

## Harriman State Park Adventure

First Trip of the Year Campout, Harriman, NY  
September 26-28, 2008

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This trip was the 2008 Scout year opener comprised of tent camping at a park and walk in location in Harriman State Park. What made this trip interesting was the forecast for a tropical storm to pass over during the weekend.

Arriving at the site at dusk on Friday night, we were greeted by a very soupy fog and mist combination. We had to walk ¼ mile up a road and trail to get to an elevated campsite which had 3-4 patrol areas to camp and a fixed latrine with wash sink. It looked like a scene from ET as we all walked with headlamps in the eery fog.

The scouts got their tents up in record time while Bill and Tom could not find the previously scoped adult tent area in the new, disorienting fog. We finally set up on high soft ground amongst some nice boulders with separated trees. The site was later actually quite beautiful.

We then returned to the cars for food and cracker barrel only to find the adult cream filled bits of heaven “Devil Dogs” had been eaten by a swarm of hungry Coyotes right out of the back of the car. And in record time I might add. Turns out the Patrol Leader and his Grubmaster didn’t realize their food was in the cartop carrier, not the hatch. “Does this mean we don’t get dessert tomorrow night?” a young scout inquired. After a measured tongue lashing, we had our first funny scout memory of the year.

The second funny memory happened not too long afterwards when we all dropped our cars off at a nearby parking lot

down by the lake. We must have intimidated the policeman as the six of us walked out of a dark parking lot together and Officer Smith was not in any joking mood. Mr. Wilson nearly got spread on the hood for cracking what we all agreed was a perfectly good wisecrack. Memory #2.

Anticipating rain throughout the weekend, we strung up a good sized rope across the main patrol area with Ron’s help and put all four patrol tarps in a single line with four tables run end to end. We tied side lines with stakes using the troop flag as a center support. We looked like a four ring circus, but it worked great in the rain. All patrols had a covered area and a central campfire ring as well. We had a snack and coffee and headed to bed.

At breakfast the adults had a great omelet with all the fixings plus bacon. I mention food because other than the patch, food is the next most memorable thing. I shopped and Eli did the bulk of the cooking. Everybody got exactly one good glug of the rationed OJ in light of high food prices. The patrols did well together on this first trip particularly in light of newly elected patrol leaders.

Saturday’s main activity was a four mile hike to a nearby pit mine. In general the weather was warmer than expected and very humid, but not a lot of rain. On the hike, I quickly zipped my scout pant legs off to shorts and was much more comfortable. The hike was over interesting wooded and

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## The unofficial accounts of Tom Bedard



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boulder strewn terrain.

At the mine near a creek, there was a big open pit with a 20 foot overlook and drop. The kids immediately started dropping rocks in to hear the splash. Greenbar member and daredevil Dan Wilson announced his intention to perform a death defying triple axel summersault in the pike position with a full twist into the deep pool. His father being present, advised him to the contrary but also suggested that if he was going to do this that he should strip to his shorts. This way we wouldn't have to listen while he chaffed on the walk back to camp in wet jeans. "Good idea, Dad," came the reply. A minute later to the sheer delight and cheers of 20 other scouts, Dan made the plunge. There was a splash followed by the fully expected "get me outta



here, it's cold!" as he scrambled to the bank. To his credit, daredevil Dan had made his mark as the first Troop 76 folk hero of the year. We got plenty of pictures for insurance purposes.

Deluxe cold cut sandwiches on Kaisers with cheese, carrots and broccoli awaited us back at the camp. We had to keep a tight rein on Mr. Reilley since he was eyeballing extra ham and cheese. The afternoon was spent playing games, Frisbee etc. The scouts built their evening campfire and we all enjoyed lunch.

Dinner for the adults was a very memorable London broil which Eli did a great job cooking over the open fire. We were treated to four different spices (Cajun was



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the favorite) along with a side of green beans, rolls, and potatoes (sour cream and butter of course). For dessert we made improvised roasted sugar apples which employed real maple syrup. A little more cinnamon next time and this is a winner. The rest of the evening was spent around the campfire with marshmallows, coffee, and good fellowship.

Around 10 pm, we started seeing flash lights zooming all around the campsite and down by the cars. Then we saw slow lights moving across the lake. Finally we saw guys dressed in lycra tights with compass and maps swarming down the trail near our campsite. Seeing as how one doesn't typically see this everyday, I took a walk down to the lake to find that an extreme sport event was going on right there in the park. We could expect to see folks all night long as part of an 18 hour sport marathon. That was certainly different.

Breakfast the next morning brought continued fog and mist, but not rain. Pancakes and sausage and plenty of coffee nearly made themselves for breakfast. I enjoyed my first experience with real maple syrup on pancakes that I can remember. That's easy to get hooked on I can tell you.

Packing up camp was largely uneventful. After a closing circle, we packed out and drove home arriving around 12 noon on Sunday. Overall, a good first campout for the year with no injuries to report. No patch on this one, but the food sure was good.■

*Tom Bedard is an Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 76 in Ringwood, NJ where he resides with his wife and three children. His son, Gabe, also participated on the adventure.*

