

NIGHT EAGLE NEWS

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

Winter 2018 (802) 446-6100
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From the Director

It's still cold in Vermont, the skeletons of the tipis in camp are still nestled in snow, and the ice is still covering the lakes, but sugar making is just around the corner, and we're beginning to get lots of calls from families who are interested in sending their son(s) to Night Eagle. That means that summer and the opening of camp is not far behind!



Hocoka Awaiting the Arrival of Campers

This summer, Night Eagle will once again be visited by representatives of the American Camping Association as part of a four-year accreditation process. They will spend the better part of a day in camp observing the campers and the staff, asking questions, and checking documentation.

The ACA, founded in 1910, is the only independent accrediting organization in the country that reviews camp operations. The process is entirely voluntary, and only 25% of day and resident camps in the U.S. attain ACA accredited status.

We are proud to say that Night Eagle was first accredited in 2000 when we opened, and we have maintained our accreditation ever since. This is just one example of our commitment to offering you the safest experience possible!

Night Eagle Sweet Grass

Western science has caught up with American Indian wisdom in uses for sweet grass as researchers identify compounds in the aromatic herb that can keep mosquitoes at bay.

Recently, the American Chemical Society held a news conference in which they revealed that chemicals in sweet grass oil match the repelling effectiveness of the common ingredient in insect sprays like Off! Deep Woods.

The findings come from studies of traditional therapies used by American Indian tribes. As you know, sweet grass is one of the sacred plants traditionally used as incense in ritual purifications, but after studying traditional therapies used by American Indians, scholars report that American Indians have always known that its fragrance kept biting bugs away as well, and they often covered themselves and their homes with the plant.

According to chemist Charles Cantrell, he and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture have investigated the compounds by steam-distilling oil from the plant and testing the mosquitoes' avoidance of the oil alongside the standard insect repellent DEET and have found that the chemicals phytol and coumarin found in sweet grass do in fact repel mosquitoes!

I've been doing a bit of research myself and discovered that it's possible to grow sweet grass in Vermont. This summer we are going to give it a try!



Spring Work and Play Weekend

This year's Spring Work and Play Weekend will be on May 5-6 (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).

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 at this year's gathering may include putting up a tipi or two, cutting and hauling in tipi poles, clearing the road of fallen trees, checking the Long Trail Shelter at Little Rock Pond, testing Summer Bear's the new clay oven, relashing Hocoka, painting the front gate, or any other projects we deem worthy of our attention. There is always plenty to do to prepare camp for the summer and there is always plenty of fun!

Summer Solstice by *Soft Path Teacher*

Traditional cultures were attuned to nature and realized that there were two special times of the year, the summer solstice and the winter solstice.

The summer solstice, June 21, is the day of the year with the most hours of sunshine. It traditionally marks the end of spring and the beginning of summer and is a time to celebrate light and life.

The winter solstice, December 21, marks the beginning of winter and is the day of the year with the fewest hours of sunshine. The winter solstice offers us a time to reflect on the year behind and is also a time for celebration because every day after it has longer and longer hours of daylight and brings us closer to the summer solstice.

At Night Eagle, the highlight of our summer is camp itself. For staff the biggest day of the summer is opening day when campers arrive with their parents. All of our hard work and preparation begins to pay off when we welcome the campers and see excitement in their faces.

This year opening day falls on July 1, and we can think about this day as one camp solstice – the height of summer and a day for celebration. Correspondingly, the day six months prior, January 1, 2018, would be the other camp solstice - - the depth of winter, but also the turning point in the year where every day that follows brings us closer to camp!

While you are celebrating the beginning of the New Year, we hope you take time to think about the upcoming summer, the close friends you've made at camp, the wonderful experiences you've had at camp, and all the fun you will have at Night Eagle after you arrive this summer!

NOTE: This summer on July 12, there will be a **Super New Moon**, which occurs when the moon is at its closest point to Earth in its monthly orbit. Plan now for a great **Super Stalk the Fire** game!

Meadow Dreamer Reflects on Night Eagle

(*Meadow Dreamer* was a five-year camper and an assistant counselor. This excerpt was taken from an essay he wrote for school. See if you agree with him!)



Ok, so every year I go to this camp in the summer. This camp is something else. Yeah, I'm not a fool and can recognize that sounds cheesy and cliché, but the thing is, I authentically mean it. There's not a single thing in my life that quite compares to it; it is literally something else. Earlier I was ranting on about stress and how it burdens me so, but at camp I'm free of this. I haven't a single reason to stress about anything. And one can't really ever comprehend how special that is until you've legitimately experienced it. At the core of my camp's philosophy is simplicity. It's our camp lifestyle.

We don't live in cabins, we don't use our phones, we don't have people slaving away for us, and most importantly, we don't have any drawbacks from experiencing life in nature. We live in tipis free of electronics and modern conveniences. We build our own fires without matches. We cook our own food. We make our own tools. We are completely self-sufficient! We aren't just a highly

functional community, we are deeper, we are a brotherhood. There is no backstabbing, there is no bullying, there is no popularity hierarchy, we are just simply, boys in a forest living in harmony.

Anyway the summer of 2016 was my last year as a camper, which is difficult and different to say the least. Nobody really wants to stop being a camper. By the time you're on your last year, you have made so many friends. Often times you won't see these friends anywhere but camp, and just the thought of never seeing them again is heart wrenching. In a way those who you bond with at camp are those who you bond with most genuinely. For at camp you are your most real. At camp, there's no judgment, so there's no reason to judge or fear being judged, which allows people to be themselves with no fake attributes. So in a situation where everyone is being himself the friends you make are the people most truly similar to you.

In society, people always modify what they say and how they act to comply better with their accomplices. Society can be quite phony. I am no saint and I've certainly said many things that weren't inherently true to make someone like me more, hell I'm sure we all have. I'm just saying there is no need for that in camp. So it really is a blessing.

My very first year I met this kid his name was **Marsh Hawk**. You're probably thinking one of two things, "Why is his name so weird" or "Woah! Knarly name, dude." Ok, so **Marsh Hawk** isn't his real name, it's his camp name.

You see, at camp we are focused on the American Indian simplistic life style and philosophy. We follow the traditions of the Lakota in particular. In American Indian culture you must earn your name, and your name must really represent you as a person. Now the Lakota used to send boys out on journeys called naming quests, where they would go out and wait for a vision. They would go for four days without food or water sitting silently, alone, waiting for a vision.

Now we don't go quite so far as the Lakota did, but we still do naming quests. We sit silent, still, and alone with no sustenance for eight hours straight. Now that may sound terrible, but it's really not. After the first hour or so, the whole uncomfortable feeling of the situation really diminishes and you lose that somewhat bored somewhat uncertain feeling. You gain a new feeling of happiness and contemplation, begin to notice all that is around you, and gain new insights that had never occurred to you before. And just like that, your hours have flown by, almost too quickly.

Everybody in the camp has gotten a name, including me, making us even tighter bound as one. Back to *Marsh Hawk*, we were the same age and both first year campers. He is a tan, skinny, sinewy kid, very muscular, but you know, in a skinny guy way. Beyond that he has a lust for adventure just like mine. He is persistent, curious, energetic, and open minded, just like me. We are perfectly compatible.

I don't care if he's weird cause hell so am I. When you really are like someone, you can look past all their flaws and see that you probably have them too. We make each other better people: he helps me fix my flaws, insecurities, and personal struggles, and I do the same thing right back.

Marsh Hawk isn't my only friend in camp, Christ, I have so many. Even the kids who sometimes can really get on my nerves, I still consider friends. Because I can see our similarities, what good and bad attributes we have in common. In society you can't really do this because most people just aren't open enough for you to get know them well enough. Sometimes I think some people are so terribly caught up in what society expects them to be they don't actually know what they are really like. It's a scary thought I know, and it may seem at first impossible, but really it's very possible and likely rather common.

People get so caught up in trends and who they pretend to be and begin to lose who they really are without even knowing it. If we never take the time to step back and focus on who we really are, we may end up becoming the person we really



Marsh Hawk being *Marsh Hawk*

aren't. A genuine person unaltered by society is a rare thing and should be cherished if found.

That's really why my camp is the biggest treasure of all because there's not only one but many genuine people in it.

With genuine human interaction things seem more meaningful more permanent. I don't remember 200 of the days from 2016, but tell you what, I remember every single day of camp. It's not just the reality of people at camp that makes it so memorable, but it's the freedom. At camp we are so boundlessly free to do as we please, and yet we have massive amounts of responsibility. I can't really explain how it works so perfectly, it just does.



Distinguished Safety 1st award

For the fourth consecutive year, Markel Insurance announced that Night Eagle has been included among only 59 boys' and girls' camps in America to have received this prestigious award.

Each year, Markel's Safety 1st program recognizes policyholders who have shown an exceptional commitment to the safety of their employees and customers.

Michael Swain, Senior Loss Control Specialist for Markel Specialty, stated, "Camps and clubs must meet stringent criteria to qualify for the Safety 1st designation. They must have a proven safety record, undergo formal assessments and inspections, and participate in continuing education and certification programs. These facilities deserve to be recognized for keeping safety a top priority."



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

February generally marks the beginning of the early enrollment season for prospective camp families, and we are already almost half filled! We'd like to remind returning camper families to get their application forms completed and mailed in so that you will have a space in the session of your choice. Our advertising begins next week. So if you haven't already enrolled, we hope it's 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 either case, Night Eagle won't be the same without YOU, so get those applications in the mail today!

Bring a Friend to Camp

Please help us get the *Night Eagle* word out! If you know someone who might be interested in attending *Night Eagle* or learning more about camp, call or e-mail us and we'll send the family an information packet. ***If any of your referrals enroll for any Night Eagle session, we will be happy to credit your account with a value of 10% of the new camper's tuition.***



So You Want to be a Counselor?

I realize it's only February, but I'm in the process of lining up AC's, and I'm already beginning to receive interest from potential counselors. If *you* or someone you know are interested in spending next summer at Night Eagle as a counselor, please let me know!

Campers Signed Up for 2018

(as of February 15)

Thunder Willow	Arctic Rain
Arctic Sun	Sunrise Bear
Prairie Sky	Mountain Maple
Rainbow Medicine	Night Heron
Mountain Friend	Winter Moon
Sun Flicker	Yellow Flame
Circle Dance	Drum Spirit
Patten Bilsbury	Circle Singer
Arrow Shade	Heart Spirit
Moon Quest	Sun Dreamer
Eli Schrader	Sergent Lamitie
Shining Spring	Marco Stephens
Bosco Benaroum	Rowan Beck
Eli Bak	Felix Berkower

Please Note Our New Address!

Aug. 5	Second One-Week Session Opens
July 15	First One-Week Session Opens
July 22	Second Session (2 and 3 weeks) Opens
July 15	Four-Week Sessions Opens
July 1	First Session (2, 3, 6 weeks) Opens
June 24	Staff Week Begins

Important Dates:

Night Eagle Wilderness Adventures
P.O. Box 479
Wallingford, VT 05773



Buffalo Robe in the Clearing!