

2016 Happy Hills Campground Trip Report

On Thursday, August 18, Richard and Eve, and Bob and Hatti, joined Greg and his grandson LJ, Ken and Linda, Sid and Shirley, and Bob and Kath, all of whom arrived earlier in the week. Pat and Jim joined the group on Friday.

During the day on Friday, most of the group headed to the pool for soothing relief from the heat. As can be expected when the group gathers around a central activity a lot of storytelling ensued.



Later in the afternoon many retreated to the comfort of their air conditioners or took youth restoring naps. Bob C. however decided to hike the trail from the campground down to the C&O Canal, Potomac River and the Western Maryland Rail Trail.



It was sad to see that the canal was heavily overgrown and partially filled in. Unfortunately many parts of the canal were damaged in the 1970s by a hurricane that came up the bay and turned inland. Sadly the National Park Service has never received sufficient funds to repair much of the damage. But the towpath is still maintained for those that wish to hike or bicycle the path from Cumberland, MD to Washington DC.



The Western Maryland Rail Trail near the campground is a new 4.5 mile section of the trail that follows the old Western Maryland Railroad line that includes the 4,400 foot Indigo Tunnel. The entire length of the paved rail trail is now about 23 miles. It runs from about a half mile west of Fort Frederick to the south face of Siding Hill. The Happy Hills Campground trail is at mile 15.

The Potomac River is wide but relatively shallow as it meanders through the valley and passes the Town of Hancock, MD. A few fish were seen jumping and a few Blue Herons were seen hunting meals along the shores. Hawks could be seen patrolling the skies above the river valley as well.





Friday evening everyone carpoled to the Earth Dog Café in Berkeley Springs, WV. The fare at the restaurant was mostly BBQ. From the sudden silence among the group once the food arrived it can be assumed everyone's order was as delicious as ours.



We had the great fortune to be waited on at the restaurant by a local celebrity, Laura Lynn. Laura is an Emcee, radio talk show host, event planner, and internationally published tattoo model.



After dinner we gathered at the campsite of Bob and Kath for a wonderful campfire. But first we had to convene a firewood brigade to unload all the wood from Greg's golf cart and stack it neatly near the fire ring.



As the night air cooled with the setting sun, the fire cast a warm glow all around the campsite. Under a clear, dark sky filled with thousands of stars we solved world problems and exchanged tales of adventures.



On Saturday morning most everyone again headed to the pool seeking relief from the rising temperature. As lunchtime arrived folks drifted off for a bite to eat while others remained to hold down the claim on the sunshade. Relaxation around the pool continued late into the afternoon.

Saturday evening Bob and Kath put out a wonderful spread with an international flair. As Bob grilled hotdogs on his new tabletop gas grill, Kath set out a large assortment of condiments, fixings, and cold deli salads. Everything was there if you wanted to make a German hotdog, a Southwest hotdog, or a Chicago style hotdog. Or you could have a plain old hotdog. Kath did urge people to fix two hotdogs and make each half in a different style.





After filling our tummies on hotdogs and deli salads we sat in the shade of the RV awning and a shade tent for the monthly meeting. After a successful meeting that lasted long enough for our food to settle, everyone dashed off and returned with their contribution for the dessert potluck. From pies to cookies to an orange/vanilla ice cream mold, there was something for everyone.



And as the sun slowly set, Kath's decorative paper globe lamps clipped around the edge of the shade tent provided soft, colorful lighting. Soon we retired to stare transfixed at another campfire. It wasn't long after that the s'mores were being cooked and discussions of the Olympic Games filled the air.

Sunday morning a light continental breakfast of fruit, donuts, and leftover desserts was served at the campsite of Bob and Kath. A brief rain shower chased us all under their awning for a few minutes. Then, with our bellies again full, we all headed back to our campers to pack up for the drive home.