships at thirteen. How was *it* all supposed to work out?

Thirteen. It's like the threshold of manhood. Here we are. What we do today determines in part what lies ahead.

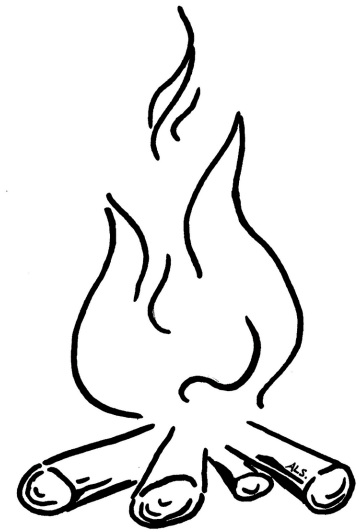
There is smoke rising from the cook-tent in the campsite. The sound of splitting wood in the wood corral. Voices along the trail. A pow-wow fire is lit each evening. A lantern now hangs in the chief's tent.

In reference to the traditional use of the title “Ranger”, we asked our campers one day what it means to be a Ranger. One responded that it means to be a “Protector of the Wilderness”. A few of us staff members smiled at each other as the title warmed our hearts. I suppose in future days the meaning could be explored much further, but for now, “Well said, my friend.”

Albert Stoltzfus - Camp Director



The Right Thing at The Right Time



There has probably been many a child who wondered why the big people blow on a fire to bring it to life when he blows on his candles to put them out. What's the difference?

To us "big people" this is an understood concept, yet how often do we fail to grasp something parallel in relationships? How often do we decide *if it's good for one, it must be good for all, or, if a little is good, more must be better?*

One of my biggest faults when I'm building a campfire is piling sticks that are too big onto a newborn fire. I see the flame rise. That question of *will it take?* is answered. And I immediately treat it like a grown-up; doubling the size of sticks that I expect it to burn. I have often overwhelmed a fire to death by expecting it to handle bigger sticks than it was ready for.

A similar phenomenon happens with jostling. When a young fire is prodded or kicked, it often experiences a major setback. But a more mature fire, that lies on a steady bed of coals, is usually invigorated by this same jostling.

People are the same. As we work with boys here, there will often be times when we will need to refrain from expecting them to handle something that will overwhelm them. Perhaps half a year later, though, that will be the very challenge they need to grow.

While watching fires burn, I've noticed that if the wood is spaced too far apart, the flame doesn't have the "community" that it needs to feed from one piece to the other and thereby grow. It is unable to span the gap, and each piece of wood becomes like its own island. However, if the "community" of wood is placed too tightly together, the flame will be stifled.

To me, this is a beautiful example of a community of people. Too much distance between us and the flame of love and goodwill will be unable to unite between us. No healthy space between us, and the flame will be stifled.

The next time you have a campfire, test these things. Spread the wood out, and watch the flame diminish. Push it together, and watch it flare up. Cram it too tightly, and watch it protest. Prod it, and see if it's mature. Where is a better place to ponder than by a campfire?

Albert Stoltzfus - Camp Director

Introducing... ***Evans Mountain Journal***

Descriptions of Camp Life

The Great Day

It started long ago, an Indian named Comuchia was sitting on a big fat rock with a leather guard on his thigh chipping out arrowheads. “Hoo” Comuchia heard. It was late at night. Birds started chirping to get their young ones to come home. Owls were starting their hooting and hunting, coyotes were walking around in their hunting packs, and wolves in the distance were howling. Comuchia had been working all day long in the hot sun. Comuchia finally finished his beautiful white-flint arrowhead. “Boom!” Comuchia looked up and there was a big red fire with a black sphere coming right towards Comuchia. The sun rose and rain fell and time went on. Many years later, an Archeologist named Dana, helped the Rangers and the supervisors on the great dig to find some amazing Indian Artifacts.

Aiden - Ranger

“What Happened Here?”

That is the question we were trying to answer under the blazing heat of a mid-August day. Dana Atkinson joined us for a few days to help us dig into the history right here on the camp property. Chief Dana got us started digging a long shallow trench as well as a deeper “profile” dig underneath the powerline, where we had already found a number of arrowheads previously. All the dirt dug out of each hole was carefully sifted to make sure we didn’t miss any clues to help us answer our question, “What happened here?”

I was working beside a number of young, eager archeologists and pretty soon we screened out a number of flint flakes. So, what did happen here? Somebody, hundreds of years ago, sat at this very spot shaping chunks of flint into a lethal arrowhead. Along with something of an answer, those flint flakes raised a lot of questions. Was it a band of hunters who randomly passed through here? Was it a seasonal campsite? Was there a small village on this knoll? What happened here?

We continued screening bucketful after bucketful of dirt. Suddenly, I spotted it. A perfect spear point appeared out of the dirt. I snatched it and held it aloft. There were oo’s and ah’s and “I wanna see!” In my hand was a masterpiece made by a master craftsman from hundreds of years ago.

There was a surge of energy in our efforts to find more links to those who lived at the foot of Evan’s Mountain years ago. At one point there was a round of exclamations over some charcoal uncovered more than a foot in the ground. Maybe they sat around a fire, late into the night, knapping arrowheads and swapping tales. Who knows what happened here!? Chief Dana got us started down an exciting trail. Where will it lead? That’s the allure of archeology.

Chief Brandon - Supervisor



Many Thanks

Thank you for working and praying alongside us to reach this milestone of enrolling our first campers. God and His people have been very gracious to us through this part of the journey. Recently, a Mahindra tractor was donated to Camp in excellent condition. It will be very useful in our work. Thank you for your generosity.



Opportunities to Get Involved

Camp Representative: We are working to strengthen our communication link with midwestern churches by having individuals who will partner with us to represent Camp to their home congregation. We have been contacting church leaders who can assist in choosing individuals for this role. The Camp Representative will:

- Be a key person to inform his group about the events and needs of the camp.
- Be on a list to receive specific camp updates on a regular basis.

Monthly Pledge: While we have been blessed with many generous donations, there is an ongoing need for finances. Our goal is to have a more consistent income, and we are asking for individuals to join a team who will:

- Give a pledged monthly donation toward the work
- Receive regular updates on the progress and the camp's financial state.

Please contact us if you are interested in more information.

Bed Sheets for the Campsite: We are needing more bed sheets and blankets made to fit the camp cots used by the chiefs and campers. If you are part of a group who would like to help with this, please contact us for sizes.

Library Books: If you have wholesome or educational books that you would like to find a new home for, please consider donating them to our camp library.

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Send donations to:

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