

TEEN WILDERNESS CAMPER FEEDBACK

" This year was my last of four years at Teen Wilderness, and this program has been the highlight of all my summers since I started it. Teen Wilderness is an amazing opportunity to spend time in the wilderness, have new adventures every year, and make friends that always seem to stick; I'll always be glad I started the first year I could and got to spend every year possible here. This trip encompasses everything I love about the outdoors and has so many opportunities every year to do every part of it: we get to hike new places each year, paddle with our friends, stargaze, roast marshmallows, all while learning all kinds of things about the wilderness.

And the bonds that form on trips like these are so remarkably fast and strong, I've noticed from the first year; I'm still in touch with a lot of old friends, both the ones who've been along with me until my final year, and even one or two who were only able to come once but who became such good friends that we still catch up occasionally. On Teen Wilderness trips it's so easy to bond with people while hiking side by side, paddling together, cooling off in the lake during free time, playing cards at the lodge- really all the time. And it's also an experience that I think helps people come out of their shells a bit; when I was twelve and started I was very shy and honestly still am, but at this point as soon as I arrive at Teen Wilderness that disappears, because the environment is so friendly and open and welcoming.

(Another wonderful thing about Teen Wilderness and staying at the AMC lodges- this is a universally recognized truth among the campers and chaperones alike- is how good the food is. One of my favorite memories from this last year is that the chef popped out of the kitchen during dinner, and the applause matched the volume and enthusiasm of a Taylor Swift concert.)

Teen Wilderness is wind at the top of a mountain and cool lake water after a long, sweaty hike. It's campfire warmth and toes in cool grass, stars overhead and vicious debates about the proper way to roast a marshmallow. It's ukulele music (somebody always has a ukulele, it seems) and the splash of so many people jumping into the water all at once. It's excitement at every mushroom we see on the trail and laughing in the rain. (One of my other favorite memories was a couple years ago when we got caught in a downpour heading down the mountain we had climbed. All of our clothing got drenched through and it was magical.) Teen Wilderness is one of the experiences that has shaped my summers as a teenager and that I will always remember as a wonderful part of my life."

-Ruby (2023 TWE Camper)

