

Eighth Grade Trip Reflections

This year the 2012 8th grade class went on a camping trip to McClellenville, South Carolina, facilitated by an organization called Nature Adventure Outfitters. Throughout the week there were new activities to try daily. The main focus of the trip was kayaking in different locations, such as brackish rivers, the intercoastal waterway, and among the barrier islands.

The first morning threatened bad weather, but fortunately it cleared and we visited Lake Francis for our Introduction to Kayaking class. At the lake, which included a resident alligator, we practiced paddling backward and forwards, then played games in our kayaks, such as tag and relay races. Later on we headed back to the cabin for a nice hot meal, card games, and music.

The second day we awoke to a dry, hot day. After a nice hot breakfast, we kayaked the upper part of Wambaw Creek. There we saw alligators of all sizes on each side of the river. Each time an alligator slipped into the water, some of us would paddle to the other side of the creek as fast as we could, while some of us paddled past it slowly to examine it. After kayaking we went back to the cabin for dinner and team building exercises. One exercise was a "name game" where each of us was given the name of another student to say while tossing a ball to them, and then they would pass the ball to another student saying that student's name. Once we got the rhythm down, we sped up the pace. One counselor timed us and another one joined our group. Finally, they asked us to speed it up to one second! At first we tried this by lining up in two lines and threw the ball in a zigzag formation, the crown form. This didn't take any time off. Finally, we held our hand out in a

descending slide and rolled the ball down our hands, saying each name as it passed. It was successful!

On the third day we moved from cabins to tents at Buck Hall. We kayaked the lower part of the Wambaw Creek, and then visited Hampton Plantation, which dates back to the Revolutionary War and was visited by President Washington. It was fascinating to see the rice canals that slaves had dug. After touring the site, we headed back to our campsite only to experience a very strong thunderstorm. This was ironic because we had stayed in the cabin for the first few days fearing a strong storm which never came. It didn't downpour until we moved into our tents!

The next day we awoke to find ourselves tired and very wet from the rain the night before. Instead of kayaking at the Awendaw Creek, we decided to head to the beach for a day of swimming and relaxing in the sun. But first, we toured Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island. At the beach we exfoliated and watched the dolphins swim by. That night, we attended a sweet grass weaving class and made wall decorations to bring home. The day and evening were filled with much laughter and great memories.

On day five we packed up camp and paddled in tandem kayaks to Capers Island. It was a windy paddle to the island. Once there, we set up camp on the sand dunes and had lunch. The island was quite windy and we feared that our tents would blow away, but they thankfully stayed put. In our free time we built sand castles, roamed around the island, swam in the ocean, hunted for shells, examined the creatures from the sea, and went paddle boarding. After an incredible

seafood dinner of local shrimp and flounder, we gazed at the stars, and then went to bed in our tents while they flapped in the breeze.

Bulls Island was our kayak destination the next day. Paddling into the wind was challenging. After walking along the beach collecting sea-shells and sand dollars, we spent our time socializing and paddle boarding. Tonight was to be the night that the class stayed alone without Ms. Arnold, our chaperone Celia Friedman, or the guides. We moved our tents away from the main camp and spent the evening eating hot dogs and beans, and laughing around the fire. We had strong wind and rain that night which made sleep challenging (not to mention that all 8 girls in the class were in a six person tent!)

It was very windy in the morning as we packed up camp, as a hurricane was sitting off the coast. We needed to shuttle our gear back to the mainland using a motor boat because the wind was too strong and the water was too rough to kayak. Once we had transported everything, we hopped on the bus and headed back to the cabins. That afternoon we sang songs accompanied by Kathie Livingston on her guitar and her husband, Steve, on his violin, and reminisced about our trip adventures. None of us wanted the trip to end! On this journey we all bonded and became even closer to each other than we were before. It was amazing! Please stop one of us and inquire about our fantastic adventure along South Carolina's coast.

Olivia Platt

See some photos of the trip on the next page.

Photos from the Eighth Grade Trip



Left and right: Swimming with alligators!



Left and right: Kayaking on Wambaw Creek.

