

# NIGHT EAGLE NEWS

A Primitive Camp for Boys Ages 10-14  
www.nighteaglewilderness.com

Fall, 2020 - 2021 (802) 446-6100  
Facebook.com/nighteaglewilderness

## From the Director

After not knowing whether we would be able to open last summer because of COVID-19, Night Eagle went on not only to open but to become the *only* Vermont boys' camp to operate for the entire summer!

In order to meet Vermont's mandatory guidelines, before Night Eagle could open we had to study Vermont's Mandatory Health and Safety Requirements. Then *Trudy*, *Summer Bear*, and I went to work to see if we could meet those requirements and recruit campers and staff in the brief time we had available to us before camp was scheduled to open..

By the time the dust had settled, we had written Night Eagle's COVID-19 Protocol (12 pages long), designed our Pre-camp COVID-19 Camper Screening Record and Parent COVID-19 Release Form, and produced a six page Synopsis of our protocol making the protocol easier to follow.

In the end, we determined that if parents and campers would do their parts at home (and we knew they would), then we could have a safe and fun summer at Night Eagle.

First, however, we had to find campers and staff. Because of the virus, many families had not signed up for camp thinking that camps would not be open. Others could not fly in. That left Night Eagle short on campers.

Once the word got out the Night Eagle would be open, we began hearing from returning and new campers.

The state of Vermont had limited us to 28 campers, but that was better than none. Still, we had to make some program adjustments with all but a few campers arriving on opening day and remaining until their session was completed.

All that remained to do was to find and hire a staff, but time was of the essence. At one point the staff was comprised of *Summer Bear*, *Arctic Rain*, and me. *Blue Bobcat* had planned to come down from Canada, but the border was closed to travelers. By early June, the staff had grown to include *Woodland Wisp*, *Hummingbird Sings*, and *Fox Vigil*. Things were beginning to shape up. When *Summer Bear* informed me that *Feels the Drum* might be available, I knew we were golden!

Yes, last summer was almost the summer that didn't happen. From the beginning I felt that we could have a great summer if the governor would allow us to open. He did, and we did. It was quite the feat to be one of the few camps in the country that managed to open safely without incident. I attribute that to the facts that 1) We are small, 2) We are surrounded by Nature, and 3) We have an amazing group of counselors, campers, and parents who support what we believe in and made it happen! Thank you all!



## Important Dates for 2021

June 1	Health Forms are Due
June 27	Staff Week Begins
July 4	First Session (2, 3, 6 weeks) Opens
July 18	Four-Week Session Opens First One-Week Session Opens
July 25	Second Session (2, 3 weeks) Opens
August 8	Second One-Week Session Opens
August 15	To Be A Man Opens

## Fall Work and Play 2019

Work and Play Weekend was a bit colder than we expected, but we were a small and hardy crew that was on a mission!

**Blue Heron** arrived first, and I arrived about 8:30 with **Otter Fox** and **Joka**, his stepfather, just behind me at the front gate. By 9:00 we had unloaded the vehicles and begun work.

I had taken most of the siding down a few days earlier, but the roof, frame, and flooring were still intact. Joka, an amazing carpenter, decided that it would be simpler and quicker to pull down the rest of the Maxwell, so after removing the roof, that's exactly what we did!



**Otter Fox, Blue Heron, and Joka** hard at work!

Then as **Blue Heron, Otter Fox**, and I pulled nails and stacked lumber, Joka built the base and thrones (seats) for the new Maxwell. Once those were in place, the frame was next.

After lunch (complete with pecan pie) under Hocoka, we were back at work, and by supertime, the roof was on, the frame was all but done, and one door was hung

After a delicious supper around the fire at the Food Shelter, it was off to the Gatehouse for the night (We had been so busy that we had forgotten to put up a tipi!).

In the morning, I headed to Home Depot for screening, and the rest of the crew set out to finish the Maxwell. When I returned a little after 9:00 A.M., they were already pounding nails.

With **Joka** and **Otter Fox** nailing siding and stapling screen on the Maxwell, **Blue Heron** and I began planning a trail to the second door of the Maxwell. After some serious log, stone, and dirt moving, the trail began to take shape and eventually we had it the way we wanted it.



**Joka, Otter Fox, and Blue Heron** braved the cold to give you a new, improved Get Lost Maxwell!

**Joka** made a really nice second door (to complement our trail), and after they hung it, all that remained was to have lunch and pack up.

The original Get Lost Maxwell House served us well for twenty years. The new Get Lost Maxwell House (Should we call it the Maxwell House #2? - Get it?) should last even longer.

I hope you can all be back next summer to enjoy it. That, of course, will have to wait until after **Otter Fox** christens it!



The finished product!

## Grandfather Rock (Tunkashila)



In the fall of 1999, we hired a man from Mount Holly, VT, Doug Devereux, to clear a couple acres where Night Eagle would eventually be centered. After he was finished using his excavator and bulldozer, we discovered that the clearing had two sections separated by a huge rock out-cropping.

In the fall of 2000, we had already begun building the food shelter, and during our first Work and Play Weekend, we busied ourselves deciding where we would put Hocoka. We settled on what we thought would be the ideal location and began making measurements and setting the posts. It wasn't until later that we began to think about "the rock."

On the northern side of Hocoka, a part of the stone ledge that runs under camp had broken the ground leaving a large stone just inside the cover of Hocoka. The visible part of the stone is about two feet high and three or four feet across. We thought about repositioning Hocoka, but decided to leave it where it was. We would deal with "the rock" later.

"Later" arrived the next summer when campers showed up, and true to form, we had not thought much about the rock. As the time to name campers approached, I recall sitting on the rock trying to come up with appropriate Night Eagle names for campers, and for some reason I began thinking about Allen Flying By, a Hunkpapa Sioux whom I worked with for several summers. I was thinking about our times together and remembered him telling us in the sweat lodge that the stones are the record keepers of the earth and see and hear all.

Not long after that, I thought about the rock under Hocoka. I thought about it lying hidden in the forest for thousands of years and then lying in the sun after some farmer cleared the woods so he could use the area as a sheep pasture. Years later, after the farmer moved on, the woods reclaimed the pasture and the rock until Doug went to work with his heavy equipment and uncovered both.

I believe everything happens for a reason. In my heart I believe that rock was meant to be exactly where it ended up - - under Hocoka. What better place was there for campers and staff to sit solemnly before a fire as they listen to their friends speak of their strengths and character before receiving their Night Eagle names?

So, our first campers and counselors (and all those who followed them) were named as they sat on Tunkashila, Grandfather Rock, who silently rests in the middle of camp and watches, listens, and records the events around him for all time.

**Little Rock Pond Shelter – 16 Years!** In the fall of 2004, Night Eagle adopted the shelter at Little Rock Pond for the Green Mountain Club. Adopting a shelter involves visiting it at least three times a year, performing light maintenance, and making sure everything is in good order. This coming summer we will begin working on our seventeenth year as caretakers of Little Rock Pond Shelter!

## Merry Christmas, Leaux!



*Leaux* enjoying his new Christmas bed.

## Spring Work and Play

This year's Spring Work and Play Weekend will be on May 2-3 (weather permitting). We invite you all to be part of the fun as we prepare camp for the summer. This is an informal cooperative event that allows new and returning campers and their families to get to know one another while together we attack some of the many projects around camp.

Families and friends are invited to come for all or part of either day or to join us for the entire weekend. This is a great time to introduce your friends to *Night Eagle*. The majority of the work will take place on Saturday beginning around 9:00 a.m. (*Night Eagle* time). By noon or so on Sunday you will be on your way home.

Families that are staying can bring a tent or reserve some space for their sleeping bags in one of the tipis that we'll put up for the weekend. We can also recommend some nearby motels or inns if you're more inclined to a hot shower and a soft bed after a day's work.

Work projects this year may include clearing the trails of limbs and downed trees, re-lashing *Hocoka*, doing a little painting, and checking the Long Trail shelter at Little Rock Pond.

**What to bring?** Dress for cool weather and wear appropriate shoes. You may want an emergency flashlight if you plan to stay after dark. Bring your own sleeping bags and ground cloths if you plan to camp. There are outdoor privies and running water at camp, but everyone should bring a personal water bottle. Food will mainly be a communal event. Pack a picnic lunch for your family on Saturday and a dish or two to share for a potluck dinner Saturday night. We'll provide Sunday breakfast.

**NOTE: If we have a late snow melt, plan to walk into camp from Skunk Junction. Tires will tear up the road into camp, but feet do very little damage!**

*Please* let us know by e-mail or phone if you plan to join us so we can make the necessary arrangements!

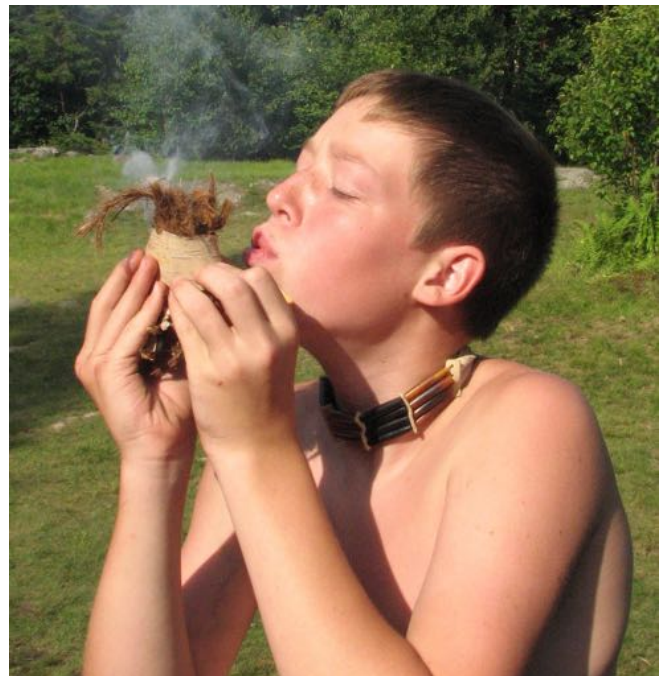
## Survival Skills Program

In 2015, several returning campers came to me and told me that they wanted to challenge themselves more that summer at Night Eagle and asked me if I could make that happen.

A few days later we introduced the new challenge for older, returning campers that was based on the Cheyenne Dog-Men Warriors, who have been referred to as "modern Spartans" because they displayed the ultimate expression of manhood and tribal identity. *Little Bear* took charge of the program, which is still open to campers today.

At Night Eagle we have camper leaders who are chosen based on four of the twelve Lakota virtues: Compassion, Generosity, Bravery, and Wisdom. Dog Soldiers are chosen based on four different Lakota virtues: Sacrifice, fortitude, Perseverance, and Humility.

Last summer, the campers and staff talked about creating another challenge for older returning campers. I gave them two possible programs, and they chose to focus on Survival Skills. So this spring I will be working on the requirements and an appropriate recognition for completing the challenge. They will focus on the Seven Priorities of Wilderness Survival: Attitude, First Aid, Shelter, Fire, Water, Food, and Signaling.



*Mustang Sun* blowing his coal into a flame

## Wildlife and Forestry at Night Eagle

Night Eagle is alive with an abundance of animals that spend all or part of their lives in our 135 acre forest ecosystem. As caretakers of the woods, we work to improve wildlife habitat by creating more availability of food and shelter for a wide range of species.

When we purchased the land in 1999, we worked closely with the state of Vermont (biologists, foresters, health officials, Corps of Engineers) to begin the long process of reclaiming land that had been abused by the previous owners and laying the foundation of the camp.

Miles of fencing and cross fencing were taken down and recycled, which allowed animals to have access to the lakes; dumpsters were filled with garbage that was removed from the forest and hauled off; and a clearing was opened where tipis would eventually be set up.

Improvements to the forest can also be obtained through wise forest management. As I write this article, a logging crew is shaping the forest at Night Eagle. Trees are being selectively thinned to provide more browse for deer, aspen for grouse, beechnuts for black bear, and den trees for hibernating and nesting animals.

At the same time, our forestry work is making the forests healthier, so they can continue not only to provide a home for wildlife but to grow more valuable trees for harvest long into the future.

When you are in the woods next summer, you will be able to find signs and tracks of all sorts of wildlife; bear, deer, raccoons, beavers, and turkeys. That's a sign of a healthy forest!



## Trips Out



Bromley Hikers with their fearless leaders, *Summer Bear* and *Feels the Drum*.

Last summer, *Summer Bear* returned to Night Eagle and remained for the entire summer serving as assistant director, health care coordinator, and tipi counselor. Some of you probably thought he was the food coordinator too since he spent so much time in the food shelter whipping up some amazing meals.

One of his many goals last summer was to try to encourage campers and staff to take more trips out of camp in order to take advantage of all that the Green Mountain National Forest had to offer.

In addition to our usual afternoon Get Lost hikes, at least four day hikes went to Little Rock Pond and two or three more went up to White Rocks (with at least one making it down to the Ice Caves). An overnight hike went to a site just beyond Little Rock Pond, and another went on a canoe trip to Wallingford Pond. We even took a small group to the famous Buttermilk Falls outside of Ludlow, Vermont. The water was cold, but the campers and staff loved every minute of it!

The major trip of the summer was a three-day, twenty-six mile hike. *Arctic Arrow* dropped off *Summer Bear*, *Feels the Drum*, and a group of eight hikers a few miles east of Manchester Center, Vermont. From there they began their hike that would take them up Bromley Mountain, past Little Rock Pond, and then eventually into camp.

If Summer Bear's goal was to get campers and staff out of camp and into the national forest, I'd say he succeeded!

## Bring a Friend to Camp



### ***Mustang Wind, Otter Fox, Cypress Cove, and Mountain Friend***

I know that all of you know Night Eagle is a special place. During the summer I often hear you talk about the “outside world,” “society names,” and the freedom you have at Night Eagle to be yourself. In fact, during the school year some of you think Night Eagle is so special that you tend to keep the magic of camp to yourself as you melt into that “outside world” that we decry during the summer.

But think about it for just a minute. What would you be like if *you* had never discovered Night Eagle? What if you had never gone on a Quest or received a Night Eagle name or slept in a tipi with a group of close friends? What if you had never known what it was like to play a rousing game of Sticks or Crack About or to jump off the ledge at Little Rock Pond? How would your life be different if you hadn’t met counselors like *Feels the Drum, Summer Bear, Mustang Sun, Hummingbird Sings, Woodland Wisp, or Fox Vigil?*

Now think about what it would be like if you shared those special moments at camp with your friends. February is the month when families begin searching in earnest for camps. Think about somebody you know who would enjoy spending a summer at Night Eagle and tell them about it. After all, who better than you knows what makes Night Eagle such a special place?

### **Informational Meetings**

Since our beginning in 2000, Night Eagle has been quite successful in attracting campers, not only from twenty-four different states in the United States, but also from eleven foreign countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, Spain, and Switzerland.

Night Eagle has become a second home for our

campers, many of whom return to camp for five or six summers. The clearing and forests at camp have become their special place where they can escape the expectations of their friends back home and be free to be themselves. Unfortunately, most of our campers value this freedom so much that they are hesitant to share Night Eagle with their friends.

You have seen in your sons the results of living in a small, supportive community, and you know that bigger is not necessarily better! You and your sons are the best ambassadors for Night Eagle and what it has to offer today’s “plugged in” boys.

Since we do not have the long lists of alumni and large advertising budgets that the larger and more established New England camps possess and use to enroll new campers, we need your help in spreading the word about Night Eagle! Talk with parents, hang a Night Eagle poster in a school, co-op, or library in your town or city. Anything you can do will help us keep Night Eagle the vibrant community that it is by introducing more boys to the wonders of living close to the earth!



If you would like to host an Informational Meeting in your home to introduce Night Eagle to prospective campers and their families, let us know and we will show you how simple it is to do. Whether you have two, three, or twenty boys in attendance, we would be happy to be there to talk about camp, show pictures from previous summers, and distribute information that families can take home.

As our way of showing our appreciation to you for your efforts, your son will receive a 10% discount for each new camper who enrolls as a result of your direct referral or hosting an Informational Meeting (an amount equal to 10% of the new campers’ tuition is deducted from your total up to 50%).

