

Kodiak at Camp Fife

By Amy DiFrancesco, Editor

Typically, Kodiaks are part of a high adventure experience, from hiking to river rafting. Over the week of July 2-8, I experienced a new type of Kodiak, one utilizing a BSA camp as the base for the Kodiak trek. It was awesome! Our "host" was Grand Columbia Council's beautiful Camp Fife about an hour outside of Yakima, WA. I was fortunate to have been asked to serve as lead instructor for one of the three Kodiak groups. Our Course Director was Dr. Bruce Noonan, with our own Web Coordinator Cindy Jesinger, teaching a



second group, while coordinating (go figure!) the faculty and participants' schedules. Venturer Jamie Reeder of Moses Lake was lead instructor for the third group. Venturing volunteer Rick Jesinger assisted Jamie and helped with the Pistol Shooting course; Frankie Stevens assisted me, while serving as a chaperone for our female participants. Volunteer Art Moriwaki was our much appreciated Quartermaster and assisted Cindy.



several Venturing discussion groups.

On Sunday night, July 2nd, twenty-four youth (two faculty and twenty-two participants) from the United States arrived at Camp Fife in the state of Washington. Our longest "commuter" was from New Hampshire; Erin traveled 21+ hours by air and auto to attend the class. The largest contingency was from Crew 270 in Vancouver. After the welcome dinner, each participant completed a questionnaire, ranking 26 activities available at the camp during the week. Choices ranged from waterskiing to C.O.P.E.; an all-day Pistol Shooting Course to an overnight horseback riding excursion; rock climbing to canoeing; Ethical Controversies to Leave No Trace and

Camp Fife assigned liaisons Lisa & Curtis to work with Dr. Noonan and Cindy in providing assistance and identifying opportunities for the Kodiak participants. Since we were the pilot Kodiak program at Camp Fife and our Kodiak attendees represented over 25% of the camp's attendance, the staff was committed to making this site and experience work for future Kodiaks.



Using resources wisely!



Most of the Kodiak participants were delighted to have the opportunity to study with Dr. Noonan, a certified NRA pistol instructor, and complete the comprehensive pistol safety class on Monday. Four members, two of whom had previously completed the NRA Basic Pistol Course, opted to spend the day at C.O.P.E., crafts, the climbing wall and completing a conservation project. Camp Fife blocked two hours on Tuesday and Wednesday exclusively for Kodiak Venturers at the rifle range, so we could practice .22 pistol shooting.

Additionally, we had the opportunity to fire 12 Ga. shotgun, .22 rifles and practice archery.

Camp Fife scheduled Kodiak exclusive C.O.P.E., waterskiing, and overnight horseback trips. Over the months preceding the Kodiak, Dr. Noonan had prepared with camp directors for its first successful Kodiak. Throughout the week, Dr. Noonan met with camp staff to facilitate an amazing experience for the participants.

Monday evening, our Kodiak Effective Team commission went brilliantly as our groups scattered around the camp, enjoying the beautiful scenery of Camp Fife. Tuesday was a bit more challenging...



**Thinking Outside the Box
Tenting within a Tent during
Thunder/Rain/Lightening Storms**

We had just completed our afternoon Values and Vision Kodiak class when the camp alarm was sounded. Scouts scurried into the new (beautiful!) dining hall. The heavy rain storm developed into an alarming lightening storm. As the entire camp watched the rain and hail from the dining hall, a fire developed across the lake. We shifted gears and used the opportunity to engage in the "Murder One" exercise slightly ahead of schedule, and everyone enjoyed the diversion from the troubling weather.

After dinner, groups were sent to secure necessary bedding, as Ranger Don monitored the progress of the fire. Just as the Kodiak crews returned with their sleeping bags, we learned the fire had been contained. Campers were offered the option of a "sleepover", since so many had transported their gear into the hall. The female participants of Kodiak enjoyed a slumber party in the large loft, while many of the male participants slept in the dining hall below. This weather "misfortune" was a defining aspect of our Kodiak. Confined for several hours without worldly belongings and scheduled activities, we spent time getting to know each other. We were unable to retreat to our individual tents and truly became teams while watching the rain, sleet, lightning and fire. That night, we enjoyed an impromptu evening of fun.

The rain resumed on Wednesday, but without lightening. A broken water pipe was discovered to be the culprit temporarily compromising water pressure. Showers were restricted to evening hours until the pipe was subsequently replaced. And yet, the young women had so much fun, they pleaded to be able to spend Wednesday night together on the floor of the loft in the lodge; some of the young men echoed the request. Cindy and Art approached the camp staff who readily agreed to a second overnight, allowing Kodiak participants to function as an "effective team", trading equipment, providing those participants going on overnight horseback riding and canoeing trips with dry tents and sleeping bags.

Why is the weather so important in this Kodiak? It offered us an unexpected challenge and inconvenience - and yet we conquered adversity as a team, maintaining a cheerful attitude and "rolling with the raindrops". As I heard justified whining and complaining from other groups, I was proud to be part of the Venturing contingency, who were too busy having fun and learning, to complain. Although Cindy (with help from Rick, Art and Frankie) spent hours rescheduling around rain, all participants were able to enjoy their top choices of activities.

Our Kodiak was a great success. I believe it was even more of a success because of our unexpected challenges. Some might say "anything that could go wrong went wrong", but we became closer and more focused as a result of the additional challenges.

With 22 participants and 26 opportunities for each, I cannot catalog all of our fun, growth and accomplishments. However, here are a few highlights:

1. All 22 successfully completed Kodiak - to the max!
2. Erin from New Hampshire successfully completed the requirements for the C.O.P.E. Ranger Elective - personally completing three C.O.P.E. classes, then assisting with two.
3. On the OA service day, only Venturers arrived to provide service (two were young women who were not in OA!)
4. Evan from Washington completed his shooting sports - shotgun Ranger Elective, hitting 56 out of 75 targets.
5. Fourteen of our members completed a 2.5 mile Land Navigation course (with 10 legs!), a core requirement for Ranger (thanks to Robert, Jamie and Kyle for setting up the course!).
6. Our Kodiak course performed the two BEST skits in the closing campfire.
7. We won the Camp Fife Spirit Stick on the final night of the Kodiak.
8. One half of our participants provided service to the camp. In addition to the OA service, they repaired a bridge, planned a new bridge, built a dam to contain the flood water, repaired dry stream beds and helped watch for fires.
9. When the camp experienced a scheduling snafu and needed assistance, they turned to our Venturers to assist them on the last evening. As a result, our Kodiak team learned of the AWLS program sponsored by the Safari Club.



At the end of the week, some of our Venturers were offered staff positions. One accepted and returned the next week; another returned to build the new bridge during CIT.

How successful was this Kodiak? Traditionally, Cindy begins the Kodiak award ceremony by removing her Kodiak medal and telling the class that she has been able to wear the medal only while preparing and teaching their Kodiak. When they complete the course, she must remove her medal and store it, until another group honors her by asking for her assistance with a Kodiak. Before Dr. Noonan could announce his intention to remove his medal after the final youth presentation, Brandon K from Vancouver shouted out "leave the medal on and give us Kodiak X!" Erin, our participant from New Hampshire said to tell her where and when - and she would travel from the east coast to the west to complete Kodiak X with the team. Some other comments were:

"We had tons of opportunity to try things that I've always wanted to try, [and which will] help me on my journey to Ranger."

"This course was exciting and challenging and fun!"

"I like how everyone works together as a team to solve problems."

"I like how it applied our skills and newly learned talents into events and activities."

"I like the organization of the classes and the activities of the week. Also, the opportunities I got to participate in."

While I approached this Kodiak (my fourth or fifth) with some reservations, I think it is possibly the most successful ever. Working out of Camp Fife with their support services and activities was great. The participants united for meals, social time and to learn the skills of Kodiak, yet they remained individuals as they planned and pursued their own unique schedules.



In closing, I echo the question of our participants - when is our Kodiak X?