



Follow the Gleam...Wilson Ratliff

by Graelyn Brashear

Wilson Ratliff has made a career out of shrinking carbon footprints. As technical director of the Charlottesville-based Local Energy Alliance Program, a regional nonprofit focused on energy efficiency outreach and education, he helps lead an operation that empowers people to make their homes and businesses more efficient.

Ratliff says a lot of well-intentioned people struggle with the question of how they as individuals can have a positive impact on the environment — or, at least, how to limit their negative impact. But it's a big task, and these days, there are companies out there trying to make a buck off that good-hearted confusion.

"I think that's why so many people are susceptible to green-washing," Ratliff says — the practice of pitching an idea, product, or fix as environmentally friendly, but overstating its impacts. "People know they're the problem, but they don't know where to start. They think, 'I'm not using plastic straws, I guess that's something I can do.'"

But he says knowledge — including broader knowledge of the natural world — can help people cut through the noise and see the underlying ecological reasons for the consequences of human actions.

"Then it's easier to look at the world through that lens, and try to make a bigger difference."

He started building his own broader knowledge at Nature Camp as a Fourth Session camper in 1996. He attended every year he could after that.

Growing up in a rural, forested area outside Charlottesville, "I was always playing in the woods," he says. "I always had a comfort level with being outside in nature, being dirty." At Camp, he began to learn about nature as well as love it.

"Trivial as it may seem to be able to ID types of plants, or salamanders, or rocks, I think there's a huge amount of value in your ability to appreciate what you're looking at when you can apply a name and categories to things," he says, and that knowledge opens doors to a broader understanding of ecological systems.

Wanting to protect those systems comes naturally, too. "As a 10-year-old, I don't think I had any real environmental awareness, but starting Camp that early created this foundation of appreciation of the outdoors and a general conservation mindset, where you try to integrate it into every facet of your life."





When he headed to college at Appalachian State University, “I knew a lot about what I didn’t want” in a career — a normal office job didn’t appeal. He loved the natural sciences, and thanks to Camp, he was well-armed with a lot of peripheral knowledge about them, but he could never pick a favorite. He ended up double majoring in building science and renewable energy technology, with a minor in sustainable development. “I’ve always had an interest in practical solutions,” he says.

Before Ratliff ended up at LEAP, he worked for energy auditing and installation companies. The work he does now is especially rewarding, he says, because he gets to focus on helping people make changes that will better the planet and save them money. A home visit from LEAP can include various tests to suss out where your house is leaking heat and air, from infrared cameras to big fans that create telltale drafts. Clients end up with a clear sense of what they should prioritize to make their homes more efficient, and LEAP can then serve as a liaison to companies that do the needed work of air sealing and insulating.

Ratliff says LEAP examines clients’ utility bills before and after any resulting construction, which means he gets to hold in his hands evidence of the practical impact of his work, in kilowatt hours and BTUs and dollars.

Some before-and-after comparisons are especially powerful. LEAP works with a few different utility programs that cover the cost of upgrades for low-income and elderly homeowners, he says. Sometimes, clients’ initial energy bills show they’re months behind on their gas or electric. Some live in trailers, which are notoriously leaky thanks to thin walls and flimsy storm windows, and rely on inefficient electric furnaces — “basically a toaster oven with a fan attached to it.”

That’s when Ratliff really sees how powerful simple changes can be.

“There have been jobs where we’ve cut people’s utility bills by half or more,” he says, which can mean hundreds a month in savings for struggling families. “Those are the most rewarding jobs for me.”

Want to make your home more energy efficient?

You might think you need to make major upgrades to your house to see a change in your utility bills, but Ratliff says that’s not true. The best bang for your buck is in relatively cheap changes that you can make without the help of a pro:

> **Switch to LED lightbulbs.** “LEDs have dropped so much in price — that’s number one,” he said.

> **Get low-flow faucets and shower heads.** “They’re also super cheap, and can pay for themselves within a couple of months.”



Spring Service Weekend

by Theta Miller

Spring Service Weekend 2019 was back on more familiar ground after the storm-related complications of the previous fall. We had 70 adults and 15 minors answer the call. The service, food, and fellowship were all incredible. I am simply awed, both by the needs of Camp and our community's will to pull together and fill those needs. In one way, there wasn't anything special about the work. Springtime and nature did their things: vegetation grew, branches fell from trees, rain infiltrated, water flowed across the earth, debris clogged ditches, buildings aged and settled, creatures lived, bred and fed, dust settled and in general entropy prevailed. Then volunteers came to tidy and repair and maintain and improve and to nurture community.

The eternal work of brush management, ditch clearing, tree pruning, and discouragement of invasives like Autumn Olive isn't sexy and is never finished. It's always on the list and there were, as always, folks willing to take it on. Similarly, every building and fan and toilet needs cleaning every time. That was done with smiles!

There seems to be a race to replace wood siding faster than the carpenter bees compromise it by drilling in to create their shelters. Various pieces of siding and a window frame on the back of the boy's bunk house were replaced. Screens suffer from the activities of people in the summer and the absence of people in the winter. Screens were repaired till we ran out of screen! A multitude of small repairs and adjustments were also made to shutters. Doors were adjusted to open and close without dragging on the floor. Nail pops in the roof were reseated and caulked. Sinks were more securely mounted to walls. Bathroom mirrors were replaced and hung securely. Failure of the light in the organ alcove of the chapel was investigated and temporarily repaired, pending a more complicated ultimate fix.

Bright yellow painted letter designations on the buildings for emergency identification and forest brown on the block foundations of several buildings were refreshed this time. The Adirondack chairs from the Staff House porch were sanded, re-stained and re-sealed. The clothes washer and dryer machines, plumbing and ductwork components were inspected and thoroughly cleaned. The collection of games in the LS was reviewed. Misplaced pieces were reconnected with their "families" and a few new games were added to the collection (due to the generosity and shopping mission of Sarah Preston).



In addition to the tasks that always appear on the list, there were numerous improvements, large and small. From under the boys T-House, a great deal of old construction debris was removed. A long-term unknown deficiency was identified and remedied by piping the floor drains to the exterior of the building and a vapor barrier was put down to reduce damaging moisture in the crawlspace. Joist replacement continued under the staff house. In the office, there were also ceiling fans and new lights installed. Ladders were added to the female staff's bunks. The clothesline posts behind the girls T-house were upgraded. Lighted switches were installed in the bunk houses so that they can be found more easily in the dark. That last small item was a much commented on and VERY well received improvement. I guess I'm not the only one who has fumbled in the dark for the light switch!

All of this "task" identification runs the risk of obscuring the real feeling of a Service Weekend. The end of a day brings a tired body but not a tired spirit and after a hot shower there is Nell's DELICIOUS, REAL food, fellowship, and fun music.

Thank you to Adam, Alex, Amy, Ann, Annie, Barak, Ben, Bennie, Brett, Brian, Campbell, Carolyn, Carolyn, Cate, Cathy, Celie, Corey, Corrina, Dave, David, Debbie, Dexter, Doug, Evan, Gary, George, Giovanni, Hanly, Hannah, Islomiddin, Jackson, Jason, Jerry, Joel, John, Josh, Kaitlyn, Karen, Kat, Kate, Katie, Kim, Krista, Langston, Leah, Lela, Leslie, Liam, Lucky, Luke, Mack, Maggie, Maria, Mary Caroline, Mary-Francis, Matthew, Mckenna, Meg, Mia, Michaux, Mike, Mike, Mitch, Naomi, Nell, Olivier, Paul, Penny, Robert, Ryan, Samantha, Samantha, Sandra, Sarah, Sarah, Scott, Sharon, Sheryl, Stacy, Steph, Stephanie, Theta, Trish, Tyler, and Wallis!

If you think that with all the work done, there couldn't have been much time for fun, then take a look at some pictures from the weekend and make your own conclusions!

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/ny8FbZLR4Ltwehio7>

Come join us next time. Spring Service Weekends are always the third full weekend in May and Fall Service Weekends are the third full weekend in September. Mark your calendars and join the fun.





Find us on Facebook!!!

You can connect with the Nature Camp Foundation at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nature-Camp-Foundation/107552817467>

You can stay in touch with Nature Camp, Inc. at:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nare-Camp/324806714283350?ref=br_tf

Almost Annual Fall Hike Day - October 19, 2019

WHEN: 10:00 AM through the evening, RAIN OR SHINE. If the weather is really unfriendly, call Camp to be sure we're still going hiking: 540-377-2491

WHERE: Nature Camp

WHAT: "Sunday Hikes" (We know they're on Saturday, but like to call them by their traditional name) followed by dinner and relaxation. **BRING YOUR LUNCH!**

WHO: All friends of Nature Camp

COST: \$20 per person over 10 years of age, or \$50 maximum for a family. Those 10 and under free with a parent.

DETAILS: You and your friends and family are invited for a day at Nature Camp. Paul Cabe and Leigh Ann Beavers are once again devoting their time, talent, and tithe to a wonderful fundraiser to benefit the Nature Camp Foundation, which provides generous and invaluable financial and other assistance to Nature Camp. You can help support Nature Camp while enjoying a fall day in the woods, great food, and fun people. Activities will include counselor-led hikes (and possibly in-Camp activities for those who prefer to remain more sedentary). Paul, Leigh Ann, and company will be busily preparing dinner while all the hikes are out, so you can come enjoy a turkey dinner after your hike (vegetarian and vegan options will be available). **We will NOT be able to provide babysitting, so choose your hike accordingly if you have small children. All minors must be accompanied and supervised by an adult that can legally sign the NCF waiver on behalf of the minor.**

Hikes will LEAVE CAMP by 10:30 AM, so please arrive in time to be ready by then. **PLEASE BRING YOUR LUNCH**, trail snacks, and plenty of water bottles with you.

PLEASE RSVP by October 12 to Adam Rotche at arotche@gmail.com. Also please note if you are a vegetarian or vegan.

Bring checks, payable to the Nature Camp Foundation, with you.





Adult Session 2019

by Krista Samson

I wouldn't want to miss the summer's blooms and the warmer fresh mountain waters at Nature Camp's Adult Session, not if I can help it. It restores my soul, and reminds me of what we are meant to be within a whole world. I wouldn't want to miss the energy of hopeful souls interested in being agents of change. So, when I yearn for the whippoorwills at daybreak reminding me I'm deep within the George Washington National Forest, it's time. Time to relax, restore, and regenerate at Nature Camp.

Falling into the philosophy of Nature Camp through an introduction by the masses in summer exodus from Fredericksburg, we became converts. After years of feeling engrossed in my children's Nature Camp stories, we attended Service Weekend, tasted the food, felt the energy, read the Conservation Pledge, and that was it. I wanted to go to Camp too. Flash forward to several years later, full of Service Weekends and Adult Sessions, and it's on the calendar before I book anything else. Confident I will learn something new and be reminded of a lost point of interest, I don't want to miss any of it. For me, I need continuing education and the promise of the boundless energy of folks hopeful for what education can do. Every year's rotating adult session—whether in June or August—delivers participating adults a peaceful mind, soul, and body restoration through reconnection with nature and like-minded souls. This year August's warm temperatures were cooled beautifully in the George Washington National Forest, and minds were massaged and laughter flourished. Add a bit of madcap mountain mayhem, Appalachian music, dancing, and conviviality and the result is always a great five-day, four-night energetic escape. The formula works, and here Camp alumni or converts feel welcomed into the circle and finally back at cherished days of summer camp.

Drawing me back to Camp annually are the serious academics, intersecting with wildly fresh ideas, both healing and fantastic. Creativity, clever curriculum, and organic authenticity seems the basis for the populus at Adult Session. It feels like a college camp for this reason, with freshman year's untethered energy of running to classes so as not to miss, or skipping school because you can. One may find a perfect balance between filling every moment with learning or fading into privacy. Unique to Camp life are reminders we forget in our modern over-obligated lives: to look up, to listen to nature, to nurture our innate needs to be outdoors, to laugh, to speak our truths, and to dance like no one's watching. Sounds surround from Big Mary's Creek and invites rock-hops to Table Rock for a slide and swim, or searching for elusive dragonflies or salamanders. Where else can we do that?

To feel a part of a bigger picture of hope, conservation and education, is to be at Nature Camp. And to share it with someone who yet doesn't know Nature Camp, who will love it, and love you for sharing, that's the gift. The gift of restoration for body and soul.



News from Nature Camp

By Philip Coulling, NC Executive Director

This summer 325 campers (and more than two dozen staff) enjoyed a mix of the old and new, the familiar and the novel, at Nature Camp. The first and last songs requested on the first day of First Session, and the last evening of Fourth, were “Leaving on a Jet Plane” and “MTA”! Tetherball remains astonishingly popular, and the Big Mary’s Creek Valley still reveals the same insights and marvels that Nature Campers have been discovering for decades.

Novelties this summer included a new hood and exhaust fan in the kitchen (thanks to the generosity of the NCF), a well received new recipe for fried chicken (which assistant cook Will Lounsbery-Scaife brought from a Korean restaurant in New York), and an already overused addition to the vernacular (“Yeet!”).

Relatively brief but intense rain events seem to be the new norm at Nature Camp (we experienced at least one thunderstorm every day of the summer) and challenged our stormwater management system, but overall it was not as soggy a summer as 2018.

Other highlights included the presence of Camp alumna Emily Montgomery as our artist in residence for two weeks, during which time she presented a couple of participatory evening programs on nature writing and led some sessions to compose poetry in the woods. In addition, we enjoyed a visit by staff members from Island Press, who were eager to learn more about Nature Camp first-hand. They are now excited to share our story with a wider audience.

And speaking of a wider audience, we have seen a slight downturn in enrollment over the past few summers. We hadn’t had a full house in Fourth Session for the past few summers, but attendance in Third Session in 2019 was the lowest in nearly 35 years, and while retention of campers from year to year remains high, we do not seem to be reaching as many new campers as we once did. So if you know a young person (particularly someone aged 11 to 13) who might be interested in participating in Nature Camp next summer, please encourage him/her/them to apply when registration begins on January 15. We have an exquisite new brochure that we are happy to share and are working on upgrades to our website.

We continue to provide a meaningful, fulfilling, life-changing experience for those who spend any time in our quiet little valley. As one veteran camper wrote at the end of her session this summer, “I don’t know where I would be without Camp, but I know my life is better having been here.”



Thanks to all of you who are reading this for your part in helping Nature Camp continue to operate and continue to have the impact that it does.

To view the video by Island Press go to: <https://island-press.org/blog/nature-camp-summer-camp-unlike-any-other>



News from Nature Camp, Inc.

By Katie Hoffman, Nature Camp, Inc. President

It's been a really great year so far for NCI, Philip Coulling once again saw the campers through four successful sessions of experiential learning, and Adult Session was evidently as engaging and inspiring as ever. Joe Garvin (VP) and I met with the staff during both opening and closing weeks this summer, and we agree that we're lucky to have such an intelligent, enthusiastic group of young people on staff. Philip and his Assistant Director, Max Manuel, did a great job of making sure Camp ran smoothly. Philip and Nina Chew Anderson (Education) teamed up to make sure that there were plenty of good Evening Program speakers over the summer. Stacy Luks (Publicity) hosted a very well-attended Prospective Camper Orientation. She also led the effort to redesign and refresh our Nature Camp brochure. The website is next! Alex Haney (Financial Assistance) reports that we were able to provide some financial assistance to all who requested it, Corey Basham (Facilities) is working with Ventry Smith (Caretaker) and Theta Miller (NCF's Service Weekend Coordinator) to make sure that we stay on top of all facilities matters. Thank goodness for our Treasurer, Ben Rottenborn, who works with Philip to ensure that all of our financial records stay in good order and—last but not least, Tony Walters (Secretary), who does a great job of making sure that we're all informed about meetings and tasks. We have a great board—please thank them for their work when you see them!

Of course, the Education Building Project is also cranking up and will soon be in full swing. Andy Flint, our contractor, was able to find us some free lab fittings—including a table with a chemical-proof surface—all of which are from the University of Lynchburg. He's saving us big \$\$ and we're recycling! The Education Building Steering Committee has three team leaders to help with project management: Ryan Garvin (Lab), Jerry Trammell (Museum) and Claire Lant (Library). We'll be recruiting a team for each space—more on that soon. Fall Service Weekend was a festival of listing, packing, and moving items to storage bins as we prepared the space for renovation. And WOW! The Education Building looks very different. Good things to come!

If you want to be on a particular team, email me at hoffmankatie@rocketmail.com and let me know.

Update your information!!!

The Foundation wants to have the best information on our supporters as possible so please update your contact information at <http://naturecampfoundation.org/my-profile/>. Updated and concise contact information will help the NCF provide the right information to you in the format you prefer.

Additionally, ask your Camp friends to do the same. There are plenty of folks still not in the "Circle" and we certainly want to inform them of the great things going on at Camp.

<http://naturecampfoundation.org/my-profile/>





Development Committee & Capital Campaign Update

by Amy Kasdorf Gonzalez

We rely on tools to help us keep track of all you lovely people, and the biggest one we use is the eTapestry Constituent Management Software. It's a product of Blackbaud, a company that specializes in fundraising software and has many strengths. But as you all know, a software tool's utility is commensurate with the time invested to ensure records are accurate and reflect our members properly. Nell Fredericksen, Lane Crawford, and I, with the support of an excellent consultant and the blessings of our board, embarked on a project this spring and summer to clean up our member records and the data queries we use to send both hard copy and electronic mailings. We have completed the bulk of the work, but there will continue to be some cleanup required. Hopefully, you won't see any evidence of all this work, but it will make our efforts at the Board level simpler and more efficient as we continue on. If you do receive communication that is incorrect, please let me know!

I was able to attend this year's Adult Session where Nell Fredericksen was also one of the instructors. Nell and I asked for a bit of time on the schedule and were able to give a presentation and answer questions about the Foundation and the Education Building renovation project.

As of September 3, 2019, I can report that we are 47% of the way to our Annual Fund Goal of \$75,000. Thank you so much for your generosity! The Capital Campaign for Renovation of the Education Building, which we have dubbed "Building on Tradition" has accomplished 25% of its multiyear goal of \$300,000. Look forward to more communications on the "Building on Tradition" Campaign, but in the meantime, thank you so much for your contributions.

If you're so inclined, when you visit the Foundation website's Give page:

(<http://www.naturecampfoundation.org/give/>)

you will see there is an option for donating to the Campaign, as well as other ways you can direct your giving. And we will be happy to accept your donations to both the Annual Fund and to the Building on Tradition Campaign!

Virtual "Nature Camp Canteen" Twenty T-Shirt Designs now available!

You can now order T-shirts, sweatshirts, onesies, kids wear, mugs, etc. from our new online "canteen." We now have 20 of the most requested designs available in our shop or you can purchase the designs for use on a huge variety of items.

Please visit our SpreadShirt shop at:

<https://shop.spreadshirt.com/NatureCampFoundation?noCache=true>

The \$2.50 we earn from each sale goes to support our scholarship fund!!!





Nominations and Elections

by Sarah Hulcher

Elections 2019 are on the horizon for the Nature Camp Foundation. This year the positions of President and At-Large Member are up for election, and the position of Facilities Chair is up for re-appointment.

Nominations are being accepted now: if you would like to be considered for any of these positions, or if you know someone who should be considered, please email your nominations to our Foundation Vice President, Sarah Hulcher at **hulchers@gmail.com**. The nominating committee will be considering nominees and putting together a slate of candidates to be approved by the Board of Directors in October, and the ballots will be mailed some time in November, to all qualified voters.

Those who contributed money or in-kind contributions (such as volunteer time) during 2018 or 2019 are eligible to vote and will receive ballots with short candidate biographies. This year, we hope to encourage more people to use our electronic voting option, but will continue to offer traditional paper ballots.

Save the Date!!! Nature Camp Reunion 2020

by Adam Rotche

Every five years the Nature Camp Foundaion hosts a reunion to bring together all friends of Nature Camp for a long weekend of nostalgia, fellowship, and fun in the outdoors. All are welcome to join the festivities alongside Big Mary's Creek as we hike, swim, eat, tell stories, play games, rekindle old friendships, and meet kindred spirits over **Labor Day weekend, September 5-7, 2020**.

We are starting to get our ducks in a row with plans for this event and we would love some volunteers to help out. If interested please contact:

Adam Rotche (arotche@gmail.com).

Mark your calendars, start making plans to join us, and stay tuned for more information to come!

Calendar of Events 2019 - 2020

Fall Hike Day	October 19, 2019
NCI Board Meeting	November 16, 2019
NCF Annual Board Meeting	January 25, 2020
Spring Service Weekend	May 15 - 17, 2020
NCI Board Meeting	June 20, 2020
Adult Session	June 4-8, 2020
NCI New Camper Orientation	July 18, 2020
Nature Camp Reunion	September 5-7, 2020





Obituary - Malika Heatwole

Malika Renee Heatwole, 47, of Richmond, died unexpectedly on Thursday, June 6, 2019.

She was born April 15, 1972 in Staunton to Stanley E. Heatwole and the late Linda Lorraine Curry Heatwole.

In addition to her father, she is survived by her brother, David L. Heatwole; half-brother, Daniel A. Knott, MD and his wife, Lauren; aunt, Brenda C. Holliday; uncle, Kenneth Heatwole and wife, Ruth; uncle, Harold Heatwole and wife, Sue; nephew, Cody Bowen and numerous cousins.

Malika was a graduate of Lee High School and Bridgewater College where she received a bachelor's degree. She had a true love of animals and was the owner of Pet Village of Staunton. She was an avid supporter of animal rescue efforts.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in her name to Henrico Humane Society, PO Box 28014, Richmond, VA 23228 or Network for Endangered Sea Turtle (N.E.S.T.), PO Box 1073, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949 or charity of choice.

Malika will be deeply missed by those of us who knew her as a camper and cherished her friendship into our adult years. Please join us in holding her family and friends gentle and tender in our hearts at this sad time.



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