



SCI Central Wisconsin Chapter's Sables Environmental Camp 2009

The Sables 3rd Annual Environmental Camp was held on June 28th through July 1, 2009. Even though we had a couple of openings left, the camp was a huge success. Our chapter once again worked with

the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Environmental Station to make the camp happen. Their Staff and facilities at the Environmental Station are top notch!

The camp started on a Sunday afternoon and after the campers were registered and moved into their cabins, the fun started. Down to the beach they went. After swim checks were completed, the campers were free to enjoy a variety of activities at the waterfront. They could swim, canoe, kayak, paddle boat, ride on a pontoon boat, or go fishing. After dinner, the campers got to make their own walking stick. First they picked out the perfect stick. Then they used leather stamps to put their names on a piece of leather and tied the leather to their stick. Finally, they were able to put designs on the stick with a wood-burner. Some were quite creative! Next, the campers headed over to the campfire to learn some fun songs and dances.



Monday started bright and early after a hearty breakfast. Out in the woods they went. They learned about compasses, paired off, and set out to find their goals pre-set by the staff. After some wrong turns and crossed paths, they were able to work together to accomplish this task. For the next activity, groups of three were given a GPS, coordinates, and encouragement to find a "treasure". If they followed the directions the GPS pointed them in, they found the "treasure box" containing words of wisdom, or a questions that they had to answer.



After lunch the campers were off to the SCI – Central Wisconsin Sensory Safari Trailer. In the trailer the campers were allowed to touch & smell all of the mounts, furs, skulls, and horns. Then they learned about the different animals in the trailer, including 5 of the 6 sub-species of deer in North America. They saw the difference between herbivore and carnivore skulls and the difference between North American animal fur and South African Animal fur. Finally they tried to name the animal furs that are displayed in the trailer.



Then back to the waterfront for some more fun time. Next up, the Campers got a crash course on identifying animal tracks. They each got to pick a track and make a cast of it to take home with them. The next project was the pond study. There, the campers used a net to sift through some mucky pond water. They were trying to find pond wild life such as bugs, worms, frogs, and other pond life. When they found some creature in their nets, they used a flip book to identify what they had found. Finally, the last project was the leave no trace/beach clean-up. This is pretty self explanatory; the campers hiked around the lake and beach area and picked up everything that didn't belong there naturally.



Tuesday morning was a bit chilly, but that didn't stop anyone from getting harnessed up and climbing trees! Everyone got a chance to climb with the harness and of course they each tried to get higher than the last one who climbed. The campers were glad the next project was inside so they could warm up a bit. They got to learn the art of fly tying. Of course they got to keep their completed fly's, the each made 2 of their own creation. They got to choose which feathers and string colors to use for each fly they tied.



After lunch, the campers learned about bluebirds and their nesting sites through some teaching and a slideshow. With that knowledge, they built their own

bluebird houses. With the pieces pre-cut, assembly wasn't too bad. Everyone nailed the pieces together to make their bluebird house, which they got to take home to hang up in their yards. Then, they headed back to the waterfront to relax and have some fun.



The Tuesday evening activities kicked off after dinner with the outdoor skills Olympics. The campers were divided into 4 groups, the Spades, Clubs, Hearts, and Diamonds. They competed in rod casting, compass course, fire building, and archery. Each of the events was scored by the staff adding up the points accumulated. Out of the four groups, the hearts were the winners with the most points – way to go Hearts! After the Olympics, everyone gathered around the evening campfire for some songs and fun to end the day.

Wednesday was a relaxing day. The campers packed up their belongings, cleaned the cabins, and headed back to the campfire. They then had the CWES traditional “stick ceremony”. This is where each camper puts a stick into the fire and tells everyone what their favorite memory of the camp was. What a great way to end the Sables Environmental Camp, with everyone's wonderful memories!

This was again a great partnership with the UW's College of Natural Resources– Environmental Station and SCI Central WI. The partnership is one that we are planning to continue for years to come. The best part is that the ones who benefit from this are the children, what a tremendous experience for them!

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