



# Wind Word

Biannual Newsletter for Wilderness Wind Inc.

Fall/Winter 2011

## In this issue

Perspective for our Soulscape	1
Three Generations and the Spirit of “Now”	2
Reflections from an Adult Canoe Trip: 3 Canoes, 6 Guys and No iPhone	3
Staff Ponderings and 2012 Needs	4
Volunteering with an 8-year-old	5
Redefining a Failure: A Story from Big City Mountaineers	6
The Paddle-a-thon: Two Youth Stories	7
25th Anniversary Celebration	8



Oliver, Noah and Minke Sundseth work together to create boats from moss, birch bark and other small items they can find. Photo by Joel Sundseth

At the end of August, Miles and I went on a canoe trip. We paddled in 18 miles, rejoiced that it was noon, enjoyed lunch, napped, read, talked, and set up camp. Daylight was changing to evening, so we gathered wood, and began the process of fire-building. We then discovered that the matches I had snagged from a previous trip’s gear were wet. Also, I had not confirmed that the lighter was packed with the stove, and it wasn’t. Breathe. We considered our options: paddle back nine miles to the Canadian Ranger station in the morning to buy matches, find other campers on the lake and see if they had extra, eat fruit for supper and hope the matches dried out enough to function in the morning. I also pondered what a great learning experience this would be for next year’s staff and realized that though dehydrated potatoes might eventually re-hydrate without heat, lentils (tomorrow’s supper) would not. Lastly, I thought through each item that I had brought wondering if somehow there might be matches in a rain jacket pocket, the tent repair kit, or the first aid kit. Indeed there were some in the latter and potato soup never tasted so good. Deep, deep gratitude was present for each meal thereafter.

The “no matches exercise” brought about a flood of underlying questions that I continue to ask a month later. “What do I really need?” “If I can be creative with less, than what can I get rid of now?” “What food truly feeds my soul and strengthens my spirit?” “What if I approached each “happening” as an unexpected surprise as I had each meal after finding the matches—car starts—wonderful, standing up—amazing, opening my eyes each day—excellent, participating in a conversation—simply phenomenal?”

I am grateful for the simplicity found in wilderness travel and the perspective and teachings that are often found there.

Sigurd Olson, a writer from the North woods, said, “Wilderness is a spiritual necessity. An antidote to the high pressure of modern life, a means of regaining serenity and equilibrium. I have found that people go to the wilderness for many things, but the most important of these is perspective. They may think they go for fishing or the scenery or companionship, but in reality it is something far deeper. They go to the wilderness for the good of their souls.” Our canoe trip confirmed Sigurd’s words for me.

Many people have come to Wilderness Wind this summer: some from inner-city Chicago, some for three-generation family reunions, some for personal retreats, others as a part of an adult canoe trip, others as life-long friends as they explore ways to stay connected. Many of them have discovered their experiences as perspective-gaining. May you find yourself and your own experiences within these pages.

*Kathy Landis, Executive Director*

## Three Generations and the Spirit of “Now”

Recalling time with my grandparents as a child, what I actually remember are quiet moments with them, times when I spent whole afternoons or nights with them, playing board games, reading books, watering and dead-heading the flowers, and feeding the chickens. I remember that fact now as I encounter that phrase of modern busyness, “quality not quantity.” What does that mean exactly? Sometimes, it means we have so little time together as families that we feel pressured to have a robust agenda for the time we do have. As for quantity, we are constantly “in touch” with friends and family, yet we almost never spend an entire day with any of them.

At Wilderness Wind this past summer, “quality time” came naturally out of spending some real “quantity time” together as three generations—me, my husband, my husband's parents, and our two children. It was the first family vacation the six of us had taken since our 6-year-old twin boys were babies. On the quiet shore of Armstrong Lake for a whole glorious week, our world became smaller and simpler as we lay under the stars at night and contemplated the vastness of God's universe. We lived sustainably because of how thoughtfully this time had been provided for us. Sticks and empty mussel shells became toys, puzzles were worked over by fingers young and old and a good book or two replaced the internet. The housekeeping was a part of our daily rhythm but reduced to good clean chores done with a spirit of *now*, just *now*.

We were just being together—having the kind of interactions that you can only have when you spend actual real time with each other. As a society we've become used to half a conversation, short snatches of Facebook entries, even shorter telegraphs tapped out on smartphones. It feels something like actually spending time, but it isn't a substitute for real, actual time together, uninterrupted and unmediated.

“*I want to live here!*” my son Oliver kept saying during our stay. He loves the *place* that is Wilderness Wind certainly, and he so loves natural places that I'm very happy that he gets to spend some real time in one so lovely. I suspect, though, that what he is also saying is, “I want to live more like we live here.” This notion is what we carry with us in between those trips four hours north. Our time at Wilderness Wind helps us remember what real rest, connection with family, and appreciation for God's creation look like, and this is a gift we carry with us through the long winter and back out again, ready for our next journey to the banks of Armstrong Lake.

*Minke Sundseth, Minnesota*

Came through the cabin door and felt  
at home. It's like a dream! My heart is  
smiling as wide as the sky.

*-Lakeside Guest*

### 2012 Reservations

#### Lakeside Cabins/Yurt Rentals

Lakeside provides:

- fully-furnished cabins (up to 6 people)
- a beautiful Yurt that houses up to 10
- use of kayaks and canoes
- opportunity for day trips to the Boundary Waters
- a sand beach and wonderful sunsets

Rent for a personal or family retreat or reserve the entire place for a reunion with friends or family.

For information, check out the website at

[www.wildernesswind.org](http://www.wildernesswind.org),

call 316-217-1129, or send an email to

[kathy@wildernesswind.org](mailto:kathy@wildernesswind.org).



Exploring both the landscape and the details: Oliver and Noah Sundseth. Photo by Minke Sundseth

**I always have a strong  
sense of  
eternity and peace here.**

*-Lakeside Guest*

### 3 Canoes, 6 Guys and No iPhone!

“Did you have fun?” was the question I was asked upon returning to both home and work. I am still sorting that one out. My initial response was, “Well, I wouldn’t call it ‘fun.’” So what was it? It was, at the least, a challenge.

I have been camping—over night in the back yard with the kids or at my friend’s back yard as a kid. I have even slept outside overnight a few times. A few times I slept out at a Kansas lake: the bath house was about 200 yards away and the bait shop with an ample supply of snacks was just down the road. Twice I even went as a co-sponsor of high school students on an all-day canoe trip down a river. Finally, I have been white-water rafting several times in mild whitewater. But I have never done anything like this.

Upon our arrival, our group of first-timers got a crash course in entering, paddling and exiting the canoe. Amid the packing and preparation, I am trying to come to terms with leaving my iPhone behind, which means no email, no crisis calls in the middle of the night, no iTunes, and no checking on the news or the stock market every few minutes. We have a final meal of walleye in Ely and say farewell to civilization.

Heading across the lake, I see a map at my feet that symbolizes my experience. I know it is telling me critical information, but I can’t really figure it out. A couple hours into this and I have the fresh awareness that this is not Disneyland. There is no deciding at this point I would rather not be here. No time out. No “I quit.” It is make-it or break-it time. And I am not sure which one it may end up being.

Then comes a flood of stimulus: fresh breezes, beautiful sunsets and sunrises, rain and wind, rough waves, slipping on wet rocks, falling head-first over the side of the canoe and taking everything with me, eagles soaring over head, beavers gliding silently by, chipmunks and a small mouse coming to share the campfire, fish jumping from the water, setting up camp, hanging food bags away from bears, fixing food over a campfire, soaking up a refreshing swim in the cove, swatting at bugs, breaking up camp, loading up and heading off on another day of adventure and, standing in awe in the wilderness, watching the space station glide overhead.

And then the sharing: meeting guys I don’t know and learning about guys I do know. And wondering if they like what they are learning about me as we swap stories around the fire, overcome the obstacles and work together toward the common goal. And then, just as Miles our trip leader had predicted, as we head back to our pick-up point, fighting the wind and rough water, we look across at our group: three canoes with six guys paddling with ease, side by side in silence as a single unit.

Did I have fun? At one point, I prayed, “God, just get me out of here, and I promise I will never come back.” But now I might go back on that promise.

- Steve Edwards, Kansas



Taking note of 400-year old pictographs can help one gain perspective of our place in time. (Steve Edwards and Miles Reimer)

Photo by Derek Christophel

## 2012 Reservations

### Canoe Trip Reservations

Explore the Boundary Waters, slow down your pace, and find your spirit renewed. There are many reasons to schedule a canoe trip.

Who goes on trips?

- If you are ages 4-85 we can tailor your trip
- Families
- Youth groups
- Three generation combinations
- Groups of friends, women, men, and co-ed
- Church small groups, etc.

For information, check out the website at

[www.wildernesswind.org](http://www.wildernesswind.org),

call **316-217-1129**, or send an email to

[kathy@wildernesswind.org](mailto:kathy@wildernesswind.org).

## Summer Staff Reflections

What I remember best about the Boundary Waters is the way sky meets earth, and how together they wrap around to make a dome-shaped universe that follows you around wherever you go. I remember, too, how the water has no end. Even if the map says the lake is 30 feet deep, when you're floating on it, it feels like the whole world could fit into those cool, clear waters.

Now I'm on a mountain in southern Oregon—where different ecosystems run up against each other in a fertile embrace. Sky and earth meet differently here. At each ridge and peak is a new meeting, confusing the limits of earth and sky.

I love doing this—sitting and being and thinking hard without hurting, thinking about things that are good. A prayer book at Wilderness Wind has a beautiful way of putting it:

*Grant me the ability to be alone.  
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day,  
Among the trees, the grasses, and all growing things.  
And there may I be alone,  
And enter into prayer with the one that I belong to.*

- Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav

I only wish that we could have ways of being alone, being alive, and being among other living things that don't make us leave the world of the regular to be so.

I hope that God and I can someday be as earth and sky are here. A mass of God perched right up on the ridgeline of my heart, refreshing me with wind, sending rains to wash away the dirt that builds up inside me, bringing snow sometimes, to remind me that all things die and are born again.

My pains, my sorrows, my hopes and my prayers all have a way of mixing together in moments like these; mixing together and diffusing themselves right out of my skin and into the wind. There God picks them up like vagrant hitchhikers and takes them for a time, making everything okay. I look out now, not exactly sure where earth ends and sky begins, and I'm content, knowing that God's wind in the wilderness will carry me on.

- Matthew Helmuth, Indiana

## Staff Positions for 2012

- **Trip Leaders:** Trip leaders teach and empower canoe trip participants as they journey through the wilderness. Grow your leadership skills, wilderness awareness and faith expression.
- **Buildings and Grounds Director:** You may find yourself repairing roofs, installing flooring, assisting contractors with a new building, caring for vehicles, or designing a small greenhouse.
- **Buildings and Grounds Assistant:** Drive groups to/from entry points, assist with the above.
- **Head Cook:** This job includes menu planning, cooking, baking, organizing and managing the kitchen, and ordering food from local vendors and national cooperatives.
- **Assistant Cook:** Bring leadership to food packing for trips, assist with the above.
- **Program Director:** Provide leadership of trip logistics and staffing, lead trips, and develop program resources for campers and staff.
- **Gardener:** Plant, transplant, weed and harvest as we experiment with a hoop house and hot boxes.
- **Lynx:** Help each facet of camp: assist in kitchen or office, organize, clean and care for trip logistics.

Join the Wilderness Wind team for the whole summer.

But certainly join us for one month if that is what fits in your schedule. For more information visit the website at [www.wildernesswind.org](http://www.wildernesswind.org). To request an application or to pursue your questions, please contact 316-217-1129 or send an email to [kathy@wildernesswind.org](mailto:kathy@wildernesswind.org)

“The summer was a “detox.” I relearned what was key.”  
*staff 2011*

## Volunteering At Wilderness Wind

When making plans to spend a weekend at Wilderness Wind to help close down the camp, I asked my almost 8-year-old BFF, Patty, “Do ya wanna come with?” “Yes, yes, yes!” I made the necessary arrangements with her parents and let Kathy know that I would have an assistant, and we hit the road dark and early one Saturday morning. There was the obligatory stop at Tobie’s, a trio of deer chasing across the highway, and all those trees. We arrived at our cabin on Armstrong, unpacked, and went up to the main camp. Kathy was excellent at finding jobs fit for an active 8-year-old; stamping postcards, running mail to the mailbox, sorting composting worms, feeding chickens and picking rocks. Patty also “supervised” the disassembly of the small yurt. The freedom she had to run and run was a real gift at Wilderness Wind.

It was a great time introducing Patty to many things, but it was also my delight to share in her discoveries of a really great spider web, going out to really see the stars, fighting the wind when trying to launch a canoe, getting lost in



Patricia is thrilled by her handful of worms as she helps prepare the worm bins for winter.

Photo by Teresa Wasick

the mist on a calm lake the next morning; amazement over all the things made of wood, how the sinks drain at the cabins, bumpy roads, and less-than-amazement at the pit toilets. Just being and working there will enlighten both of us. We will be back, working our way to a trip into the BWCA...some day.

*-Teresa Wasick, Minnesota*



Entering items into the Silent Auction website was one of Teresa’s volunteer jobs.

Photo by Patricia Schloe

## Volunteer Positions for 2012

Volunteers are change-makers at Wilderness Wind. Join us and see the results. We try to fit volunteers with their interests and skills so adjust the tasks below and help out in other ways that you enjoy. Volunteers are needed from early May to late September. To speak with someone about your interest, call **316-217-1129** or email [kathy@wildernesswind.org](mailto:kathy@wildernesswind.org).

Join us for any of these tasks for one week to the whole summer:

- **Pastor/spiritual director:** Provide leadership to quiet time and group reflections.
- **Lakeside host(ess)/housekeeper:** Prepare the cabins and welcome guests.
- **Driver:** Hear canoeing stories as you drive 30-40 groups to and from their entry point.
- **Kitchen assistant:** Enjoy the energy in the kitchen as you create, bake and pack trip meals.
- **Maintenance assistant:** Projects can be set to fit your interests and skill level.
- **Opening and close up:** Come in early May or anytime after mid-August and there are a wide variety of things you can help with for all ages and abilities.
- **Builders, builders, and more builders:** Help is needed in early May as we take on several building projects. Framers, roofers, fine carpenters, as well as builders of simple shelves are needed.
- **Office assistant:** Help with mailings, data entry, organizing and record keeping.

2011 marks our third year of partnering with Big City Mountaineers (BCM). We are currently in dialogue about a four-year contract and value our work serving under-resourced urban teens from Chicago and Minneapolis. Help Wilderness Wind grow with them through your donations and volunteer support.

---

## Redefining a Failure: A Story from Big City Mountaineers

Of the five boys on this expedition, four of them are struggling with substance abuse. None had been camping or experienced anything like the BCM program. At first, the guys were tentative and admitted they didn't know if they could be successful on the expedition. They are not used to being successful. We had identified John as a potential leader and though he saw himself as a failure—we saw him as someone who could lead the other teens to success.

Our journey was progressing well. The guys were learning a lot and had many accomplishments under their belts. Two of the older ones really took to the experience. It triggered some deep thinking about their lives. Getting away from the city life, the noises, the friends, cell phone, iPod, showers, beds and so much more combined with exposure to some of the most pristine wilderness this country has to offer has a way of hitting the pause key. John and Dequan had to quit smoking on the expedition. Friends prior to the expedition, they would ask for some time together so they could talk about what they were experiencing, share struggles and support each other. After dinner on day five, they once again asked for some time together to talk. They then asked to talk to me privately. John took the lead and said that they originally thought I was being tough on them to give them a hard time. During their discussion today, they decided that I was expecting a lot from them because I cared for them and wanted them to do well. Tears were in their eyes at this point and they each asked for a hug. John said he had never had anyone treat him that way before. Home was all about being berated and torn down. He typically felt rejected and neglected by everyone. We didn't do that. We praised his successes and gently encouraged him when he fell short. We believed in him. They went on to recount what they referred to as four wasted years of drug use. More tears flowed as John shared that his dad isn't in his life, but he thinks about him often. As today was his dad's birthday, it was a tough day for John. As the tears continued, there was another hug. John didn't want to let go.

BCM is about connecting. Connections happen in all different ways and simply being quiet while paddling together can be a moment of connection. Sometimes the connection is more dramatic, like the one I had with John. Even if there weren't any other successes, the few moments with John and Dequan make everything worthwhile.

John went on to rise to the bar we set for him. He won the leadership award for the expedition and tied a youth record for longest canoe portage. Not bad for a failure.

- *Bernie Ruppe, BCM Regional Program Manager, Illinois*

Thank you God for another day  
For another voyage  
For another turning  
For another chance to be  
conscious of your presence  
everywhere. *Lakeside Guest*

### Wilderness Wind Wish List

- Volunteers (see page 5 for details)
- Life-jackets for Lakeside guests
- Sing the Story and Sing the Journey hymnals
- Minivan
- Composting toilet
- Projector to show photos after trips
- Computer—preference for laptop
- Monitor—flat screen
- Grant writer

### Wilderness Wind newsletters via email

To cut down the amount of resources used, the newsletter and annual report can be sent to you via email. To be added to the email list, please email [adminassistant@wildernesswind.org](mailto:adminassistant@wildernesswind.org) or send a note through the contact page at [www.wildernesswind.org](http://www.wildernesswind.org). Thank you!

## The Paddle-a-thon: Two Youth Stories

After having enjoyable experiences on their youth group canoe trip, both of the youth below separately decided to join us for the event. What a gift they were. This year marked our 7th annual paddle-a-thon. It included 22 paddlers, the most to-date, and raised over \$15,000. Thank you to all the supporters and participants.



Paddle-a-thon preparation includes route planning with your canoeing team and choosing from a table-full of food. Marilyn Kamp, Micah Raber and Mary Ruth Kamp. Go team!  
Photo by Marshall King

I learned of Wilderness Wind when my high school offered it as a mini-term class. My school leader was Michael Amstutz, and the canoe trip leader was Matthew Helmuth. I went on the trip with four other students from school. Some things that I really enjoyed on the trip were getting to know the guys from my school and our fearless leader Matthew. The silence, being out on the water and not having to think about anything except what the weather would be like that day was enjoyable and refreshing. Happily, the weather was never bad and we only got rained on a little. The quiet is something that I miss a lot.

Later when I returned to Ohio after the canoe trip, I was talking to my father's coworker about the trip. Another coworker, who was going on the paddle-a-thon overheard and invited me to join them for the event. I really enjoyed the paddle-a-thon because I got to know the people I was with a lot better. Getting up when it's still dark and going out on the water with nothing except stars is something that I will never forget. The good experience with the paddle-a-thon has led me to want to do it again whenever possible. I think that all people should do something of this sort in their life time.

- Micah Raber, Ohio

This summer, I had the privilege of returning to the Boundary Waters twice for two very different experiences. The first was on our regular trip with our church youth group, and the second for the annual paddle-a-thon fundraiser. On our youth trip, I was reminded of the magnificent beauty and serenity of the Minnesota wilderness. Its isolation from civilization and society amid gorgeous creation is always refreshing for me. I was also reminded of Wilderness Wind's strong emphasis on the spirituality of wilderness and on the tending of our relationship with God, creation, each other, and ourselves through prayer and reflection. Despite getting soaked our first day on the water, our youth group was able to dry off, warm up and have a meaningful experience.

When I learned about the paddle-a-thon, I realized that it would be a great way to support the camp that had given me such meaningful memories while spending another day in the wilderness. I found that when I asked people for money, they were all generous and eager to give to Wilderness Wind. The event itself was fun as we got to watch the sun rise while paddling, see miles and miles of beautiful wilderness, and celebrate with others who love both the Boundary Waters and Wilderness Wind.

- Benjamin Wiebe, Indiana

**Wilderness Wind nurtures relationships with God and creation through wilderness living which promotes spirituality, cooperation, and environmental sustainability.**

**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.**



Wilderness Wind  
2945 Hwy 169  
Ely, MN 55731

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 923  
Wichita, Kansas

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Board Members**

John Daniels, IN  
Melissa Falb, MN  
Glenn Gilbert, IN  
Ed Kauffman, Calgary  
Marshall King, IN  
Beth Landis, ID  
Abby Nafziger, WA  
Paula Northwood, MN  
Dave Ostergren, IN  
Steve Mullet, OH  
Brenda Sawatsky-Paetkau, IN

**Executive Director**

Kathy Landis

**Publications Editor**

Mary Ruth Kamp

**Administrative Assistant**

Marcia Mahoney

218-365-5873

316-217-1129

[www.wildernesswind.org](http://www.wildernesswind.org)

[www.wildernesswind.wordpress.com](http://www.wildernesswind.wordpress.com)

Just in case you missed  
the invitation in the mail, here are  
the details for the  
**25th anniversary celebration.**  
We would love to see you there.

**When:**

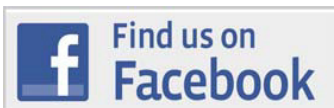
October 22nd, 2011  
6:30 p.m. Silent Auction begins  
7:00 p.m. Dinner  
Please RSVP by calling  
574-400-5175

**Where:**

Assembly Mennonite Church  
1201 South 11th Street  
Goshen, IN 46526



Remember being here?  
Come celebrate your Wilderness Wind experience  
at the 25th Anniversary Celebration.  
Photo by Paul Christophel.



Printed with soy ink on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.  
Please recycle or share after you have read your newsletter. Thank you.

