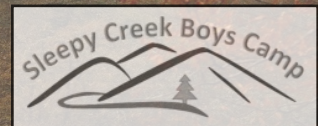


# Backwoods Bulletin



“ The greatest  
glory in living  
lies not in never  
failing, but in  
rising every time  
we fall.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Is That the Rising Sun?

Is that the rising sun over on the eastern ridge, or is it a fresh new day, a new beginning, a chance to start again, a chance to make more mistakes and learn from them, a time to grow closer together and farther away from the things that bind us?

Is that the scream from someone who has jumped into cold water, or is it a shout of joy, a thankfulness to be alive on a new day, the friendship of those around us, and what that connection means?

Are those stars in the night sky up above us, or is it God telling us to get back up again, try harder tomorrow, rely on His strength more and more, find peace and strength and hope in the hillsides of West Virginia?

Is that the fire from pow-wow, or is it the healing power of a listening ear, of affirmation after doing our best, of magic in the middle of hardship?

Is this camp, or is it the best place you'll ever know? Are we building tents in the woods and eating meals together and walking lantern-lit trails, or are we walking each other home?

Summertime came. The hard-packed snow and ice gave way to days of dull clouds and misty skies. Sometime, I'm not for sure the exact day, the wood stove that kept us alive all winter died away to ashes for the last time. The coats cleared off the hooks. Insulated boots were left forgotten under the bed, and the water shoes in the bottom of the locker box made their way to weekly use. At some point, the dull skies became clear with violent thunderstorms rising in the afternoon.

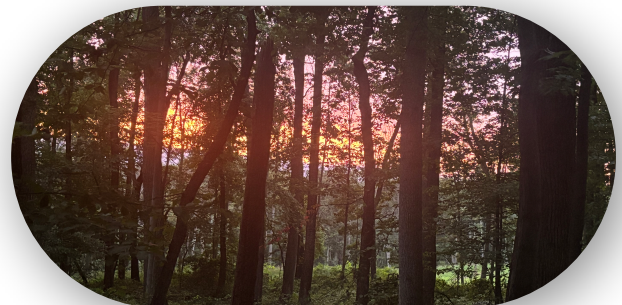
I went swimming in Johnson's Mill, then went swimming there again. Then I lost count and have only kept track of the water slowly falling to a trickle over the rocks into the pond. The bridge is repaired from the springtime floods, and no currents will sweep you away. Then, one chuckwagon, Chief Tye held up what looked like a grossly overgrown goldfish but turned out to be a trophy koi.

If you happened to stop by our haven, you might find us making raspberry ice cream to go with Saturday night burgers, or the Frontiersmen might be wiping sweat from their faces as they pack buckets upon buckets of food for their three-week canoe trip. Miss Rhonda made blackberry sauce for the pancakes from fresh blackberries on power line. The bear came and dug through the dumpster for the third night in a row. Miss Sharon put more goldfish in the chapel pond, and two turtles, three fence lizards, as well as four newts have a habitat within our care.

Fall's coming soon. The fireflies have ceased their midnight light festivals. The water in Sleepy Creek has dropped and dropped some more. Even the weather has cooled some, though it may warm up again. And when fall comes, we'll make apple cider, and we'll use it to make apple butter. There'll be a lot more leaves to rake up on fire barrier and the trails. The air will start to get nippy, and we'll pull our hoodies from the locker box, and we'll light the lanterns in the mornings too.

And then we'll settle in and watch the magic. We'll plan some educational trips while eating pear cobbler, and we'll watch the days go by. Then we'll brush the first snow off the canoes, put another layer on, and light the wood stove for another winter.

Yet will it be winter with miserable cold and snow, or will it be another magical season at camp? And is it God who changes the seasons and makes the mockingbird to sing in the treetops and lights the hot summer sun over West Virginia? -Chief Brandon



---

# Canoe Trips

---

## Why do we go on canoe trips at camp?

Let's take a look at some of the ways our problem solving strategies are put to work while on a canoe trip. First of all, nothing is predictable while out on the river. The weather changes, log jams and rapids come up, and dams need portaged around. Every night a campsite is found and then set up. All meals have been planned ahead of time and then prepared on the trip. Security and trust are being built as the group encounters and overcomes these hardships along the way. Our teamwork skills are put to test while we are learning to operate a canoe successfully and even in our morning and evening chores while out on the river. Trusting chiefs to help guide a group on the journey is all part of the wilderness therapeutic program that builds trust, unity, and strength in the group.

If we are not careful, daily life at camp can become redundant. Taking a canoe trip can renew our passion and excitement about life, our campsite, our ability to work through things and solve problems, our respect towards each other, and the way we all can work together.

A canoe trip is perhaps one of the most effective type of trip to help solidify cohesiveness, responsibility, and teamwork, as well as a sense of accomplishment and adventure.

Another important aspect of the canoe trips is the planning process. This requires a few months of extensive planning. We plan a commissary list which includes all of our tools, dishes, cooking utensils, and sleeping equipment. We plan each meal for each day which has to be in a certain budget. We plan our starting point, ending point, portages, and restocking points. A day plan and an itinerary is written for each day. We learn to tie knots, build fires, and set up tents before we leave. We learn basic canoe and water safety along with packing a canoe correctly. The better we plan, the smoother our canoe trip will be.

As groups have returned from canoe trips, the differences noticed in each one of the campers are huge! They feel accomplished and successful. They stand taller and straighter; they look you in the eye; hand shakes are solid. Intentionality and respect for their group is very evident. After planning, preparing, and accomplishing a 3-4 week canoe trip brings a satisfied and settled feeling to each camper.



On the next two pages, we will try to give you a small picture of the Trailblazer's 4 week canoe trip on the Susquehanna River and the Frontiersmen's 3 week canoe trip on the Green River.



## Canoe trips continued..

May 5 Monday 4:57 p.m.

Today we got up at 6:30, cleaned up camp, and ate breakfast. Got on the river at like 11 and like 2 miles in we came to a log jam so I cleared some of it out so we could move on through. At noon we stopped for lunch and then siesta. Then canoed for some more. In total we canoed for like 6 miles. Goodnight. -Trailblazer



Friday May 16

Well well another day in the books. Today we hit the water at 8:45 with an absolute down pour. We went 9 miles and found camp around 10:45 and now sun is out and feels absolutely amazing. And tomorrow is restock. LET'S GO. -Trailblazer

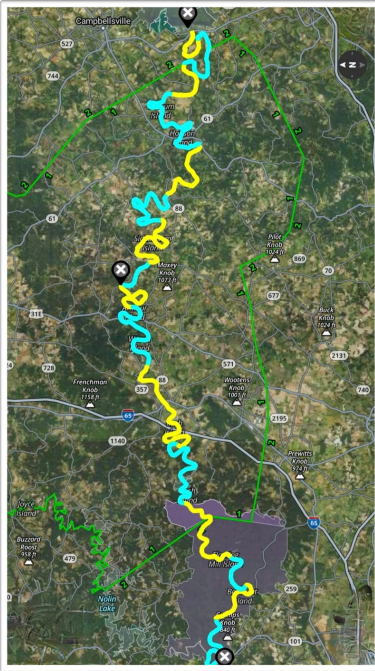
May 21 Wednesday

It was raining when we woke up. The laundry I did yesterday was nicely hanging in the rain. The rain abated while we ate dry frosted flaked and canned fruit for breakfast. We had beans on the menu, but thankfully we elected to save them for supper. Once we got on the water it was raining again. I had to do some weight readjustments in my canoe because the wind kept blowing my front around. Once I got that figured out I started paddling after the group. I had such a good morning. The rain drops were dripping off my leather hat keeping my face dry. I started singing the camp songs I could think of. How privileged I am to get to be here doing this. We had to portage around a dam in Lock Haven. Everyone did good and helped so it went really well. We set up our campsite in the pouring rain which wasn't ideal. Chief Tye caught a monster of a small mouth at 21 inches! It was really fun to watch him reel it in. I tied on my last crank bait because I couldn't miss out on the fun. I tightened the knot and then pulled on my lure to test it. The line immediately broke. The 10 lb. braided line is a joke, and it cost me a few lures. Bryce nicely offered me some of his 20 lb. stuff so after I got that on my ugly stick, I went and reeled in an 18.5 in. bass, which I'm super happy about. I caught another 17 in. before we retired for the night. This island has some nice fish. We had rice instead of Mac n cheese so that was a good little break. It's still raining. It was a tester of a day, but it was worth it. Hopefully tomorrow doesn't rain quite as much. -Trailblazer Chief Supervisor

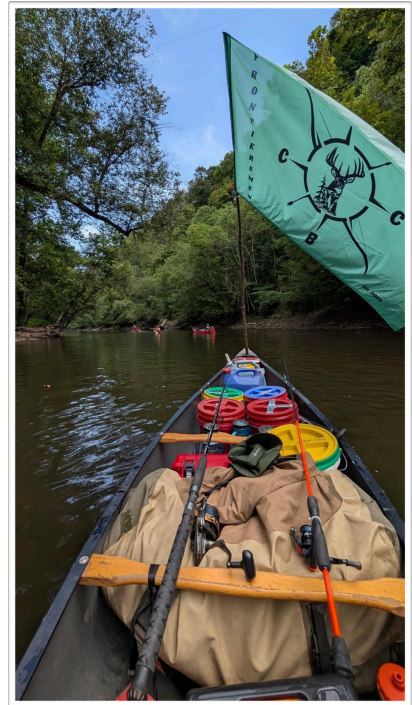




## Canoe trips continued..



Well good morning,  
We canoed 9.8 miles, and I caught two bass. We found an awesome spot where we ate lunch, had siesta, and did flips. We kept canoeing and then found a nice campsite with a cool log that had water flowing in and out of it. There was a cool vine to swing on. We had a wonderful pow-wow and went to bed. -Frontiersmen Camper



August 11- Hello people,

It's the first day on the river after Sunday. We woke up at the crack of dawn and rolled, twisted, and stretched our sleeping stuff into their bags and then cleaned up and fooled around until it was time for devotions. For devotions, Chief Alex read to us about Jesus walking on the water. After that we enjoyed a breakfast of pancakes with peanut butter and syrup. We got canoes packed up and then circled up for a while. I'm in a canoe with Chief Matt, and we got on the river at around 10:30 and canoed five miles to a good place for a lunch of trail mix, Slim Jims, and Clif bars. We had siesta and then canoed 5.8 miles in the insanely hot sun to a rocky campsite. We didn't know if it was gonna work, but we got set up and it turned out pretty good. Chief Jake caught a bass earlier so I did that up in tin foil and put in in the fire with some spices. We enjoyed a supper of a can of baked beans a person, peaches, and fish. After supper we set up catfish poles and then circled up for awhile. Finally, we headed to pow-wow, talked about the day, and then headed to our tents. Chiefs did their rounds, and we all fell asleep under a big bright annoying moon. - Frontiersmen Camper





---

📖 Schoolhouse update 📖

---



Your walkathon dollars have been at work! We purchased a mini barn and have been doing a face lift. It's almost time to move in! Our education director will be using it as he helps the campers one-on-one.



---

## Goodbye

---

Miss Amber, Thank you for all the delicious meals you cooked!

Chief Jessie, Thank you for working on the many odd jobs we put on the maintenance guys' white board!



Trailblazer's chuck tent site

---

## Welcome.

---

- To Miss Beth Litwiller from Arthur, IL. Miss Beth is one of our amazing cooks.
- To Chief Braeden (Bill) Nickel from Eakly, OK. Chief Bill is on our maintenance team.
- To Miss Sharissa Unruh from Lonetree, KS. Miss Sharissa is here teaching the staff kids.

---

## Progress Report

---

- The Brook traveled to SCBC last homestay for our first camp conference. It was a weekend enjoyed by all!
- We are continuing to work on fixing up a house for our second family worker.
- The Frontiersmen group got a new bridge put up on our Chapel trail. Thank you, guys!
- The Trailblazer group is working at redoing their chuck tent.
- The rock wall by the maintenance shop is completed.



Frontiersmen's bridge building skills