Summer Camp 1971

Ames Forestry Club

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In the early June of 1971, 48 I.S.U. forestry students assembled north of Harrington, Quebec. We were keen and eager to begin our summer camp with enthusiasm little dampened by memories of slides showing rain sodden tents and capsized trucks, of tales of mosquitoes and bad food, and of the size of the camp fee. Perhaps all forestry students are eager for camp but we were especially so because ours was the first Iowa State Camp ever held outside of the U.S.

The camp itself for the first month, was located in a 4-H camp on the grounds of the Canadian International Paper Company’s Nature Center 30 miles north of Hawkesbury, Ontario. Six cabins, a wash house with cold water and basins, but no showers, a mess hall, and a small 2-story building were in the site. The mess hall doubled as classrooms. Dr. Hopkins, camp director, lived in the 2-story, and eight foresters bunked in each of the cabins. For the last
two weeks of camp we moved to tents and a large
warehouse-like building at the Nature Center itself
as the 4-Hers were taking over their facilities.

This site had been found by Dr. Hopkins while he
was spending six months on faculty improvement
leave with the Forest Economics Research Institute
of the Canadian Forestry Service during the 1970-71
school year.

During the course of the camp we came into close
contact and became friends with several of the C.I.P.
personnel. Manny Wilson, resident manager of the
Rouge Division of C.I.P. spent time with us on sev-
eral occasions talking about C.I.P. and Canadian
forestry in general. George Dolan, coordinator for
the Nature Center took special interest in seeing

that our facilities and food were as good as they pos-
sibly could be. Richard "R-r-roto-tiller" Urbanski
worked closely with us on assignments and field
trips and was almost as interested in us and what we
were doing as we were in his daughters.

On Monday morning, June 7, Dr. Hopkins and Dr.
Bensend delivered the opening addresses. Dr. Hop-
kins laid down the rules, as he did nearly every
morning for the rest of camp. Dr. Bensend then en-
tertained us with an hour's worth of anecdotes con-
cerning broken bones, sprains, axe wounds, car and
truck accidents, and various other catastrophes and
ended by reminding us we were thirty rough miles
from the nearest hospital. Thus encouraged we got
into the nitty gritty of camp.

The forest products utilization course taught by
Dr. Bensend was probably the favorite of most of
the foresters because we were always visiting
Hawkesbury or Montreal or Point Gatlneau or some-
place else with electricity and girls. Dr. Bensend
surmounted all obstacles including deafening Ma-
somite guns and bra-less Montreal chicks to give us
some knowledge of Pacific gravity and a crank
hardening, or something like that.

Hans Zuuring was back in his own neck of the
woods again teaching us mensuration. His home is
in Ontario and he even had Canadian plates on his
car. It only rained three days during the camp but
one of them was the day we cruised timber for
Hans. The only part of the tract we cruised that
wasn't too steep to raise goats on was the bog. To
make matters worse this came close on the heels of
the closed (?) traverse debacle. We didn't mean all
those things we said about you, Hans. Honest.
Dr. Gordon was on hand for the second half of camp, arriving about the time Dr. Bensend left. In his forest biology class he covered forest types, site, tree growth, soil development, and other biologically important things. It was in this class we learned how to dig soil pits and break increment borers. Dr. Gordon also demonstrated that he was half race horse and half mountain goat as we tried to keep up with him on mountain trails.

Dr. Hopkin’s forest operations course was involved with Canadian forest practices and especially how they compared with U.S. methods. We heard several Canadian government officials talk who were very concerned with pollution. We studied pollution perhaps more thoroughly than anything else, both in this class and in Dr. Bensend’s products utilization course.

The faculty wives added something to camp that otherwise would have been lacking. Mrs. Zuuring and five month old Robert and Mrs. Hopkins were present for the whole camp, Mrs. Bensend for the first half, and Mrs. Gordon for the second. They helped at least to tone down the obscenities in the mess hall. Mrs. Hopkins served as librarian and stamp dealer. Without her some of us never would have sent any mail at all.

For the first few weeks of camp the insects were terrible but the problem subsided after that. Some campers maintained that the mosquitoes and black flies weren’t as bad later in camp because their population declined. Others maintained that we just got used to them being around plus we were so permeated with 6-12 and OFF that they didn’t like us too well even if we hadn’t made a recent application. Any way you look at it we still lost, just not quite so bad.

Our French cook, Mr. Millette, did a very good job. Like many people in the camp vicinity he did not speak very much English. Once when two of us wanted to know if the clams in the river were edible he told us, “Yes, the K.P.’s will serve supper Sunday night.” When we pressed the question again he showed us where the extra peanut butter was kept.

Horseshoes, fishing and hiking were favorite past-
times at camp during the off hours. Swimming in the nearby Rouge River was also popular. The river was labeled polluted and then clean several times by different sources. None of us died after bathing there exclusively for nearly a month. Evenings in camp were usually fairly quiet as many campers preferred to turn in early.

All in all, camp and Canada were quite an experience. Some of us are still saying “ay” instead of “uh”. Camp is one of those places that when you’re there seems like the armpit of the world but later doesn’t seem nearly so bad. In fact some of us, facing what could be a jobless summer, wish we had it to do over again.

- Steve Imerman, with a little help from his friends.