Mennonite Camping Association

Natural Links

MENNOCON’19

Every MCA member camp from all states and countries are heartily invited to send 1-2 tee shirts for the Mennonite Church USA 2019 (MennoCon) convention. The shirts will be displayed as part of the booth and given away at the end of convention. Think of all the exposure your camp will get! Attendees are loyal camp people and will look for their favorite camp’s tee. These tee shirts can be sent to Olivia at Camp Mennoscah who will be representing MCA at the convention in Kansas City in July. Olivia Bartel, Camp Mennoscah, PO Box 65, Murdock, KS, 67111.

FACEBOOK

Join the conversation! “Like” us on Facebook and be part of the community online: “Mennonite Camping Association - MCA” group.

GATHERING PLACE

The Gathering Place is an interactive website for Anabaptist youth leaders to find connection, resourcing, networking, mentoring, and spiritual formation. Visit www.thegatheringplace.us for info on upcoming FREE webinars especially designed for faith formation leaders.

MCA REGIONAL GATHERINGS

EASTERN GATHERING REFLECTIONS
by Josh Brown, Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center

This year’s MCA retreat was a change of pace for me personally. I have been Program Director at WCRC for four years and have attended both bi-nationals, but have never attended a regional retreat. I was personally nervous about the size of the retreat (30 people or so), but soon found that the size was by far my favorite part of the retreat. Being able to connect more personally with other camps from my region was a pleasant surprise.

Camp Deerpark knocked things out of the park with their hospitality. Their staff genuinely cared for us while we were there and showed all of their guests great hospitality. Thank you Kevin, Sean, Rick, and others for serving us so well. Big thanks to Ken Bontrager who took some of us on an awesome tour of NYC. Ken certainly knows his way around that concrete jungle and I highly recommend a tour with him if he ever offers you one!

Looking forward to next year’s bi-national at Spruce Lake!

WEST/MIDWEST GATHERING REFLECTIONS
by Olivia Bartel, Camp Mennoscah

Twenty-two people from 5 camps plus 5 Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp staff members reveled in 3 days of rest and rejuvenation on the west side of Pikes Peak in the Pike National Forest with John Murray as the keynote speaker. Dave Foncannon led the group in music with hymns, bluegrass, and songs he wrote.

A recent snow gifted the group with the opportunity to enjoy the tube run and human curling on the pond, and there was beautiful weather for hikes and snowshoeing. Workshops offered included the State of the Forest (caring for a forest infested with Spruce Beetles), RAWtools (creating garden tools from guns), and Diving Into Inquiry (strategies and tools to work through sticky problems).

Throughout the days, incredible conversations, time to reconnect with fellow camp staff, and hearing from others on camp issues were highly valued, offering learning and support through the experiences and knowledge of others. The importance of the fellowship at these gatherings cannot be understated. We’ll see you all at the 2020 bi-national at Spruce Lake!
Drift Creek Camp, Lincoln City, OR, www.driftcreek.org
by Brenda Kauffman, Executive Director

We knew that 2019 would come with uncertainties, knowing that major work needs to be done at a failing culvert along Drift Creek Camp’s only access road. Details are still coming together as access depends on water levels affected by spring rains, but there will be a complete closure with demolition beginning in June and wrapping up by October. Together with the board we explored alternative camp locations, but with safety a priority, most of the scenarios just did not prove feasible. Knowing the decision would disappoint many, we had to make the tough call to cancel summer camps. Financially, the closure is going to hurt, but we also recognize that NOT doing the work could result in the culvert collapsing and the road washing out completely. The project will not only protect the road from a potential disaster, it should also restore the native fish migration on North Creek.

What we did not yet recognize in those early planning sessions was God’s perfect timing. Little did we know then that the road closure would now feel like a gift... I was diagnosed with breast cancer on March 1. Not spending the spring planning for summer camp means that I am better able to spend these next few months fighting for my life. The closure means that our schedule is unusually more flexible to accommodate for chemo treatments, surgery, radiation and necessary recovery time. The closure means that I can protect myself by limiting my exposure to people, elements and injuries. The closure provides the gift of time for healing and the peace that God’s timing is perfect, and I could not be more grateful.

CULVERT DETAILS:
Over the years, there have been a variety of routes guests could travel to Drift Creek Camp, but today only a single access road remains. Local agencies are working to restore North Creek and replace the failing culvert which lies within a mile from the camp entrance with a more secure structure that will not only benefit the stream’s salmon but ensure camp accessibility for generations to come. The existing 11 ft. culvert creates a barrier to the upstream migration of fish and other aquatic organisms. It will be replaced with a 15 ft high and 50 ft wide “land bridge”. The wider structure will allow for an all aquatic organism passage to provide spawning and rearing habitat, and a cold water refuge in summer for salmonids, including (threatened) Oregon Coast Coho Salmon.

The current culvert has mitigated the salmon spawning beds for more than 60 years. With the diameter being too small, the culvert has increased the force at which water exits. The result has been that the water has “fire hosed” the receiving streambed. The gravel, needed for spawning, has been washed out. Part of the plan for replacing the culvert is to also restore the gravel, vital to the sustainability of the salmon native to Drift Creek.

Not only does the current system threaten the fish population, it also poses the enormous threat of the only access road being washed out during winter storms. While it is unfortunate that the access window for construction intersects with the season DCC is used most, it is vital that the work be done. So while we recognize the importance of replacing the culvert, it will come with a significant income deficit. It is estimated that DCC will lose roughly $100,000 in rental income. If you would like to support DCC’s Road Recovery Fund, please send donations to PO Box 1110, Lincoln City, OR 97367.