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## **2007 Annual Members' Meeting at Drift Creek Camp The Irreplaceable Component: The Power of the Outdoor Setting**

### **WHY WE NEED THE OUTDOOR SETTING**

The Outdoors is good for us--Physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

- \* Restores body and psyche.
- \* Enhances spirituality.
- \* The literature: quest for tranquility, social reinforcement, skill building, aesthetic enjoyment.
- \* Fawver's doctoral work: physical/emotional restoration, social reinforcement, spiritual growth, appreciation of God's creation.
- \* Richard Louv: nature's Ritalin, nature as antidote--"stress reduction, greater physical health, a deeper sense of spirit, more creativity, a sense of play, even safer life--these are the rewards that await a family when it invites more nature into children's lives."

Historically camp has been outdoors oriented.

- \* Camp meetings in 1860's.
- \* Youth camps from 1880's. Camps have some of the finest real estate anywhere,
- \* Outdoor setting becomes the "mixing bowl" for the entire camp experience.

Maximizing the outdoor setting makes a camp different from other recreational programs for children and youth. Conduct program experiences that are not mere replications of the sports that campers have in the city or church, such as boating, nature photography, hikes, creation awareness activities.

Young People today are suffering from *nature-deficit disorder*--Richard Louv.

Estimates indicate Americans spend 95 percent of their life indoors. So, when possible, use the camp experience as a radical break with modern society and opt for multiple outdoor experiences.

### **HOW WE MAXIMIZE OUTDOOR USAGE (RECOVER OUR OUTDOOR ROOTS)**

Board presents a mission statement clearly embracing the outdoors.

- \* Twin Rocks Friends Camp: "To use God's creation and a Christ-centered environment to promote personal and spiritual growth."

Director and staff set the example of holding God's creation high.

- \* Develop a sound theology of nature and environmental stewardship.
- \* Utilize the compelling strength of the natural environment.
- \* Think through what experiences you want your campers to have.

A site analysis can help find ways to utilize the outdoor setting and yet protect fragile areas.

- \* Preserve the natural aspects of your camp.
- \* Interpret the natural goals to all of your staff.
- \* Work with local, state, and national agencies to protect the natural environment of your area.
- \* Adapt your facility to the site.

Get the campers outside for uniquely camp: activities, but also for Bible lessons and worship times.

- \* Be looking for nature "happenings"--star showers, gathering thunderstorm, sunset.
- \* Walks and hikes to a destination for worship or learning.
- \* Chapel gathering and Bible lessons outside when possible.

Teach biblical outdoor spiritual truths in the outdoor setting. Help campers to look at God' creation and be directed to him.

- \* Jesus taught outdoors and used things of nature to convey spiritual values.
- \* Consider the Gospels, Psalms (104 & 139:14 for example), and Job (37:14).
- \* God's Art Gallery--nature objects at camp, found in Bible, teaching lessons.

+ *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv.

+ Children & Nature Network (C&NN), inspired by positive response to Louv's book. See [www.cnaturenet.org](http://www.cnaturenet.org).

Also

+ "Using the Outdoor Setting to Communicate Spiritual Truths" (CCCA Focus Series).

+ "Recovering Nature's Simplicity" by Edward L. Hayes, November/December 1988 *Journal of Christian Camping*.

+ "Experiencing Outside" by Sterling W. Edwards, January/February 2006 CCCA Insite.

+ "Move It Out: Capturing Your Camp's Best Outdoor Qualities for Programming" by Gary Fawver, January/February 2003 *Christian Camp & Conference Journal*.

+ "Not even Footprints: A contagious passion for preserving God's wilderness" by Brett Swanson, May/June 2005 CCCA *InSite*.

+ "Outdoor Hope" Gary Fawver, January/February 2007 CCCA *Insite*.