

## KID CAMPOUT GETS HIGH MARKS FROM ACA

The American Camp Association chose Wander Wisconsin's Kid Campout at Wyalusing last August for its on-site accreditation visit. That trip and all of Wander Wisconsin received high marks.

Program Manager Cheri Wilson. The trip leaders for this trip were Josh Ludke who has been with Wander Wisconsin for nine years and Alex Krucas. 2010 was her

first year with Wander Wisconsin.

"Josh does such a good job of preparing the kids," said Wilson. "He tells them exactly how it will go and what you need to do first."

Wander Wisconsin goes through the accreditation process every four years. All aspects of the program are evaluated according to over 300 safety standards.

The visit consists of a day spent examining all the registration forms and paperwork associated with the program and a second day for an on-site visit. Accreditation visits are made by ACA trained "visitors" who are camp directors themselves.

"Our camp program is unique," said Wilson. "Most ACA camps are resident camps but we're a trip and travel camp." Wilson said Wander Wisconsin meets or exceeds ACA standards. All trip leaders and trip staff are certified in Wilderness Water Safety. ACA requires that one person on the trip be certified.

"Many of our trips are on rivers and lakes so we thought it was really important to have all our staff certified," said Wilson.

Wander Wisconsin has been accredited by ACA since 2000.

"They observed a full day of activities at Wyalusing even down to watching how the kids exit the van," said



Campers hunted for and found crayfish on the Kid Campout at Wyalusing State Park last August.



# Whereabouts

A seasonal newsletter from Wander Wisconsin

FALL 2010

## Kids Love Wander; Offer Suggestions

If we could get rid of the mosquitoes, have pizza or hobo dinner for every meal and not wash the dishes we'd have the perfect Wander Wisconsin trip!

Evaluations from Wander Wisconsin participants were



According to camper evaluations washing dishes, top, was not a favorite activity. Kids liked the hobo dinners though (meat, potatoes, onions and spices cooked in foil packets in the fire).

very positive for last summer's trips. Like most kids, these campers had strong opinions about some things as well as interesting ideas for activities and future trips.

Wander staff asked kids what their favorite activity was. Canoeing, swimming, and visiting Devil's Lake and Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park all got lots of votes. Least favorite activities? The car ride, washing dishes and nothing. "Sleeping" and "trying to fall asleep" each got one vote. For favorite meal hobo dinner, spaghetti, pizza and hot dogs all ranked high.

When asked if they wanted to travel with Wander Wisconsin again there were 42 "yes" votes, one "no" votes, two "maybes," one "possibly" and one "totally."

As far as things they would change about the trip, "no mosquitoes" and "more swimming" were mentioned

several times. Other helpful suggestions included "a bigger tent" and "no rain." And for those campers who had trouble unplugging: allowing cell phones and having power would have been nice.

Suggestions for where to go next time were all over the map. Six Flags Amusement Park, Devils Lake and Mt. Olympus got several votes each. Bemidji, MN, Grandma's House and China all got one vote. Now that would be wandering! Thanks to all the Wander campers who took time to give us feedback. We're working on next summer already and will keep your suggestions in mind!

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## NEW LOCATION, NEW PRICE FOR FALL CAMPOUT

Wander Wisconsin's fall campout went to a new location this year: Aldo Leopold Nature Center's Black Earth campus. The cost was reduced too from \$160 to \$135. Thirty-nine campers attended the annual event.

The two night campout was from October 27-29 and included teambuilding games, nature crafts,

cookout, campfires, and a visit to a pumpkin patch with a hayride. Campers stayed in a three story log cabin. Ages eight to 11 (up to fifth grade) attended the campout. Sixth to eighth graders were also welcome. Each age group had their own counselors and lodging.

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Permit No. 2428  
MADISON, WI

Director's Column:

Don't Let Wisconsin Winter Keep You Indoors



What a great summer we had at Wander! We explored some new places while visiting some old favorites, made lots of new friends and enjoyed seeing how many of our returning campers had grown!

Summer is a great time to get outdoors and there is so much to do and see here in our beautiful state, but

don't let winter keep you inside! There are many ways to enjoy the outdoors with your family all year long. As a child growing up in Hawaii, I spent almost all of my waking hours outside. As a family, some of our favorite outdoor activities included going to the beach, shell hunting and fishing on weekends.

My kids and I love getting outside in winter to snowshoe, sled, walk through the woods, bird watch, and just play in the snow. One of our favorite places to go in winter is Indian Lake off

of Highway 19 near Cross Plains. Indian Lake offers fantastic cross country ski or snowshoe trails, a wonderful sledding hill with an outdoor campfire pit and a small warming house at the top of the sledding hill. We always take along a thermos of hot chocolate to help us warm up and enjoy sitting by the fire.

Another of our favorite winter activities is to walk through the woods near our house to look for animal tracks and signs of animals. You can turn this into a nature scavenger hunt to keep kids engaged and actively looking at their surroundings.

The easiest outdoor activity in winter is just playing in the snow! We love to get outside and dig tunnels and make forts in the snow which usually leads to a snowball fight! Just remember to dress warm and head inside for a break when you start to feel too cold or tired. Don't let a little winter keep you from the beautiful Wisconsin outdoors!

*Cheri Wilson*  
Cheri Wilson

Winter Break Will Have Fun in the Snow

Cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing and a sleigh ride are in the works for Wander Wisconsin's winter break program.

"Last year we did a winter

sports day at Elver Park," said Wander Wisconsin Program Coordinator Cheri Wilson. "The kids really liked it because they got to try so many different things."

A visit each week to a water park, a Wander Wisconsin tradition, is also planned. Last year the group went to Red Ridge Ranch in Mauston for a horse-drawn sleigh ride. Wilson is looking into that possibility again too. Program will be



offered on December 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29 and 30. Parents can choose which days they would like their children to attend.

"Parents really like to have that kind of flexibility around the holidays," said Wilson.

Winter break information will be posted in November at wanderwisconsin.org.

Wander Trips Spring Break

A Travel Club experience is planned for spring break 2011. Travel Club involves a trip to a different destination each day. Travel is by Wisconsin Youth Company van with one of our qualified trip leaders.

This year the plans include a water park visit, Discovery World in Milwaukee, visit to a nature center and an adventure day with climbing or caving. Check the website www.wanderwisconsin.org in January to find out where we'll wander over spring break.

Spend More Time Outdoors With Your Kids

Wander Wisconsin staff believe in the power of the outdoor experience for kids. We know first-hand the benefits of time spent in the natural world with friends and caring adults. We see kids make new friends, learn about teamwork, learn new skills, grow more relaxed, learn to care about the environment and much more.

*Want to help your child continue to benefit from time outdoors while in-between Wander Wisconsin trips?*

Here are some tips:

1. Hike in a state park and look at the fall colors. Cook your lunch in the fire ring at a picnic site or pack sandwiches. Visit www.dnr.state.wi.us for information about Wisconsin state parks.
2. Feed the birds. Put up a feeder at home, put out some seeds and see who shows up. Feeding birds can spark
3. Visit a nearby nature center. Many nature centers schedule family activities in the fall. Some are free. Visit www.naturenet.com for a listing of websites of nature centers in south central Wisconsin.
4. Take a night walk preferably away from noise and light. Talk in whispers or don't talk at all. Look at the stars and listen to the night sounds.
5. Try outdoor photography with your kids. Purchase disposable cameras and choose an aspect of nature to photograph while you're

a life-long interest in bird watching, a great outdoor activity. Fall is a good time to look for migrating waterfowl in Wisconsin. One of the best websites to learn about birds is www.birds.cornell.edu sponsored by the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology.

6. Sketch or draw outdoors. Find a sunny spot protected from the wind and draw what you see. You don't have to be a skilled artist. The act of focusing on something as you try to draw it can help you to really see and appreciate it.

7. Maybe the best activity of all is to just go outside with your kids. Wander around the yard or the block or the neighborhood park. Just look and smell and touch and be together. You'll come home refreshed. Guaranteed!

Learn more about outdoor activities and the importance of outdoor time for children and adults at www.campparents.org, sponsored by the American Camp Association. Check the Wander Wisconsin website regularly,

walking—trees, bodies of water, hills, grasses, leaves. Compare pictures and see what caught their attention.

8. Wander Wisconsin website regularly, www.wanderwisconsin.org. We'll be updating it as activities for winter break, spring break and next summer get organized.

9. You can encourage wonder by helping your child see the little things in nature like the tiny frog this Wander camper found on a Travel Club trip.

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Bayfield, Door County Planned for Summer 2011

Wander Wisconsin Summer 2011 is still in the planning stages but trips to Bayfield, WI, Door County, caving and fishing are definitely on the list according to Program Manager Cheri Wilson.

"We haven't had a trip to Bayfield in four years," said Wilson. "It's such a unique place."

Wilson said she didn't

think many families had the opportunity to go to the Bayfield area and really explore because it takes more than just a weekend.

"It's a beautiful part of the state and we can explore it by camping, hiking, kayaking and canoeing," she said.

Wilson also has planned a Wander trip back to Door County.

"There's so much to do up there," said Wilson.

This year the teen adventure trip to Door County included a live theater performance at Peninsula State Park, canoeing, fishing, caving, and biking.

"With such a broad range of activities, there's something to appeal to everyone," said Wilson.

Wilson plans to take a trip to Popp's Cave again and the limestone caves at Ledge View Nature Center in Chilton. Both trips were popular last summer.

A trip to several fishing spots and the Fishing Hall of Fame in Hayward is in the works.