

Laura Cheek
Shenandoah National Park
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Campfire Program Outline
“The Wild Side of Shenandoah”

Theme: Strong voices and difficult choices are vital to wilderness preservation.

Goals: Audience will understand the importance of federally designated wilderness in Shenandoah, recognize their connection to wild lands, and be inspired to become stewards of wild lands.

Objectives: audience will be able to

- 1) explain own definition of wilderness
- 2) relate 3 different perspectives of wilderness throughout history
- 3) identify 3 strong voices for wilderness preservation
- 4) define wilderness according to the Wilderness Act
- 5) identify the National Wilderness Preservation System

So What?: We connect with wild places on an emotional level – knowing that protected preserved natural land exists is important to our individual and national psyche; we can perpetuate and protect wild lands by the active choices we make in our daily lives.

Props:

Quote cards for audience to read (Bradford, anonymous, Muir (2), Wilderness Act, Eastern Wilderness Areas Act, Jacobson)

National Wilderness Preservation System map

National Park System map

Outline:

- I. Intro
 - A. me, welcome, talk “The Wild Side of Shenandoah”
 - B. words from our sponsor – The Overlook
 1. wilderness article
 2. wilderness programs
 3. Jr. Ranger
 - C. safety stuff (if necessary)
 1. for how many 1st time in SNP
 2. for how many 1st night in SNP
 3. rest of you can help me out
 - a. what are some things to be careful about?
 - b. Deer, bear, snakes, ticks, fire, etc.
 - D. find out where audience is from
 1. name a National Park Service site in your state – rest of us guess state

- a. only one state has none – Delaware
 - 2. raise your hand if you know of a designated wilderness area in your state
 - a. only six states have none – CT, RI, MD, DE, KA, IA
 - E. At this moment, very near some of the most amazing, unique wilderness in USA
 - 1. bottom of Dark Hollow (or identify according to amphitheater location)
 - a. no sign, no neon lights, no fence, might not even feel any different
 - b. yet special place – our society has decided has unique value, and has granted special protection to
 - 2. 40% of SNP is designated wilderness
 - a. this is what we’ll talk about tonight –how unique, how got here, how it is a part of you
 - b. how many of you think of Shenandoah as wilderness?
 - 1) may or may not fit your own definition of wilderness
 - c. specific definition of wilderness here, designated wilderness, which we will define later
 - d. designated wilderness is a designated place, with boundary around it, yet wilderness can be an experience too, or both, many definitions abound
 - e. what is wilderness? We all have own definition – let’s talk about that first
- II. definitions of wilderness
 - A. audience definitions
 - 1. summarize (ie. Experience, place, natural, without humans, etc.)
 - B. my definition – Alaska
 - 1. explain my story
 - 2. a place and experience
 - 3. SNP a small park, close to DC, millions of visitors
 - 4. SNP changed my definition of wilderness – maybe change yours too
 - C. SNP’s wilderness more intriguing and more unique than Alaska wilderness
 - 1. as unique as your big toe
 - 2. you’ll figure out why by end of program
 - 3. to find out why secret of SNP is in your big toe, we need to find out why wilderness is here
 - 4. wiggle your big toe, we’ll tell the story of Shenandoah’s wilderness
 - a. it’s a result of strong voices and difficult choices
- III. history
 - A. has this area always been wilderness?
 - 1. no – had a series of changes, natural and human, that have affected landscape
 - 2. let’s take a look through time at what SNP was like
 - B. thousands of years ago
 - 1. was this wilderness? Were people here?
 - 2. native people lived here, made use of resources, left little evidence, not many people
 - 3. probably didn’t think of this as “wilderness” – it was their home

- C. 400 years ago, early 1600s
 - 1. come forward in time to when wilderness became a word, had a definition
 - 2. what was happening in VA early 1600's?
 - 3. European settlement on coast
 - 4. Concept of wilderness
 - a. How think of wilderness?
 - b. Audience read William Bradford quote
 - c. Audience read Anonymous quote
 - d. feared, to be conquered, not preserved, for most part
 - 5. How could definitions of wilderness change from then to now?
- D. mid 1800's, move west
 - 1. lured by endless lands, the frontier, the American dream and ideal, uniquely American
 - 2. homesteading
- E. 1890 – paper read at World Exposition in USA stating “frontier gone”, no wilderness left
 - 1. concern grew, mostly in growing cities, mainly in east, thought of losing something – a place and experience uniquely American
 - 2. strong voices spoke up for preserving lands still wild
 - a. 1 in particular - John Muir
 - 1) story of Muir
 - 2) audience read Muir quotes
 - b. Resulted in setting aside federal land for preserves and parks – National Parks and Forests
 - c. Never came to SNP, but without his voice we wouldn't be at this park tonight
- F. Where were most Parks in early 1900's? – out west
 - 1. people went, but difficult to get to
 - 2. push for eastern parks – committees formed, voices spoke up
 - 3. what was the result? – Shenandoah National Park
- G. SNP
 - 1. authorized in 1926
 - a. what was this place like? was it still wilderness?
 - b. No – several thousand people lived here
 - c. No bear, deer or wild turkey here, though native to these mountains
 - d. People moved up in 1800s as people moved west
 - e. People gave up their homes for this park, for this wilderness – its own fascinating story
 - 2. 1935 established as SNP, conserved for future generations
 - a. recreation and re-creation
 - b. was it wilderness? People had left....
 - c. First Superintendent of Shenandoah made difficult choice
 - 1) was told to protect some homes and structures
 - 2) said no, let nature return and reign
 - 3) still controversial

- d. voices for protected wild lands growing stronger still – change from 1600s!
 - H. in 1920's first federal land declared wilderness, Gila National Forest, promoted by forester Aldo Leopold – but what is wilderness?
 - 1. definitions debated, all the way to congress
 - 2. resulted in congressional act, mainly written by wilderness advocate Howard Zahnizer
 - I. The Wilderness Act – 1964
 - 1. Audience read quote
 - 2. This is designated wilderness
 - 3. protection beyond what park service or forest service can provide– must be managed with different focus, different goals
 - 4. we practice restraint as managers and individuals
 - 5. must be approved by congress
 - 6. started National Wilderness Preservation System
 - 7. places our society deemed especially valuable and worthy of protection
 - 8. did Shenandoah fit?
 - a. some said yes, some no
 - b. some strong voices said yes - Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Wilderness Society, Superintendent at time
 - c. congress said no
 - J. Eastern Wilderness Areas Act – 1975
 - 1. congress reinforced Wilderness Act definition of wilderness by restating that land did not have to be “pristine” but that imprint of man’s work had to be “substantially unnoticeable” and the area “primarily affected by the forces of nature”
 - 2. recognized importance of preserving representative parts of all ecosystems, especially near populated areas, as the ultimate land protection
 - 3. recognized importance of preserving cultural history
 - 4. audience read quote
 - 5. did Shenandoah fit? Yes
 - 6. 1976 approx. 80,000 acres designated wilderness, 40%
 - a. managed by park, but added protection of Wilderness Act
 - b. audience read Jacobson quote
 - c. a place our society has deemed especially valuable and worthy of protection, speaking up for and making sacrifices for
 - d. in only 40 years, this area changed from non-wilderness to wilderness, nature reclaiming the land, evidence of human expansion diminished
- IV. our role
 - A. 25 years have passed since wilderness established here, society continues to change
 - 1. who will be the strong voices now?
 - 2. you – please, all that are able stand up for a few minutes
 - B. why need to speak up for wilderness?

1. protected but not guaranteed as society's needs and demands continue to change and different priorities prevail
2. not much left to designate, especially with continuing pressures on natural lands
3. some places wild, but not protected
 - a. out of following 4 parks – which one has most wilderness?
 - 1) Shenandoah, Great Smokey Mountains, Yellowstone, Glacier
 - b. Answer - Shenandoah, rest have proposed, but not designated, why?
 - 1) political – needs strong voices and difficult choices
 - 2) Congress hasn't acted on it yet
 - 3) Have proposed wilderness areas, areas with pending wilderness designation
4. how much wilderness in USA?
 - a. all audience represents land mass of USA (approximately 4.6 billion acres)
 - b. sit down activity
 - 1) have all audience sit down (by clothes color or sitting location) until about 4% of audience is left standing – i.e. if 100 in audience, 4 left standing)
 - c. those still standing represent the amount of designated wilderness in USA – about 4 %
 - d. ½ of those standing sit down because 2% in AK – 50 million acres
 - e. ½ of those left standing sit down (or one person left sit down but hold up arms and legs), because less than 1% east of Mississippi
 - f. last person point to own big toe, because that small part, size of big toe, represents the amount of designated wilderness in Shenandoah compared to the entire United States
 - g. that's why Shenandoah's wilderness is as unique and valuable as your big toe
 - 1) analogy: you don't always see your big toe, but it's there; you don't always think about your big toe, but it's there for you when you need it; don't always take care of your big toe, but it sure helps you walk forward and balance
 - 2) the same is true for Shenandoah's wilderness: you don't always see the wilderness, but it's there; you don't always think about the wilderness, but it's there for you when you need it; you don't always take care of the wilderness, but it sure helps us move forward and to balance our society's conflicting desires
 - 3) like your big toe, Shenandoah's wilderness is part of a bigger system, the National Wilderness Preservation System, with designated wilderness in almost every state
 - 4) places of unique value with special protection
 - 5) not only places that preserve clean water, wildlife in natural habitat, endangered species, plants, but preserves an experience for us, even if we never go there physically
5. how can you play a part?

- a. think of your favorite wild place – is it designated wilderness? If not, should it be so? What will you do to keep your favorite wild place wild, as place and an experience
- b. even though I am no longer in Alaska, it is a wild place that will always be a part of me, and I a part of it
- c. now in SNP and now know Shenandoah has amazing wilderness, especially because it is in such a small park, 1 1/2 hours from DC, in a place millions of people visit every year
- d. my first summer here I went into Shenandoah’s wilderness and camped out overnight by myself – I saw no other people, I heard mostly wild animals with few planes, I felt powers beyond my own, I experienced unknown and fear (rattlesnakes and thunderstorms), I thought about how I fit in, what I get from wild places and what I can give to them
- e. thought maybe it is time for a new concept of wilderness - not think of wilderness as something separate from us, a boundary put around, but as a part of us, and us a part of wilderness, as home - a place to respect and take care of - as it was thousands of years ago, whether AK, SNP, or your own backyard
- f. all of our favorite wild places unique, yet Shenandoah’s wilderness is exceptionally unique – it reflects our society’s changing definitions of wilderness from a dismal hideous place to a place worthy of protecting, of making difficult choices for and speaking up strongly for
- g. 100 years ago, an advocate of preserving natural places and experiences, Henry David Thoreau, stated, “In wildness is the preservation of the world.”
- h. More recently, an advocate of wild lands in the southeastern US, Wendell Berry, wrote, “In civilization is the preservation of wilderness.”
- i. It is up to you
- j. As you leave, return to your home, walk on your big toe, think of the uniqueness of Shenandoah’s wilderness, think of the importance of your own favorite wild place, and keep in mind this final question in the words of poet Mary Oliver: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

Quotes used:

Wilderness is a damp and dreary place where all manner of wild beasts dash about uncooked!

-Anonymous

What could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men?

-William Bradford

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

-John Muir

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength.

-John Muir

Declares the "policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness. A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain... an area of Federal Land retaining its primitive character and influence, without permanent improvements..." with "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation."

-congress, Wilderness Act 1964

Areas shall be managed to promote and perpetuate the wilderness character of the land and its specific values of solitude, physical and mental challenge, scientific study, inspiration, and primitive recreation"

-congress, Eastern Wilderness Areas Act 1975

We recognized, through its relatively small size, its already established levels and patterns of visitor use,... that our wilderness area was not of the highest order...while our wilderness is not supreme, we will not allow its primeval character, and its opportunities for solitude, inspiration, and physical and mental challenges to decline. Furthermore, we will strive, and might be able, to improve its overall quality.

-Superintendent Jacobson, Shenandoah, 1976