

NIGHT EAGLE NEWS

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

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From the Director

Usually in October I send out the *Talking Leaves* that campers create during the summer. This fall, when I looked for all the artwork, it was nowhere to be found! I looked everywhere in my house and then I went to camp and looked in the Gatehouse. - - still no luck. I opened the crafts shed and inspected every box and can in it. I searched in Trudy's and in the pantry. I even looked in Skunk Junction. Finally, exasperated, I gave up.

In late January *Mustang Sun* called to see if the snow was good for skiing at Killington, and I asked him if he had *any* idea where *Talking Leaves* was. He told me that he had no idea, but *Hummingbird Sings* was with him and he asked him if he knew where it was.

Well, he did, and now I do also (I think). The problem is that we won't know until late April or early May when the snow melts. Then I will head out to camp, open the crafts shed, and pull down the arts and crafts supply box from the corner on the top shelf in the crafts shed. If *Hummingbird Sings'* memory serves him correctly, I will find and retrieve *Talking Leaves*.

With any luck, I'll have them printed before the Spring Work and Play Weekend. If you're there, you can pick it up. Otherwise look for it a few days later - - a good segue into camp!

Sugar Season in Vermont!

There are eight sugar houses near camp, and they all welcome visitors when they are boiling. Our experience is that the maple syrup producers are offended if we don't want to sample their syrup. Needless to say, we always comply!

In a few weeks I'll be picking up the eight gallons of maple syrup that we will use this summer on Night Eagle pancakes and French toast!

He's Baaack!

In 2010, *Summer Bear* arrived at Night Eagle and for the next five summers became one of the most versatile and popular counselors in Night Eagle's short history.

Even after he left following the summer of 2014, he never *really* left. He showed up at most of our Work and Play Work Weekends (Fall and Spring) and dropped in several times each summer to give the staff a helping hand and to work with the campers. In 2018, he returned to direct Staff Week and man a tipi of campers for two weeks.



Summer Bear and *Mustang Sun* (as a camper)

In this issue of the *Night Eagle News*, I'm happy to announce that *Summer Bear* is 95% certain that he will be returning to Night Eagle this coming summer to once again serve as our Assistant Director, take over the medical care of campers and staff when Trudy is not in camp, and have a major hand in programming.

He told me that he's planning to hike the Long Trail and wind up at camp in time for Staff Week. I'm looking forward to having *Summer Bear* back with us full time this summer, and I know the campers are too!

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!



Campers enjoying a rousing game of *Buffalo Robe*

Games at Night Eagle

When *Night Eagle* opened in 2000, we only played a handful of games, most of which centered around our activities and taught skills such as patience and stealth that were developed in camp games such as *Quest for Fire*, *Stalk the Chief*, *Rattlesnake*, *Medicine Lodge*, and *Counting Coup* fell into that category.

Other popular games in our early years included *Buffalo Robe*, *Capture the Feather*, *Sioux and Chippewa*, and *Sticks and Stones* (known simply as "Sticks") and *Battle Ball*.



Morning Cypress and *Drum Spirit* playing *Slack 'Em*

Over the years more games have been added: *Medicine Ball*, *Crack About*, *Legend Ball*, *Big Bootie*, *Stalk the Fire*, and one that we have not even played yet, *Wasicu in the Woods*. Maybe this summer we will finally get around to playing that one!

Childhoodbynature.com

This is an excerpt from an blog by childhoodbynature.com recommending their top10 wilderness camps in N. America.

For those of us living in the Northern Hemisphere, summer will be here in six months—which means it's time to secure your child's spot in summer camp!

We usually cringe at the extra pressures modern society puts on parents to overschedule and overcomplicate childhood. But, in this case, setting your kid up with the ideal camp experience for them could be the best way to keep childhood simple.

While every child is different and has different interests, consider bucking the trend of trying to use the once-lazy, free days of summer to cram in as much cultural enrichment, athletic training and academic spoon-feeding you can. We understand how hard it is to resist the temptation in today's world of ever-increasing specialization of kids' activities. Sure you can take 8-10 weeks of summer vacation and enroll your child in a coding crash course, attempt to make them an expert debater at a model UN camp or have them attempt algebra in 4th grade at a Russian Math School. At a minimum, you might be ruining your child's summer. At its worse, you're likely ruining his or her childhood.

And that's not OK.

So allow us to present our own hand-selected roundup of nature-based, rugged camps that are sure to bring out the wild in your child.

You're probably thinking, "But all camps get kids outdoors, hiking, swimming." And, yes, most do. However, the camps that made our list claim a commitment to making nature the focus of the summer experience, often taking the emphasis off the extras like drama, arts and crafts, color wars for back to nature skills like wildlife tracking, hiking, trekking, survival skills, pioneering, convening with nature, self-reliance in nature. In essence, they value the role of nature in the social and emotional development of kids and are designed to foster the relationship between nature and child.

A note that we have no monetary arrangement with any of these camps and no connection to them. In fact, we haven't attended these camps (though we wish we did) and are not recommending them from personal experience. They just look pretty awesome to us.



Night Eagle, Vermont

Perhaps the wildest of the camps on our list, Vermont-based Night Eagle describes itself as "a unique, primitive, sleepaway summer camp" and, judging its website, that seems pretty accurate. This small camp of fewer than 40 boys aged 10-15 is situated on 135 forested acres in the heart of Vermont's beautiful Green Mountains.

The outdoor experiences at Night Eagle are intentionally different from a boy's everyday life. There are no iPhones, Fortnite or memes here. Night Eagle campers experiment with such activities and skills as making drums or didgeridoos, carving bows and arrows or atlatls, whittling spoons and bowls, tanning deer or beaver skins, making pitch-glue, designing and carving atlatls, beading on looms, lashing a raft, shaping and firing primitive pottery, or carving hobblebush chokers.

Night Eagle's philosophy is to "give boys space to be boys, surround them with nature-based activities, and listen to what they have to say.

They take it from there!"

The Rabbit Nation

The Rabbit nation was very much depressed in spirits on account of being run over by all other nations. They, being very obedient to their chief, obeyed all his orders to the letter. One of his orders was that upon the approach of any other nation that they should follow the example of their chief and run up among the rocks and down into their burrows, and not show themselves until the strangers had passed.

This they always did. Even the chirp of a little cricket would send them all scampering to their dens.

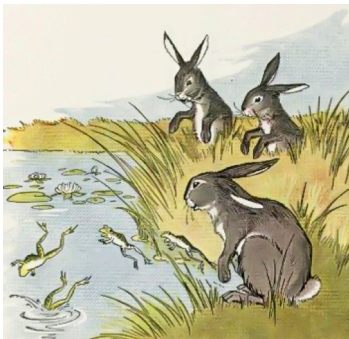
One day they held a great council, and after talking over everything for some time, finally left it to their medicine man to decide. The medicine man arose and said:

“My friends, we are of no use on this earth. There isn’t a nation on earth that fears us, and we are so timid that we cannot defend ourselves, so the best thing for us to do is to rid the earth of our nation by going over to the big lake and drowning ourselves.”

This they decided to do; so going to the lake they were about to jump in, when they heard a splashing in the water. Looking, they saw a lot of frogs jumping into the lake.

“We will not drown ourselves,” said the medicine man, “We have found a nation who is afraid of us. It is the frog nation.”

Had it not been for the frogs, we would have had no rabbits, as the whole nation would have drowned themselves and the rabbit race would have been extinct.



6 Reasons to Send your Son to Night Eagle Where Electronic Devices are *Not* Allowed

(Adapted from an article by Melanie Hempe, RN)

1. Young brains need a break so they can connect with nature, real life, and real people instead of fixating on the virtual world of their games.
2. Summer camp is a ripe opportunity for deepening bonds with friends and building social skills. Screen-free activities allow creativity, eye contact, and communication including observing and interpreting facial expressions, body language, and vocal tone. It’s impossible for video games to build those skills.
3. Without phones and video games, the door opens to creativity and exploration. Give you son the gift of unstructured time at summer camp. Without his devices, he will find other things to do and explore.
4. Without video games to distract him, your son will get more exercise, more sunshine, and more real rough-and-tumble play - - ingredients critical for optimal brain development.
5. Electronic devices remove your son socially, emotionally, and physically from hanging out and relaxing with friends. If your son is plugged in, he will miss the priceless memories that happen with relaxation. It would be a shame to miss out on Arctic Arrow’s hilarious puns and summer Bear’s stories and antics. Experiencing new things makes summer camp fun, priceless, memorable, and healthy.
6. So much of a boy’s life is planned and presented to him. Many boys do not create their own entertainment, but have it spoon-fed to them. At camp, there are decisions that need to be made every day about what activities to choose, whether to find wood for the tipi, and to do during free time. It all builds relationships, life skills, patience, and funny stories that become family lore.

Western Snow (Paul Cobb) 1987-2011

On Jul 22, 2019, Jill Lindner and her husband Don Cobb emailed me to let me know that **Western Snow** had died tragically in an accident in 2011 and to ask if they could come visit Night Eagle.

Western Snow was a Night Eagle counselor in *Sichangu* in 2007, the summer after his freshman year at Butler University. I remember him as a good counselor who smiled quite a bit and was quite artistic. His tipi campers included **Shield Spirit**, **Sunrise**, **Distant Thunder**, **Sun Spirit**, **Black Elm**, **Rising Cub**, **Sunset Pine**, **Woodland Spring**, and **Arctic Fox**.

Since **Western Snow's** death, his parents have made several pilgrimages to places that he loved including Spain, many beaches in Florida where they vacationed as a family, state parks where they hiked together, Fayetteville, WV, where **Western Snow** spent the summer of 2010 white water rafting and rock climbing, and many other wonderful places that he loved.

They told me that *Night Eagle* had been a place that they had wanted to visit ever since losing Paul. They said, "He had an amazing experience the summer he worked at *Night Eagle* and spoke of it for many years after his summer there."

One of the dates they could visit coincided with the Fall Work and Play Weekend, and not long after the last camper and their parent drove away, **Western Snow's** parents drove up.

I met them at the gate and we walked into camp so they could see camp as **Western Snow** had seen it.

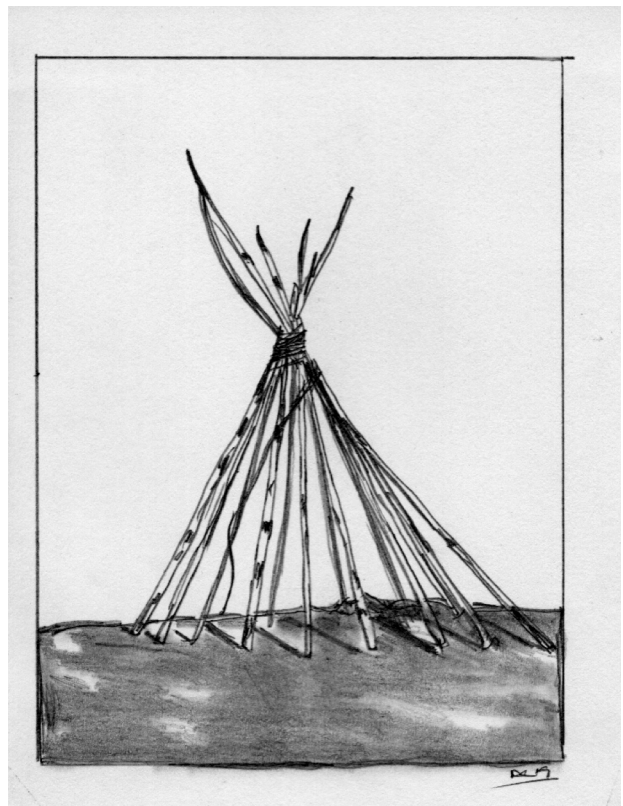
We stopped at the sweat lodge, stood on the dam between the lakes, passed Skunk Junction, and made our way up to the clearing. As we walked, we talked about **Western Snow**: his talents, his accomplishments, and his struggles.

I learned that he had dropped out of college and had travelled around the U.S. and Europe playing music, hiking, rock climbing, drawing, and enjoying life.



A drawing by **Western Snow**. It's plain to see how "Western" became a part of his Night Eagle Name. He was blessed with creative ability.

After I showed his parents around camp, we made our way back to the front gate. There, they asked if they could go back up to camp and spend some time alone there. I knew they felt **Western Snow's** presence in camp and needed some time there by themselves.



This sketch was made by **Western Snow's** dad during his and his wife's visit to camp. I asked for permission to use the sketch on *our* thank you cards as a way to remember **Western Snow**.



LSU is invited to the White House as NCAA National Champs 15-0 (just saying!)

In celebration of LSU's National Championship, we made a huge pot of Louisiana red beans and rice. It then occurred to me that some of you had asked for the recipe at camp this past summer,

2 lbs. dry red kidney beans
 2 large onions
 2 cloves garlic
 Water
 Olive oil
 2 lbs. Louisiana smoked pork sausage
 Tabasco hot sauce
 Salt

Wash beans well, getting all grit and rocks out. Soak overnight in a large pot. You may have to add a little more water after they've soaked a few hours.

The next morning, rinse well in cold water and fill pot with fresh water. Add chopped onions and garlic. Add Louisiana hot sauce, to taste.

Cover the bottom of a heavy skillet with about 1/2 cup olive oil. Cut up the sausage in 1" pieces and cook thoroughly. Drain the grease from the meat and add the sausage to the bean pot. Bring to a good boil, turn heat down and cook slowly several hours until done. Keep loosely covered until the last hour of cooking. Serve over white rice. Serves 6-8 (or more)!

GEAUX TIGERS!

Calling All Campers! If You Have Not Already Enrolled, It's Time!

As this is the beginning of the season for prospective camp families to inquire and begin to enroll, we'd like to remind returning camper families to get their application forms completed and sent in so that you will have a space in the session of your choice.

If you haven't already enrolled, it's probably because you're still on Night Eagle time and haven't realized that the summer enrollment season is here or because the extreme temperatures and snow have kept your mind on other things! In any case, Night Eagle won't be the same without YOU, so get those applications in the mail today!

2019 CAMPER LEADERS

1ST SESSION

Wicasa

Arrow Shade

Pipe Keeper

Mountain Friend

Drum Keeper

Circle Dance

2ND SESSION

Wicasa

Circle Singer

Pipe Keeper

Winter Moon

Drum Keeper

Drum Spirit

AKICITA

Night Heron



Arctic Rain leads a spontaneous game of Duck, Duck, Goose before lunch.

