

the afterglow

Issue 95, Spring 2019

Follow the Gleam... Stephanie Lape

- by Sarah Kujawski

It all started with a snappy grandma, a bold little girl, and an intriguing picture of Matthew Bain holding a snake out on the Nature Camp rec field.

Stephanie was born curious and loved learning about science and the natural world. Taking after her gardening grandmother, Ava Conner, Stephanie loved the immersion of the Nature Camp experience - the place, the environment, and most of all, nature. Surrounded by her peers - especially other bright curious young women - they embarked on a singular journey into a new world.

Her first impression was nothing but love. An enveloping appreciation for the mountains, the flow of Big Mary's Creek, the bunkhouses named after our Virginia regions. The staff was warm, as were Colonel and Mrs. Reeves.

Thanks to Nature Camp, Stephanie found a profound sense of place and purpose. A bold sense of belonging. The only thing she dreaded, she said, was the long "whole year before the next camp session!"

Stephanie credits Nature Camp with bolstering her innate curiosity and enthusiasm. Curiosity is a Camp foundation and it's that very character trait, along with a respect for the Earth and all living things, that encouraged her to learn and to want to teach. After college, she jumped at the opportunity to join Teach for America and to learn about another culture when she taught middle school science to Dine (Najavo) students. She credits Nature Camp for encouraging a passion for understanding how the health of our planet directly impacts the health of our people. She is reminded of the quote by Senegalese poet and environmentalist Baba Diome: "In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."

Camp fueled Stephanie's love of reading. She is especially thankful for the Garden Club's donation of book awards at the end of session, including works by Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, and the Audubon Society.

Stephanie is grateful for the relationship with the natural world she developed at Nature Camp. It's a relationship that continues to grow and evolve: "As a younger person, the outdoors was a place of discovery and wonder. This still holds true. Increasingly I find nature is also a source of solace and refuge. Wendell Berry's poem 'The Peace of Wild Things' comes to mind."

Stephanie was a camper at Nature Camp from 1991 until 1996. She then worked as a counselor until 1998 and served as Assistant Director in 1999. She has a B.A. Echols Scholar Interdisciplinary Degree from University of Virginia, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Western New Mexico University. She attended Eastern Virginia Medical School to obtain her M.D. and did her Family Medicine Residency at St. Mary's Medical Center, Grand Junction, CO. She is currently at the University of New Mexico in a Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellowship.



News from Nature Camp, Inc.

It's going to be a busy year! The contract with L. G. Flint Construction has been signed and the renovation of the Education Building will begin right after Adult Session this year. There will be opportunities for everyone who is interested to participate in some part of the project. Much of the demolition work in the fall and many of the final touches in the spring will happen at Service Weekends. We will probably also need volunteers to take on some special projects outside of Service Weekends - look for more details and invitations soon. We'll hold an informational session at Spring Service Weekend for anyone interested in being part of the project, and we'll find a good way to let everyone know how plans are progressing.

We are refreshing our look in other ways, too. We will soon have a beautifully revised Nature Camp brochure, thanks to Stacy Luks, who has been working with Helm and Hue Design out of Richmond, Virginia. Next, Stacy will be working on revamping our website to bring it up to date, including making it more mobile-friendly.

I am excited about all of the changes, which will undergird our abilities to deliver a top-notch educational experience to our campers. An added plus will be the many opportunities to create community and engage with one another. Let me know if you have any questions.

Hope to see you in Vesuvius!

Katie Hoffman
President, Nature Camp Incorporated
hoffmankatie@rocketmail.com

2019 Prospective Camper Day

This year marks our 5th (yes, already!) annual "sneak-peek" experience for prospective Nature Campers, scheduled as always for the afternoon of the middle Saturday of 3rd Session, July 20th. Please mark your calendars and keep the event top-of-mind for referral to relevant friends and contacts who would benefit from joining us.

In five short years this event has become a successful and reliable mainstay for not only first-time campers enrolled for 4th session and their parents, but also for friends and siblings. The exposure to camp's setting, the opportunity to see the facilities, to meet Flip, the campers, counselors and staff; and to ask questions and get excited about arriving the following Sunday seems to work a magic spell on most enrolled 4th session attendees.

In addition, we are happy to increasingly be welcoming camp alumni with young offspring, who seem keen to stay connected and accustom their younger children to Camp and its environs.

As for helping us to spread the word about Prospective Camper Day, we have been focusing our intentions and efforts toward achieving full enrollment in both 3rd and 4th sessions, and in particular to middle school educators - teachers, librarians, etc.

As always, look for postings about 2019 Prospective Camper Day on Camp's website and Facebook page. Fliers will also be available at Service Weekend, Adult Session, and Camp 1st and 2nd sessions, but please reach out if you would like a supply to share!

- Stacy Luks, NCI Director of Publicity/Promotions



News from Nature Camp

It has been an exciting fall, winter, and spring for Nature Camp, and while the buildings, grounds, and vegetation of the Big Mary's Creek valley have largely lain dormant, much has been happening. Who ever would have thought that Nature Camp business would take me to Minnesota not once but twice in a three month span in 2019? In January I traveled to Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center near the North Shore of Lake Superior for the biannual gathering of staff of Residential Environmental Learning Centers, sponsored by the Association of Nature Center Administrators. This stimulating conference with a wonderfully collegial and supportive group of educators, all driven by and devoted to a shared mission, covered topics such as risk management, inclusion, and ideas and best practices for staff training. This was all done using Open Space format, in which all participants are considered experts and all may share equally in the presentation and discussion of ideas. The weather was positively balmy with low temperatures about 25 degrees F below zero! Then in April I returned, this time to Camp Knutson, an amazing camp that provides programs for many groups of campers with special needs, for a week of training to become a certified instructor in Mental Health First Aid for Youth. The impetus for taking this course was to provide better training and preparation for our staff at Nature Camp, but I look forward to sharing the knowledge I have gained with other camp professionals and members of the local and regional community.

But wait, there is more! Thanks to the dedication of our Director of Publicity/Promotion, Stacy Luks, we have been working on an exciting new brochure, which we look forward to unveiling at Camp this summer (copies should be available at the Spring Service Weekend). We are also eagerly looking forward to having alumna Emily Montgomery with us this summer as our first-ever Artist in Residence; Emily, who is pursuing an MFA in poetry from the University of Alabama, will be onsite for parts of First and Second Sessions and will assist with classes, lead some activities during rec periods, present two evening programs, and work with campers on creative writing. We are also pleased to announce a new partnership with Island Press, a non-profit publishing company devoted to providing ideas and information to protect the environment and helping create solutions to complex problems. We are still exploring the possibilities for this partnership with an organization whose mission dovetails with our own and how it will manifest itself, but stay tuned for further developments and more announcements!

As this issue of the Afterglow goes to press, a handful of spaces remain available for both girls and boys in Third and Fourth Session!!

- Philip Coulling, Nature Camp Executive Director

Update your information!!!

The Foundation wants to have the most current 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 folk 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/>

You can also see a color version of this Afterglow on our website!

Fall Service Weekend

Fall Service Weekend 2018 was decidedly unusual. In the week leading up to the scheduled time of September 14-16, Hurricane Florence appeared to be on track to dump about 10 inches of rain in Vesuvius on those days. Widespread flooding and power outages were expected all over Virginia.

The emails flowed furiously as the storm track and predictions varied and possibilities were considered. Finally the combined Boards of the Nature Camp Foundation and Nature Camp, Inc. decided that we would cancel the regular Service Weekend in the interests of safety and sanity.

Immediately, there was a second flurry of communication to try to arrange what we expected to be a Florence Clean-Up Detail. Three future weekend options were thrown out to the community and the best all-around response was for the following weekend of September 21-23. Critical to that choice was the availability of a cook! Reid Downer volunteered to head up the kitchen with the help of Jeff Pool and Wilson Ratliff. An army (even a small army of volunteers) marches on its stomach! Thank you, gentlemen!

Twenty-four volunteers came for our makeup weekend and we found a suprising LACK of storm damage. Vesuvius had received just a little more than an inch of rain in the previous weekend and wind had not left a huge mess. Nevertheless, there was plenty to do!

Several weddings were booked for fall dates including the very next weekend, so Camp needed a thorough cleaning. The Chapel received new benches and gravel was redistributed to smooth the drip-line and gully to provide a pleasant path for the bride to tread down. The LS, T-houses, and bunk houses were "spiffed" up and the very musty mattresses were all cleaned and aired.

Along the right side of the driveway into Camp, a new ditch was created to keep stormwater headed towards the creek without crossing and eroding the driveway. Now a cute little bridge over the ditch marks the beginning of the trail to Buttermilk Springs.

A window was rebuilt. Doors and drawers were rendered easier to open and close. Trails were cleared of autumn olive and downed trees. Music was played and delicious food was shared!

Thank you to Ann, Barak, Carolyn, Corey, Devon, Flip, Graelyn, Jeff, Jerry, Jerry, Kate, Matthew, Mia, Mike, Paul, Peter, Reid, Sheryl, Shirley, Simon, Theta, Ventry, Walter and Wilson!

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!

- Theta Miller, NCF Service Weekend Coordinator



Almost Annual Fall Hike Day

Over one hundred friends of Nature Camp gathered together on a beautiful Saturday morning last October, to explore the Blue Ridge Mountains in all of their autumnal glory. Many thanks are owed to Barak Brashear for orchestrating volunteer hike leaders to guide each group as they trudged over ridges, splashed across streams, and bushwhacked their way through tangles of mountain laurel. The five hikes that went out this year included Mine Mountain, whose shoulder nuzzles Camp from the north, and two hikes taking alternate paths to the top of McClung Mountain, our snuggle-buddy to the south. Another cadre of hikers enjoyed a pleasantly long and meandering journey over Whetstone Ridge while Barak himself took a cohort to Spy Rock on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

After seeing these groups of intrepid adventurers strike out from Camp around 10:00 AM, I joined Paul Cabe and his team of cooks to saunter gleefully back and forth between the walk-in, pantry, range, and dishwasher. Highlights of the menu included an impossibly enormous pile of Leigh Ann's crescent rolls and a cranberry sauce made from Flip and Bain's foraged berries.

Thanks to the generosity of those who attended, The Nature Camp Foundation was able to raise nearly two thousand dollars! If you missed out on this one, don't worry! Come traipse with us October 19th, for our 2019 Fall Hike Day!

- Adam Rotche, NCF Member at Large

Save the Date!!! Nature Camp Reunion 2020

Every five years the Nature Camp Foundation 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 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!

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/Nature-Camp/324806714283350?ref=br_tf

News from the Development Committee

I would like to take credit for the outstanding donations to the Nature Camp Foundation Annual Fund (\$87K+ compared to the goal of \$75K) in 2018. And let's celebrate another \$14K+ contributed to the Scholarship Fund in 2018 and over \$20,000 given to the nascent Education Building Renovation Campaign! I'd like to think that the eloquence and poignancy in my communications prompts your generosity. And yet, in my heart, I know your gift grows from within your own hearts, from the love and respect that you have for the mission of Nature Camp and the Nature Camp Foundation.

Elsewhere in this Afterglow, you will see the Annual Report from our fair Madame President Fredericksen. And you will see an update from Katie Hoffman, the Project Lead for the Education Building Renovation Project. It's always good to keep you in the loop and to thank you when you make donations. As a Development Chair, I'm starting to learn these things. Thank goodness I don't work alone. There's a team of caring volunteers to keep this effort thriving. That's one way we keep our overhead so low – no full time paid employees for the Foundation. We pay as needed only for more technical services. We strive very hard to keep the highest percentage possible of your donation headed to the mission of supporting Nature Camp.

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, amongst the other ways you can direct your giving. We will be conducting a quiet campaign for a bit longer, soliciting charitable foundations and larger private donors, but stay tuned for more Campaign news in the coming year. The Campaign to Renovate the Education Building is kind of a mouthful, so we are working to come up with a "brand" name. We're thinking "Building on Tradition."

If you are reading this, we probably have your current contact information up to date in our database. However, if you know someone who loves Camp, but might not have current information with us, would you let me know? That way folks can receive their own Afterglow and/or reminders about Service Weekends and Fall Hike Day. Questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions – send 'em my way at amykgonzalez@gmail.com.

- Amy Kasdorf Gonzalez, NCF Development Chair

Nature Camp Adult Session 2019

The good Lord willin' and the creek don't rise, Adult Session 2019 will take place August 16-20. This year's session just happens to coincide with the 50th anniversary of a time when the creek did indeed rise - a whole lot! On the night of August 19-20, 1969, the remnants of Hurricane Camille stalled out over the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the historic rainfall that ensued caused massive flooding in and around Nature Camp. We will recount that event, examine the perfect storm of conditions that produced this meteorological phenomenon, and take a trip to see local sites that still bear the scars and other signs of flooding and landslides that Camille produced. There will also be the usual state of natural history pursuits - plants, birds, herps, and the like - plus haiku, alcohol inks on tile, and medicinal mushroom tinctures. So come join us in August - but keep an eye out for Percy!

Nature Camp Foundation Elections

Voting in the 2018 election for Secretary, Treasurer, and At-Large Board Member ended in December. Thanks to NCF Parliamentarian Nancy Lowry's careful tallying, we are pleased to announce that you re-elected Amy Wingfield Clark for Treasurer, Louise Bowling Manilla as Secretary and Jason Farr as the At-Large Member. Amy Gonzalez, who was serving out the remainder of Joe Irby's term, was appointed to her first full term as Development Chair.

This year the positions of President and the second At-Large Member are up for election, and the position of Facilities Chair is up for re-appointment. The NCF/NCI Board Development Committee will convene in June to begin the process of seeking willing volunteers interested in serving on the board. Suggestions for potential nominees will be accepted by mail, phone, or email anytime through September 2019.

In September and October, the NCF Governance Committee will develop a slate of nominees to be approved by the Board of Directors, and ballots will be mailed in November to all qualified voters. Those who made financial or in-kind contributions to NCF during 2018 or 2019 are eligible to vote and will receive ballots with short candidate biographies. We hope to encourage more people this year to use our electronic voting option, but we will continue to offer traditional paper ballots.

As Vice President, Sarah Hulcher serves on the NCF Governance Committee that will coordinate the NCF election this year. If you are interested in helping, or are willing to consider serving in one of the open NCF positions, please contact Sarah (see contact information below).

Watch the Foundation website for announcements about the upcoming elections throughout the summer.

Contact Information: Sarah Hulcher, NCF Vice-President - hulchers@gmail.com

The Nature Camp Foundation Virtual Canteen

Don't forget you can order T-shirts, sweatshirts, onesies, kids wear, mugs, etc. from our online "canteen." We have 20 past Nature Camp designs on a variety of items available in our shop or you can purchase the designs to create a variety of items of your choice.

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!!!

Emma (Emmie) Kajsa Marie Nicholas, 1999-2018

Reprinted from *The Daily News-Record*, Harrisonburg, VA.

Emma Nicholas, born Jan. 16, 1999, made a deliberate and thoughtful decision to end her life on Wednesday, October 24, 2018.

After struggling with depression for many years, Emma felt that this was the only way that she could find the calm that her body, mind, and soul needed. Emma unapologetically lived her life, fully embodying the phrase “marching to the beat of her own drum.” She had a unique perspective of the world that came through in her sense of humor, writing, and conversations with practically anybody. She stood firm in her well-researched opinions and life philosophies and was more than happy to tell you how you were wrong. One of the causes she most strongly advocated for was environmental conservation and sustainability and this passion will continue on as she has elected to use her cremated remains as part of an artificial coral reef. She will also live on in others through tissue donation.

Emma was proud of her bisexuality and loved being part of and supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Bringing beauty and meaning into the lives of others made her happy. Emma was passionate about creating artwork that utilized elements of the natural world with digital, paper, and three dimensional media. She loved filming and editing pictures and videos of cities, nature, and her cats, Furbie and Cornelius. She spent her time enjoying and discovering new music that featured prominently in her many playlists and through her radio show at Franklin & Marshall College, *The--Em--Dash*.

Emma is survived by her pops, David Nicholas, her mom, Kajsa Svarfvar, and her brother, Jonathan Nicholas (“brother”), along with her large and loving extended family in both the United States and Sweden.

A celebration of Emma’s life was held at Nature Camp on Saturday, Nov. 3rd, at 3 p.m.

Editors note: Emma was a camper from 2010 to 2016 and was selected Best All-Around Camper during her last session. She was an incredibly bright light with a keen intellect, a spirited passion for learning and the environment, a fierce drive to succeed, and deep empathy for others. A few years ago Emma took it upon herself to refurbish the old bird identification boxes in the museum and spent countless hours painstakingly rewiring them and adding digital recordings of the song and call of each species. She will be greatly missed.



Calendar of Events 2019-2020

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|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Spring Service Weekend | May 17-19, 2019 |
| NCI Board Meeting | June 22, 2019 |
| NCI Adult Session | August 16-20, 2019 |
| NCI Prospective Camper Day | July 20, 2019 |
| Fall Hike Day | October 19, 2019 |
| Fall Service Weekend | September 20-22, 2019 |
| NCF Annual Open Meeting | September 21, 2019 |
| Nature Camp Reunion | September 5-7, 2020 |



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