



Wind Word

Biannual Newsletter for Wilderness Wind Inc.

Fall/Winter 2007

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I am being converted. We are given windows of “truth” throughout our lives. Then something shifts; we hear a song, read a poem, converse with a friend, experience the Bible differently, take note of a still small voice or are faced with a situation or experience that brings about a conversion.

My conversion is happening around Psalm 23. Like many, I memorized it as a child. Though its descriptions of “God with us” are rich with natural images, the first sentence has always brought me up short. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” It is beautiful in its cadence, but as I look at the world around me, I simply see a lot of want. “How does this sentence apply or how is it experienced by those who live in poverty, have experienced emotional abuse, or have experienced extreme physical loss?” Obviously, they are in want, yet God is their shepherd? Seeing this disjuncture, I have to confess, I have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. The convergence of a song and this summer’s experiences, however, has brought about a conversion.

Canadian artist Jane Sidberry created a song reflecting the significance of Psalm 23, “The Valley”. The song starts with “I live in the hills, you live in the valley, and all that you know are these blackbirds.” The metaphor of blackbirds as our experience of the valley was particularly appropriate for me this summer as we worked on the food prep building. Any camp director would find overhauling its main building in the course of the summer a challenge. There were certainly moments, particularly when an early June deadline was not reached, when the snowball effect started and the blackbirds swooped in. The song continues, “And every step you take is guided by the love of the light on the land and the blackbird’s cry, you will walk in good company.” The latter phrase is repeated at the end of the song and then it ends with, “The shepherd upright and flowing. You see...”

As we encountered the challenges of building in the course of the summer, I continued to hear the phrase “You will walk in good company.” Indeed, we walked in good company. Good company that was not only surprising and unprecedented but also unexplainable. This summer, Wilderness Wind was gifted by:

- Goshen College May term class, which included nine people who with seeming ease filled a 30-yard dumpster with rubble, mudded drywall, and literally dug us out;
- a group of six skilled carpenters who were originally scheduled to help with an exciting new project but were willing to shift to gutting a room and putting up drywall;
- a highschool student who spontaneously helped during one of our crunch times;
- a young woman, rather new to Wilderness Wind who wanted to volunteer for a month;
- a couple who made and shipped over 400 cookies, giving us both energy and time;
- our first SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older People) volunteers, who came with carpentry and office skills - every camp director’s dream come true;
- summer staff who offered grace during many hard days and jumped back in the next day;
- a pastor on sabbatical who volunteered for three weeks. (The list could continue).

As I mentally recapture the faces of these folks, their good company and their timely gifts throughout the summer, “the shepherd upright and flowing,” I see.

~Kathy Landis



“The women’s canoe trip meant so much to me. It’s impact...the scenery, sun, sharing stories, and especially the building of relationships. The memories continue to surround me with love, confidence, beauty and hope. A very powerful experience that is close to my heart and lives on.”

- Paula Okerstrom, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Where the Trees are Praying

Regretfully, I was only able to spend the months of May and June in Minnesota this summer. Those months, however, were filled to bursting with delightful moments and experiences bearing golden kernels of wisdom that I will carry with me. One of the most memorable of the summer experiences transpired with the last group I led, a multigenerational family with kids ages 8-12, parents, and grandparents.

During orientation, assistant director Mary Ruth led us in a worship time on top of Pine Ridge. Seated in a tight circle beneath the rustling red pines, sun slanting through the trees and birdsong in the air, she read to us a children's story of a son and his grandfather who took long walks together in the woods. There the boy asked his grandfather big questions about life and God. "Listen," the grandfather said to the boy, "can't you hear the trees and the rocks praying?" The boy listened carefully, but he could never quite hear the prayers. Years later, the grandfather passed away, and the boy went alone into the woods to mourn. He sat alone and for the first time could hear the prayers of the trees whispering up to God.

The story was moving, particularly as we were seated: grandparents next to grandchildren, under the sweet smelling pines.

The next day, we embarked on our trip into the wilderness. Around noon, a thunderstorm struck and we were forced to take cover, with our lunch, huddled like church mice under a much-too-small rain tarp. (Yes, guides occasionally pack the wrong gear!) Spirits were high, however, and after the rain and hail ceased, we ventured onward to find a campsite.

On the next portage trail, I happened to be in the canoe that crossed the trail first. Being the helpful trip leader I was trained to be, I headed back up the trail to lend a hand to the rest of the group. Not far into the woods I encountered "mom" and a few kids who needed no help, so I continued on. Just around the bend I saw coming toward me quite the sight: a darling and valiant little 8 year-old, scrawny knees and mud-stained legs giving way to flowered flip-flops. Her head was bowed with one fist rubbing her tear-filled eyes, the other fist clutching a Kondos pack about as big as herself, dragging her way through the washed-out trail. She looked so alone in the dripping wet woods.

What was I to do? She looked so sad. I ran up the trail to greet her, calling her name and exclaiming how brave and strong she was, walking through the woods alone. Her usual perky and inquisitive banter was lost to sobs, and I asked her to sit with me a bit to rest. We sat a moment in silence and watched the water drip from the trees. The color green is never so alive as just after a storm; neither is the smell of earth. I reminded my little friend that you never have to be afraid in the woods, because the trees are always praying with you. God moves in the life of the forest, which can give you strength. She nodded, cleared her tears, and we continued down the path to join the rest, one "flip-flop" at a time.

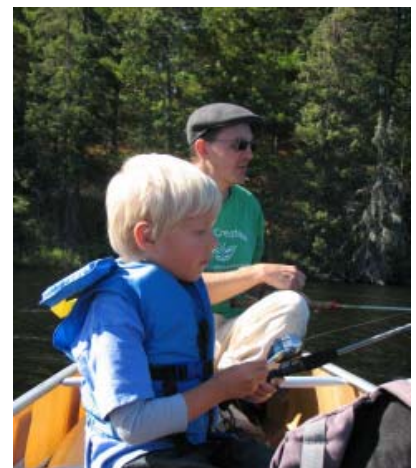
The next day, we sat comfortably around a cozy campfire, having a nice conversation, and I was asked if I go to church. Before I could give an answer, this same courageous young lady chimed, "It must be easy to have church out here, because the trees are always praying."

And there you have it. In the rush of our lives we forget how close we are to God, but God is near. The trees are praying.

~Aubrey Helmuth, Santiago de Chiquitos, Bolivia



The Bye/ Hess family on their way to journey together through the wilderness.



Noah and his dad Eric, guests at the Lakeside cabins, fishing on their day trip to Hegman Lake.

From the Back of the Canoe

Dip, J stroke.
Dip, C stroke.
The cadence of the paddle,
 splash of the water
Progression across the lake,
 through the stream,
 over the beaver dam.
Relying on partner.
Observing nature from the inside out.
That illusive straight line wake!

Portage...
Sweat, trembling legs, gulping water.
Rocks and sand, incline and descent.
Bulging backpack, weight of the canoe.
Hitting the physical wall.

Mutual aid
Sharing the load.
Encouraging words
Bridge!

Rocky campsite
Stars and shadows
Talking, open to the Spirit.
Reflections taking off on significant tangents.
Making new connections.
Readying for life back in the trenches.

God at work.

~ *Lloyd L. Miller, Goshen, Indiana*

A sampling of the 2007 summer:

- Twenty-one groups journeyed into the Boundary Waters.
- A second three-person canoe was purchased.
- A humane composting toilet was built for staff.
- Many volunteers gave their time and talents with a total of 1,215 hours worked.
- The Goldenrod group of six stayed at Lakeside and experienced the history, natural beauty and culture of the area.
- Thirteen paddlers took part in the Paddle-a-thon raising over \$15,000.
- The Food Prep building was revitalized this summer with a shored up foundation, drywall, new paint, and much more.
- The Gathering Place was made more welcoming to Lakeside guests.
- A new trail was begun at Pine Ridge.
- Two coldframes were built to lengthen the growing season next year.



Phil Hostetler getting to know one of Paul's sled dogs.



Dinner around the fire with friends from MDC/Goldenrod

Sharing Perspectives

What trip do returning wilderness wind staff most often request to lead? The disabilities trip. Why? Each staff person would answer their own way but I sense it is the combination of new experiences, laughter, discovering more about themselves and redefining priorities.

The partnership of Wilderness Wind and Mennonite Disabilities Committee/Goldenrod (Goshen, IN) has resulted in an annual BWCAW trip since the 1990's. This year, due to staffing and structural changes, MDC/Goldenrod was not able to co-organize the experience. Rather than dropping the whole program and opportunity, WW chose to pick up the aspects MDC/Goldenrod had cared for including: organizing transportation to and from WW, providing care givers, and caring for medical needs and requirements.

The week together proved to be worth the extra effort. Not only did we enjoy ourselves as we visited the 72 sled dogs at Paul Schurke's head quarters and the newly adopted bear at the bear center, all enjoyed learning life skills. Skills varied; for some it was roasting marshmallows, for others it was patience while fishing, for others it was seeing ways of expressing gratitude and connection from a genuine and pure heart. I am not sure who benefited more, the campers, or the Wilderness Wind staff.

As we wish to continue these trips in the summer of 2008, we will especially need caregivers and drivers. Medical experience is not necessary. The ability to slow down and to view the world from another's perspective are needed attributes. Thank you to all who help make this week happen.

- *Kathy Landis, Kansas*



Paddle-a-thon crew 2007:

Back row (L to R): Aryn Baxter, Ben Gerig, Robin Fletcher, Peter Wigginton, Mary Ruth Kamp, Kerri Haldeman, Kathy Landis, Arthur Paul Boers, Marshall King
Front row (L to R): Dave Leonard, Val Hershberger, Heidi Collins, John Daniels



Arthur Paul Boers, John Daniels and Marshall King during the Paddle-a-Thon, August 10, 2007

Thoughts from the Paddle-a-Thon

Canoeing in the dark had its own special challenges and its own special beauty. We were on the water at 3:45 am. We didn't go very far very fast at the beginning. The quiet was overwhelming, as was the darkness. The Big Dipper was on our left, Orion on our right and the moon straight ahead – it seemed as though the path was set for us.

The dawn was by far the most beautiful part of the day and we were grateful for daylight. The loons swimming quietly in the morning mist were calming and it was fun to hear the north woods wake up to another day.

It rained at one point during the later morning hours and then it became really, really hot. After traveling for eight hours, we knew at noon that we weren't going to quite make our mileage. We pulled out the maps, made some adjustments to our route and ate some lunch. At this point we were a long way from home, approximately 20 miles or more and we didn't even have a tent. We were getting tired and feeling a little anxious.

As we turned the corner to head back south, we began to settle into a rhythm and feel that it was possible to paddle a long way in one day. We sang songs as we often do to calm our spirits. At one point we were singing 606. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him above all creatures here below." About that time loons starting calling on all four sides of us, and we sat still, just listening. It seemed they wanted to join the chorus - a highlight of the day.

Later in the evening, we found two other groups of paddlers from the paddle-a-thon. This was the boost that we needed. The encouragement from the two groups of women helped push us past exhaustion for the last few miles home. It was dark again; the stars were coming out. Soon the Big Dipper would be on our right, Orion on our left, the moon straight behind us.

~ Val Hershberger & Heidi Collins, Gosben, Indiana

Paddle-a-thon Results

To date Wilderness Wind has raised \$16,479 from the 3rd annual Paddle-a-thon. To all the paddlers, donors and volunteers who helped make the Wilderness Wind Paddle-a-thon a successful and satisfying event: **THANK YOU!**

Wilderness Wind's mission is to nurture relationships with God and creation through wilderness living which promotes spirituality, cooperation, and environmental sustainability.



Trip Scheduling 2008

In the midst of memories of laughter, refreshing water, the song of the wild and community, plans for 2008 are under way. We are beginning to process trips as well as plan open trips for next summer. Has it been a while since you've used your paddling muscles? Is your spirit wanting to set a slower pace of life? Have you always wanted to explore the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness? If any of these are true and/or you just want to spend a week out in the wilderness or in a Lakeside cabin, we would be delighted to speak with you about your summer options. If you're not full of dreams already, start dreaming about where your paddle may take you, and give Mary Ruth Kamp a call at 330-763-3265 or contact us through our website at www.wildernesswind.org. The website has updated information on our canoe trips, the Lakeside cabins and much more. We are excited about working with you and experiencing the North Woods through your eyes.

Trip Season

Mid May - Mid September

Lakeside Season

May- October



Wilderness Wind Contact Information

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wildernesswind@juno.com

www.wildernesswind.org

330-763-3265 or 316-217-1129

Staff Positions Available

Wilderness Wind is beginning to plan for the summer of 2008. Would you like to spend your days in the sun, wind and woods empowering others to journey into the wilderness? We are always looking for trip leaders. Each summer we need between three and five trip leaders. These folks lead canoe trips and also help with projects around base camp on their weeks off the water. Additional staff positions that are available include the following:

- head cook
- buildings and grounds assistant
- kitchen assistant
- office assistant
- lakeside coordinator
- volunteer coordinator

Many of the positions mentioned above can be combined to create a full-time position, and others are already full-time positions. If none of these options excite you but the North Woods is calling, please contact us about how you might plug your gifts and interests into Wilderness Wind. Looking forward to seeing the staff emerge for 2008 and the community begin to build in beautiful ways. Come and join the Wilderness Wind team. For more information visit our website at www.wildernesswind.org and/or to fill out an application please contact Mary Ruth Kamp at 330-763-3265 or email us at wildernesswind@juno.com.

**'Awake, my soul!
I will awake the dawn,
and give you thanks, O God.'**
Psalm 57: 8-9



STAFF TRIP

Back row (L-R):

Dave Leonard,
Aubrey Helmuth,
Ben Gerig,
Robin Fletcher,
Kate Harnish,
Peter Wigginton

Front row (L-R):

Mary Ruth Kamp,
Kathy Landis,
Aryn Baxter

Important Note

We now have our Newsletters available via email. If you want to receive newsletters and other communication via email instead of the U.S. Postal Service, please let us know so that we can update our mailing list with this request.

our email address: wildernesswind@juno.com

Sustainability

Sustainability is an important concept for our personal and communal activities and choices, but it also crucial for the health of organizations. Wilderness Wind is working towards sustainability through:

- strengthening our connections with the Ely community
- increasing staff wages from volunteer status so they are in line with other camp's guidelines
- celebrating increased support from volunteerism and fundraisers
- improving camper services
- broadening board member's skill sets and time investment's

These shifts are notable. Add to that, the resulting parallel shifts and the affect is remarkable and confirms that all things are interconnected!

Your support is crucial for these changes in keeping with our desire for wilderness trips to be accessible; our fees cover 66% of program expenses. Your support cares for the other 44%. In addition, all improvements to buildings and grounds require donations. Literally, your contribution is what makes sustainability and change possible. A change however is not only physical and organizational; it also impacts how campers view themselves amidst global, spiritual and ecological communities. From here, the ripple affect is endless.

If you want to be apart of the transformation, an envelope is enclosed for your convenience, or you can donate online from the financial support page at www.wildernesswind.org. We are grateful for the significant and deep ways you are affecting the various layers of Wilderness Wind. The overall affect is experienced daily but don't just take my word for it, come see for yourself and feel the difference.

~ Kathy Landis, Kansas

Humanure: The composting of human by-products

A year ago, a friend taught me something that made me stop and think. He opened my eyes to a whole new world of possibilities, of nature's cycle's, pollution, waste, beauty and self-sufficiency. After living in the city for two years without a break from the concrete hustle and bustle, I realized that I need to spend time in nature. Even more importantly that I need to help care for the earth so there will still be nature to go to.

Compost has always been something I have believed in – cutting down on waste by feeding food scraps to composting worms. Since my friend introduced me to the art of composting humanure I have not been able to look at going to the bathroom in a traditional flush toilet the same way.

Composting our own urine and feces is important for a few reasons; it uses no water, as compared to the five billion gallons of perfectly good fresh drinking water that is flushed down our toilets every day, it also eliminates the need for harsh chemicals like chlorine that are used in many wastewater treatment systems, it stops us from discarding an extremely valuable resource, and it completes the cycle.

Composting humanure is pretty simple: all you need is a compost bin, two five gallon buckets, a seat and cover material like sawdust, peat moss, or leaves. You can build the toilets seats yourself or invite a friend to build them for you. They can be very simple or quite extravagant, but having two rotating five gallon buckets can be helpful.

Make sure to place dry cover material in the bucket before using it. Place it under the toilet seat and you're ready to start. After depositing your feces in the bucket place a handful of sawdust over it and you're done until next time.

When both of the buckets are full simply empty the buckets into the center of your compost bin, cover it with a good layer of straw or leaves, rinse out the buckets, and set them up for the next time.

As for the compost bin, food, leaves, and humanure can all be put in the same bin- and it is vital to always cover fresh deposits on the compost pile with coarser cover materials such as hay, weeds, straw, or leaves making sure that enough cover is applied so that there is neither excess liquid build-up, nor offensive odors escaping either the toilet or the compost pile. The trick to using cover material is quite simple: if it smells bad or looks bad, cover it until it does neither. Once your compost bin is full, the compost must sit idle with no additions for one year in order to break down anything harmful that may be in the poop. After a year your humanure should be beautiful nutritionally rich humus ready to be added in your garden.

This summer I volunteered at Wilderness Wind for a month and one of my projects was to help build a humanure system for the WW staff to use in the summers to come (and others who are intrigued).

Everything I have written and have learned came originally from an inspiring book that explains everything down to the last detail, *The Humanure Handbook* by Joseph Jenkins, which is also available to read for free at weblife.org/humanure/.

~ Camille Hobbs, Evanston, Illinois

First SOOP workers at Wilderness Wind Camp

After retiring in March, we did our first three-week experience as SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older People) workers in Florida- a very good experience. Then after reading the MARP (Mennonite Association of Retired Persons) www.marp.mennonite.net summer newsletter detailing the need for volunteers at several of our church camps, we decided to spend two weeks at Wilderness Wind Camp in Ely, Minnesota. We chose this camp since we had been in the Ely area 20 years ago with our family at a resort on one of the islands in the Boundary Waters. We had hopes that our second visit would be as enjoyable as the first.

Upon arrival, we were welcomed as the first SOOP volunteers to work at Wilderness Wind. We were assigned a cabin at Lake Armstrong with a view of the lake right outside our front door. We saw a beautiful sunset almost every night and also enjoyed the loons and ducks on the water. One day we even saw a bald eagle flying around, stopping to rest on a dead tree a few yards from us.

Each day following a morning reading by one of the staff and a 20-minute quiet time, director Kathy Landis assigned tasks to the staff and volunteers. John spent days staining newly made windows for the gazebo at the lakeside property, helping put the glass in, trim them out, and install them in the gazebo. He must have done a good job – he got to do more staining. The two-story staff house also needed three coats of stain. High up on the scaffolding he went with another volunteer.

During the two weeks I worked in the office tabulating the evaluations of campers, addressing envelopes for the fall fundraiser mailing, and entering pledges for the camp “Paddle-a-thon” (a one day paddle of 30-75 miles in the Boundary Waters to raise funds for Wilderness Wind). Another of my tasks was to help the canoe groups get their food ready and packed before heading out to the Boundary Waters. I also helped cook meals for the staff and volunteers. I left my mark at Wilderness Wind with the curtains I made for the staff house.

This was a great experience for us. We really enjoyed the interaction with the staff and we had opportunities to see interesting sites in the area. If you would like a nice summer get-away, try volunteering at Wilderness Wind.

~Kay Reimer, Normal, Illinois



Left: John Reimer staining and building windows for the Gathering Place.
Right: Kay Reimer sewing curtains for the staff house.



2008 Volunteer Needs

- help with set up of camp in May
- planting and maintaining trees and gardens
- exterior work on the cabins; painting and small and large carpentry jobs
- kitchen assistance: cooking, drying fruit, taking care of the gardens
- office assistance
- many other opportunities exist

Kathy's wish list

(Executive Director)

- Volunteers (priceless)
- 2 White mountain 6 qt ice cream makers (\$200) for canoe group and cabin guests gatherings
- 12 gallon copper or cast iron kettle (used as above)
- Books for libraries for both facilities (\$20-5,000)
- Did I say volunteers?

Dave's wish list

(Summer Maintenance Director)

- Belt Sander (3x21 or 4x24) (\$100-\$200)
- Jigsaw (\$150)
- Wood working vise (\$50)
- Sawzaw (\$180)
- Planer, hand held or thickness (\$130-300)
- Small bench top drill press (\$100)
- 1 1/2 -2 horse power router bits (\$5-\$100)

Mary Ruth's wish list

(Assistant Director)

- Nylon lightweight hammocks for canoe groups (3-4) (\$30-150)
- Books – for staff as resources (I have titles.) (\$20-\$500)
- A kayak or two for lakeside guests and staff to enjoy (\$500+)
- A volunteer gardener to care for and cultivate our gardens

Wilderness Wind is a nonprofit corporation that has a 20-acre base camp and 3.5 acres of Lakeside property located close to Ely, Minnesota. Wilderness Wind is a member of Mennonite Camping Association and the Central Plains Mennonite Conference.



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Board Members

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Melissa Falb, MN
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Executive Director

Kathy Landis, KS

Assistant Director

Mary Ruth Kamp, OH

What is an Ecological Footprint?

As I was reflecting on life and thinking about the part of Wilderness Wind's mission statement on environmental sustainability, I was reminded of a very helpful tool. There is a book called [RADICAL Simplicity: Small Footprints on a Finite Earth](#) that takes you through a step-by-step understanding of Ecological Footprints and a commitment to environmental sustainability.

I found it intriguing that the first part of the title sounded so "Mennonite". Historically the Mennonite church has been a radical group of people in their responses to social, moral and political issues, both locally and globally. And when I try and explain to non-Mennonites what it means to be Mennonite or what the Mennonites believe, one of the ideas that always comes up for me is simple living. So what does this book and the idea of an Ecological Footprint have to do with any of us, whether Mennonite or not?

A few things that none of us can escape: We inhabit the earth, the earth provides much of what sustains our lives, and though the earth leans toward renewability, it does have its limits. Let us move to definitions. An Ecological Footprint is "the measure of the amount of natural resources an individual, a community, or a country consumes in a given year." – Redefining Progress Website. More simply put, it seeks to answer the following question: "How much of the Earth's resources does your lifestyle require?"

On the Footprint Network website you can find a short quiz to help you assess the size of your footprint. I tend to think I live a simpler life. After taking the quiz I found out that we would need 3.8 planets to sustain us, were everyone to live at the level I do. This quiz takes a glimpse into your food, housing and travel choices. The analysis given is based on data published by UN agencies and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, according to Redefining Progress.

The book I reference above breaks this down into more detail. I'll share an example from my personal life. I usually drink a cup or two of coffee each day (with some variation) and if I'm drinking with someone this adds another cup or two per day. If I use on average 6 grams of coffee each time I make coffee, I end up with an Ecological Footprint of .04 acres/month or .48 acres/year. The Ecological footprint includes the land used to grow the coffee and the impact therein as well as the energy to produce, package, ship and make the coffee. On average my shared Ecological Footprint for coffee consumption (with one other person) is almost 1/2 an acre a year. The average per person for the United States is .085 acres/month or 1 acre/year.

From this small example, I can make choices pertaining to my coffee consumption. Do I choose to drink less by limiting myself to one cup a day, or a cup three times a week, or do I decide to stop drinking coffee altogether? All these would be options. What I like about this quiz and the results are that you begin to see the reality of your everyday choices and that you can creatively make changes that will impact the earth in positive ways.

For further exploration, visit the following websites: Footprint Network www.footprintnetwork.org, Redefining Progress www.rprogress.org or The New American Dream www.newdream.org. Or pick up the book, [RADICAL Simplicity: Small Footprints on a Finite Earth](#) by Jim Merkel published by New Society Press. Take it slow, give yourself grace, and have fun making choices that will impact the earth in positive ways for generations to come.

~ Mary Ruth Kamp (staff), Ohio