

# The Tent Peg

Western Carolina University  
Parks and Recreation Management Program  
Spring 2014

## A note from the editors:

The classroom can only go so far in preparing us to enter the professional field; the rest comes from personal excursions, experiences, and studies. As we apply the skills we learn, we realize the importance of sharing our reflections, so we can learn from others as well as ourselves.

In this semester's tent peg, faculty and students have recounted personal stories and thought provoking insights and discussions about the past, present, and future.

The following pages are filled with memories and matters that we hold dear to our hearts, and that have served as a large impact in our lives. We as a department thank you for your support, and deeply appreciate the time you devote to the success of this program.

Sincerely,

Kayla Chipley and Michael Milideo

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## **Changes Are Coming To PRM**

Dr. Ben Tholkes

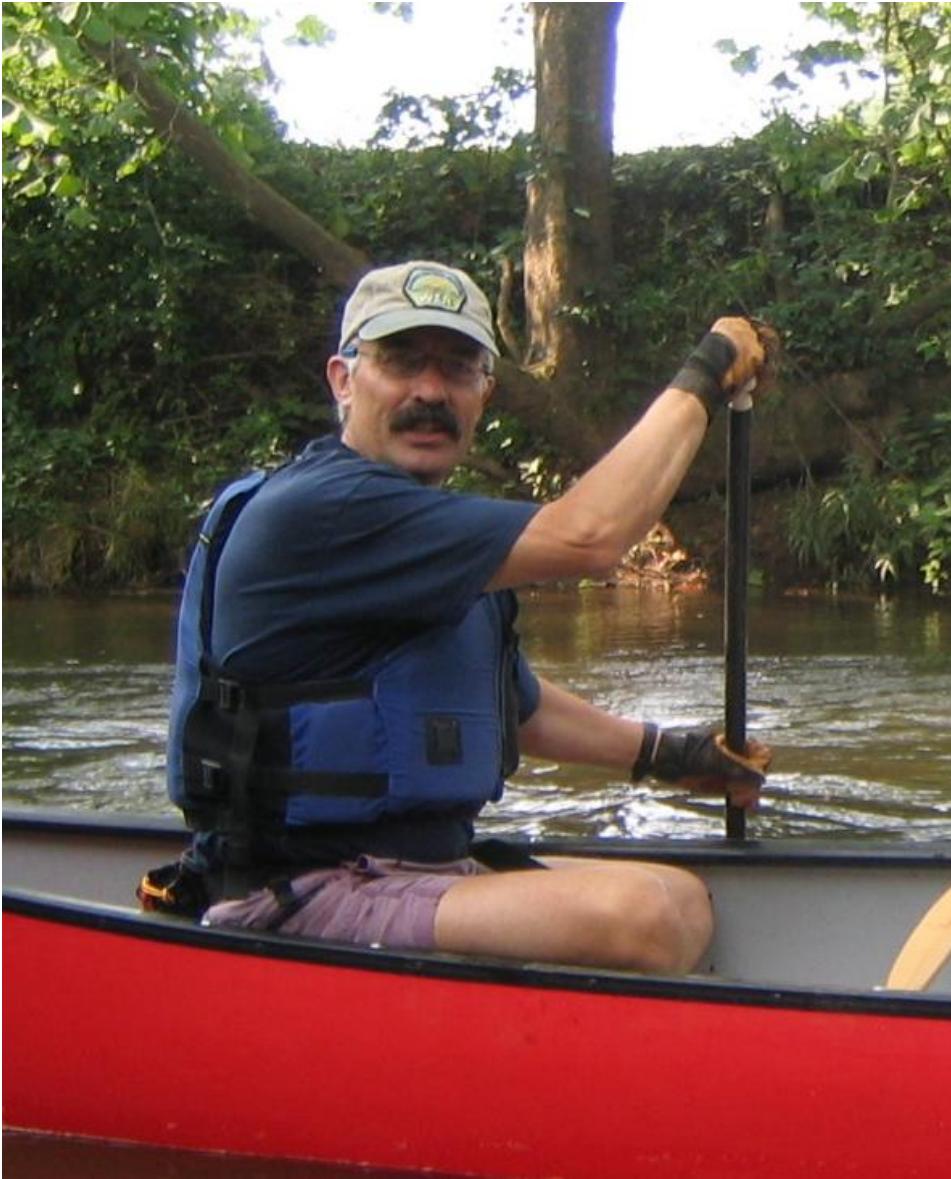
For 20 years, Maurice and I have worked together in the Parks and Recreation Management (PRM) program. When I came to Western Carolina University and the PRM program, our PRM offices were located in the basement of Graham Infirmary and most of our classes were taught in Breese Gym. We had a small equipment locker, and very little equipment to use for our classes. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Maurice, we have become a program to be proud of. I could use the rest of this article listing all of the accomplishments Maurice has achieved over the last 20 years. Actually, Maurice did a pretty good job of doing this when we were asking for permission to hire someone for his position. Looking at the list of Maurice's duties made me wonder how we could ever find someone to take on Maurice's position. You will notice that I never said we were looking for someone to replace Maurice, because no one will ever do that. You don't replace a colleague and a friend; you do the best you can to fill an open faculty position with someone who will keep the program moving forward. Officially, Maurice will be going on phased retirement so, he will still be teaching with us for the next three years during spring semesters.

We feel fortunate that we were able to find a new faculty member who will be able to step in and continue to make PRM an outstanding program. This fall, Dr. Andrew Bobilya will be joining our PRM faculty. Dr. Bobilya comes from an educational background very similar to Maurice and me. We all received Master's of Science Degrees from Mankato State University in Experiential Education, and we all studied under Dr. Leo McAvoy at the University of Minnesota. I am sure I speak for all of our students and friends of PRM by wishing Maurice well during his phased retirement, and welcoming Andrew to our PRM family.

Spring months symbolize change, in all aspects of our life. The world is greening itself up for summer, and the harsh mountain winter winds recede. For some students, the world of opportunity opens its door as they prepare for graduation, and for some faculty, their next step in life. We would like to dedicate this semester's Tent Peg to Dr. Maurice Phipps, who has impacted all of us in the program in some way, whether it be through his anecdotes or his many "Maurice Codes." We thank you for all your hard work and dedication you have shown us over the years.



**Thank you Maurice!**



## **Parks and Recreation Management: Building Professionals**

Jordan Davis

The Parks and Recreation Management program at Western Carolina has become one of the most successful programs at the university for many reasons, but for one in particular; it actually prepares and places its students into a successful, professional work environment. From internships, to experiential learning, to multi-day trips, the PRM program gives us experience and opportunities to comfortably walk into a job after and even during school.

As a requirement for the program each student must complete three, 50-hour internships and one 400 hour capstone internship in the field that is evaluated and obtain a written letter of recommendation to be used for future jobs. Along with recommendations, students will be able to have work experience which is now almost a requirement for applying for jobs, as well as an increased skill set.

All of the courses in the program are primarily built around the experiential learning model, which puts students into an environment where they are applying current and newly learned lessons. For example, students are taught to roll white water kayaks in a pool, and then taken out to local lakes and rivers where they will have the opportunity to practice and hone their skills. Also, for the administration of outdoor pursuits course students are taught group dynamics, leadership styles and trip preparation; this is then followed up with a 4 day backpacking trip where students will take turns solving conflict, practicing and analyzing leadership styles, and working through the dynamics of the group. Another opportunity offered is the Outdoor Emergency Care class that certifies students in emergency first aid and CPR from the

National Ski Patrol. After the completion of the course, the following spring semester, students have the opportunity to work at Sapphire Valley Ski Area as a ski patrol candidate where they can be trained in sled work and hands on patient care.

These are only a few examples of what the PRM professors are doing to more than adequately prepare their students to proudly walk into professional careers as Parks and Recreation Managers.

## **Bye Buddy, Hope You Find Your Dad!**

Madison Crawley

College can be a fun time in a young person's life. Many who go to college use this time to party, do crazy things, experience new things, find life long friends, seek academic success, and network. The list goes on and on. Overall, college is a very enjoyable experience for most of its participants. There are, however, some struggles that college students face. Most of these struggles, from my own personal experience, have come during my final year. I have tried to find a quote that best summarizes my thoughts about ending my college life, and finding a full-time career. Mr. Narwhal, from the movie "Elf", gets it just right when he says, "Bye Buddy, hope you find your dad!"

Western Carolina University is focused on quality education and preparation for responsible citizenship in a changing world. This mission is very similar to that of the movie "Elf". Buddy the Elf was trained to be an elf. He was equipped under a mission similar to Western's. He felt so connected to his North Pole community, but he became bigger than his current environment. He needed to branch out and go to New York to seek out his real father. During his time at the North Pole and through experiences in New York, he experienced plenty of struggles such as: his

father being on the naughty list, not understanding the unspoken rules of the women's restrooms, mistaking the world's best coffee with the worst coffee, getting stuck in revolving doors, and shoving all the cookies into the VCR. Buddy the Elf can easily be compared to a college senior.

As a senior, I am very aware that my time at Western is coming to a close. Most of my days are full of reminiscing, job searching, pondering graduation, and what I have learned here. I often feel like the big fish in a pond full of little fish, that prefers to hang out with the rest of the little fish. There is a lot of stress being a senior and it would all seem too overwhelming if it were not for my friends, professors, peers, organizations and if my major had not equipped me to face many life challenges. During my college experience, I have advanced my character, knowledge, education, skills and experience. I have gained all of this not only through personal friendships and mentors, but also through the Parks and Recreation Management program.

My time as a parks and recreation major has consisted of hands-on, experiential learning, similar to Buddy's toy making classes. I have been given the opportunity to expand my knowledge in areas such as certifications, team building, communication, organization, program planning, professionalism, marketing, leadership, management, and so much more. I have been advised and mentored by my professors, just like Buddy's relationship with Santa. Because of all this encouragement, and mentorship, I can engage in a life after college and successfully demonstrate Western's mission. As I am being sent off into a life that will require me to apply my knowledge gained in college, I can look back at WCU, see them

lovingly waving goodbye and wave back and go "find my dad".

## Close Calls at Paradise Falls

Aaron Caldwell

Around spring time last year, a group of friends and I decided to take a little day trip to Paradise Falls. We packed water and food, piled in the car, and headed on out. We arrived to the turnoff where you begin your hike down to the falls, gathered our things and began our descent. While we were walking down the mountainside, my good friend Tanner started telling us about this little overhang under the falls that he and a friend had found one time. We all agreed that we wanted to see it once we got to the falls.

After arriving, we unpacked our gear and sat at the top of the falls and enjoyed the gorgeous weather we were having. Bright and sunny, at least 70 degrees and the water was nice and warm. It was literally a perfect day to be out enjoying the falls. After relaxing for a little while and finishing up our lunches, we decided to follow my friend Tanner down to see this overhang. We headed down the left side of the falls where there's a path that leads you to two different areas: one being a slippery, angled rock-face that does, indeed, lead to a small overhang under the falls, and two, down to the bottom of the falls where there's a nice natural pool. We decided on the first of the two options so that we could watch the water flowing over us.

Currently I have several first aid/rescue/outdoor certifications that came in handy on this hike. My friend Tanner was shuffling across the rock-face and he lost his footing. Luckily, I had tied myself into a big friendly tree so that if I did happen to slip, I wasn't going anywhere too far. This was not

the same for my friend Tanner. I remember the moment right before he slipped. He was sitting, feet first, on the rock-face looking down into the natural pool. I told him, "Tanner, please come tie into the rope", to which he responded, "No, it's okay. I'll be fine". So I pleaded, "Tanner, one person dies every year at Western on a waterfall. I don't want you to be part of a statistic"...and there he went.

He slid down initially about 20 feet and smacked his whole body against another rock, then fell out of sight. The first thing that popped into my head was, "I just watched my friend die". It was one of the most violent collisions I had ever seen. So I immediately sprung into action and began rappelling down the rock-face to find my friend. He was sitting in a little nest of rocks staring down at the pool. I managed to get down to him and make sure everything was all right. He didn't appear to have a concussion or any broken bones or anything. So I told him in order to get down from here, we were going to have to jump down into the pool and swim to the side and then walk our way back up. He agreed and we both jumped in.

Now things get even worse. Not only is my friend shaken up, bruised, and possibly concussive from this event, but I also came to learn that he could not swim. Not because he told me he couldn't, but because I had to pull his head out from under the water. Not only that, but he was the one that jumped into the natural pool first. Luckily I'm a pretty strong swimmer, so I jumped in after him and pulled him up and brought him over to the side. I had to pull him out of the water and just let him relax for a moment. We both laid on the rock absorbing the warm sun and cleared our heads for a little bit. We sat in silence for about 5 minutes until my friend Tanner finally said to me, "Well that was close".

We both just laid there and laughed for a little bit, and then began our walk back up to the top of the falls to enjoy the rest of our day.

## **Being Fit and the Outdoor Experience**

Lance Flowers

When I came to Western Carolina University in the Fall of 2010, I didn't know what I wanted as a major. I entered the Parks and Recreation Management program because I love being active and want to take advantage of the outdoor recreation opportunities that are available at WCU. I have always been interested in fitness and, once I entered the Parks and Recreation Management program, I quickly realized how being fit is directly related to the outdoor experience. Western Carolina University is geographically located in a terrific area of the country for outdoor activities such as kayaking, skiing, hiking and white water rafting. To do these activities the participants would have to be in somewhat good shape.

Hiking is a popular outdoor activity here at WCU. A friend and I were hiking a local trail and my friend had to stop every hundred yards. I thought this was due to the "Energy Mile". The energy mile is a theory that says hiking one mile and increasing elevation by 1000 feet would be the equivalent of three energy miles. My friend was gasping for air because he wasn't used to the steep trails we were on, so we had to turn back and attempt an easier trail. If a person is out of shape, they will be limited to the types of outdoor activities in which they will be able to participate. It can be argued that you don't have to be physically fit to recreate. This is true; there are different types of recreation activities that can be done outdoors that don't require a

person to be physically fit. Some take offence if they are questioned about their fitness level, but in the recreation field it is a necessity.

I was teaching a wellness program for the YMCA and I was teaching the students the importance of stretching before hiking and its purpose. One student said, “we’re just walking, why do we need to stretch” my response was “It’s not just walking, you’re climbing up in elevation and there is a potential to strain a muscle in the leg”. I feel that the number of people who are ignorant of the importance of proper fitness levels is staggering. You can also use the outdoors as a place to increase your fitness level.

### NPS

Jarred Burcham

The National Park Service (NPS) is a great place to work and/or volunteer. Whether a person is a full time green and grey employee of the park, or a part time volunteer, everyone is treated the same and with the utmost respect. If being outdoors in some of the most beautiful areas of the country were the kind of thing you like to do, I would strongly recommend trying to get on with this organization any way you can.

However, I did learn early on that it is not all outdoors work. I have recently started to volunteer at The Great Smoky Mountain National Park, and most of it so far has been visitor center work and meetings. Nevertheless, all this grunt work has led to an internship with them this summer where I will be leading hikes and programs in the park.

Even just working at the visitor center has been satisfying for me. One of the best ways to learn is to teach others; while working with the public I am constantly

teaching them about the different aspects of the park, in turn constantly learning more about it. That is one reason I do not mind doing this work because, in the long run I know it will give me more knowledge for doing the outdoor stuff, and it is giving me needed experience to possibly further my career in the NPS.

Anytime someone is new at a place of employment there is a “hazing” period that one will probably be doing work he or she most likely doesn’t like doing. The key to moving up is doing these jobs with a smile on your face, and sometimes asking for more. Then you never know, if you show enough tenacity and ambition, it could ultimately lead to your dream job.

### Let it Snow

Kayla Chipley

Living in western North Carolina opens up a whole field of recreation opportunities throughout the year. In the warm months, there’s rafting, kayaking, fishing, hiking, camping, and things galore; but, in the winter we have snow sports. Before this year, I had never been really involved with snow sports, simply because of the expense and the fact that none of my friends were interested. This season, I was lucky enough to be offered jobs at two ski areas, opening up the opportunity to learn about playing in snow.

Having completed my Outdoor Emergency Care certification course through the National Ski Patrol, the next step was to get a job putting it into use. This year, four students from the Parks and Recreation Management program were selected to serve as ski patrol candidates at Sapphire Valley Ski Area, and work more in depth on our skills. We mainly worked on our skiing ability, but we also worked with injured

patients on and off the slopes, as well as doing scenarios like chair lift evacuation and sled work.

My participation in this candidate program greatly helped me to feel more prepared for next season, and it also instilled a love for skiing. I feel like if more Outdoor Emergency Care students were offered this candidate position, they would be more likely to keep volunteering their time as Ski Patrol for more seasons to come.



### Alternate Spring Break

Michael Milideo

I was given an excellent opportunity to go on an Alternative Spring Break trip with Western Carolina University in 2012. The trip included students and staff from the Nutrition, and Recreational Therapy departments. The original objective as explained by one of the trip leaders was to go to the rural town of Rabinal, Guatemala, and educate the school children on nutrition, as well as provide family with more information for their children and family members that may have disabilities. We would also be spending some of our time

working in a half clinic, half nunnery, giving them assistance with whatever they needed.

I had always been a fan of traveling, but did not know about the trip at all, and once told, did not think that I would be able to go since I was a Park and Recreation major. The trip leader came into class and said they needed one or two more people to go on the trip, so I decided to jump in. I informed them of my profound lack in both nutritional and recreational therapy material; but they were happy to have me, and said they would surely find a way to put me to work.

After doing a few fundraisers, and packing parties, we (9 students, 3 chaperones) headed down to Atlanta, to begin our trip to Guatemala. After landing, we met our translator/guide Miguel, hopped on our chartered bus, and made our way through the twisty, narrow, country roads of Guatemala for three and a half hours to Rabinal, only having one narrow miss with a truck. More than a few of the group were overly joyed to get off the bus.

Once we settled in to our hotel (a walled in villa style building with some cows out back, and a roof acting as a tetanus factor), we sat down for a home cooked dinner. This is where Miguel told us that we would not be going to the schools – since they had closed for Easter. Instead we would go to the clinic in town where, as it turns out, the locals were already expecting us to be. The radio station had been broadcasting about us during the week before our arrival.

The next morning we met the nuns at the clinic, and their wards. Not only were they a state sponsored clinic, but they were also an orphanage, and nursed malnourished children back to health. It wasn't soon after that, towns people began to show up, seeking help and more knowledge for their

families and loved one. I was feeling a bit out of place since I could do little to help, but there were so many people that we had to set up a bit of a “waiting room”. So I was thrown in there with a handful of crayons, a coloring book, some bouncy balls, and puzzles.

I had never thought of myself as a kid person, at all. But, spending every morning, and afternoon running around like a maniac with children, while trying to understand more than three words between us, I was beginning to have fun. In the late afternoons, we were given the opportunity to go to local shops, and visit local artisans, as well as a trip to the remains of an ancient Mayan temple.

The food was all local and great; the nuns prepared breakfast, and cooked lunch for us every day. Despite that, we did have a few members of the group fall victim to bacteria. After a trip full of surprises, we get to the airport to find out that they can't fly us home due to some trouble in Dallas. We decided that, as long as we get back into the United States, we could all find our own flights back, the best way that they could fit us.

My week spent in Rabinal, working with the nuns, and playing with the children, was one of the happiest weeks of my life.

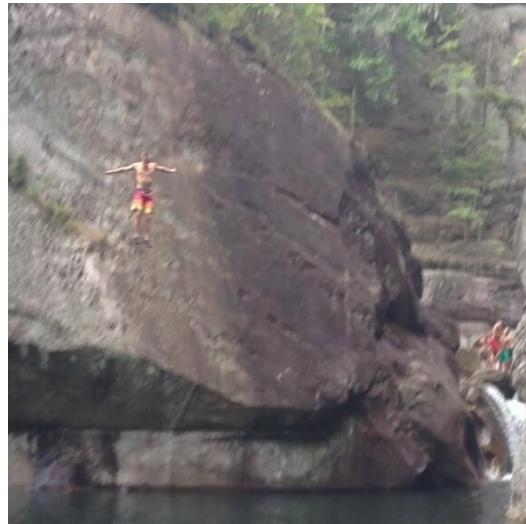
### **Paradise Falls**

Tanner Deninger

I found out about Paradise Falls through Base Camp Cullowhee. Base Camp Cullowhee is located in the Brown building right off central drive on Western Carolina's campus. If you're looking for an outdoor adventure, they'll have plenty of pamphlets and information readily available at the front desk, anything from hiking to skiing, you

name it! They have the info, from maps to bike and kayak rentals. Base Camp will do anything in their power to help get you started on your new adventure at Western Carolina University.

If you're a student at Western Carolina University who loves to hike and explore the outdoors, this is the place for you. Western is a school surrounded by many adventurous outdoor activities. One I would personally recommend you to check out is Paradise Falls. This is not your ordinary hike through the woods, this is a hike that is somewhat challenging but yet very rewarding. At the end of your hike you reach a waterfall that fills a crystal clear swimming hole. For those of you who love a good adrenaline rush, you may dare to climb to the top and take a leap of faith into the refreshing mountain water. Although it is not advised you do this, you may use quality judgment and check the waters depth before hand, as the level of water does change day to day. I went to Paradise Falls for the first time last September. It's a great weekend trip on a hot sunny day. Be sure to check out waterfall safety awareness before you enjoy your adventure, and I hope you all enjoy the falls just as much as I did!



## Trees

Emily Luebs

*I was canoeing on Santeetlah Lake with friends one autumn day when we suddenly heard a loud earth trembling boom. It was frightening. We stopped our conversation, searched the banks for an answer and puzzlingly began staring at one another. Here we were in the middle of a placid lake, paddling around without any other people in sight. There was no immediate explanation of what it could have been. Certainly not the backfire of an old truck, and we knew nothing of any rock quarries close by. When no conclusion could be figured, we continued our paddling, but more quietly than before. Then the boom again and the earth shook violently. Instead of looking around to the shore or at one another, we all looked up to the sky as if we were waiting for smoke to rise or to see bombs falling. Still nothing. Our fear rose and we decided we should paddle back. The boom went off 5 more times before we could reach the truck. Vibrating our kneecaps as we stood on the ground, it was sincerely unlike anything I had experienced before. We decided to go ask the rangers a few miles away at Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest of what was disturbing our tranquil day on the lake. When we pulled into the entrance there was a woman in her U.S. Forest Service uniform waiting to stop any potential visitors to the forest. We parked, climbed out of the truck and she told our fearful faces "The forest is closed because we are dynamiting dead hemlock trees today."*

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is one of the last remaining eastern old growth forests and is located close to Robbinsville, NC within the Nantahala National Forest district. Unlike almost the entirety of the surrounding forests, the land was spared from any form of logging because of its true uniqueness and the drastic drop of lumber prices in 1929. The land was later bought in 1936 by the U.S Forest Service for the lofty

sum of \$29 an acre, while most land at the time was going for \$3-4 an acre.

To continue the preservation of the land, in 1975 the land was designated as a wilderness area. In such a place motorized or mechanical vehicles and equipment are prohibited. There are few roads, the trail blazes and signs are minimal in an attempt to preserve the natural integrity. Everything remains as it was and as it should. This explains the unusual measure by which the dead Hemlocks were being destroyed that day. With the disallowance of chainsaws, a natural "windblown" effect via explosion was decided upon for the dead hemlocks that threatened the safety of the many visitors Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest has.

Land and wilderness areas such as Joyce Kilmer are of extreme importance to people. It is a living, breathing, ever growing museum. Many of the trees are hundreds of years old, sometimes 20 feet in diameter and of all kinds of variety. The hemlocks are regarded as some of the oldest trees and are losing a battle against the Wooly Adelgid, similar to how the Chestnuts were killed off by a blight. As scientists try to fight the invasive woolly adelgid with various treatments and predatory beetles, very few can be saved. The trees existence suddenly went from one of the most abundant in the forest to be incredibly endangered.

*The same group of canoeists and myself returned to Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest weeks later with an inquisition of what the dynamite did to the trees that at one point held the roof to a place I considered my church. Quietly we travelled through the woods and tried to withhold emotions at the fallen splintered giants lain across the trail. What once was a shaded path through the forest was now*

*bathed in sunlight. About 428 trees were blown up because of how they threatened the visitors that now can only look up at large poplars, oaks, and locusts. I left that day wondering what this will mean for the rest of the forest. How will the forest manage this? I am grateful that I was able to gaze up at the magnificent trees while living, standing and growing at one point. I could not help but be overcome with the stark detail that my generation's children may never be able to stare up at something as beautiful as a virgin hemlock tree.*

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is named in honor of Alfred Joyce Kilmer who was born December 6, 1886 in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Kilmer was an accomplished American journalist, poet, soldier, husband and father. He attended Rutgers University and Columbia (B.A., 1908). Although, he was well educated, an already accomplished poet and family man he enlisted in the World War I. He was a part of the 69<sup>th</sup> regiment and a movie was created featuring his character. He was killed in action July 30, 1918 by a sniper and his body now rests in Oise-Aisne Cemetery, Fere-en-Tardenois, France.

As Kilmer left the earth too soon, so have begun the Hemlocks, however, not without providing endless importance. They each have lost a battle started by another man and there is a clear parallel between the greatness and unfortunate early loss of both.

#### Trees

I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.  
  
A tree whose hungry mouth is priest  
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;  
  
A tree that looks at God all day,

And lifts her leafy arms to pray;  
A tree that may in summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;  
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.  
Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.

- Joyce Kilmer  
1913



#### No Statues in the Park!

Jennifer Stogner-Lee

Should parks be natural places that are completely free of human creations, such as statues? During a layover in San Francisco, I took a tour on which I learned about one park that was the battleground of nature versus man for decades. My plan was to see all of the major highlights of the area in just 24 hours, so I took a "Hop On, Hop Off" open air, double-decker bus tour. Golden Gate Park was on the route, and the bus driver shared the story of John McLaren, the long-time superintendent of the expansive park. McLaren wanted the park to be available for anyone to enjoy lounging on

the grass and playing in nature, without signs or barriers.

McLaren loved natural places and absolutely despised statues. The tour guide summed up McLaren's philosophy with the words, "nature is soft and giving, whereas statues are cold and hard; therefore statues have no place in nature." Whenever the city refused to honor his objections to a new statue, he would simply plant an attractive hedge circle around the statue. Eventually, the shrubbery would grow tall and dense, completely obscuring the work of art. He would then add more shrubs and vines in additional circles around the original ring of hedges. Some of his hidden statues and plaques have likely never been found. They continue to be discovered to this day.

He defended the park's natural beauty in many other ways, as well. He believed that a park should be a place where visitors feel free to walk or lounge on the grass, and refused to allow signs to be posted to the contrary. He objected to a streetcar line, which the city was planning to allow to cut through the park, complaining, "You'll ruin the trees!" Since the area in question was actually a clear, unobstructed path, McLaren had some work to do. He had rhododendrons planted all over the area throughout the night in order to foil the engineers when they arrived to inspect the grounds the following morning (American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration).

He refused to quit his job when it was time to retire, forcing the city to change their retirement policy just for him. He stayed on the job until his death at the age of 96. Ironically, a memorial statue was placed in the park in his honor; something he surely would have hated. It is the only statue in the park that has not been placed on a pedestal, because it seemed appropriate to have his likeness' feet in touch with the earth.

## The Pursuit of Inspiration

Emily Shapiro

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that one "can never execute anything higher than the heart can inspire." We hear it all the time. That word which seems to hold so much weight and drips with the rich overlaying importance of some significant purpose. We are simply drawn to it. If a film is "inspired by true events" we are much quicker to want to see it, or in a relationship of any sorts, we are always far more likely to remember and even idolize those who have "inspired us." It is a word that we throw around in many scenarios in attempts of trying to shine a light on something that has been awakened within our deepest core and yet, it is a word that we know so little about. The idea of inspiration is much like an onlooker of a famous celebrity. We can feel so strongly towards it, know its different habits and even have a specific emotion or feeling attached to it; however, we may not know it as intimately as we think, if even at all. So then the pertinent question would seem to be what is inspiration? How do we find it, or more importantly, is it something to be found? Is it, perhaps, something that once was but has now been lost?

What makes inspiration so beautiful and yet so difficult to explain or examine is its specificity to the person in which it reaches. Inspiration is by no means a "one size fits all" subject. Some may find it in the words of a loved one, where others may find it in the solitude of the outdoors. Wherever it is the importance is that it is there, eagerly waiting to be found. As a college student I am told multiple times a day of the many things that I should pursue. Whether it be my teachers helping me to pursue a career,

my friends excitedly wanting me to pursue a soul mate or my parents eagerly requesting I pursue anything that will get me off of their payroll, we live our daily lives in constant pursuit. I have seen many college students pursue many promises of inspiration that have left them empty. Whether it is a major that only led to a job they hate or a relationship that only left them more damaged than before, we chase after desires that we think may inspire only to be left more uninspired than we once were. So then what is the point? Why go after something that only turns up to be a chasing after the wind? The question that drives me to this point is the idea of our personal pursuit of inspiration.

Living in this day and age I have watched as our society has become more and more plugged in and yet incredibly tuned out. We walk around with our iPod's in our ears, our laptops turned on and our phones in constant reach. Though the idea behind these devices was once for us to be more connected, it seems that all they really do is disconnect us from the things that truly matter; the things that inspire. We are also consistently told what exactly we should go after so, we chase it thinking it will be the source of our inspiration. However, I believe that this is the very death of inspiration itself. Inspiration cannot be taught. It cannot be told or plotted out, it can, however, be pursued. It is in everything we do, we need only to take off the blinders that the world has put on us, and begin to once again see it as it was intended to be seen. We must see it for ourselves and ourselves alone. We must fight to awaken the inspiration that rests quietly within our souls.

Though I believe many people live happy lives, I also believe that people are

feeling less and less inspired by the lives that they and others live. It is easy enough to look at the lives of the great Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King Jr. and feel the inspiration, but what about the look of our own lives? Though these people were more than extraordinary, I believe that living an inspired life can be done in an everyday fashion. There is a certain amount of courage that comes with the pursuit of inspiration. To find what inspires you means having the courage to admit what does not. For the first four years of my college career I was a premed student. I went into the major truly thinking that this was the best path for me. After the first two years I began to feel the decline of passion I became less and less inspired by what I was doing yet stayed in the major out of the fear of pursuing anything different. After spending the summer working at camp, I found my heart filled in ways I didn't know possible. I then returned to school knowing what I had to do. I had to fight for inspiration. I had to walk away from what I may have known and the ideas of a life I thought I needed. I had to have the courage to pursue a life of inspiration.

Don't get me wrong, I do not believe that you will live every second of everyday feeling awe inspired. This would only make the moments of inspiration less significant. I do believe, however, that many people can so easily be stuck in a routine of life that no longer awakens inspiration within them. I believe that deep down every human being has a want for adventure, freedom and a desire to feel that what they do has a purpose. I believe that engaging this feeling means going after the very things that leave you feeling inspired. It can be something as insignificant as kayaking down a river or something as grand as opening an

orphanage, whatever it is, the importance is that one has the courage to allow it to be awakened. Inspiration is like a tiny rock that is thrown into a river, though the ripples may start off small, they will soon grow. This is what we must get back to as human beings. We have to start casting rocks of inspiration in order to make a large splash on the world as it is. We can no longer settle for the systematic ways of life, but must chase after the things that bring us back into our deepest depths. Since the beginning of time man has had the right to the pursuit of happiness. Let us now fight for and reclaim the right for the pursuit of inspiration!

### **Backpacking/Hiking/Camping**

Dalton Payne

Near the campus of WCU, there are many great places to go hiking, camping and backpacking. Backpacking is a mixture of both hiking and camping for several days. One of the newest and closest hiking trails is the WCU Trail System. There are several different loops and branches on the trail and at the trailhead there is a map showing each route and the mileage. There are signs at each trailhead with the same information on them. Hikers and Bikers can also view the map online at the Basecamp Cullowhee website. The trail is also used for mountain biking, so hikers should always use caution and be aware of bikers. The WCU trail has a big variety of several different hill climbs within it and a hiker can make there hike either strenuous or easy depending on the route they choose.

There are a variety of great places to camp in the WCU area. Many WCU students visit Panthertown Valley to camp, hike or backpack. Panthertown is actually 40 minutes away from campus. It has a wide variety of trails and campsites and maps for this area can be bought from the bookstore

on campus or from Black Rock Outdoor Company located in downtown Sylva.

Standing on the top of Black Rock Mountain, on a beautiful evening, it's easy to see why people fall in love with this location. With beauty, comes danger and that is something people should be aware of. Panthertown has many steep cliffs and gorges that people should be aware of. It is also a bear sanctuary and in the past few years the bear activity has increased and there have been many more bear sightings. It is important to know the procedures while backpacking in bear country. Know not to cook near the camping area and how to correctly hang a bear bag. If one does have an encounter with a bear they should not try to get close to it and if the bear charges then one should hold their ground and try not to run. The most dangerous situation with a bear is when a bear is surprised. It is always good to make noise while hiking on the trail or hike with a group of 3 or more people.

Another factor to take into consideration while in Panthertown Valley is snakes. Rattlesnakes are local to Panthertown so one should always be cautious and try not to stray from the trail or footpaths. It is also reasonable to wear high top hiking boots while hiking and camping in Panthertown. This is a great outdoor activity, especially for this area and it can help students become more involved with their surroundings. Basecamp does many hiking/backpacking trips and information about basecamp Cullowhee can be found on WCU's website.



## Sled Dogs

Kimberly Trapp

One of the earliest forms of transportation in North America was dog sleds. In fact, there were references of Native Americans using dogs in harnesses long before Europeans came to this country. Breeds used by inland cultures such as the Athabascan Indians were the ancestors to the Alaskan Husky (which is smaller and sleeker than the traditional Siberian Husky). After the European contact, dog sledding dropped off. However, the Alaskan Gold Rush brought it roaring back into style. Many of the gold mines were only accessible via dogsled in the winter. Any supplies, mail, doctors, prospectors, or commerce was moved by sled. This led to the nicknaming of the late 1800s and early 1900s as the “Era of the Sled Dog.”

During this time, Malamutes were the most common dogs as they were heavy, strong, and had tough feet. They weren’t particularly fast, but they were phenomenal pullers. Teams generally ranged from eight to ten dogs, hauling between 500 and 700 pounds per sled. Towards the middle of the 1900s, airplanes had replaced dog sleds for mail delivery; however, dogsleds were still being used to patrol the western border of Alaska during World War 2. Recreational mushing rose up to maintain the tradition of driving dogs.

Due to this change, large load – pulling dogs gave way to lighter breeds with higher speed and endurance for racing. Americans began importing Siberian huskies to crossbreed with their dogs for increasing speed. The average weight for a modern sled dog is around 55 pounds and they have adapted to have tough webbed feet that act as snowshoes. Racers look for dogs with efficient gaits, and try to match their entire teams based on size and gait. Picky eaters

are generally discarded (sled dogs are traditionally fed high-fat diets, mainly consisting of salmon or blubbery sea mammals), as are aggressive dogs.

Most sled dogs now are mutts, but come from a few traditional breeds: the Alaskan Husky, which is the most commonly used breed in sled racing; the Alaskan Malamute, which was used mainly for freight and are thought to be one of the first domesticated breeds of dogs; the Canadian Eskimo Dog, which was developed by the Canadian government and was used as a hunting dog; the Chinook, a blending of several large breeds that is the state dog of New Hampshire; the Greenland Dog, a heavy breed with high endurance and little speed (many hunters in Greenland still use them as the primary source of transportation); the Samoyed, developed in Siberia where they were also used to herd reindeer and hunt; and the Siberian Husky, who are as strong as Malamutes but lack the same stamina. Several other breeds have been used, but these are the traditional ones.

Today, there are a surprising amount of races and associations and supporters determined to keep the sport alive. The ISDRA (International Sled Dog racing Association) has information on their website about upcoming events, getting started, and the basics about sled dogs.



## Cataloochee: More Than a Valley.

Drew Smith

It's mid-winter and the snow is falling ever so nicely on the ground and trees. As the world around you starts to get white, there are dreams of getting out and thoroughly enjoying the bountiful snow and all its glory. Layers that consist of thermals, mid-layers, heavy outerwear, and last but not least, gloves and a warm cap to tackle the brutal cold. Grab snacks and gas on the way out to Cataloochee Ski Area in Maggie Valley, North Carolina.

The ski resort is located just off Highway 74 and a few miles up through Maggie Valley. As you pass through the main gate, there is a sign posted: "Watch for livestock at large," which is a nice indicator as to the amount of nostalgia that is about to wash over you. At the end of the gravel dirt road are the parking lots and ski lodge. Run through to get your lift ticket, boots, and board, or skis if you prefer. Pass under the deck and out to the bottom of the slopes only to be bombarded with which lift to ride and what run to take on the way back down.

Strap in and hit the lifts! The ride up carries one of the most beautiful views on a clear day that opens up the entire valley on the back side of Cataloochee. Riding and bouncing only to get to the top and barely manage to make it off the lift without crashing out of the gate. Move over to the side of trail and get ready for the first run of the day. Take a good deep breath and push off. The speed begins to pick up as the wind somehow makes it into the only uncovered part of your face. You don't mind at all because it makes you feel alive and somewhat a little bit freer from the world. Carving it down and trying to navigate, not

only around natural obstacles, but the loads of people that are accompanying you on such a gorgeous day. As you round that last curve, the bottom of the mountain comes into view and you start to slow down to prepare for the masses. The first run is great, but they only get better after that. At the end of the day, getting out on the snow is the perfect cure for the cold winter blues.



## Snorkeling in St. John

Megan Luke

Two years ago in December I made a trip to St. Thomas that I will never forget. When I was on St. Thomas I came across a catamaran and was asked to go on a ride. While usually one would keep walking thinking it is just a tourist attraction, I gave the man some money and jumped on board.

As we were leaving the bay it was such an experience to see all the locals that lived on their boats and watching other "tours" go out. I noticed the farther off of St. Thomas we kept going the more beautiful it became. Finally we got to the point of the island, there Michal Jordan was building his new house and then it was pure nature at its finest. The farther we went the bigger the other islands around were becoming. The staff on the boat tells us that the smell we are smelling is Tortola's mushroom tea brewing for their full moon mushroom tea parties.

About forty-five minutes later, we are right off the small island of St. Johns. The crew starts to hand out snorkeling gear, which I was not expecting! I get in the water and it is wonderful and warm, the next thing I know I am snorkeling in towards the island passing all the sea turtles, urchins, tropical fish, star fish, and sea horses, in the most beautiful clear waters of the Caribbean. The staff would come by and point out creatures and features of the surrounding areas to the snorkelers helping them along the way. There weren't very many people though, just enough to not interrupt the true beauty at hand. We ended up snorkeling for about four hours all around St. John and taking breaks to explore the jugged areas right off the water on the island. On the way back to the catamaran I saw the biggest sea turtle I had seen yet, about four foot in diameter.

Once back on the boat the staff began to give out rum, rum being one of the biggest exports in these islands. It was then that I noticed that I had not just walked up on some locals trying to get some money but instead I got to explore the beauty of the nature in the island on a license snorkeling, rum running catamaran and I will never forget that experience.



## Duck, Dodge, and Dive

Maggie Lee

Last fall I organized a dodgeball tournament at the Cashiers/Glenville Recreation Center as part of a mini internship. There was a lot of planning that went into coordinating this event. I created a survey for members of the recreation center to complete that asked what kind of tournament they would be most interested in participating in. Dodgeball won so I decided to have adult and youth coed leagues.

There were six teams in each league and each team had to have at least 5 players and at least one female. Each team paid a registration fee of twenty-five dollars, which went toward the purchase of dodgeballs and t-shirts that would be given out as prizes. There was a prize for first place for both youth and adult as well as a best-dressed award. We encouraged the participants to dress as crazy as they wanted because we wanted this to be a fun event for everyone involved.

The tournament was held in a double elimination style in the gym located in the facility and was open to the public, not just members of the facility. The gym has a curtain that separates the court into two sides so we were able to have youth on one side and the adult league on the other. We had two people act as officials, myself included, to referee the tournament. The tournament was very successful, the money we received from the registration paid for the dodgeballs and t-shirts with a little left over. Everyone who participated had a lot of fun and I really enjoyed planning the event.



## **PRM Students Present at Undergraduate Research Expo**

Debby Singleton

Each year, PRM students participate in the Undergraduate Research Expo. The expo is sponsored by the Honors College and includes a two-day, campus wide event which features research presentations, creative works, projects, and service of undergraduates from a wide array of majors. This year's Expo was held March 24-25, 2014 with PRM students presenting research, program plans and business plans to Dr. Ben Tholkes' PRM 250 class.

Madison Crawley presented her business plan from PRM 430 entitled, "Red Barn Events", a special events venue utilizing her family's farm property and a red barn which they used for her own wedding in October 2013. Since the creation of her business plan, her family has hosted one other wedding on the property. Her dream job is to be a special event planner, Red Barn Events, could be the start of that career.

Kayla Chipley, Madison Crawley and Danielle Russell presented "What Outdoor Recreation Employees Are Looking For" a research project completed in Dr. Ben Tholkes' PRM 433 course. The project

included creating an outdoor instructor job description and three gender-neutral resumes with varied education and work experiences. Each resume featured a different style and format. The job description and resumes were then sent to outdoor professionals in the industry to review, complete a survey and offer feedback. Their findings showed that education and work experience were equally important and a resume that highlighted the skills and experiences in a bullet point format were most desired.

Jordan Davis, Michael Milideo and Lance Flowers presented "WCU Trail System Survey", a research project focused on gathering user data for the new WCU Trail System, which opened in the spring of 2013. This project was also part of Dr. Ben Tholkes' PRM 433 course. The students created a survey, which was handed out in classes to students who had used the trail system and they stationed themselves at trailhead locations to gather data directly from users. Their findings showed that the majority of users were there to hike and bike and felt the trails were moderately hard. There were a variety of majors represented in the survey with PRM and Recreational Therapy majors being the largest group.

The last presentation featured Jennifer Stogner-Lee, Emily Shapiro, and Aaron Caldwell. Their presentation was entitled, "Effectiveness of Environmental Education for Preschoolers", a program plan that was created for Dr. Maurice Phipps' PRM 361 course. Students created an environmental education program for children who attend the Kneedler Childcare Center on WCU's campus. The program required them to work with the director of the center to develop an appropriate lesson and activity for preschoolers. The actual

program included a pre/post survey and a hike focusing on litter pick up and why bugs are important. The children had a great experience and the students took away a better understanding on how to plan a lesson/activity for preschoolers.



## **Summer camps and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### Hilary White

Summer camps have been around in the United States for more than 200 years. The original intention of summer camp was to bring people together to learn different skills, majorly in the outdoors, but also dealing with people. Today, summer camps are built around the same intentions. They bring children and youth together to learn different skills, usually based around a main idea such as art, Girl Scouts/ Boy Scouts, 4-H, YMCA, academics, or sports, and teach many important skills of dealing with other people.

Many summer camps, however, are being shut down either for lack of funds, lack of interest, or because of economic struggles from customers. Society views recreation as a luxury in that people do not need it to survive, but by being involved in it, you could gain from it, but that it is

merely an extra “fun” thing that is not necessary. This is where society is wrong. Summer camps are more than fun, games, songs, swimming, late night stories, secret codes, and campfires. Summer camps offer children and youth something that they do not get in their everyday lives. It allows children and youth to be themselves without the pressures, stresses, and high expectations from teachers, parents, or other children or youth. It allows children and youth to have a voice and an opinion, and to value other peoples’ voices and opinions. It teaches communication as an important function in everyday life. It teaches teamwork and cooperation while also allowing for conflict.

In today’s world, communication and teamwork is lacking. People disappear into their phones, computers, iPads, and other electronic devices. The only communication they have is through social media and the small talk they may have face to face with other people. Students wake up, head to school, and sit in a classroom for 8 hours, with very little allowable time to communicate with others. They ride the bus home for 30 minutes to an hour, get home, do homework, and then either resort to the TV, video games, computer/iPad, and chores and other responsibilities, and then go to bed and wake up and repeat the same. So many young people are starting to miss out on the right of passage of summer camps because of the disappearance of camps. Summer camps allow children and youth get outside and learn about nature, about animals, about survival skills, and above all else the importance of friendship, cooperation, and communication.

Summer camps not only have benefits to the campers, but also offer benefits to the counselors and directors. They also allow the adults to be able to get away from the rush of day-to-day life and get back to nature, away from those stresses

and pressures. Summer camps allow adults to see that there is more to life than work and paying bills, that communication not involving the latter does exist and is well worth having, that teamwork is an important skill to have, that it's okay to have fun and be crazy, and above all else that friendships made at camp are unlike any other.

In conclusion, summer camps are more than just a fun luxury. They teach important life skills while allowing people to be fun and crazy and be the person they would be if they didn't let the 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology and the rush of day to day life get in the way. We should be building more of them, not getting rid of them.

## Why I CrossFit

Erin Kearse

As I walk into the box for the first time, I had no idea what to expect. Little did I know that almost a year later, this place would become my escape and a new-found family. That Saturday morning would be when I learned what a WOD was.

CrossFit is a core and strength-conditioning program. Every workout is designed to be challenging to the most elite athletes but is able to be scaled for those who are just beginning CrossFit.

At a typical workout session, you can expect to spend about an hour at the gym, or as CrossFitters call it, "the box". At my box, a typical workout will include 4 different components. You will start out with a warm up. This would be in place of traditional stretching. Usually this includes push-ups, pull-ups, shoulder mobility, and air squats, just to name a few. After you complete the warm up, you move to the SWOD (strength work out of the day). This

is mostly in a rep/set format and you are working to be as heavy as you can but still using proper form. The SWOD could be anything from bench press to deadlifts to power cleans. After everyone is done with his or her SWOD, then you move to the WOD (work out of the day). This could be set up in several formats. It could be anything from a timed workout and you are doing as many rounds as possible in that amount of time, or a set workout and you are trying to complete it as fast as possible or several others. They can last anywhere from five minutes to forty minutes depending on the workout. After everyone completes the WOD, sometimes there will be overtime, which is normally a short core workout.

When I tell people that I CrossFit and they ask me how I like it, I tell them it's a love-hate relationship. I love it but at the same time, it is never easy. From walking in that first Saturday and having to scale every aspect of the workout, to being able to keep up with some of the best in my box, it never gets easier, you just push yourself harder. CrossFit is not about competing against the other people there, but it is about becoming a better you and improving from who you were yesterday. I think that is part of why I love it so much. The sense of camaraderie is overwhelming. Once you walk in you feel that, and it doesn't take long before everyone there becomes part of your family.

Even though most CrossFit WOD's aren't about competing against others, if you enjoy that rivalry there are competitions you can take part of. There are the CrossFit games, which would be comparable to the Olympics for CrossFitters. If you aren't quite up to that level of competition, CrossFit holds what they call the CrossFit Open, which allows any level athlete to sign

up online and enter in their times and weights of WOD's to see how they compare to other athletes around the world.

After completing my WOD that first Saturday almost a year ago, CrossFit has become part of my daily routine. Give it a try and it could become part of yours!



### Future X-Games Athletes

Spencer Sharrits

Over Christmas break, I went to visit a long time friend, Grant, at Snowshoe Mountain in West Virginia. He works as a manager in the rental shop and lives on top of the mountain. Spending a week at the resort, skiing all day, every day was a great way to celebrate the end of the semester, as well as bring in the New Year. One night his buddy called and said that we should come to the Expedition Center and take a snowmobile tour. I was a little nervous

because I have seen the X-Games, where they go extremely fast and do flips, which can be extremely dangerous. As well as being nervous, I was extremely excited because I know that these sleds have a great deal of power under the hood, and I like to go fast.

When we went down to the outpost, we were greeted with smiling faces along with an informational meeting. In the meeting, they went over the sled's features and how to control the machine. After this, we got fitted for a helmet and went out to the sleds. Grant and I went to the front because he knew our guide for the night, and he told us that these specific sleds were faster and he would let us have a little fun. Once we were on the snowmobiles, we made a couple of laps on the flat section of the mountain, allowing folks to adjust to how the machines work, and steer.

Once everyone was comfortable on his or her machine, we headed down the mountain. We were told to stay in a line with a safe amount of distance between each sled. I had been skiing on the same slopes that we were currently riding on, but since it was dark, I really had no clue where we were, so it was important to follow our leader.

Once on the slopes, we would go up and down the runs. On the way down we had to go slower because the sleds didn't have brakes, but on the way up the slopes, the leaders would go faster and wait at the top. Grant and myself, being in the front and really having a good time, would gun it up after him. I hit 52 miles per hour on one slope and it was really exhilarating, but also a tad bit scary.

The tour was an hour. I could tell when we were almost done, because we started to climb to the top of the mountain. I was not ready for it to be over because I was starting to get really comfortable on the machine. Trying to be sneaky for extra time on the sled, Grant and I began to play and drift the sleds, but the sweeping guide came up quick from the back and shut us down saying it was dangerous.

The snowmobile tour was a great way to end an amazing week at Snowshoe. As well as my enjoyment, I was excited to spend time with Grant because we both love to drive and be in control of powerful

machines. The next day, we went skiing for the last time and had a fun time trying to guess where we went the night before and to see how fast the sleds were going. The hills were not the longest, but somehow we were able to get up to 45-50 mph quickly on the snowmobiles.

If you're ever given the opportunity, I would strongly suggest experiencing the thrill, fun, and education of a snowmobile tour. Being on a snowmobile is not as intimidating as it sounds, but it also made me realize how strong and brave the X-Game athletes must be to take these machines off 50- 60 foot jumps.

“We will be known  
forever by the tracks we  
leave.”

-Dakota Sioux

