TETON VALLEY RANCH CAMP
Summer 2019

BOYS' SEASON
Arrival: Friday, June 16
Final Rodeo: Friday, July 14
Departure: Saturday, July 15

GIRLS' SEASON
Arrival Day: Tuesday, July 18
Final Rodeo: Tuesday, August 15
Departure: Wednesday, August 16

EXPEDITIONS PROGRAM
Arrival Day: Tuesday July 18
Departure: Sunday August 7

2019 DATES
Howdy from Jackson Hole!

Summer Camp, what a glorious adventure. Friends, heroes, challenges, and in the middle of it all, the opportunity to be yourself, to be a kid. Teton Valley Ranch Camp has existed in spirit for 80 years on the premise that venturing out into wild places gives us the opportunity, not necessarily to find ourselves, but to create ourselves. To experience the transformative power of an intentional community dedicated to the idea that the spirit of the American West holds treasure waiting to be discovered. That the wilderness, the mountains, and the rivers, provide abundant challenges to be faced, to be met, and to be overcome. The culture of the West, and of Teton Valley Ranch Camp were built on the values of courage, community, appreciation, and a willingness to try. It’s this last value that impresses me most about our campers at TVRC.

Many of our campers arrive on the Ranch never having mounted a horse or strapped on a backpack for a multi-day trip into the wilderness. Our first full day of camp is our chance to orient Campers to the knowledge and skills they’ll need to be successful in the backcountry. Before their third or fourth sunset on the Ranch our Yearlings and Rough Riders have already slept out overnight to prepare them for their greater multi-day adventures out in the Bridger-Teton National Forest or in Grand Teton National Park. I’m always inspired by the way our Campers rise to the challenge, and how their enthusiasm wins out over their butterflies.

Perhaps you have your own memories of the corrals at TVRC and the mountain trails around Western Wyoming. Maybe you’ve experienced it through your child’s adventures, and the stories that return home and tumble out over the weeks and months after their season is finished. Either way, you understand the mission at the deepest level. Whether your time at the Ranch was in Kelly or Dubois, you know the nervousness of Arrival-Day, the elation of a mountain summit, the pride of sharing your Return Skit, and the tearful goodbyes when the season finally ends. All of these are as powerful and necessary in the age of the iPhone as they were in generations past.

I often find myself explaining to friends of TVRC that we are inspired by our future and grateful for our past. As you read this edition of the Wrangler I invite you to read between the lines to see how our inspiration is driving projects that will make our physical plant more solid. How our gratitude has us continually seeking connection to the traditions that make TVRC unique in a world that prefers conformity. While many summer camps are finding ways to incorporate cell phones into their daily camp routines we at TVRC are continuing to provide real-life experiences that build strong and positive identities that help our Campers navigate in the real challenges of the world out there.

In addition to being grateful for TVRC’s rich history, we are grateful to you. Our Camper Families, our Donors, those who have loved, served, and supported Teton Valley Ranch Camp through the years. Please join us in seeing our next 80 years are as rich and inspiring as the last!

Yours in TVRC Spirit,

Matthew Cook
This past January and February Matty and Whitney hit the road for a whirlwind RoundUp Season. They started in London on a staff recruiting trip that also included a stop off to visit a couple of camp families from the other side of the pond, hosted by the Goldner–Humphries family.

After a few days in jolly old England they zipped back to New York City where the first ever East Coast Campfire Event was hosted by our dear friend and board member, Crossan Seybolt.

“We had a lovely turn out at The Brook Club for this Campfire Event and we look forward to holding another soon. We were grateful to have multiple generations of past campers and staff attend, as well as a good number of current camper parents. It’s truly a joy to see families who’ve never met come together to share stories of the place and experience that is beloved by all.”—Whitney. While in NYC Matty and Whitney held a RoundUp hosted by the Niles family. This is Allison and David’s fifth year hosting a RoundUp and we’re forever grateful for their warm hospitality and support of TVRC.

Matty and Whitney then headed up the road into Connecticut to the second RoundUp on the East Coast hosted by the Kelly family in Greenwich. Another well attended RoundUp with several families who were hearing about TVRC for the first time! After the East Coast leg Matty and Whitney had just enough time to swing back to the valley to get a couple of ski days in at Grand Targhee, repack and head to the west coast and for a bit of warmer weather. They kicked the Cali-tour off in Laguna Beach at the Shaffer’s home. A lovely event where some younger future campers and alumni from the late 80’s and early 90’s attended and reconnected with Camp. Then onward up the coast to Los Angeles with another well attended RoundUp, kindly hosted by the Latteau-Stallings’ family; wonderful new connections and reconnections with more TVRC families.

Matty and Whitney’s last stop on the trail was San Francisco with the second Campfire Event held at the Presidio Club by board member Britt Packouz and his wife Robbin. A well attended Campfire to be sure! Filled with many potential camp families and campers who we look forward to welcoming on the ranch in the summers to come.

A huge thank you to all our RoundUp hosts and to the TVRC families that hosted Matty and Whitney on the tour. It’s always a joy to get on the road and visit camp families and alumni in their hometowns. If you’re interested in hosting a RoundUp event for the 2020 season please reach out to Whitney at woppenhuizen@tvrcamp.org.
OVER 80 YEARS AGO, Wendell (Weenie) Wilson had the inspired idea to start a summer camp for boys in the mountains of Wyoming. He’d had his own summer camp experience in Colorado and wanted to create an opportunity to share that adventure with upcoming generations. Weenie was traveling through Jackson Hole when he realized that this was the spot for his camp, and started looking for property in Jackson Hole.

Between the vision and single-minded dedication of Weenie, and the strength that his Bride, Mary Ellen, brought as a business person, and organizer TVRC was born and has sustained eight decades of high adventure serving thousands of young people.

As we now celebrate 80 years of operation since Weenie founded the camp in 1939 we are grateful to still have so much of the original essence and purpose that Weenie brought to camp in those early years. Matty and I recently sat down with Ellen Wilson, the daughter of Weenie and Mary Ellen, to catch up and share how things are shaping up for this 81st summer. It gave me great joy to spend time with Ellen as I remember hearing stories of the Wilson family and TVRC as a young girl. My grandfather was a student of Weenies at Cranbrook Boys School back in Detroit in the early 1940’s. After a year or two Weenie and my Grandfather struck up a friendship and Weenie invited him to come work at the ranch in the summers. I remember being regaled with stories of my Grandfather on horseback with TVRC’s famous cowboy, Jack Davis, going up Death Canyon to evacuate a young boy who was showing symptoms of an appendicitis on the trail. And the long drive of the horse heard over the Tetons and into the winter range in Idaho at the end of the season.

Sitting with Ellen and hearing her stories of the ranch, past campers and staff (many of whom are still active in
our community today) and her take on the growth and change TVRC has gone through over the years was in a word – lovely. She shared with Matty and I that she’s truly grateful that the camp is still running and holding true to the heritage, while embracing the ever-changing landscape of childhood, and the challenges of growing up in this disconnected digital era.

Balancing the responsibility we hold in the lives of our campers, staff, and alumni as a space for real traditions, growth, and a chance to be connected to yourself and the wilderness that we play in, is something we don’t take lightly. Especially with the world changing so quickly. Technology is becoming more present in our daily lives and it’s challenging to hold space and to root ourselves in the “old school” way of living like we do at Camp. No cell phones, evenings spent around campfires telling traditional TVRC stories, practicing and learning the skills necessary to be stewards of the wilderness as we play and learn in the backcountry. These are all integral parts of the TVRC experience and community. In reflecting with Ellen I realized how closely tied we still are to the camp experience so many have had before this year’s cohort of Yearlings, Rough Riders, Top Hands, Wranglers and Trailblazers. As we say often, you could take any of the photos we take during the summer in black and white and, save for the backcountry gear changing, it could be any given summer of the last 80 years in TVRC’s history.

This conversation with Ellen spurred us on in a exciting project we’ve already kicked off. We want to gather stories from alumni and current staff and campers, of their best TVRC experiences. What are the good memories that you cherish about your time here in the mountains? We’re putting together a coffee table book of photos, memorabilia and stories to celebrate the 80 years since Weenie and Mary Ellen were first inspired to start TVRC, and the people who have kept that inspiration alive for generations. Please share with us anything you feel drawn to! We’ll consider any and all submissions for inclusion in the coffee table book. You can share your memories with us by emailing us at 80years@tvrcamp.org.
How did you first hear about TVRC and what’s your history with camp?
I first found out about TVRC when I was driving back home to Oregon from Denver, where I was going to college at the time. I immediately fell in love with the Tetons and the surrounding area. I got to spend a few days camping and exploring and knew then that I wanted to come back out to work the next summer. I had always loved working with children and was considering the possibility of pursuing a career in Outdoor Education at the time. I had heard of rumblings of TVRC at University of Denver, where I had a lot of friends that worked at camp. There are so many aspects of TVRC that are unique and make it incredibly special. When I arrived at camp the next summer, I was immediately drawn to the community of staff members. It was one of the first times in my life that I felt like I was a part of community of like minded individuals that were passionate about the outdoors and utilizing the wilderness as a tool to enable growth and change in kids. TVRC is this beautiful woven tapestry of place-based education, passionate staff members and a supportive environment for making mistakes and growth. After my first summer, I was even more inspired to pursue the path of Outdoor Education and have been on that track since my first summer. In my summer staff years at TVRC I transitioned through the roles of photographer, counselor and trip leader. After I decided it was time to leave the TVRC ‘nest,’ I realized how important it is to me to have a greater impact on the organization that influenced me so greatly and that I am deeply passionate about. That’s when I returned to TVRC as Program Director, the position I’m in now.

What do you think makes outdoor education and experience so beneficial for children?
Wow, that is an enormously important question. I think that it is becoming more and more common in schools to incorporate the outdoors and nature in some capacity into their curriculum, but for a long time, as a society, we moved away from being outside and realizing the benefits of it. Learning inside a classroom is exceedingly different than experiential learning. There are so many teaching methods, as well as so many ways in which we learn. Being inside a classroom and learning from a textbook or presentation is one way of learning. Being outside, learning about science, nature, hard skills and the challenges of the wilderness is another way. Both are important, but by ignoring one, we are losing out on an incredible opportunity for growth and new knowledge. There are countless studies being done on the benefits of being in nature and green spaces. Cities all across the world are incorporating more greenery into their design because being outside and surrounded by nature is proven to increase happiness. Danish researcher Kristine Engemann stated “There is increasing evidence that the natural environment plays a larger role for mental health than previously thought, green space seemed to have an association that was similar in strength to other known influences on mental health, like history of mental health disorders in the family, or socioeconomic status.” Nature provides the best environments to push our comfort zones and learn more about our limitations. We are so fortunate to be able to operate in these wild places, that often times, can be unforgiving. For campers, being able to explore these areas and learn the skills to be able to survive in the backcountry also creates an opportunity for growth. When we are uncomfortable, or out of our comfort zone, that often times translates to growth in many different capacities. At camp, when we remove all the external distractions, and take time to be at peace with ourselves and push our boundaries in a setting where we are supported, nature becomes the guiding tool, just like the textbook is in the classroom.
**WHAT DO YOU THINK SETS TVRC APART IN THE OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE FIELD?**

TVRC is one of the most unique experiences a child can have nowadays. We blend backpacking and hard outdoor skills with western heritage and Wyoming’s cowboy culture. We are one of the few organizations where you can be backpacking in the Wind River Range on Thursday and horse packing in the Gros Ventres the next Tuesday. At the heart of TVRC is our tradition and our location. The experience attached to this place is immeasurable, and when you add our rich history in the valley, it creates one of the most unique opportunities offered to youth and staff today. I think that everyone who has a connection to TVRC, also develops a very strong attachment to the Tetons and to this region. The dramatic setting in which we operate creates such a long-lasting response and connected feeling to the environment, in a way that can’t be replicated anywhere else.

**WHAT’S ONE OF YOUR FONDDEST TVRC MEMORIES?**

There are so many, but almost all of them involve my Trailblazer girls cabin. I was so fortunate to have a group of girls that really wanted to squeeze ever drop out of camp that they could. They worked together well, the group cohesion and dynamics couldn’t have been better, and honestly, they made my job really easy. One of my favorite memories was on the JD pack trip, when we had a really raw and honest discussion circle about technology and social media. The aim of the circle wasn’t to talk about how horrible social media is, or how detrimental technology is to children, it was to have an open discussion about how they felt that social media was affecting their lives, or influencing their decisions. Not only did we have an amazing discussion about technology, that was eye-opening for me, but this night really felt like the culmination of their TB year and the group that they had become. They were able to listen to one another with respect, while voicing opinions in a well-rounded and beneficial manner.

My co-counselor and I were able to sit back and really let them take the reins, which is ultimately my goal when leading any group discussion, I want to merely be the facilitator. To top it off, when we got back from that trip, we went into Jackson so that they could get their TB rings, and they had the option of having their phones that full day. But as a group, they decided to get them back for half an hour to call home, and then to turn them back in, because they wanted to stay present with one another the little bit of time they had left at TVRC.

**WHAT DO YOU SEE COMING NEXT FOR PROGRAMS LIKE OURS?**

As technology and screens grow more and more pervasive, the importance of getting outside and having challenging experiences in nature will grow ever more essential. As the world around this generation of children becomes more restrictive and more career driven, we must create and maintain the spaces that allow children to make mistakes and learn from failure. We have a duty to this generation to help them find the freedom to “fail” forward, particularly in a place that pushes boundaries and comfort zones. Built on a foundation of purposeful tradition, we can utilize the past and the rich TVRC history, while tailoring our program to meet the needs of today’s children.

**ANY OTHER THOUGHTS / WRAP UP?**

I am so grateful to be a part of an organization and community that stretches back 80 years and is as far reaching as TVRC. This community of campers, staff, and parents is one of the most passionate groups of people I have been lucky enough to experience and I look forward to doing my part to keep the TVRC legacy alive for many more years to come.
Since the formation of Teton Valley Ranch Camp—Education Foundation in 2001 our focus has been on keeping the camp spirit alive and available to all who wish to attend. Our first years were dedicated to finding our new property and getting the structure in place to provide the same overall camp experience that was available at the original camp in Kelly. In the next chapters of TVRC’s story we are looking toward the future. We’re focused now on the needs of our program and the ranch with the goal of providing the most impactful and traditional TVRC experience possible.

It’s with this forward-looking view that we are refocusing our efforts on reaching our stated goals for the General Endowment and the Scholarship Endowment. In the coming years we’ll be dedicating our efforts on these, as well as key infrastructure needs that are outlined below. It’s our goal as a non-profit to be transparent with our TVRC families and donors about the fact that our greatest focus is keeping our camp program and the ranch itself in world class shape.

**POSSE 2020**

This effort was launched in January of this year and is focused on building the General Endowment toward completion. We are looking for 20 individuals or families to join our Posse and contribute $20,000 annually for five years. Securing this group will allow us to raise almost half of the remaining funds needed to fill the General Endowment. By doing this we are setting the ranch up for success moving forward. Once we complete the General Endowment we will rely on it to cover the expenses of continued maintenance and infrastructure improvements at the ranch. Until this is fulfilled we will need to raise funds individually for projects like the Bathhouse, listed on the next page. We are in the early stages of this endeavor to find 20 individuals or families (or more!) to join us. Annual payments to the pledges would start in 2020 and run for five years. As a member of the Posse individuals will receive key updates on the ranch, direct communications with Whitney and Matty regarding progress of the campaign and program highlights. Posse 2020 members will also have access to unique opportunities at the ranch as the campaign wraps up.

**CURRENT STATISTICS:**

- **Goal for Endowment:** $8 million for General Endowment and $2 million for the Scholarship Endowment
- **Amount Raised to Date:** $5 million
- **Goal for Posse 2020 effort:** $2 million

**SCHOLARSHIP FUND SUPPORT**

While we continue the effort to complete the General Endowment, mentioned above, we look to annual support for our scholarship fund. Starting in 2020 we are looking for a family or individual to commit to donating $25,000 for one year as a lead scholarship sponsor. This would be a single-year commitment to support scholarships that we currently award annually. This allows us to start the year on the right foot and ensure we have the funds available to continue offering our scholarships annually. We believe that offering scholarship support is a core value of our organization and our TVRC family.
It’s been over fourteen years since we built the ranch in Dubois and TVRC established it’s permanent home. In the infancy of TVRC-EF, funds were tight and we did the best we could to build out the infrastructure needed for opening camp on time. Two of our key buildings were, of course, our bathhouses. They were built as “five-year solutions” for getting us up and running. Now, well over a decade later, they’re in need of replacement. We kicked off this fundraising effort in 2016 but because of factors associated with the Lava Mountain Fire we have had to refocus temporarily to handle environmental changes at the ranch. These include rising water tables and specific forestry projects. Now, the time has come to readdress our needs, and we come to you for help.

We’ve chosen a kit building that is both economical and provides a long-term solution to our needs. These buildings include all necessary materials for the project, pre-cut building materials, and even a 50-year metal roof. This project breaks down into three phases: design, foundations/floors/plumbing, and building construction. Your leadership gift, or multi-year donation, will allow us to answer this most urgent infrastructure need. The ability to break ground in the Fall of 2019 will allow us to finish the buildings prior to the beginning of programs in the Summer of 2020.

**CURRENT STATISTICS:**

Cost of project: $250,000 for both bathhouses
Amount Raised to date: $7,950

Thank you for considering a gift to the Bathouse Project.

If any of these projects appeal to you please reach out and let Whitney know (woppenhuizen@tvrcamp.org or call the ranch office). Our community knows best how important these efforts are to the success of camp. We’re focused on ensuring the next 80 years can be as impactful and fun-filled for campers as the last 80 were for many of you.

Thank you!
Doug Ross will be rejoining TVRC as head of Barn this summer. Doug was a staff member from 2001 to 2011. In the years since he's left TVRC he has been working as a horse trainer in Texas and Kansas. His expertise in working with both horses and instructing riders in larger American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) shows will be well used back at the ranch. We're thrilled to have Doug back at TVRC to share his knowledge and love of horses with campers and staff!


New to the Board of Directors: Daryl Peightal (camper 1987 -1990) and local Jackson resident joined the board this past winter. New to the board as of September 2018—Britt Packouz (camper 1987 – 1990, staff 1993 and 1994). Britt, his wife Robbin and their daughter (future Yearling) Bennett live in San Francisco and were integral in putting together our Campfire event there this past February. Also joining the board is Rev. Jimmy Bartz (camper parent 2017 – 2019) Jimmy lives here in Jackson with his family and is the Rector at St. John's Episcopal Church in Jackson. We're so fortunate to have three strong and thoughtful new editions to the TVRC Board of Directors.

TVRC Alumni Clarke Nelson, father of Chuck Nelson, passed away in March of this year. Remembered as an family man, honest businessman and a “darn tough card player” our thoughts are with the Nelson family during this time.
A Word from the RANGE

Year after year we are thankful for the kind words of parents, grandparents and those closest to our campers. Members of our leadership team receive thoughtful emails, letters and phone calls about how their camper’s experience at TVRC has been inspiring and even life changing. Recently we received this letter from our friend, and Camper Parent, Mary Audrey Attaberry that made all of us smile.

We asked her if we could share it with the larger community here and she generously agreed. We believe what Mary Audrey shares here is truly a text book example of what we’ve heard from so many families over the years. We’re grateful to be able to keep sharing this extraordinary place and these one of a kind experiences with campers, summer after summer.

A right of passage…that’s what TVRC means in our family…
my younger brother, and 7 of my parents grandchildren have been campers, or currently are campers, at TVRC.
In our family, the question is…when do I get to go to camp?

When I ask my own children what makes TVRC so special, here are their answers:

“The traditions- and I love being away from it all and how at camp you can just be…” (Charlie, Yearling 2016)

“The people, everyone is friends and loves each other despite their age.” (Amelia, Trailblazer 2018 – completed five years)

Ever since I attended my brother’s final rodeo back in 1996, I knew there was something magical about TVRC. I could feel it in my soul, the love campers and staff had for one another, the accomplishment they all felt at the end of the camp session, the camaraderie and triumph at the last campfire. It was a feeling I had never experienced and something I wished I was a part of.

Finally, in 2013, it was time for my oldest to experience camp, what a monumental year to begin, it was TVRC’s 75th! I don’t know who was more excited, Amelia or my husband and me! But, I do know everyone in the car, as excited as they were, were also nervous! Amelia nervous for all the reasons a child would be going to overnight camp for 4 weeks, and as her parents nervous to hand over our sweet 11-year-old into someone else’s care!

As a mother, I had every scenario good and bad run through my head over and over for weeks before drop off, and now on that long drive up to camp they were flying through my head…but, as soon as we are greeted 1/2 way down the dirt road by counselors on horseback with smiles from ear to ear, and a great big, “Hi! Welcome to Camp, we are so excited to have you here!” My worries as a parent began to melt away, and that amazing TRVC welcome and camp spirit began to fill my heart and calm my nerves, you know the feeling if you’ve ever been blessed by a camp welcome.

Once again, TVRC entered my soul, the love of camp and one another, it came full circle- this was the feeling I felt the last time I was on camp property over 25 years ago at my brother’s final campfire. This is what makes TVRC so special, what differentiates TVRC from other camps. It is not something you can quite put into words, it is an overwhelming feeling of peace you feel when you are within the presence of TVRC campers, staff or on camp grounds. That quiet peace and confidence each and every camper takes with them when they leave camp. This is what I witnessed first-hand just the other day when I saw my daughter reach out and introduce herself to one of her peers, a girl she didn’t know, who looked nervous while waiting for a class. Amelia’s warm welcome, reminiscent of a camp welcome, instantly put a smile on this girl’s face and made her feel at ease. Not a regular occurrence in today’s world of teenagers who barely look up from their phone.

So, thank you TVRC for the values you teach—it goes out into the world one by one as each camper, counselor or staff member leaves camp at the end of the season. Just like the words in the song Peace sung at campfire each night “...when I learn to live serenely cares will cease from the hills I gather courage visions of the days to be strength to lead and faith to follow all are given unto me….”
The Mid-Summer Party will be held this year on July 16th, 2019 right in Jackson, a couple blocks off the town square! Join us on the lawn between Persephone and The Juicery from 5pm to 8pm for music, drinks, food and catching up with TVRC friends old and new! We'll be celebrating 80 years since the founding of TVRC right in the heart of the community that has been so supportive of the ranch since the very beginning. We look forward to seeing you all there!

www.tvrcamp.org/mid-summer-party

WAYS to STAY IN TOUCH with TVRC

Receive enewsletters sent every couple months; take part in surveys and discussion boards—www.tvrcamp.org

Enjoy our frequent posts on Facebook—www.facebook.com/TVRCamp

Stay connected with current campers, staff and alumni on Instagram—www.instagram.com/TVRCamp

Take a break with our YouTube channel—www.youtube.com/TVRCamp