



The Firefly

A quarterly newsletter with news and letters all about

Camp WA WA Segowea!

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue # 11 December 2020

Hello and Welcome to The Firefly! This is the Camp Newsletter that now comes out on a quarterly basis. This month we wrap up the very strange year of 2020 with all things camp!

A look at the summer of 2021
Camp Director Lily presents our plans for next year, 2021 (with fingers crossed!)
Page 1



It's almost time for our Capital Campaign! We focus on preserving the main lodge,
Your Taxpayer Deduction benefits Camp.
Page 2

We talk to Southfield local and seasonal employee Janice Boults-
Page 3

5 Year Kid update!
Page 4



Moving Ahead with Overnight Camping Plans

Lily Mercogliano Easton, Camp Director

Despite still being in a completely unprecedented time for camp planning, I am approaching summer planning much like any other program planning that we do for camp: make a first plan, a back-up plan, and a rainy day plan. For us, no matter what happens, we will be running camp next July and August with as much access for overnight camping as is safely possible.

Throughout the pandemic, our organization has been committed to having camp in whatever ways were safe and met our mission. Last summer, that meant no overnight youth camping and family camping instead. Next summer, we are hopeful

that increased knowledge about COVID-19 will make it possible for the State of Massachusetts to allow overnight camping again and we are planning accordingly.

There are three key capabilities of our program that are underlying our optimism about summer 2021:

Flexibility: Camp WA WA has always been grounded in community and what is best for our campers. So, for next summer our program will change in whatever ways are needed to make sure everyone is safe and has the opportunity to live together on Harmon Pond for what will surely be a unique summer.

Bubbling: Overnight programs that did successfully run last summer in other states, did so using a combination of testing, screening, and isolation to prevent transmission of the virus during camp and to create a camp bubble that has a single point of entry for campers and staff. We are grateful to have access to those experiences and to be able to

implement similar procedures at WA WA.

Commitment to Safety: As we learn more we will adjust our plans in accordance with the guidance we get from the ACA, CDC, and our local health department. We will face plenty of challenges, but the easy decision will always be to make the safest calls for our campers, staff, and families.

At this time, we are also planning to hold two weeks of family camping in addition to our overnight camping. This will give our families more options and provide a balance in programming as we wait for a more standard normal again. Whatever next summer brings, we will be ready and camp magic will continue!



The Capital Campaign is coming soon!

Since 1928 when it was built, the main lodge has been the centerpiece of camp, with its majestic beams of American chestnut and its steel structure holding everything together. A small amount of work has been completed through the years to maintain the building, Now is the time though to seriously preserve the integrity of the building and thus we need to raise money to do just that. Plans are underway for a capital campaign to begin in 2021 and the first step is choosing a chairperson of the campaign. Camp Parent and volunteer, Matt Toback was selected and agreed to take the position! Thank you Matt!



What's your connection to camp?

I was started hearing stories about WA WA in 1998 from my new college friend, Boo Van Alstyne. In the years that followed, I've been lucky to experience camp as an adult, making me even more envious that I missed it in my own childhood. Now as grown-ups with our own children, I want them to join the WA WA experience. And volunteering is one of the ways I can help WA WA be there for new generations of campers to come.

What's your favorite place in camp? The kitchen. I like being behind the scenes, keeping people fed, and having late night chats over leftovers.

What's your favorite camp meal? Breakfast! Nothing better than a griddle full of scrambled eggs and kids (not so patiently) waiting for bacon.

New taxpayer deduction benefits camp!

Georgia LoPresti Meckes, Smith Park Board of Directors

Did you know that if you take the standard deduction, the CARES Act makes it easier to give back to camp in a meaningful way before the end of the year? The relief bill passed last spring includes a deduction for taxpayers that take the standards deduction and make a donation up to \$300. With less than \$6,000 left to go in our annual campaign goal- donations of that size would add up very fast! We are so grateful to the many, many alumni that have already made tax deductible donations during this year's crucial campaign, and invite anyone who has yet to give to do so via our website www.campwawa.org.

Camp WA WA's "Unsung Hero"

In this Firefly, we're beginning a feature we're calling the "Unsung Hero" of camp. It's a person who's connected to camp in their own individual way, and tirelessly works behind the scenes making camp better in some form or fashion. In this inaugural edition, we highlight and meet Southfield's own Janice Stiles-Boults. We asked Janice just a few questions and provide her responses here.



My name is Janice Stiles-Boults, and Southfield is my hometown! I grew up in the village, always aware of the camp, but never went to camp or even explored the property - it was private, and primarily campers were from out of the area, so I never knew anyone that went there. As a child, I recall large groups of kids walking to the Southfield Store, coming by my house; and in the evenings we could hear the taps being played.

I began working at the camp in 2019 as a building cleaner, and fell in love with the beauty of Harmon Pond. My favorite spot is the side porch of the lodge, watching the water and listening to the sounds of nature. I loved my first summer working because the kids were there-and I got to see the activities, hear the laughter-it was so enjoyable, it never felt like "work!"

2020 changed all that... I still went to camp to work, but was almost always there by myself. I found that to be very sad, but also a calming oasis where I could just breathe and relax and forget all the chaos of Covid!

Hopefully, WA WA will be full to capacity next year and the children can, once again, have a summer of fun!

Thanks Janice! We too, look forward to the summer of 2021!

5 Year Kids Update

Since the beginning of the program (in 2014), the "5 Year Kids" have grown in size, they've grown in experience as well as age. These "Kids" are campers or staff or campers that become staff and do so for five years since the start. When they come to camp and reach that fifth year, they are recognized during the summer season with a ceremony at the end of the session. They then are recognized in the offseason with a feature on Camp's social media. Just last year, in 2019, we followed up with the original group to get an update from them as it had been another five years! We featured them on our social media as well and we're continuing this part of the program in 2021.

Here is an update from one of those original 5 year kids- Zach Dragsbaek

Hi Zach! What are you doing now?

I'm finishing my last semester of college at Mass Bay, Working in the cheese department at whole foods, and am about to start a volunteer program at MSPCA to get some experience before I try to become a vet Assistant.

What's the first thing you think of when someone says Camp WA WA?

When I think of camp I think of friends. The people I went to camp with are still some of the best friends I've ever made.

What is something you learned at camp (skill or something else) that you use today?

Responsibility. It's cliché, but camp was really the first time I had to take responsibility for myself and others. I had help keep the camp clean, work with my cabin mates to create a chore chart, then stick to it. When I became a counselor I had to be responsible for the kids in my cabin, and really all the kids at the camp. I learned to step up and do what needed to be done, and it's a lesson that has served me well.

Looking back, what did you discover about yourself in your time at camp?

I learned about my love for camping after the trip I took as a CIT. I still camp to this day, and it never stops being fun.

What is something you miss about camp?

How relaxing it was. I remember I would spend hours just reading on the porch, and enjoying the view of the lake.

Any other thoughts on camp you'd like to share?

WaWa has always held such a special place in my heart just like I think it does for so many of us. It really isn't like any other camp I've been too. The people are closer, and there's just more love.

A quick funny anecdote, I've told my girlfriend so many camp stories that she groans every time I try to tell one now. I think that just shows how much impact camp had on me.

Thanks Zach!



We'd love to hear more alumni news! Please email us - mike@smithpark.org with alumni updates you'd like shared in future editions of the Firefly!

One other update, For those campers and staff who were scheduled to be at camp in 2020, and took part either in our online Not Camp Camp or came to camp with their families, we're including that as participation and count towards your five years. We're at 70+ members now and hope to add even more the summer of 2021!

Since our last Firefly, we've witnessed a gorgeous autumn and an early winter season! Here's a few pics of both.





Camp Alumna Marissa Fugardi is completing her final semester in college and doing a research project about the impact Camp WA WA Segowea has had on alumni! How awesome! PLEASE participate- the survey takes about 5 minutes to complete and is found here, you must be 18 or older to submit: https://cuboulder.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b7S5LhKJIeDAS4l

Camp WA WA Segowea does comply with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and is licensed by the Local Board of Health of the town of New Marlborough, MA

SMITH PARK OF NY MISSION:

Smith Park of New York is devoted to the preservation and operation of Camp WA WA Segowea, the protection of its natural surroundings and historical integrity and the continuation of traditional resident camping that improves the spiritual, mental, social and physical attributes of young people in a caring community.

Smith Park of NY Board

Sarah Perks — President

John Dunn — Vice President

Beth Hodos — Treasurer

Josh Perks — Secretary

Michael Bruns, Kathleen Davis, John Fisher, Adam Hammond, Georgia LoPresti Meckes, Jim Masters, Patrick Page, Lisa Perks, Nella Stoltz

Firefly Contributors

Michael Bruns, Lily Mercogliano Easton, Georgia LoPresti Meckes

Contact Info

Smith Park of New York

P.O. Box 4994

Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

smithpark.org