



the afterglow

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Following the Gleam.....



When Sarah Francisco was a young Nature Camper in the mid '80s, she witnessed something that had a profound impact on the way she saw the forest of her youth.

"They were doing a clear cut right up the road from camp, and the logging trucks would come by with all the logs coming out of the forest," said Francisco, 33. When counselors led a hike there to explore it, she got a shock. "The forest was gone, and there was just this tumbled array of logs and logging slash. You couldn't even really walk through the clear cut. You had to climb over everything. That had a really big impact on me, the experience of the forest and of having the forest be removed."

At the time, she said, it might not have registered to her younger self as a watershed moment. "But it was this new piece of information to me about our forest."

Now, some two decades later, Sarah is a senior attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center in Charlottesville, and leads SELC's national forests and parks program, working with the U.S. Forest Service and outside groups improve forest management and protect publicly held natural resources—including those she got to know and love as a camper.

Sarah grew up on a 200-acre Christmas tree farm in Augusta County, just south of Staunton. An only child, she spent much of her time outside in the woods, riding her horse around the farm, caring for the family sheep, and hiking with her dad.

Always an outdoorsy kid, she loved camp and managed to go nearly every year she could. She has fond memories of a certain floppy-haired staff member. "I remember Flip as a counselor, playing basketball and leading hikes and trying to get campers excited about botany," she said.

Those years affected her deeply, even if she didn't notice it at the time. Camp was where she first began to realize that the wild places we love aren't guaranteed to stay that way. "I came home and put Save The Bay stickers on all our faucets," she laughed. "It really gave me a bigger understanding and a better perspective on environmental issues."

Years went by before that perspective started shaping her career path. She studied English as an undergrad at Mary Baldwin College, but after graduation in 1998, she was torn about what to do next.

"I wanted to do something that I viewed as having a more concrete impact on peoples' lives and on our community and the world in general," she said. She ultimately decided on the University of Richmond's School of Law, and she had an epiphany when she took her first environmental law class in the spring of her freshman year.

“As I went through my years at Nature Camp, and at college, I got a better sense of the the threats to these resources and places,” Sarah said. “And I always cared about that, but I didn’t really see an avenue or a focus for that.” When she realized the law could give her the tools to protect those places that still meant so much to her, she was hooked, and once she learned about SELC, which is headquartered in Charlottesville and has offices in Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, she knew that’s where she wanted to end up. She landed a fellowship in Charlottesville right out of school in 2002, and has been there ever since, driving across Afton Mountain each day from her home in Waynesboro.

Those 10 years have been marked by success and heartbreak, she said—but fortunately, it’s mostly the former. The day-to-day work of environmental law isn’t that thrilling, Sarah said. Few, if any, dramatic courtroom speeches, and a whole lot of reading, writing, and talking on the phone. But through that work, she has seen stronger protections put in place for Appalachian forest lands. One major victory was a challenge to a timber sale in the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, when the SELC won a legal battle to require the Forest Service to apply its own stricter forest management plan to a logging project. Another was a successful negotiation with the Boy Scouts of America to scrap plans to permanently site the group’s National Jamboree on sensitive land near Goshen Pass. That one never made it to the courtroom—and that suited Sarah fine. It’s not always about a fight, she said. Just as often, it’s about finding common ground with the Forest Service and others who, on the whole, share a lot of the same values. Sometimes it happens out in the woods themselves, on field trips to look at forest lands in question.

“We can almost always come to an understanding or reach an agreement,” she said. Still, things don’t always work out the way she’d like, even when SELC wins a battle. The Cherokee timber sale the organization fought to limit is a good example: The Forest Service had to adopt stricter protections, and Sarah said she believes forest management has improved across the board since then. But the sale still went forward, and important and beautiful forest lands were destroyed completely.

She continues to work to improve the system and make sure there’s accountability. For the last few years, she’s spent countless hours following the creation of a new management plan for the George Washington National Forest. The plan, which is expected to be approved by the Forest Service by the end of the year, will lay out how the government and industry can use the GW’s natural resources. There’s a lot at stake, including the possibility of unprecedented oil and gas exploration.

It’s fitting, she acknowledges, that she’s fighting for the same forest she came to love—and wanted to protect—as a camper. It makes her think about the words of a Tennessean she met while battling the Cherokee logging project, a man who remembered the woods they were trying to save from his Boy Scout days.

“He said, ‘We’re seeing the forest the way it could be and it should be,’” Sarah said. “That stuck with me. That’s what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to protect and conserve the southern Appalachian National Forests for what they can be, and they should be.”

- Article by Graelyn Brashear

News from our Nature Camp Family

Wedding Bells rang for our very own Camp director **Philip Coulling**. Philip and **Sandra Hayslette** were married at camp in the Reeves Memorial Chapel on September 29th. We wish them a future filled with birdsong, sunlight, clear rolling streams, and love.

Following the proposal made at the Fall Service Weekend at Camp, (with much squealing and excitement from those in attendance), wedding bells also rang for **Katie Hoffman** who married **Brett Tiller** on Friday, October 19th. The wedding weekend was shared with Brett’s daughter, a recent Service Weekend attendee, **Maria Tiller**.

Molly Pickral and **Mark Perdue** welcomed their first born son, Nickolas James Perdue. Nickolas was born on 9/13/2012 at 4:32 AM; 7 pounds, 12 ounces. Congratulations on the newest future camper.

Mike and Heather Meads welcomed their first daughter (after three boys!!), Leia Anna Marion Meads was born 5/5/2012 and has already been to her first Service Weekend where she proved to be quite social!

Charlie Truxell, our outstanding caretaker and his lovely wife **Priscilla** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on October 18th. Congratulations to the lovebirds!!!

Notes from Nature Camp, Inc.

Nature Camp's 70th summer of operation began with a fortnight-long celebration of the 250th session, complete with a couple of evening programs highlighting Camp's history and daily tidbits from past issues of *Woodland Echoes* and other archival materials. It was not this historic milestone, however, but rather an unusual meteorological event which will stand as the most memorable episode of the summer. Just as First Session's Closing Ceremony was getting underway in the chapel, suddenly the wind picked up and the electricity went out. Little did we know then how extensive or damaging the June 29 derecho storm would be.

Despite the continued power outage, Second Session began as scheduled two days later, although the unavailability of the PA system forced some changes to the procedure for checking in campers. (And in the days which followed, counselors announced hikes by unamplified voice from the

Staff House porch at the beginning of recreation periods, and head male counselor Tony Walters admirably performed as the first live bugler in many a year.) We were fortunate that the buildings suffered no structural damage, and the generator behind the canteen powered the well pump and provided us with ample water.

While the campers had an unexpected chance to experience Nature Camp much as their predecessors had before 1970—without the creature comforts of fans in the bunkhouses and hot water in the T-houses—it was our cooks, Stephen Ackley and Adam Rotche, who faced the greatest challenge and bore the most stress. Though forced to prepare food by headlamp using only the gas stove and oven and cope with the absence of refrigeration, they exhibited tremendous creativity in modifying the menu, tenacity in working in a stiflingly hot kitchen, and resolve in continuing to turn out delicious meals under very trying and compromising circumstances. Just before dusk on the 4th of July, as the campers were enjoying s'mores on the playfield and settling in to listen to another account of Percy, a great cheer erupted among the throng as the power was restored.



While not as dramatic or monumental, the rest of the summer was not without its highlights: a Sunday hike to Torry Ridge, reprising the first Sunday hike which Charles Thornton led in 1943; a new class in invertebrate biology; Amy Beard's frequent, rhyming reminders to stay hydrated and endless "How Hot is It? (It's So Hot...)" jokes; riveting games of Pinball Dodgeball and Quidditch on the playfield; dramatic presentations of "Harry Potter in Five



Minutes" and *The Wizard of Oz* during counselor talent shows; and evening programs by former campers or counselors Graelyn Brashear, Jason Farr, Charles Hearn, David Kimbriel, Berang r LeFranc, Buck Tribble, and Laurel Woodworth. Enrollment topped 340 campers for the fourth year in a row, with campers representing three different continents.

On behalf of Nature Camp, I thank all of you for your continued, invaluable and immeasurable support, which will no doubt enable Nature Camp's 71st summer to be just as exciting and fulfilling.

And an added note, in addition to the Nature Camp Foundation page, Nature Camp, Inc. is now officially on Facebook!! Find us at www.facebook.com/pages/Nature-Camp/324806714283350?ref=hl

- Philip Coulling, Nature Camp Director

Spring Service Weekend

The dining area of the LS was trashed when we arrived for the May 17-20, 2012 Service Weekend. Everything from the kitchen and pantry had been moved to the dining area for the renovation of the kitchen. During the winter, much of the subfloor in the kitchen was gone, so rats had ready access to all parts of the LS. They took advantage of the opportunity and made a mess of the food in storage containers, the dishes, glasses, cups, flatware, pots and pans, tables, shelves, and chest freezer. The kitchen crew, with loads of help from other volunteers did a wonderful job of scrubbing everything and getting it back into the kitchen and ready for the regular sessions of Camp. The new Champion dishwasher was not yet up and running, so all the dishes, pans, and everything else had to be washed by hand. Charlie had done a great job getting the sinks and stoves back into the kitchen and functioning before we arrived for the weekend. The new kitchen looks wonderful. There is a new tile floor throughout the kitchen, back hall, and pantry, a new sheetrock ceiling which has been painted black, and new lighting. There is also stainless steel on the wall behind the Champion dishwasher. A small crew of folks installed 1"x10" pine boards and trim around the inside walls of the kitchen during the Service Weekend to cover the open studs. It all looks really sharp.

In spite of the turmoil in the kitchen, the food was excellent. Pizza was on the menu again, because the stoves were back in the kitchen and functioning. There were 13 pizzas. Nell headed the kitchen crew with much help from Penny, Amy, Art, Cathie, Fabienne, John (who always seemed to be washing dishes), and Theta.

In addition to the kitchen, we had several other projects. We finished reshingling the BBH. We framed and poured a concrete step

in front of the door to the room behind the Garage. We pressure-washed and repainted the pool deck. We installed a landscape-block pad in front of the pool house in an area that was perpetually muddy. We replaced some fascia boards on the Garage and Library. We replaced the flagpole rope and the rope to the bell in the Chapel. We hauled loads of brush. We spread some gravel. And we installed 43 floor joists under the BBH. Liam Carr (Mack Carr's 10 year old son) was lowered via climbing rope down into the Chapel bell tower in order to thread the rope through the ceiling of the room below for access to the rope from the ground.

On Thursday, Charlie had the new (to Camp) white Chevy 3500 1-Ton dumptruck positioned under the eaves on the front of the BBH and Christopher, Flip, Joe, Mack, Matthew, Mike, Oliver, Reid, Tony, and I removed the old shingles from the front half of the building. Except for a couple of overhangs above the windows,





the BBH has now been reshingled. We will move on to start reshingling the Staffhouse in September 2012. It will likely take 3 Service Weekends to complete the Staffhouse roof.

A great many of the 60-year-old floor joists in Camp are dry-rotted to the point that they can be pulled apart by hand. We started by sistering a new pressure treated 2"x10" next to the existing white pine 2"x8" floor joists in the GBH in September of 2011. We only repaired a quarter of the GBH, because the floor in the BBH was sagging more than the remaining sections of the GBH. This past May, we repaired half the BBH floor joists. In September of this year we will repair the remainder of the BBH floor joists and go back to the GBH next spring. After that, we will move

on to all the other buildings that have suspended floors, until all the buildings have new joists. If the bunkhouse floors are sagging, it won't be long before the remainder of the floors in Camp are sagging as well. It is easier to fasten a new joist in place with a flat floor than with a sagging floor. Eight of us, Alia, Chris, Dave, Liam, Mack, Reid, Walter, and I worked under the BBH. Some of us were under there for 15 hours that weekend. We had 24 new boards to start, but moved so rapidly Saturday morning that we bought enough to finish half the building. With the new wood, the floors are now stronger than they were when the buildings were new.

The hero of the weekend would have to be Ventry, who arrived on Sunday a week early and left on Sunday after most folks were gone. He helped Charlie a great deal to get Camp ready enough to have a large group of volunteers. He also had 7 other members of his family there during the Service Weekend.

Some folks played music in the LS on Friday and Saturday evenings. Of the 71 folks who attended, 22 had never been to a previous Service Weekend and I think 15 of the 22 had never been to Nature Camp before that weekend. We have now had 382 folks who have attended at least one Service Weekend.

Thanks to Adam, Alia, Amy, Annie, Art, Ben, Bob, Brett, Caleb, Cathy, Celie, Chris, Christopher, Chuck, Corrina, Dave, David, Ellis, Eric, Fabienne, Flip, Gisela, Jack, Jerry, Joe, John, Kat, Katie, Kim, Leah, Leslie, Liam, Lily, Lucas, Mack, Maggie, Margaret, Matthew, McKenna, Michaux, Mike, Molly, Nancy, Natalie, Neil, Nell, Nina, Oliver, Paul, Penny, Peter, Philip, Reid, Robert, Rosie, Sandra, Sarah, Sarah, Sheryl, Stephanie, Steve, Theta, Tom, Tony, Valerie, Joseph, William, Ventry, Walter, and especially Charlie. Next time you run into Charlie, thank him for everything he does and especially the newly remodeled kitchen.

Art Maguire has volunteered to direct folks to the various tasks that need to happen during the weekend. This has been a frustration to me, and many volunteers, over the years because I am usually on a roof or under a building and can't take the time that is necessary to help folks find projects. Art can usually be found somewhere around the LS, so he is much easier to find, and can keep track of volunteers as they arrive and head them in the right direction. I think this worked very well.

Amy K Gonzalez has invited you to look at her photos from this weekend. Amy has the photos posted at the following website. She spent loads of time gathering names, and for this I am extremely thankful. I spent a good deal of my time under the BBH, so didn't get a chance to see everyone who attended. I could not have compiled the list of attendees without Amy's and Art's diligence.

-Jim Brooks, NCF Facilities Chair

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Upcoming Nature Camp Foundation Elections

We are preparing for another election season for the Nature Camp Foundation. This year, the Treasurer, Secretary, and At-Large positions are up for election and the Finance and Development Chairs are up for appointment.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by the current Vice-President, Chris Chamberlin, and made up of Walter Mehring and Reid Downer, have nominated Sarah Huchler and Catherine Hammond for Secretary, Amy Clark for Treasurer, and Alia Anderson, Lucas Gillenwater, and Mack Carr for the At-Large position. Those eligible to vote will receive a letter with a ballot for voting in November. The results of this year's election will be posted on the NCF website in January and included in the Spring Afterglow.

We are always interested in getting more people involved in the leadership of the NCF. If you are interested in serving on the Board or any of the committees, or know someone who would be a great candidate, please contact the Foundation.

Adult Session 2012: Nature At Night

Adult Session had its 23rd successful year, despite the regrettable absence of long-term instructors Ali Wieboldt, Terry Richardson and the Spanglepotts. Thanks to the miracles of modern technology Terry, whose truck failed him somewhere between Charleston and Vesuvius, was able to beam the slides for his talk on "Light Pollution" to Flip, so the show went on although without Terry's usual dynamic presentation.

The theme was "Nature at Night," with topics ranging from insects to plants to snakes. Nell Fredericksen told us about the few snakes that manage to be active at night, while Flip Coulling and Julie Moore told us about behavioral and biochemical processes that some plants switch on at night. Connie Sancetta gave an overview of bioluminescence, reducing the room to laughter when she imitated male and female fireflies attempting to communicate. Chris Chamberlin and Amy Beaird explained about caterpillar feeding patterns, and led a flashlight exploration to see the little guys in action. Walter Mehring and Nell organized two jewelry projects on making wood-bead necklaces (Walter) and cast silver using carved molds of cuttlebone (Nell). Peter Mehring by request repeated his popular recordings of frogs and insects at night, showing us how the sound changes when the frequency is lowered, which may reflect the subjective experience of the animals themselves. In a new direction, Walter taught us how to use listening skills to reduce argument and increase understanding between two people with opposing viewpoints. Mike Tabony and Walter's cousin Harry Hanger gamely agreed to represent their views on climate change while Walter coaxed them along a path of understanding. Paul Cabe taught us about the nightly behavior of crayfish.

In addition to all the learning there was book sharing, hikes, naps, great food, and many a good time.

The Foundation launches new Virtual Nature Camp Canteen!!

So many folks have expressed an interest in purchasing Nature Camp t-shirts but these have only been available during the summers at Camp from the Canteen. In response, the Nature Camp Foundation has opened a CafePress shop and will be offering items for sale featuring the NCI logo, the NCF logo and many of the older camp T-shirt designs (to be added in the next couple of months). All proceeds from the sale of these items will go to support the Nature Camp Foundation Scholarship Fund.

So visit the shop, find that design you missed and help support scholarships for campers!!

www.cafepress.com/naturecampcanteen

Calendar of Events 2013

NCF Board Meeting
 Spring Service Weekend
 Adult Session
 Fall Service Weekend

January 26, 2013
 May 17-19, 2013
 August 16-20, 2013
 September 20-22, 2013

The Nature Camp Foundation has
 a new
 Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 265
 Studley, VA 23162

Website: www.naturecampfoundation.org

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