



The Wabun Way

80 Summers of Wilderness Adventure

Wabun has provided boys and girls with the chance to travel in uncomplicated ways in undisturbed wilderness territories for eighty years.

This sunny summer, young Chippy and Wawatay sections paddled, sang, and swam through the pristine lakes of the Temagami region.



Middle sections honed paddling and wilderness skills as they paddled farther afield, experiencing an introduction to whitewater.



Senior campers on the “Long Trips” journeyed over a thousand miles down the Winisk and Attawapiskat Rivers to the shores of James and Hudson Bays.

No matter the age or experience level, campers all enjoyed the spectacular scenery of the Canadian wilderness, and developed profound relationships with the section mates with whom they shared the daily adventures of wilderness living.

A congratulations and thank you to the campers and staff of the 2012 season for an amazing summer and a fantastic 80th season; we look forward to seeing you on the dock to kick off the 81st!

A Day in the Life...



2

Summer Highlights



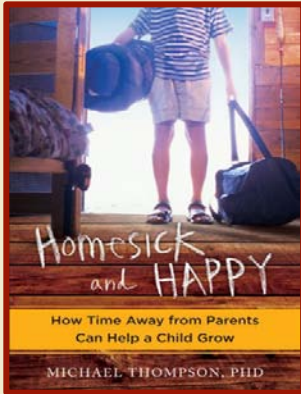
3

Birch Bark Canoes



4

Words of Wisdom



“Wabun is featured in the new book Homesick and Happy: How Time Away From Their Parents Can Help A Child Grow by renowned clinical psychologist, New York Times bestselling author, and parenting expert Michael Thompson.

A champion of summer camps, Dr. Thompson came to know Wabun while conducting a youth development training for Wabun staff in 2008. He interviewed president and managing director Dick Lewis in 2010.

Dr. Thompson’s book explains, “how children who are away from their parents can be both homesick and happy, scared and successful, anxious and exuberant. When children go to camp- for a week, a month, or the whole summer- they can experience some of the greatest maturation of their lives, and return more independent, strong, and healthy.” Read more on Dr. Thompson’s website: <http://www.michaelthompson-phd.com>

Letter from the Director

Dear Wabun Family and Friends,

Welcome to the 2012 Wabun Newsletter. August 7th brought Wabun’s 80th season to a close. First, a thank you to all for making this season a success.

Campers and staff, you did a magnificent job of extracting every ounce of benefit from the opportunities the camp offers – thank you! Your pleasures this past summer were the shared enjoyments of group accomplishment. You bonded in common efforts, you celebrated, and you had great fun together.

Families, thank you for your trust, and for giving your child the opportunity to experience the wilderness through Wabun. It is not easy to let go of your child for the summer, without so much as an email or phone call. It is a profound thing that you do, and it has a powerful impact on the development of your child. But, we’ll leave discussion of camp fostering developmental milestones

to the experts (see Words of Wisdom *left* for Dr. Thompson’s treatise on the subject!).

Alums, I would love to see you along with campers, parents, and staff- as we come together to celebrate our Wabun experiences at regional reunions throughout the year. A schedule of reunions is posted on the [Wabun website](#) and reminders will be posted on the [Wabun Times](#) blog, and the [Wabun Facebook](#) page throughout the year. Wabun does not advertise, so we depend on friends of the camp to spread the word of what we do – please invite or refer your friends and family to the sites and reunions to learn about the opportunities Wabun offers.

May the wind be at your back.

Respectfully,



Dick Lewis

A Day in the Life of a Mattawa by Sofia

This summer Wabun inaugurated a new section, the Mattawa. Named in honor of the hometown of many of the guides who led Wabun trips from the first Wabun season, 1933, through the 1960’s. Mattawa camper Sofia, age 14 from DeWitt New York, remembers her favorite Mattawa day:



Wabun Lake Trip Day 10
July 27, 2012

Today we woke up on glorious Wabun Lake (named after our camp!). We were sad to go. *Continued on Page 6*

Summer 2012 Highlights



Building Birch Bark Canoes: Wabun Staff Share Their Skills by Adam Wicks Arshak

In early May, longtime Wabun campers and staff, John Zinser, my sister Eliza Wicks-Arshack, and I, along with our friend Daniel Cassel, set out to facilitate a three month long birch bark canoe-building program for Bear Island youth. From our camp behind the community baseball field, we worked together with high school students to harvest resources, prepare materials, and build the canoes. Though the program was largely completed by the youth of Bear Island, we were overwhelmed by the support, interest, and helping hands of Wabun campers, Lake Temagami community members, and other campers. Approximately a thousand people put effort, energy, and intention into crafting canoes.



For a very long time, birch bark canoes were the primary means of travel through the Canadian wilderness. For hundreds, if not thousands of years, birch bark canoes were built on Lake Temagami, specifically on Bear Island. Bear Island is home to the people of the Temagami First Nation; the Teme-Augama Anishnabai, or Deepwater People. The people of Bear Island have

been neighbors and friends of Wabun since our camp's founding in 1933. Numerous Bear Islanders have been campers and staff at Wabun over the years, and it was a privilege to help grow and deepen the relationship between Wabun and Bear Island this summer.



Harvesting materials from *n'Dakimenan*, the land of the Deepwater People, was an honor. From the grace of the land, young people of Bear Island were able to collect enough birch bark, cedar and spruce root to build two beautiful 17-18 foot canoes. Wabun campers lent a hand. Sections traveling anywhere from Lake Temagami all the way to the shores of Hudson Bay collected pine pitch to seal the finished birch bark canoes. It is a beautiful thing to recognize the collective energy that was put into building these canoes.

Nearly every Wabun camper this summer came to Bear Island to work on the birch bark canoes, or worked on the restoration of a birch bark canoe at Wabun that was given to a founding family member in the 1920's. From splitting a cedar log into ribs and sheathing to splitting and preparing spruce root for the sewing and lashing, Wabun campers experienced an education in the beauty and spirituality of building birch bark canoes in the traditional, "wishcut" way.

Each step of building a birch bark canoe requires a different mindset. During the search for

materials we become in touch with the land and open to the signs that guide us to the right trees. Honoring tradition, when we take a tree to use for the canoes, we give thanks and acknowledge the spirit of the living tree as it transforms into a living canoe. In preparing the materials one must practice patience and embrace the repetition involved in splitting hundreds of feet of spruce root and carving hundreds of pieces of sheathing. The finished product reinforces the value of perseverance.

Throughout the building process this summer, the style and creativity of each young person was transformed into the stitches and artwork etched into the bark of the craft. These young people each left their own distinctive mark. For the facilitators, the most significant moment of the project was watching every young person from Bear Island and Wabun who had worked on these canoes have the opportunity to paddle them. These crafts were built from the gifts of the land through the hands of these young people. Knowledge of the role they played in keeping tradition alive was written on their faces. That is the power of the canoe.

We are forever grateful to the people of Bear Island for giving us this opportunity to learn from their traditions, from *n'Dakimenan*, and for so graciously welcoming us into their community. Chi Miigwetch.



Wabun Staff Build Awareness of Northern Communities by Andrew Stachiw and Max Flomen

This summer, six Royal Canadian Geographical Society expedition members, including longtime Wabun staff members Jesse Coleman, Max Flomen, Stefan Superina, and Andrew Stachiw, completed a 50 day expedition from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories to Coronation Gulf on the Arctic Ocean. The purpose of the expedition was to explore, educate, and hopefully inspire more young people to avail themselves of the beauty, peace, and simplicity that traveling on the land provides.

The expedition team's final destination was the Inuit community of Kugluktuk,



Nunavut, where the group's canoes, paddles, tents, lifejackets, wannigans, and other gear would be donated to the community's youth recreation and outdoor program. This commitment was the first and perhaps most important step in bringing the group's goals to actualization. To be certain, the path to Kugluktuk would not be an easy one, nor would the path be well travelled. The route, developed by Stef

following his reading of Keith Ross Leckie's novel *Coppermine*, was chosen for historical and educational reasons, not for ease or directness of travel. The final route, stretching approximately 2000 kilometers, was a composite of the overland journeys undertaken by several European explorers, including Samuel Hearne, John Franklin, and Warburton Pike. Beginning in the territorial capital, the expedition began by crossing one of the ten largest lakes in the world and the deepest in North America, Great Slave. This was



followed by paddles across seven of the ten largest lakes in the Northwest Territories, 35 days of upstream travel, 21 days beyond the tree line in Canada's Barren Lands; all this with limited trip notes and no planned rest days. In addition to getting from point A to point B, the expedition's main focus would be creating curriculum for the RCGS (in compliance with the Canadian Council for Geographic Education), taking photos, and collecting film footage for a pending educational documentary. The journey, and its outcomes, provided the opportunity of a lifetime. Indeed, the abundant fishing and unique wildlife, the energizing effects of the midnight sun, the shifting geography of this seemingly other-worldly landscape, and the pleasures of group travel made our Coppermine expedition a trip unlike any of us had previously undertaken.

Continued on page 7

Parent Perspective



Parent of three campers, Libby, of Freeport Maine, shares what Wabun means to her family:

"My husband and I truly believe a summer at Wabun is the best investment we can make in our children. To watch them paddle in after a summer immersed in breath-taking beauty and character-defining wilderness is simply glorious. They return confident, capable, stronger – physically and emotionally – and best of all, happy.

"Six weeks is harder for us than for the kids. They are totally engaged and rarely have time to miss home for all the adventure right in front of them. For us, it means learning to trust our children, that they can provide their own food, shelter and entertainment without us and to trust ourselves to let them go and let them grow. The rewards are deep and rich.

"When I sit in the lodge the last day of the season, and cheers between sections and strong bodies and sunshine and friendships and fill the room, I wonder why every parent would not choose this for their child if they could. My children have dug deeply within themselves at Wabun, and are stronger for it. And I am deeply grateful."

Camper Corner



Pierce, age 12, from Wycoff, New Jersey, shares recollections of this past summer and why Wabun is important to kids like him:

“ At Wabun children can experience a new kind of life without electronics and without your family to make decisions for you. Early this year my school took us up to the Catskill Mountains and we had to stay up there for three days without electronics and without contact. I was thinking about Wabun that whole time

“I keep coming back to Wabun because I love experiencing the unthinkable. When I tell my friends at home that I lived in the Canadian wilderness for six weeks paddling and portaging canoes every day, it blows their minds. Also, my Wabun friends are probably the closest friends I have. Go Wabun Cree 2012!

“This summer at Wabun I loved paddling and lining the swifts of the North and South Channels with my staff, Will, cooking (and eating!) Alfredo with bacon on the campfire, and seeing moose in the wild!”

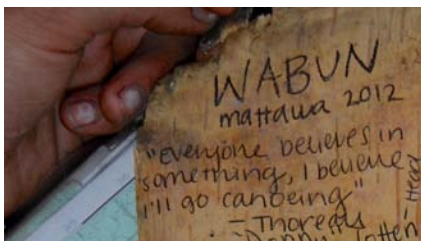
...A Day in the Life continued

We completed our morning routine, rolling our sleeping bags, taking down our tents, eating breakfast, and clearing the campsite. Once these tasks were completed, we loaded up our red canoes and



pushed off. Before starting the 1,800 meter portage that led away from Wabun Lake, we stopped at another campsite on the lake. It has been a tradition for decades for sections or groups (not just from Wabun) who travel to this lake to leave a note on a piece of birch bark on this site for future sections to find.

While reading the birch bark notes, we all learned something. Sara found out that her cousin had done the Wabun Lake trip three times when it is rare for a person to do it even once. Nina found her sister's birch bark from 2009, but



unfortunately it had gotten a bit wet. We wrote our names and a Henry Thoreau quote on a piece of birch bark we had collected for the

purpose- it's cool to think that it will be read for years to come. We finished reading and pushed onward, glad to be on the move once again.

We were going to have seven portages that day. Three to get from Wabun Lake to Sunnywater Lake, and then four from Sunnywater Lake to Smoothwater Lake. We made it to Sunnywater Lake in time for lunch. We jumped in for a swim in water that was unrealistically blue. After a whispered discussion from our staff, it was decided that because the lake was so beautiful we would have a “Y.O.L.O.” (you only live once) half day and would camp in Sunnywater for the night. Yay! We spent the afternoon competing in some water Olympics- after all of



us (and our canoes) had gotten considerably wet we noticed that our staff were safe and dry in their officiating canoe. They decided to flip themselves over rather than have us do it.

After our day of fun, we were ready for a big dinner of Pot Lag (lasagna in a pot) and gooey Tiger Bars for desert. We then curled up in our tents for the night, already looking forward to the next day.

...Northern Communities continued

Two months of frenetic yet painstaking planning, organizing, and fundraising had prepared us well for the journey. Lengthy trips



through remote territory invariably present an opportunity for deeper reflection on new accomplishments and realizations, whether individual or collective. We prepared diligently and executed our proposed objectives, but little (short of increasingly vivacious discussions of Northern Store purchases) could prepare us for the journey's end. Our reception by the people of Kugluktuk, young and old, whether advance contacts or new friends, was nothing short of incredible. Working with several teachers and community activists, we had the opportunity to deliver a lecture and slide show presentation at the high school, lead some informal paddling sessions, and we always had the nightly pleasure of hosting several guest chefs (none over the age of eleven) on our 53-part series "What's for Dinner?" Though they didn't always come to cook, they always stayed to eat!



Conversations with other folks in the community touched on a wide range of subjects, many touching on matters of far greater consequence than the weather. Though I must preface by emphasizing that Kugluktuk was a well-managed and friendly community, issues related to malnutrition and obesity, the inadequacy of access to education and justice, and the debilitating effects of soaring teen pregnancies, alcohol, and drug abuse rates are sources of extreme concern. Without addressing all the historical forces which have produced the deplorable conditions to which Canada's Native peoples are subject, I would strongly encourage all past, present, and future Wabunites to take a much deeper look at the history of the land we like to call home for a few weeks every summer.



What allows a select group of privileged strangers to experience the transformative power of wilderness travel while the land's first inhabitants remain socially and economically marginalized? How can we, as canoeists and outdoor enthusiasts, engage Native communities in a manner that is cognizant of their concerns and aspirations without sounding hollow or patronizing? These are not easy questions to ask of ourselves, but only an honest attempt to answer them can produce a human and natural environment that is morally acceptable for members of all communities.

Staff Spotlight



Ellen Haenszel, age 20, is a student at Miami of Ohio University. A long-time Wabun camper herself, Ellen shares why she returns each summer to staff at Wabun:

"As a camper, the second I left Temagami in August I began the countdown to the next season. I returned every summer to continue the friendships I had made with my section and to experience the wilderness in a way I could never do at home. As a staff I am committed to giving my campers the same amazing experience I had.

At Wabun, campers not only learn how to live comfortably in the wilderness, they also learn how to lead and motivate their peers, push themselves mentally and physically, and communicate effectively with each other and with adults. In addition, one of the greatest gifts Wabun gives you is life-long friendships.

When I see my campers smile at their accomplishments and recognize their strengths, I am filled with pride. It is these moments that have me counting down to my next summer as a staff."

Register Now!

Planning to be part of the **2013 season**? Make it official and take advantage of the following deals... **5% tuition reduction**, for applications received with full payment by January 31, 2013 and for sibling applications.



Newsletter
Acknowledgments

The Wabun Newsletter could not be produced without the help of many friends, staff, and campers. We would like to thank all of you who submitted written contributions. We would also like to thank the shutterbugs for allowing us to use their photographs.

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