

The 1936 4-H Conservation Camp

Camping!! There's a thrill in that word, "camping" for all who like the open, no matter the time of year. This 4-H Conservation Camp is really not a camp because it is held at a resort and there is not the usual "roughing it" that a camp requires, but the members will spend all their wakeful hours tramping and observing in the open, so in that sense, at least, this is a Camp.

We conduct many 4-H camps each summer, 18 to 20 of them, but this camp has a program and purpose that is rather unique. This camp has two distinct purposes.

First: To help club members understand and enjoy the things of nature about them that are nearest, and most common; the things that are indispensable in nature's scheme of affairs and necessary to our lives -- the soil; the birds, the trees, the wild flowers, the insects, and the waters. Thoreau wrote, "He is richest whose pleasures are the cheapest", which is another way of saying that the person is wealthy who has found much of his pleasures in an understanding of the common things about him. Well, that is one purpose in holding this camp - to develop an appreciation.

The second purpose is to teach club members how to conserve the things worth conserving and to help them plan a program of work whereby they can really make a contribution in conservation - to play the part of a good citizen in this regard.

So much for the purposes. There are twelve states holding such camps. And one man - a business man of Minneapolis, has made all these camps possible. I suppose that he had visitons of boys and girls, everywhere, thousands of them, getting out into the open, finding their greatest joys there, learning to understand nature and so, by a self-created desire become protectors of our landscapes. Something like that, coupled with a faith in boys and girls must have been lurking in his mind. Anyway this man, by a generous gift made possible this camp and the camps in eleven other states.

This 4-H Conservation Camp is the culmination of a season's work in study and accomplishment in conservation of birds, flowers, trees and our soil. The work

has been carried on as a 4-H project or activity, and 40 of the members in our state who seemed to do outstanding work in hatching and rearing pheasants, conserving wild flowers, encouraging and protecting song birds, planting trees, preventing erosion on hillsides and slopes, and other helpful activities, have been selected to come to this Conservation Camp with all expenses paid. It will be held at a resort in the Lower Dells of the Wisconsin River, near Wisconsin Dells, in a spot of inspiring beauty. The time is September 10 to 13. On one day a trip will be made to the State Nursery at Wisconsin Rapids to learn of the methods of growing the millions of trees that are used in reforesting the tree lands of our state. A study in wood utilization will be a part of this trip in a visit to a paper mill. Special arrangements have been made to make this something more than a trip through the mill. The club folks will be instructed before the trip in the kinds of trees used, how pulp is prepared and how made into paper of various kinds. Another day will be given over to a trip to the State Game Farm at Poynette. Here they will learn the methods employed in hatching and rearing upland game birds. A portion of one day will be spent in seeing the Dells from a boat. Professor Denniston of the University will conduct a study in wild flowers and there will be a tour to a beautiful flower garden where many of our wild-ings have been used. Dr. Brown of the Historical Museum will tell stories about Wisconsin around the camp fire, or the log fire in the large fire place, if it is too cold to be outside. Likewise, Chief Yellow Thunder will relate Indian Lore and may-be interpret a few of the Indian dances. The camp is a school in outdoor life as well as an award for worthwhile accomplishments. There is a fundamental bit of philosophy behind a camp of this kind. It is starting conservation education where and when it should be started - with youth in the outdoors. It is encouraging the study of outdoorlife by actually getting out and studying it at first hand. It is instilling the idea that it is good citizenship to help conserve our natural beauty and resources, to know the laws.

The 4-H Club department is going to carry on this conservation project next year. We want and need the interest of every farm boy and girl. We invite you to

learn about the work. It is the part of good citizenery to help in the Conservation work. And there is a joy in doing it, for

The trees, the flowers, the birds and the brooks  
Are more full of wonders than all of the books.