

d) To administer all funds available to the commission.

e) To act jointly, when advisable, with any other state agency, institution, department, board, or commission in order to carry out the recreation commission's objectives and responsibilities. No activity of the commission, however, shall be allowed to interfere with the work of any other state agency.

f) To employ an executive director, and, upon the recommendation of the executive director, such other persons as may be needed to carry out the provisions of this act. The executive director shall act as secretary to the commission. The staff carries out the duties and powers in action throughout the state.

The chief function is to aid each community in doing its own job by advice and help rather than supervision or authoritative control. It is as simple as that and the story of possibilities and realities of action offer to all recreation a stimulating and vigorous story of progress. The state's responsibility to local communities is to assist in bringing more abundant and wholesome recreation to the masses of the people.

Harold D. Meyer is Director of the North Carolina Recreation Commission.

WHY OUTDOOR AND CAMPING EDUCATION?

Lloyd B. Sharp

Why has education been slow in using the outdoors to implement classroom study? Why should outdoor and camping education be established? How should it be done?

At one period in the early development of our country, it was decided that our democracy could not survive and grow unless the country was composed of literate people. Thus education became a cornerstone of our democracy—free education, a free people. At that time formal education was largely a matter of mind training—learning to read, write, and figure.

As new needs arose, more subjects were added. The pattern for broadening the curriculum was set. With the period of industrialization and expansion, more and more people congregated in the cities, adding to the complexity of city life and creating new social and economic problems. Our country is now over 75 per cent urbanized, making it difficult and in most cases practically impossible for people to have much direct contact with basic realities of life. In the congested centers and indeed in all parts of our country, made up of various races and creeds, the demands upon education for contributing to a more workable democracy are great. It requires *more* than literacy to meet the demands of our present-day society. If we are to preserve and extend our freedom, the two basic qualities of *understanding* and *self-reliance* must be developed within each individual and far more effectively and quickly than at present.

To accomplish this, our present system of education must be more realistic. There is no necessity for the twenty-eight or more million school youths to spend most of their time within the walls of school buildings when much of our education can be secured more effectively in the outdoors by dealing directly with the environment and real life.

Outdoor experience and camping are justified as a part of the curriculum because of their health and recreation values, but there are more basic reasons. It has been proved in educational research that *we learn most through direct experience, we learn faster, the learnings are retained longer, and the appreciation is greater*. If this be true, why delay in putting this program into full operation?

It would be neither practical nor wise to move all education outdoors. The subject matter of the curriculum should be divided on the basis of *where it can best be learned—inside the classroom or outside*.

All youth can explore valleys, streams, and all forms of com-

munity life close by. The outdoors begins immediately outside the school building. The teacher and her pupils can begin exploring and studying their immediate environment and continue outward in an ever-widening circle as far as it is practical to go. These field expeditions can start with the class period and extend to two hours, three, half a day, and even for two days or more.

The outdoors as a classroom is available to all teachers. In general, the teachers of English, literature, mathematics, history, geography, social studies, and other subjects do not visualize outdoor education as their concern. The average teacher or school administrator would think that it is entirely a matter of play and physical development, yet a teacher in any subject matter at any level will find abundant material outside the classroom which can be learned through direct experience.

The School Community Camp

It is educationally sound that school authorities should establish a school camp as an integral part of the total school plant. The school camp is a necessary facility just as much as the library, the gymnasium, the auditorium, and the laboratory. In the school camp, results in self-reliance, co-operative living, and understanding are developed to a degree not possible in the present school program. It is a center for realistic experience in living and working together.

The school camp provides an ideal setting for a new kind of outdoor community. Here the school youth and their teachers have the opportunity to plan their own program and to set up their own democratic procedures for living. The camp is free of city controls and regulations. It is the youth's community, a place to live together in the open country, and learn firsthand things not possible in school.

The camp groups should be divided into as small groups as possible—seven to ten have been found to be the best size for a

group. Each such group should operate as a small camp and be as self-sustaining as possible, should plan its own program, plan and prepare most of its meals, do construction work, and be responsible for its own activities.

These small groups should be some distance from each other, yet close enough for combined activities on occasion. The central part of the camp should become the community center or village. In it would be located the main library, infirmary, administrative office, a place for some meals to be served, bank and post office, cobbler shop, and other facilities needed in community life.

If the camp is to be operated only in the summertime, the structures of the small camps should be rustic and preferably designed and built by the campers themselves. The tepee, round-to, lean-to, covered wagon, and other types of shelter furnish the best opportunity for youth to use their imaginations and muscles to provide their own housing.

The school-camp program should be a natural outgrowth of the school curriculum. It has been found that some learnings can go on in camp more quickly and effectively than in school. As the school year proceeds, the teacher and students will find some things that they can do best in camp and some that are accomplished better in school.

A few sound guide posts in starting a school-camp program are:

1. Regimentation should be avoided.
2. No matter how well planned the activity, unless every camper participating has had a hand in the launching of it, the activity will not be as complete or meaningful an experience as is possible. It may in some instances prove harmful.
3. Primary emphasis should be given to helping the camper discover himself, his place in the group, his contribution to it, and his understanding of how people live together.
4. The program content should be centered in the out-of-doors;

it should give campers a fuller understanding of our natural resources and should teach them to solve some of their own problems connected with man's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, group living, and spiritual uplift.

5. The camp should motivate its program by causing children to do for themselves and to solve their own problems. It should emphasize experience by putting the native materials into the hands of the students at the spot where such materials are naturally found.

6. Camp life should give youth the optimum chance for serving others first and making self secondary to the group.

7. The leaders of the camp, the counselors or teachers, should live with the campers and have common experiences with them.

8. Whatever the learning and whatever the philosophy, camp *from the point of view of the campers is for fun* and it should be so conducted that both campers and staff find it so.

In a public-school camp made up of many small groups of eight campers each, one small camp group included an Orthodox Jewish boy, three non-Orthodox Jewish boys, two Roman Catholics, and two Protestants, one of whom was white and the other Negro. For the first time in the lives of these youngsters, it was possible for them to live and learn together. They prepared most of their own meals, did much construction work in their small camp, planned trips, and shared many vital experiences. Religious and racial differences soon disappeared and real understanding, tolerance, and friendship prevailed.

Not in any school situation is there an opportunity for the development of these qualities to the extent possible in a school camp. Provide this type of camping experience for the nearly thirty millions of our school youth throughout the country and *our problems of racial tolerance and understanding* would largely be solved, as well as a better meaning of democracy attained.

Teacher Preparation

What has been said about outdoor and camping education for school youth applies equally to the preparation of teachers. Teacher-preparing institutions should make sure that college students have a broad and rich background of experience in the outdoors, supplementing classroom study with field trips, explorations, and living in the open. Also, these future teachers should have camping experience as a part of their preparation. The wide gap between book knowledge and reality must be shortened, and better still the two should be carefully integrated.

As education turns to the outdoors to implement classroom study, conduct school camps, and prepare teachers and administrators to carry out the program, there is real hope for the development of self-reliance and understanding so essential in our American way of life.

Lloyd B. Sharp is Executive Director of National Camp-Life Camps.

A CHECK LIST FOR EVALUATING SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

Milton A. Gabrielsen

Although participation in recreation activities occurs primarily outside of school hours, the education program of the school and the school plant have a definite responsibility to the pupils and the community for recreation. Recreation and education cannot be separated; a good education program contains adequate recreation. Schools must assume major responsibility for teaching the skills essential for recreation participation.

Below is contained a check list by which schools may evaluate their participation and responsibility in recreation.

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