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Summer Camp 1979

The Lubrecht Forestry Camp owned by the University of Montana was again home for 50 students for six weeks last summer. The camp, set on 8094 hectares of experimental forest and surrounded by gentle mountains proved to be very adequate. For most, the western Montana scenery was a welcome change of pace from the midwestern plains.

The camp, being somewhat set in a valley, experienced totally unpredictable weather conditions. When the weather reports on the radio said it was raining in Missoula, 30 miles away, the sky would be beautifully clear at camp. Rain was practically nonexistent except for a few quick late afternoon thunderstorms. Temperature fluctuations were very broad, sometimes varying 50°F from early morning to afternoon. These fluctuations were coupled with a lack of high humidity, which was appreciated by all.

Classroom time was kept to a minimum by holding most classes outdoors and by taking field trips. In forest measurements class, taught by Dr. Steve Jungst, everyone got a chance to romp around the woods and maybe get lost for a while. Dr. Jungst's class involved learning the basics of forest measurements and actually getting out in the field to apply what was learned.

A "Mr. Klint Ometer" wanted the services of each cruising team, composed of five people, to gather data about a certain twenty acres and produce a map for the twenty acres. Each team ran a boundary traverse around the perimeter of the twenty acres, timber typed the area, and drew a map of it. Then, sample plots were laid out, measurements taken, volumes estimated, and total worth of usable wood material estimated. Needless to say, measurements was the most time consuming class, but also one of the most liked.

Multiple Use Operations taught by camp director Dr. David Countryman provided a broad overview of the operations of various agencies. All of the time in this class consisted of field trips to private, state, and two different federal agencies. In addition, trips were taken to the Forest and Range Experiment Station, Forest Sciences Laboratory, Fire Research Laboratory, and Smoke Jumper's School, all in Missoula.

Because the field trips always involved quite a bit of traveling time,
there would usually be some resistance from the sections of students that had to ride in the old, well used truck on cold mornings. The other section which got to ride in the two brand new vans would just stand and smile.

On occasion, in the afternoon when the weather was nice, each section would want to ride in the truck with the canvas rolled back, and “catch some rays.” However, with most of the roads being dirt and with the lack of rain, dust was a constant annoyance. Often, after a ride in the truck, clothes would be completely coated with dust, teeth would be gritty, and hair would be dirty. The ride in the vans behind the truck was not much better.

Dr. Joedy Colletti taught Wood Utilization for the first three weeks of camp. Many field trips were taken to plants that manufactured house logs, winow sashes, plywood, lumber, and particleboard. General class discussion and unforgettable mill reports followed each of the trips to bring out the finer details of each mill. Souvenir plywood plugs to replace knots were picked up by some students in memory of the trip to Champion International, the largest plywood plant in North America.

During the last three weeks of camp we experienced the world of Forest Ecology as taught by Dr. Paul Wray. The forest ecology class was unique in that it covered so many topics. Work in the field consisted of everything from making a plant collection and digging soil pits, to making site index curves and investigating forest pests. Data collecting was often laborious under the hot sun, and the writeups were no more pleasant, often having to be turned in by 6:00 P.M. the same day. Even so, much was learned by Dr. Wray’s wisdom.

There were no complaints about the meals that Mrs. Laura Schilling prepared for us. When everyone returned from a day out in the field, we all could count on Mrs. Schilling to provide us with plenty of hearty food. Each person in camp, except the vehicle drivers, had KP duty for one week and general camp cleanup for one week. Sunday morning and afternoon was Mrs. Schilling’s well deserved time off. This gave the people on KP a chance to test their cooking skills. Much to everyone’s surprise, the KP crews usually fared quite well.

Attending class five and a half days a week, and doing catch-up homework on weekends, left little time to enjoy the surrounding countryside. The extremely long days which lasted until 10:30 P.M. or so, helped somewhat, giving everyone an opportunity to play horseshoes, softball, or volleyball after dinner. Also, by procrastinating a little, everyone usually found time to enjoy themselves on the weekend.

Weekends were filled with such things as hiking, backpacking, washing clothes, fishing, and going to church. Such familiar names as Roundup, Clearwater, or Potomac bars were the site of some mighty good conversation and pool playing for those who did not opt for the long drive to Missoula at night. At these places such well known people as Mr. Flake, the owner of the house log operation we visited, could be found socializing. When people did go to Missoula on Saturday night, the best bet was that they would be found at either the Holiding Company or the Trading Post Saloon.

Unusual things sometimes happened after the Missoula crew came back at night. A speed ditch in the camp driveway made to slow down traffic was mysteriously filled in one night. Occasionally, some people such as Dr. Jungst and those who dined and discoed with him, had an extremely hard time finding their way home.

The extremely dry summer, low humidity, and a sudden thunderstorm one night gave about fifteen people the chance to work on a fire crew. Fires, started by lightening, broke out all over the area and our camp was called upon by the state to help put out the fires. For those who worked the 26 straight hours it was a hot shower and plenty of sleep when they returned.

Fourth of July weekend gave everyone a chance to have an extended weekend of three days to explore the countryside. The folks who went to nearby Bob Marshall Wilderness were greeted with driving rain which later turned into snow. Others went to Glacier National Park where they were greeted by more snow. Still others went to Coloma, an abandoned mining town in the Garnet Range just a few miles from camp.

Another group went rafting on the nearby wild Blackfoot River the last day of the long weekend. The weather again did not quite cooperate, changing from warm and...
sunny to cold and drizzly by the end of the day. The weather didn’t spoil the fun though, especially when each raft went rampaging through the Round-Up rapids. Although there were a few close calls, with one person falling out into the rapids, no one was hurt, except for bumps, bruises, and a few sore muscles.

To top off the weekend, a special meal was arranged by those who had ordered steaks and set up a steak fry. Everyone got to cook their own steak over hot coals. The section A vs. B softball game that followed made some wish they would not have eaten so much.

Dr. Countryman also arranged an alumni day for alumni around the area to come to camp and visit with everyone. The alumni that showed up were greeted well, and had an enjoyable time as well as the students that visited with them.

Enough crazy and unique things happened at camp to inspire songs to be written which explicitly described what went on. One such song was named after what had become our camp motto, “It Could Only Happen at Lubrecht.” Another song told of one of the instructors, Joe Colletti and was entitled “Colletti’s Song”.

After summer camp was completed, those who were lucky enough to find jobs stayed and worked. The rest left for home, with some wishing camp could have been longer, and others yearning to go back next summer to work.

For those of us who were out at camp last summer, we will always remember that it could only happen at Lubrecht.
"It could only happen at Lubrecht"

Look Inviting?

The crew from cabin 20.

Enough cookies for 60!

Dr. Colletti "on tour" at K&L Mill.

"I'm a lumberjack and I'm O.K...."

"Lenny and Squiggy" at their best.

"...I work all night and sleep all day."