Camp Wakonda's Quarterly Newsletter Jun-Sept 2025

The Beam

Written By Zack White

A Look Back At the Summer of 2025

Wakonda showed growth this summer in several categories. The summer camp program showed an increase of 22 over the number of campers that attended last summer. The Wakonda For All Family/Alumni Camp had 12 more attendees than last year. 185 people came to the Ox Roast event this year. That number has grown by 20 compared to the same event last year.

The value of the camp experience is hard to explain to people who have never had that experience for themselves. What makes camp so special? Why do those memories and friendships stay with us so long? We may all have different answers to those questions. When I think about these questions, several things come to mind. When we choose to disconnect from the world and come to a place that is intentionally set aside for connection, we open ourselves to growth and reflection in a way that we may not allow within ourselves in the normal day to day routine. These things take time, and the world tells us time is a luxury. It tells us we have to squeeze every drop of productivity out of every moment we can scrape together, in order to get what we want out of life.

Taking time to step aside, slow down, reconnect to who we really are on the inside, encounter God in the silence, and attune to the rhythms of the natural world around us helps to renew our perspectives and provide balance. There have been many times this summer that I have seen individuals find new pieces to add into their identities. God was moving in this place. He challenged perspectives, reframed trauma and baggage, unveiled new purposes and delivered new gifts and blessings. He provided an environment where people could feel His love for them. I saw these things happen with campers, staff members, chaperones, rental groups, and within myself. God is good.

Camp Timeline

I would love to fill in some gaps in Wakonda's history as I understand it so far. My wife Liz, staff alum 2002-2007, would like to create a visual timeline in the lodge, with lists of staff members and pictures. When you think back to your time at camp, what do you remember that could help? Who was on staff when you were here? Which years were you at camp? Do you have any pictures you'd be willing to copy and share?

Pray

Please pray for Wakonda. Pray that God would protect this place and that He would bring the people here who need to encounter Him. Pray that He would provide staff and resources to continue the work that He plans to do in this place each year. Pray that whoever drives into camp would leave this place better than they were when they arrived.

Retreat Center -

As a part of the capital campaign, the Camp Wakonda Retreat Center was purchased from the Muskingum FFA Camp. In the spring of this year, a contractor came in and handled a lot of the repairs from the building inspection. Here are some pictures of the building as it looks today. As you enter the building, you come into the large common room which contains couches and chairs by the fireplace as well as the meeting space. To the left is the kitchen, followed by the two bathrooms. The bathrooms each have a toilet, shower and sink. The three bedrooms are at the end of the main room, opposite the fireplace. The two with bunk beds are on the ground level and the third is upstairs. In the picture of the meeting space you can see the doorways to the two bedrooms on that level, and the opening where the hallway goes back to the stairs on the left.

This building has heat and air conditioning. It is available for booking year round. The property also has a pavilion with ping pong tables, an outdoor fire ring with seating, a volleyball net, a basketball goal, and a trail down to the edge of the lake.

Three Bedrooms

Meeting Space

Common Area

Bathroom

Kitchen

Exterior

Storm Damage Update

Back in April, if you remember, Wakonda experienced two storms that caused a lot of damage. The first was a straight line wind that took down trees. The second, a couple of weeks after the first, was a storm that brought a 91 mph wind shear. Between the two storms we lost more than 90 trees. One large tree landed on the roof of one of the cabins on the girls side. Another clipped a second cabin on the boys side, and a third crushed the smaller cabin out at Outpost. This is the one some of you know as the Shack. I am happy to be able to say that the buildings are fully functional once again. The cabin that caught the one tree has a new roof and the Outpost cabin has been replaced from the ground up. There are still trees that haven't completely been cleaned up but we were able to get around the site and operate as normal throughout the summer. I have included below pictures of the repaired buildings.

Outpost Cabin - Complete Rebuild

Girl's Cabin

Tree Removed

New Roof

Volunteers

There are a variety of ways that volunteers can help Wakonda, whether or not you can make it to camp in person. Contact Zack for further details if you are interested.

It's always great to see and talk to Wakonda Alumni! If you are ever in the area, stop by and see us. Look around camp and reconnect. Walk the trails again; relive the memories.

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