

# Summit Bechtel Reserve

## Whitewater Adventure

Troop 598's High Adventure Trip  
New River Gorge National Park

2023



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2023



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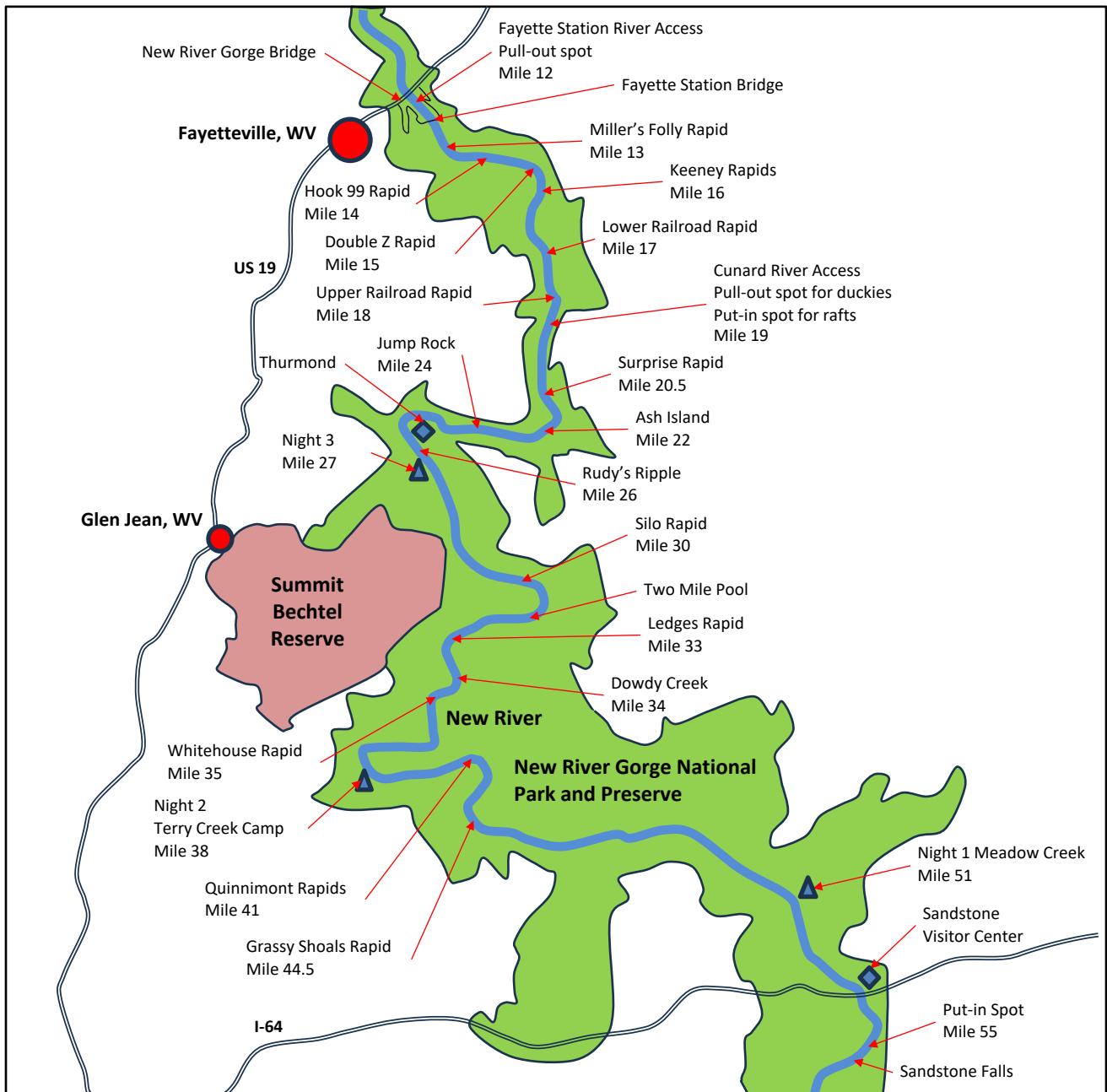
**Background**

As part of the Evendale Troop 598's high adventure program, the Scouts from the Troop participated in a 6-day trek at the Summit Bechtel Reserve, located in Glen Jean, WV. The Troop was assigned the crew number NR062423-AB. The "NR" refers to the fact that the trek was the New River Gorge trek, the "062423" was the assigned arrival date, and the "AB" refers to the fact that the Troop had 2 crews.

The trek covered 36 miles of the New River over 4 days in individual ducky kayaks and 7 miles of the New River over 1 day in 8-person rafts. Nights were spent at campsites along the river.



Map showing the location of Summit Bechtel Reserve relative to Evendale, Ohio



Map showing Summit Bechtel Reserve and the new River Gorge National Park

## **History of the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve**

The Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve, often shortened as Summit Bechtel Reserve, is BSA's newest high adventure base, joining the existing bases Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, Sea Base in Florida, and Northern Tier in Minnesota. The Summit is in Glen Jean, West Virginia.

The history of the Summit began in 2007 when the BSA leadership started looking for a permanent home for the National Scout Jamboree. At the time, the Jamboree was held at US Army property at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia. Being a military base, the BSA was not allowed to build any permanent structures. Each Jamboree the BSA was required to set up temporary housing, activities, dining halls, etc. Having a permanent home would allow the BSA to improve the experience for the attendees.

In addition to obtaining a permanent home for the Jamboree, the BSA wanted to open another high adventure base for the large number of Scouts who are wait-listed each year at the other three high adventure bases.

More than 80 sites in 28 states were evaluated over an 18-month span as possible venue sites. The sites were whittled down to three sites in 2008: Arkansas, Virginia, and West Virginia. In November 2009, BSA announced that it had selected the West Virginia site as the final decision. One of the key deciding factors in choosing the West Virginia site was its adjacency to the New River Gorge National Park. More than 13 miles of the Summit property borders the park, giving Scouts access to the more than 72,000 acres within the federal property. Over 14,000 acres were purchased, with construction on the various facilities starting in 2010. The Summit's opening event was the 2013 National Jamboree.

The Summit Bechtel National Scout Reserve comprises three main components of activity:

- James C. Justice National Scout Camp  
The National Scout Camp operates week-long summer camps and offers units a resource for camping.
- Paul R. Christen National High Adventure Base  
The high adventure base operates six different organized treks:
  - New River Experience: This trek offers 50+ miles of backpacking style travel on inflatable kayaks and rafts. This is the part of Summit that the Troop experienced.
  - Summit Experience: This trek offers introductory level experiences at each of the nine Summit high adventure venues
  - Bikepacking Experience: This trek offers 50+ miles of backpacking style travel on bikes
  - Polaris ATV Experience: This trek offers 60+ miles of exploration using ATVs.
  - Marksman Experience: This trek offers a variety of shooting sports activities
  - Pack N' Paddle Experience: This trek offers 40+ miles of hiking and rafting
- John D. Tickle Training and Leadership Center  
The leadership training center offers youth and adult training throughout the year.

## **The New River and The New River Gorge National Park**

The New River is approximately 360 miles long. The river originates in North Carolina and passes through Virginia and West Virginia. In West Virginia, the New River joins with the Gauley River to form the Kanawha River, ultimately flowing into the Ohio River.

There isn't any evidence to explain the origins of the name of the river. Despite its name, the New River is considered by some geologists to be one of the oldest rivers in the world.

In West Virginia, most of the New River is contained in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. The river was designated as a National River in 1978 and redesignated as the National Park and Preserve in 2020 under the control of the National Park Service. The park contains 53 miles of the river and over 72,000 acres of the surrounding land. The high adventure trek took place fully within that stretch of the river.

The New River Gorge area is home to a very diverse plant and animal habitat, including many endangered species. The rock cliffs that form the walls of the gorge provide a rich display of geological features. The human history of the area is dominated by the lumber and coal mining industries, made possible by the introduction of the railroad into the gorge. Many abandoned places related to these past industries dot the hillsides along the gorge.

## **Explanation of rapid classification**

Whitewater rapids are typically assigned a classification number to communicate the relative difficulty of the rapid as well as the danger associated with that rapid. Several factors are used to determine a rapid's classification: volume of water, gradient drop, the number of obstacles, the technical skill required, difficulty of rescue, and the risk of harm. The generally accepted classification system goes from Class I to Class VI. The definition for each classification is detailed below.

### Class I:

Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

### Class II:

Easy rapids with smaller waves and clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering might be required.

### Class III:

Rapids with high, irregular waves and narrow passages that often require precise maneuvering.

### Class IV:

Long, difficult rapids with constricted passages that often require complex maneuvering in turbulent water. The course may be hard to determine, and scouting is often necessary.

### Class V:

Extremely difficult, long and very violent rapids with highly congested routes, which should be scouted from shore. Rescue conditions are difficult and there is significant hazard to life in the event of a mishap. Class V is the upper limit of what is possible in a commercial raft.

### Class VI:

Nearly impossible and very dangerous. For teams of experts only. Involves the risk of loss of life. Class VI rapids are not commercially navigable.

On the Summit trek, the crew kayaked Class I – III rapids in the ducky inflatables and rafted Class I – V rapids in the full-size rafts.



**Crew Photos**

Crew A



Declan McGrath, Crew Leader



Jake Patrick, Chaplain



Nathan Hoffman, Outdoor Ethics



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens

**Crew Photos**

Crew B



Nathan Young, Crew Leader



Travis Anglin, Chaplain



Austin Young, Outdoor Ethics



Wesley Anglin



Aiden Fischesser

**Crew Photos**

Crew A



Mr. Tim McGrath



Mr. Brad Wilkens



Mr. Luke Wilkens

Crew B



Mr. Jess Anglin



Mr. Steve Lohmueller



Mr. Nick Young

**Saturday**  
**June 24**

The Troop started the day out by meeting at the BTAP at 7:00 am. After collecting the last of the paperwork, stowing the gear, and taking a group photo, the Scouts were on the road by 7:30.



Jake Patrick, Wesley Anglin, Ben Adkins, Nathan Young, Nathan Hoffman, Mr. Wilkens, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Lohmueller, Petey Wilkens, Travis Anglin, Mr. Young, Austin Young, Mr. Anglin, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. McGrath

Mr. McGrath, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Young, and Mr. Lohmueller drove. The drive was easy with no traffic issues. The Troop stopped at a Subway restaurant for lunch just east of Charleston, WV, and arrived at Summit's Ruby Welcome Center around 1:30 pm.



Stopping for lunch at Subway



The Troop arrived at the Welcome Center for Summit to check in

The check-in building was empty of Scouts, with only a few staff members around. Eventually, another Scout troop did show up as well.

While going through check in, everyone filled out their buddy tags, did a quick pass-through for the medical recheck, and several people got their picture taken with a large stuffed bear in the lobby. They were then off to their campsite.



Mr. McGrath explaining expectations during the check-in process



Mr. Lohmueller with his new friend

The Troop's campsite was in Base Camp D. It started to rain just as they had arrived in the campsite. Everyone hunkered down next to the shower house to stay dry while they waited for information as to which tents they were assigned to. After about 15-20 minutes the rain stopped, and they were able to check out the tents. The tents were two-person and were palatial in size.

A little bit later the Scouts were able to meet their staff guides. The Scouts received their dry bags, and the staff gave them pointers on what to pack and what to leave behind, running through a quick shakedown of everyone's gear. The guides also talked about what to expect on the river.



The Scouts meeting the staff guides and getting their gear



Listening to instructions

The crew, consisting of three separate Troops, would have 4 staff members present for the duration of the trek. Melinda, or Lindy, was the leader. She is local, having grown up just a few miles from camp. This is her fourth year at Summit. Emilio is from Puerto Rico, and this is his third year at Summit. Zeke is from Texas, and this is his second year on staff. The fourth staff member, Cat, also from West Virginia, was not present and would meet the crew in the morning.

After the shakedown, the Scouts went to the trading post to purchase souvenirs. Afterwards everyone went back to the campsite for a bit before walking up to the dining hall for dinner. Everyone was impressed with the quality of the food. After dinner, the Scouts had their crew photos taken.



View of the camp



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, and Jake Patrick hanging out amongst the tents



Austin Young playing frisbee golf



Aiden Fischesser playing frisbee golf



Base Camp D



Mr. Wilkens inside one of the tents



Austin Young



Rounding up the Scouts for dinner



View of the camp from the dining hall



Inside the dining hall



Crew A:  
Mr. Wilkens, Jake Patrick, Mr. Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman,  
Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, Petey Wilkens, Mr. McGrath



Crew B:  
Mr. Anglin, Wesley Anglin, Austin Young, Nathan Young,  
Travis Anglin, Mr. Lohmueller, Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Young

In the evening, the Scouts gathered around the Gaga ball pit. At first, the Scouts just kicked the ball back and forth while talking. After a while, though, the Scouts got actual games of Gaga ball going.



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young



Wesley Anglin



Sitting around the Gaga ball pit talking



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath, Wesley Anglin



Ben Adkins, Mr. Young



Mr. Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman, ,Nathan Young





Nathan Hoffman against Austin Young, with Ben Adkins, Travis Anglin, and Petey Wilkens watching



Travis Anglin against Aiden Fischesser, with Wesley Anglin and Austin Young in the background tossing a ball



Jake Patrick, Declan McGrath



Smooth move by Petey Wilkens, with Ben Adkins and Nathan Young watching



Nathan Young against Declan McGrath, with Petey Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman, and Mr. Wilkens watching



Aiden Fischesser against Travis Anglin, with Mr. Wilkens, Nathan Young, Austin Young, and Nathan Hoffman watching



Declan McGrath, Jake Patrick, Aiden Fischesser tossing a ball



Jake Patrick, Declan McGrath tossing a ball

Later that evening, Mr. McGrath called the Scouts together to hold a short crew meeting to talk about expectations for the trek ahead.



Chaplain's Aides Jake Patrick and Travis Anglin speaking to the crews about the Duty to God award



Outdoor Ethics guides Nathan Hoffman and Austin Young planning on how to earn Summit's Sustainability Award

Towards the end of the evening, a storm blew through the area, chasing everyone into their tents. Fortunately, the storm did not last long.



Approaching rainstorm



Approaching rainstorm

**Sunday**  
**June 25**

The Scouts got up around 6:00 and everyone was able to get most of their gear packed before heading to breakfast in the dining hall. Everyone agreed that breakfast was amazing for a camp meal.

After breakfast everyone finished their packing and headed over to the meet-up spot in Basecamp Charlie by 8:00 to begin the trek. Each member of the crew received their PFD and helmet and packed their gear on the gear truck. The crew boarded the bus and were on the road by 9:30 am.



The crew just prior to departure for the trek, in front of everyone's dry bags



Aiden Fischesser with everyone's dry bags

Together there were 3 Scout troops on this trek. In addition to Troop 598, there was Troop 1441 from Cleveland, OH and Troop 810 from Galveston, Texas.

The bus ride to the put-in spot near the town of Hinton, WV took about 1.25 hours. The put-in spot is just downstream of Sandstone Falls at river mile 55. These falls are the tallest falls on the New River at about 16' of vertical drop. The falls are 1050' long and span the entire width of the river. The crew would put in downstream of the falls and travel 43 miles downriver to the pull-out spot at the New River Gorge Bridge.

Once at the river, the crew took a 1/4 mile hike from the parking lot to an overlook to see Sandstone Falls. The staff crew leader, Melinda, explained some of what the crew could expect on the trek.



View of Sandstone Falls



View of Sandstone Falls from the observation deck



View of Sandstone Falls from the trail to the observation deck



Jake Patrick



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens



Mr. Lohmueller

The crew grabbed lunches and the gear they wanted on the river and walked to the put-in spot for lunch. The lunches were Philmont lunches. Several of the lunches had lemon pepper tuna, which didn't go over well with the Scouts. Several people believed in forest fairies.

During this time, Austin Young was very anxious to get started. About every 15 minutes he'd say "NOW are we going to get in the water?". After lunch and a talk from Melinda about safety and what to expect on the river, the crew donned their life vests, stowed gear on the duckies, and got on the water.



Melinda giving the safety instructions prior to the crews getting on the water

Melinda mentioned that the river was currently flowing at around 9,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) of water. The average for this time of year is around 4,000 CFS. This meant that the current was going to be strong and flowing well. Melinda mentioned that she likes rafting the best when the water flow is in the 8,000 to 10,000 CFS range.

The area of the put-in is a calm pool, so the first thing the crew did was to practice getting into their duckies. Everyone had to jump out of their ducky and get back in without assistance.



Once on the river everyone grouped together for Melinda to give some additional instructions



Mr. McGrath practicing self-rescue



Several scouts practicing self-rescues



A scout practicing self-rescue



Wesley Anglin



Declan McGrath



Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman

The crew hit the first Class 2 rapid around mile 53.5. Wesley got flipped and had to swim down the rapid. A bit further down the river, the river opened into a pool, and the Scouts were allowed to get out of the kayaks and swim. Widespread tipping of kayaks took place.



Petey Wilkens



Good natured kayak-tipping



Petey Wilkens attempting to flip Ben Adkins's kayak



Petey Wilkens swimming away after successfully tipping Aiden Fischesser's kayak

The first day was relatively short, only covering about 4 miles of river. The crew stopped at Meadow Creek for the evening. Everyone carried their kayaks up the boat ramp and stowed them next to the campsite.



Everyone's kayaks stowed for the night



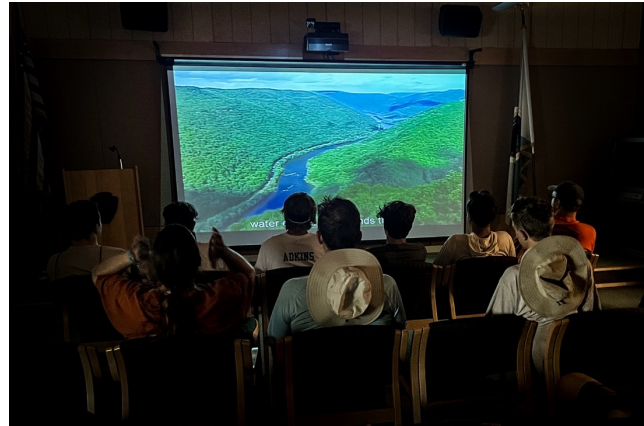
Travis Anglin and Austin Young took the opportunity to practice throwing the safety rope

After getting tents set up, the crew took a hike to the Sandstone Visitor Center. The visitor center is part of the New River Gorge National Park. The hike was about 2 miles each way and was on public roads the entire way. The Scouts didn't seem to mind the walk, but they were not too engaged with the displays at the visitor center. They did get a chance to watch a video about the history of the area that they seemed to enjoy.

One of the displays that did get the attention of the boys was a sandbox with augmented reality. The user could sculpt the sand and the augmented reality would create the contour lines which would be projected onto the sand. The augmented reality would then portray a rainstorm, showing how the water would flow across the land based on the contours.



Sandstone Visitor Center entrance



The Scouts watched a video highlighting the geography of the area



Scouts playing with the augmented reality display



Mr. Brad Wilkens, Mr. Luke Wilkens, Nathan Young



Nathan Young



Once back at camp, Emilio put out chips and salsa for a snack. The Scouts played football with the other 2 troops or tossed a whiffle ball, until it was time for dinner. For dinner, the crew had tacos.



Ben Adkins, Petey Wilkens



Petey Wilkens, Austin Young, Travis Anglin



Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman



Petey Wilkens, Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens



Austin Young, Wesley Anglin, Nathan Hoffman



All three troops played football together in a field next to the campsite



Ben Adkins



Austin Young



Wesley Anglin, Ben Adkins



Austin Young



Travis Anglin



Nathan Young



Nathan Hoffman



Wesley Anglin



Jake Patrick

For each meal, several scouts from the three Troops would be responsible for cooking the meal for the three troops and staff.

Before each meal, the crew was expected to say Grace. Like the other high adventure bases, Summit has a grace specific to Summit.

*Summit Grace*

*For this time and this place  
For your goodness and grace  
For each friend we embrace  
We thank you, O Lord.*

*Amen*

On the way back from the visitor center, Emilio mentioned to the crew that they would be baking cobbler for dinner that night. One of the scouts mentioned that Mr. Lohmueller makes yummy cobbler. Melinda then mentioned to the Scouts that she was the two-time Raleigh County Cobbler Queen. She then challenged Mr. Lohmueller to a bake off.

The quartermaster had provided a large box of cake batter and 7 lbs of cherry pie filling to make 2 cobblers. This is about 2-3 times what would be needed to make just 2 cobblers. Not to waste anything, Melinda wanted to use it all to make the cobblers. Due to the extra volume, it took about 1.5 hours to bake, and they still weren't quite done. Mr. Lohmueller's was mostly done, but Melinda's was still runny. One person jokingly referred to her cobbler as cobbler pudding. The consensus amongst the Scouts was that Mr. Lohmueller had won this competition. Melinda wasn't quite ready to admit defeat though.



Nathan Young, Travis Anglin, and Austin Young making dinner



Mr. McGrath in the dinner line



Declan McGrath working on dishes after dinner



Mr. Lohmueller making his cobbler



Melinda with the 2 cobblers ready for baking



Melinda asserting her role as Two-Time Raleigh County Cobbler Queen



Melinda and Mr. Lohmueller working together to check on the cobblers



Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Wilkens, and Mr. Young hanging out while the Scouts played football



Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, Mr. Wilkens, and Ben Adkins playing cards while waiting for the cobbler to bake. It was during this card game that Mr. Wilkens offered some wisdom: "I'm going to give you some advice that will really make a difference in your life. Listen more. Speak less."



Mr. Lohmueller's cherry cobbler



Emilio serving up the cobbler to Declan McGrath and Aiden Fischesser



Emilio serving up the cobbler



Declan McGrath giving his impression of the cobbler



View of the hillsides surrounding the campsite

After the cobbler, Melinda led the crews in a version of Roses, Thorns, and Buds, with her version being along Summit themes. Her version was High Side, Low Side and Horizons. Each person was expected to share their experiences of the day through these items. High Side refers to a highlight or something positive of the day. Low Side refers to something that wasn't so good or was difficult. Horizon refers to something that the person was looking forward to in the days ahead. The intent of this exercise was to help crew members process the day and to build comradery through the sharing of their thoughts and experiences. As a Scout was sharing, they would hold a spatula, affectionately called the talking spatula. This was to showcase that the Scout had the floor and that everyone else should be quiet and attentive to the speaker. Once the Scout was done sharing, he would pass the spatula to the next person.

Each person also had to answer the question of the day. Today's question was "Cheesecake – is it pie or cake?"

While on the river, Nathan Hoffman lost a camera to the river, Melinda lost a phone, and another adult from one of the other troops also lost her phone.

Once it got dark, the hillsides surrounding the campsite were lit up by a multitude of lightning bugs. The stars were out and there was a half-moon in the sky. It was a pretty night.

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	4.0	4.0
Hiking	4.0	4.0
Total	8.0	8.0

**Monday**  
**June 26**

Emilio gave a loud rooster call at 7:00 am to wake up the cooks. Around 7:30 Mr. Lohmueller presented another episode of the Morning Show. The other two troops had not been told about the Morning Show, so it took them by surprise, but they seemed to enjoy it. This was the first time that the Morning Show was presented to more than just Troop 598.



View of the area around the campsite



View of the area around the campsite

While waiting for breakfast several Scouts spent the time tossing a wiffle ball. The crew had breakfast burritos for breakfast. After cleaning up and packing away all the gear onto the gear truck, the crew was on the river by around 10:00 am. The river report stated that the river was running around 11,025 CFS.



Scouts tossing a wiffle ball in the field next to the campsite



Scouts tossing a ball



Jake Patrick and Travis Anglin leading grace before breakfast



In line for breakfast



Wesley Anglin, Emilio, Austin Young, Declan McGrath and Aiden Fischesser at breakfast time

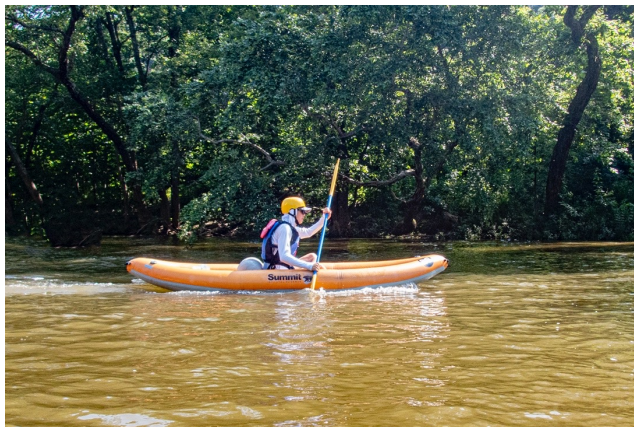


Mr. Young, Petey Wilkens, Mr. Lohmueller, Jake Patrick and Mr. Anglin at breakfast time

Melinda did not have a watch, so right before she got on the river, she took a red marker and drew one on her wrist. For the rest of the day if someone asked her what time it was, she would look at the “watch” on her wrist and say that it’s 10:00.

On several occasions throughout the day when the crew got to long pools on the river, Melinda would allow the Scouts to swim. Inevitably, the swimming turned to tipping others. Many ducky battles took place. In addition, several Scouts wanted to earn Kayaking and Whitewater Merit Badges, so Mr. McGrath would work with the Scouts on the requirements while floating down the pools.

During one of these pools, Melinda shared with Petey a new activity. You would flip a ducky over and two people would climb on and stand atop the ducky. They were not allowed to touch each other, and the goal was to get the other person to fall off the ducky by rocking the boat. The winner was the one left standing on the ducky. This became known as ducky wars.



Nathan Young



Petey Wilkens





Mr. McGrath, Austin Young



Wesley Anglin



Everyone lining up in preparation for running a rapid



Everyone in a line ahead of running a rapid



Nathan Young



Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser



Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Declan McGrath



Everyone lining up in preparation for running a rapid



Ducky war between Nathan Young and Pety Wilkens



Ducky war between Declan McGrath and Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman, Wesley Anglin



Nathan Young rowing the gear boat



Mr. Wilkens



Austin Young



Austin Young



Nathan Hoffman



Declan McGrath



Petey Wilkens found a log floating in the river and started bench pressing it



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath



Nathan Young and Petey Wilkens in a ducky war



Travis Anglin, Austin Young



Looking downstream



Aiden Fischesser



Ducky war between Nathan Hoffman and Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young



Several of the adults taking a break



Nathan Hoffman and Petey Wilkens in a ducky war



Nathan Hoffman in a victory stance against Petey Wilkens



Mr. Lohmueller



Aiden Fischesser



Austin Young, Nathan Hoffman



Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins



Austin Young



Nathan Young



Petey Wilkens

Grassy Shoals Rapid was the first Class III rapid of the trek. The rapid has a big hole followed by a long wave train, making for an exciting introduction to class III rapids.



The crew grouped up so Melinda could give instructions on how to run the rapid



Lining up in preparation of running the rapid

For lunch, the crew stopped at a beach area just downstream of Grassy Shoals Rapid. Lunch consisted of deli sandwiches and snacks.



The crew used an upside-down ducky as the table for the lunch line



Lunch was on a rocky beach riverside



Petey Wilkens extolling the contents of his sandwich



Lunch



Nathan Hoffman, Aiden Fischesser



Melinda giving instructions for the rapid coming up next



Wesley Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins

After lunch, the crew had another Class III rapid, Quinnimont Rapids. Quinnimont is French for “Five Mountains”, referring to the five mountain peaks surrounding the town by the same name that existed next to the river. After the rapids, the Scouts were able to enjoy another pool for swimming and playing in the water.



View approaching Quinnimont Rapids



View looking down river as the scouts regroup after Quinnimont Rapids



Austin Young trying his hand at being at the helm of the big gear boat



Jake Patrick



Mr. Wilkens ferrying several kayaks for Scouts who were playing in the pool of the river



Nathan Young attacking Petey Wilkens's kayak



Aiden Fischesser and Declan McGrath in a ducky war



Nathan Young trying a new way to paddle his kayak

Near mile marker 38, the crew arrived at the campsite for the night. The area is called Terry Creek. Summit owns a small strip of land there to house the campsite. The site is about 100 yards deep and 400-500 yards wide right on the river's edge and is mostly sandy beach.

After everyone got their tents up, it rained for about half an hour. After the rain stopped, Emilio brought out a snack of crackers, cheese cubes, and slices of pepperoni and salami. The Scouts devoured the snack.



The first job once the Scouts got to camp was to unload the gear truck



Mr. McGrath



View of the kayaks stowed riverside



View looking downstream





Mr. Anglin



The Scouts set up their tents on the edge of the sandy beach



Nathan Hoffman getting gear from his kayak



There was a lot of bamboo growing around the campsite



Mr. Young



Dinner line



View of the kitchen area of the campsite

After dinner, Ben started a small fire to hang around. Melinda started the High Side/Low Side/Horizons discussion for the Scouts to share about their day. The Question of the Day that everyone had to answer was “If you were a kitchen appliance, what would you be?”. After the discussion, Emilio brought out the fixings for Smores. Mr. McGrath also finished up working with several scouts to complete Kayaking Merit Badge. Wesley, Travis, Nathan Hoffman, Ben, and Jake Patrick completed the merit badge.



Wesley Anglin cleaning up after dinner



Declan McGrath, Ben Adkins



Campfire for roasting marshmallows



Ben Adkins



Hanging out around the campfire



Austin Young, Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman, Aiden Fischesser,  
Declan McGrath



Nathan Young



Mr. Wilkens helping to get the fire going



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, and Wesley Anglin

It started to rain hard and thunder around 11:00 pm. The storm lasted for about 1 hour.

At one point on the river, several scouts were talking to Cat about the agenda for the rest of the trek. Cat mentioned that on Wednesday night they would be camping on top of the hill away from the river and that they would be taking a bus from the river. Ben asked incredulously, “A bus? What is high adventure about that?”

The day started out at 66°F with a predicted high temperature of 79°F. Other than the rain before dinner and after bedtime, it was sunny throughout the day.

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	13.0	17.0
Hiking	0.0	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>21.0</b>

**Tuesday**  
**June 27**

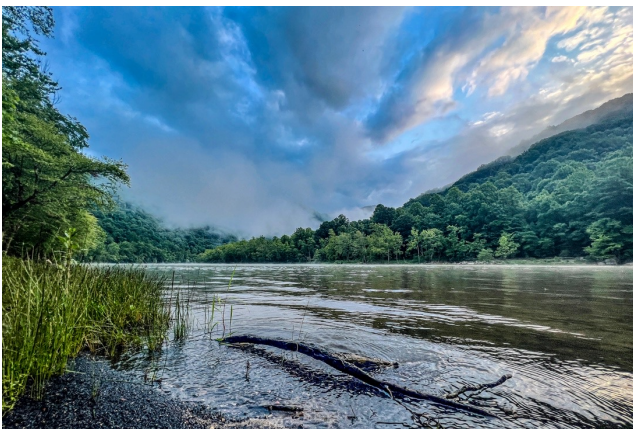
The morning started out somewhat cool, with partly cloudy skies, and a nice sunrise.



Panorama view of the river from the campsite (flowing right to left)



View of the campsite early in the morning



Early morning sunrise with clouds filling the gorge, looking downstream



Early morning sunrise with clouds filling the gorge, looking upstream



Nathan Hoffman, Wesley Anglin, Petey Wilkens



Mr. McGrath journaling notes on the trip



Nathan Hoffman



Chow line



Everyone was responsible for cleaning their own dishes



Mr. Wilkens ready to get on the water



Mr. Young ready to get on the water



Petey Wilkens plotting the route ahead

The crew was on the river by around 10:00. Around mile 36 the crew came to a Class II rapid. Up to this point, Melinda gave instructions on the route to take through each rapid and everyone was expected to file one after the other through the rapid. This was called a duckie line. With this rapid, however, Melinda allowed everyone to pick their own route through the rapid.



Getting on the river in the morning



Starting another day of kayaking

The next rapid was Whitehouse Rapid, the first Class III rapid of the day. The rapid was named for the fact that there used to be a white house on the water's edge. The rapid is also called Duckie Muncher. While traversing this rapid, Nathan Young was thrown from his kayak, but ended up landing in Luke Wilkens' kayak. The two finished up going through the rest of the rapid together on Luke's kayak before retrieving Nathan's kayak.



Melinda giving instructions on how to run Whitehouse Rapids



Forming a ducky line while approaching Whitehouse Rapids



Nathan Young



Nathan Hoffman

At Dowdy Creek, the crew pulled off the river on river right. They were able to take a short hike through a culvert tunnel to a small waterfall. The waterfall had a drop of around 25 feet. Some of the Scouts enjoyed standing under the falling water.

Back at camp in the morning, Melinda brought out a ballerina tutu and was wearing it all morning. At the waterfall, she offered it to anyone to wear. Petey Wilkens immediately jumped at the chance.



Culvert tunnel that provided access to the waterfall



Approaching the waterfall on Dowdy Creek



The waterfall on Dowdy Creek



Group shot with the waterfall on Dowdy Creek



Petey Wilkens



Travis Anglin



Nathan Young



Mr. Wilkens



Austin Young



Austin Young



Melinda



Petey Wilkens rocking the tutu



Nathan Hoffman rocking the tutu



After the waterfall, the crew crossed over to river left and stopped at a beach for lunch.



Travis Anglin leading grace before lunch



An old tree trunk was used for the lunch table



Petey Wilkens



Petey Wilkens



Mr. Wilkens, Petey Wilkens,  
Nathan Young



Kayaks stowed riverside during lunch



Before leaving the Scouts policed the lunch area to make sure they didn't leave any trash

Immediately downriver from the lunch spot was the Ledges Rapid. This rapid is a series of three large ledges on the riverbed, creating great wave trains. In preparation for running the rapid, Melinda and Mr. Young went ahead of the group, with the rest of the crew following behind at some distance. This allowed Mr. Young to position himself downstream of the rapid to video everyone as they ran the rapid.



Melinda used the sandy beach to draw out the upcoming Ledges Rapid to show how to run the rapid



Queen Melinda knighting Declan McGrath



Grouping up on the river after lunch before running the Ledges Rapid



Melinda calling everyone to form a ducky line before running the Ledges Rapid



Mr. Young with his GoPro camera



The Scouts tossed a wiffle ball while Mr. Young and Melinda went ahead to videotape the Scouts running the rapid

Downriver from Ledges Rapid is Two Mile Pool. This is a long stretch of water that is calm. The crew floated most of the length of this stretch of river, which allowed the Scouts to get in the water and play around. Numerous rounds of ducky wars took place, as well as other shenanigans. Several people tried stand up kayaking. One of the other troops made a barge out of numerous kayaks. Each layer of the barge consisted of 3 kayaks and there were 5 total layers. Zeke joined in on the fun by stealing other people's kayaks. Mr. McGrath also started working with Scouts who were interested in earning Whitewater Merit Badge.



Mr. Anglin carrying a Scout's kayak



Mr. Young



Travis Anglin in Zeke's kayak



Ben Adkins attacking Petey Wilkens' kayak



Jake Patrick taking a quiet rest as his kayak drifts down the river



Petey Wilkens flipping Austin Young's kayak



Nathan Young



Jake Patrick



Mr. Wilkens



Travis Anglin



Emilio challenged Melinda to a ducky war. Get ready, set, ....



Go! Let the battle begin



Melinda wins



A second later Melinda lost her balance and fell in



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins



Mr. Young



Melinda



Kayak barge



Travis Anglin



Petey Wilkens attacking Austin Young's kayak



Emilio bringing up the rear with the gear boat

While the Scouts were on the trek, there were a huge number of forest fires that were burning in Canada. The smoke from these fires was extending down into the US. Although it wasn't strong enough to affect breathing, it did cause the air to look hazy. Views down the gorge frequently are clear and the color of the forested hillsides a vibrant green. On this trek, everything looked muted and hazy.



Ben Adkins attacking Petey Wilkens



Mr. Young

During the Two Mile Pool, Melinda introduced another fun activity. She provided a piece of webbing and a carabiner. The carabiner would be attached to the front of the kayak. The Scout would then stand on the back of the kayak, and by pulling the webbing, attempt to get the kayak to flip end over end.



Austin Young



Travis Anglin



Zeke attacking Petey Wilkens's kayak while Petey is jumping onto Ben Adkins' kayak



Mr. Anglin ferrying a Scout's kayak



Jake Patrick



Nathan Hoffman and Austin Young in a ducky war



Mr. McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Petey Wilkens



Mr. Young



Austin Young and Travis Anglin attacking Petey Wilkens



Ben Adkins and Petey Wilkens in a ducky war



Tim McGrath



Mr. Wilkens



Nathan Hoffman



Travis Anglin takes over Zeke's kayak as Zeke goes out looking for someone to tip



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser, Nathan Hoffman

The last rapid of the day was the Class III rapid, Silo Rapid. The rapid provided a great run and an awesome way to end the day. The rapid is named for the storage silos near the river that were used for storing sand. The sand was quarried from the sandstone near the rim of the gorge and was used in glassmaking. Though no longer used, the silos can still be seen from the river.



Coming out of Silos Rapid



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath



After the Silo Rapid, there was another pool where the Scouts could play in the water.



Mr. Anglin



Mr. Anglin



Travis Anglin and Austin Young



Mr. Wilkens

As the crew was nearing the campsite, many people got excited to see that the campsite already had wall tents set up for the Scouts to use. The camp is semi-permanent, with base-camp style wall tents on platforms.



Approaching the campsite



View of the campsite



Each tent had 2 bunk beds



The campsite had a large shelter with picnic tables



View of the campsite from the river's edge



View of the river from the campsite



Mr. Anglin



Wesley Anglin and Melinda making pineapple upside-down cake



Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Anglin, and Declan McGrath doing their dishes

After dinner, the crews took a 30-minute walk into the historic town of Thurmond. On the way the Scouts had to cross a bridge over the river. This afforded the opportunity to see one of the rapids, called Rudy's Ripple, that they would be going through in the morning. Emilio also provided some history on the bridge itself. At one point in its history, the townsfolk knew a flood was coming and were worried about the bridge. They parked a steam engine on the bridge to help weigh it down and make the bridge more stable. Unfortunately, their plan did not work, and the flood destroyed the bridge, forcing the town to rebuild the bridge. At low water levels, one can still see the steam engine downstream of the bridge. Cat then took the opportunity to explain to the Scouts how to "read the river", so that they can understand how to navigate while on the river.



Part-way through the walk, Emilio paused to give some history of the town of Thurmond and the surrounding area



Crossing on the bridge over the New River



View of the New River as it approaches the town of Thurmond, WV.



View looking upriver with Rudy's Ripple on the left-hand side

Emilio led the tour through the town and was a wealth of information on the local history. The settlement of Thurmond, WV was incorporated as a town in 1900 and was established by Captain W. D Thurmond, who had been living in the area since 1844. The town was built on property that was given to Thurmond as payment for a surveying job. The town remained small until the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway established a rail stop in the town. This allowed the town to prosper, in large part because of the many businesses and facilities that were established to support the railroad. The stop also allowed for the movement of goods in and out of town. The railroad also allowed for coal mined in the area to be hauled to market. In its heyday more than 12 passenger trains stopped at the train depot daily.

Captain Thurmond did not allow alcohol on his property, which comprised the originally incorporated portion of town. Although there was already a hotel in town, a second hotel was established just outside the incorporated boundaries, thus sidestepping the ban on alcohol. This hotel, the Dun Glen, was opened in 1901 and quickly became a nationally known resort. The hotel burned down, however, in 1930, marking the beginning of the decline in the town. The decline was driven in large part by diminishing outputs from the local coal mines. By the 1950s, it was mostly abandoned. Today, there are only 3 people who live in the town. There are still some remaining buildings from its heyday. Most of the town is currently owned by the National Park Service.

The first stop in the tour of Thurmond was the train depot. The first passenger station for Thurmond was built in 1897 but burned down in 1903. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, which operated the depot, announced that it would rebuild the station, making it one of the largest on the line. The new station opened in 1904. The first floor provided services for passengers and the second floor was used for railroad offices. In the 1960s, due to decline in passenger trains, the entire building was converted into offices. These offices were used until the mid-1980s, when the railroad stopped using the building. The National Park Service purchased the building in the late-1980s and restored it to its classic early 1900s appearance. Today the National Park Service uses the building as a visitor center, and Amtrak operates a flag stop for one of its passenger trains, the Cardinal line.



Emilio explaining the history of the train station



View looking down the tracks to the train station

The main street of Thurmond was called Commercial Row, due to the string of businesses that operated along the street. At the far end of Commercial Row stood the National Bank of Thurmond building. The building was erected in 1917 and originally housed a jewelry store and a clothing store on the first floor, and offices and apartments on the second floor. The Bank of Thurmond moved into the building in 1923 and operated there until the bank failed in 1931 in the early days of the Great Depression. After the bank closed, the building housed a dry good store for many years. In the 1970s new life was breathed into the buildings when two Thurmond residents bought the buildings along Commercial Row to establish the Banker's Club. The Banker's Club consisted of a hotel, restaurant, and club, catering to whitewater rafters. The Banker's Club closed in 1988.



View looking down Commercial Row



National Bank of Thurmond building

Another prominent feature in Thurmond is the coaling tower. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway built the large cement tower in 1922 to provide coal to the steam engines. The tower can hold up to 500 tons of coal. A series of elevators lifted the coal into the top of the tower. Tracks on either side of the tower allowed the steam engines to pull up close to the tower. The coal then fell down chutes on the side of the tower into the tender cars of the locomotives. Once the railroad switch to diesel-electric locomotives, the tower was no longer needed, and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway abandoned the tower in 1960.



View down the tracks towards the coal tower



Abandoned coal tower



View from the coal tower towards the train station



Emilio offering some more history of the buildings in Thurmond



One of the handful of abandoned houses in Thurmond



There are still 3 people who live in Thurmond, and this building serves as the town hall.



CSX still operates frequent freight trains through Thurmond

Back at camp the crew had pineapple upside down cake and did the High Side/Low Side/Horizons sharing. Then Jake Patrick led a daily devotional before everyone called it a night. Austin Young had his Scoutmaster Conference for First Class this evening as well.

The weather was overcast and somewhat cool throughout the day.



High side / Low side / Horizons discussion

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	11.0	28.0
Hiking	3.0	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>35.0</b>

Wednesday  
June 28



Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Travis Anglin



Mr. Young improvising a strap for his sunglasses



View of the campsite



Policing the campsite to leave no trace



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young

It was a chilly morning to start the day. Nothing dried overnight, so everyone started out with wet clothing. The crew was on the river by around 10:00. The first rapid of the day was Rudy's Ripple. This is a Class III rapid that starts out with a challenging hole, following by a strong and long wave train. Mr. Anglin, Travis Anglin, and Petey Wilkens ended up flipping in the rapid.



In a ducky line in preparation for running Rudy's Ripple



Regrouping after running Rudy's Ripple

The next rapid is called Swimmers Rapid. This is a Class II rapid, and the guides allowed the Scouts to swim the length of the rapid. About half the crew took the opportunity to swim the rapid.

The next point of adventure was Jump Rock. This is a large boulder on the river's edge that towers about 10-12' over a deep pool of water. The crew pulled off to the side of the river and about half the crew climbed on top of the boulder, taking turns jumping into the water below.



Nathan Young



Travis Anglin



Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins





Petey Wilkens



Declan McGrath



Mr. Wilkens



Jake Patrick



Aiden Fischesser



Mr. Lohmueller



Wesley Anglin



Mr. Young

After Jump Rock, the river flows into a long pool and the Scouts were able to swim once again. This time the energy level was more subdued. It was during this time that the crew saw the Amtrak train, the Cardinal, passing through the gorge. The train stops at the Thurmond station three times a week as it heads east to New York and again three times a week as it heads west to Chicago.



Mr. Anglin taking it easy while ferrying a Scout's kayak



Petey Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins



One of the other troops created a new challenge. They used carabiners to connect a series of kayaks and the challenge was to run the length of the kayak chain without falling off.



Travis Anglin



The Young family taking a quiet rest break



Jake Patrick



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens attacking Nathan Hoffman



Mr. Wilkens at the helm of the gear boat



Ben Adkins, Petey Wilkens

The crew stopped for lunch riverside at around mile 22, just upstream of Ash Island.



The crew used an upside-down kayak as the lunch line table



Petey Wilkens, Declan McGrath, Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman



View of the lunch beach



Cat, Melinda, Emilio, Zeke

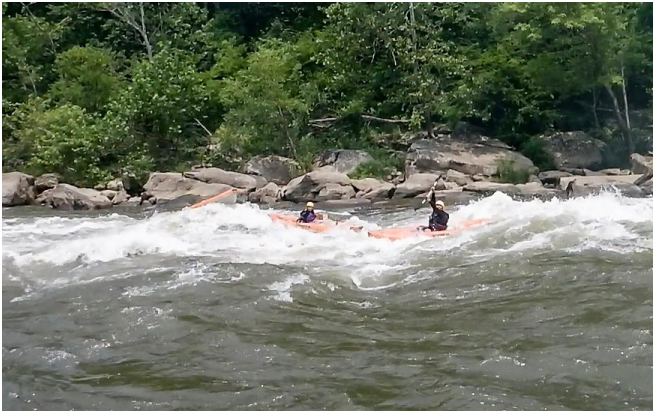
After lunch, the crew entered Surprise Rapid, which is a Class III rapid.

Previously, the guides had placed bets amongst themselves as to how many people in the crew would get ejected in Surprise. The predictions ranged from 15 to 20, out of the 34 people in the crew. The guides also picked their top 3 people they expected to have to swim the rapid.

The rapid is a bit misleading. As you approach the rapid, you see a large hole created by water as it flows over a boulder, but the view is not too intimidating. What you don't see until you are in the hole is that there is a wave of water at the bottom of the hole that shoots sideways, smacking the side of your kayak. This makes it very difficult to keep the kayak upright.

One of the guides took Mr. Young's GoPro camera and videotaped everyone as they came through the rapid.

Views of the Scouts as they kayaked through Surprise Rapids



In the end 17 people ended up flipping in the rapid, including two of the guides. This was an exhilarating way to end the kayaking stretch of the trek, as this was the last rapid the crew would float through on kayaks. There was a long pool downstream of the rapid, and then the crew arrived at the pull-out spot.



Looking upriver towards Surprise Rapids at the end of the kayaking portion of the trek



Pulling off the river at the Cunard River Access

While the crew was getting the duckies deflated and stored on the trailers, another rafting company had arrived and was bringing 4 8-person rafts to the waters edge. All the riders were young girls and were struggling under the weight of the rafts to carry them down the ramp and to the water. The Scouts cheered them on.

As the girls were climbing into the boats at the edge of the river, you could tell that they were apprehensive about getting their feet wet. The guide told them quite plainly “I realize that you probably don’t want to get wet. You picked the wrong activity!”

The crew had about a 20-minute bus ride to the night’s campsite. The bus driver had no fear driving up the winding and narrow road. She was very liberal in using both lanes to get around bends in the road.

Once at the campsite, the crew saw that the tents that they would sleep in that night had already been set up and were dry and clean. After getting settled in tents, the crew set up their wet and sandy tents from the previous days to dry out, before repacking for the next group going through a trek. Then, work on dinner began. This meal was a little different, in the sense that the adults did the cooking. The adults served a steak and potato dinner.



Mr. Lohmueller and Mr. Young cutting the steaks for grilling



Mr. Lohmueller grilling the steaks



Mr. Young grilling steaks for dinner



The dinner serving line is set



The Scoutmaster from one of the other troops and Mr. Wilkens doing the dishes

Nathan Hoffman came down with a bit of a fever and started feeling under the weather. He took some Tylenol and napped for a bit and was feeling better by the end of the day.

Cat and Emilio set up the branding station and were able to brand various items for the Scouts. They branded water bottles, boots, hats, cups, and other items. Cat, the self-proclaimed Branding Queen, was confident that she could brand almost anything. She came through with brilliant colors.



View of the campsite from the dining fly area



Propane furnace to heat the branding irons



Cat in action



Emilio branding an item for Travis Anglin



Emilio branding a hat for Declan McGrath



View of the campsite and dining fly area on top of the hill



Watching Mr. Young's GoPro video of the Scouts running Surprise Rapid

Mr. McGrath and the Scouts were able to complete the requirements for Whitewater Merit Badge. Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Aiden Fischesser, Austin Young, Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, and Jake Patrick earned the merit badge.

Before the trek had started, Austin Young asked Mr. Lohmueller to give him a Scoutmaster Challenge. Recently Austin had learned about challenge coins, and seeing one in the gift shop, he wanted to complete a challenge of some sort on the trek so that he could earn the right to purchase one. Mr. Lohmueller decided to challenge Austin to coordinate a campfire program that evening. Austin invited the other two troops to participate in the campfire program and one accepted. Mr. Lohmueller expanded the challenge to the rest of Troop 598 by challenging the two crews of 598 to see who could come up with the best skit. The Scouts had only a few hours to plan and practice their skits before the campfire program. Crew A chose a skit called "Prison Scene" while Crew B chose the classic "If I Weren't a Boy Scout" song, modified to fit the trek. The guides were then asked to be the judges of the competition. Mr. McGrath led the crew in one of his favorite songs about meeting a bear. Wesley Anglin sang a rendition of Abba's *Dancing Queen* but changed the words in honor of Melinda to *Cobbler Queen*. After several skits and songs



the two Troop 598 crews presented their skits for the competition. The Scoutmaster from one of the other troops presented a Scoutmaster Minute, and then the judges revealed their final decision. The members of Crew B were crowned the winners.

After the campfire program, several Scouts made Smores over the fire. The Troop then had a short devotional led by Travis Anglin, and then everyone called it a night.



Waiting for the campfire program to start



Austin Young leading the campfire program



Mr. McGrath, Ben Adkins



Travis Anglin

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	8.0	36.0
Hiking	0.0	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>43.0</b>

**Thursday**  
**June 29**

The day started early at 6:30. The temperature was somewhat chilly and there was thick fog. Everyone's dry bags had to be fully packed and stowed on trailer by 7:00. The crew was out of camp by 8:00.



Everyone had a dry bag like this to store their gear throughout the trek



In the morning everyone had to take their gear up the hill to stow on the gear truck



It was a foggy morning



Jake Patrick  
Everyone helped tear down the dining area and carry the gear to the gear truck



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath  
Everyone helped tear down the dining area and carry the gear to the gear truck



Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman  
Everyone helped tear down the dining area and carry the gear to the gear truck



Foggy view of the campsite



Loading the gear truck

The crew rode the bus back to the spot where they pulled off the river the day before. Today, the crew would be riding with an established river rafting company called River Expeditions. The Troop would be split between 2 8-person rafts.



Crew A:  
 Petey Wilkens, Jake Patrick, Mr. McGrath, Declan McGrath,  
 Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Wilkens, Emilio



Crew B:  
 Mr. Lohmueller, Travis Anglin, Wesley Anglin,  
 Aiden Fischesser, Austin Young, Nathan Young, Mr. Young,  
 Mr. Anglin, Emilio

The river guide for Crew A was named Katie. She was relatively new to guiding rafting trips on the Lower New River.

The river guide for Crew B was named Chaz. While on the river he wouldn't tell the Scouts how long he has been guiding river trips. All he would say is that he just started the week before, but not to worry, he spent all week watching YouTube videos, so he feels confident that he knows how to guide the boat successfully. Afterwards the Scouts learned that he has 34 years of experience leading rafting trips. Chaz has a dry sense of humor and comes across a bit as a stern, crusty person. One of the Scouts mentioned that he was a fun guide, in a drill sergeant kind of way. On the river, it became obvious that he did in fact know what he was doing.

After putting into the river, the Scouts quickly arrived at the first rapid of the day, the Class IV Upper Railroad Rapid. The rapid is named for the railroad bridge that crosses the river right after the rapid.

Immediately after Upper Railroad Rapid is the Lower Railroad Rapid, which is a Class III rapid. The rafting company had a photographer on the shore at this rapid to get photos of the Scouts as they came through the rapid.

Crew A:



Crew B:



After making it through the Lower Railroad Rapid the Scouts were introduced to the concept of whitewater surfing. This is an exhilarating experience. To surf, one paddles upstream to a hydraulic. A hydraulic occurs when water flows over an obstacle below the surface and cascades down the back side of the obstacle, creating a hole downstream of the obstacle. The guides navigate the raft into this hole and the surging water causes the boat to be stuck in the hole. The boat bucks and thrashes, but stays in the hole, giving a heart pumping ride. After a while the hole spits the boat out.

The four boats in the crew had the chance to get into the hydraulic at the end of the rapid and surf. Once the boat got spit out of the hole, the boat would paddle to the side of the river and get back in line to surf again. Each boat got the chance to surf 3 or 4 times.



Looking upstream at the Lower Railroad Rapids. The leftmost boat is about to enter the hydraulic to go surfing

After the Lower Railroad Rapid the Scouts had another Swimmers' Rapid where they could float through the rapid. After a few more rapids, the Scouts were presented with another Jump Rock, just before the Double Z Rapid. This jump was about about a 15-foot drop into the water below.



Jake Patrick



Ben Adkins

The rafting company also had a photographer positioned at the Keeney Rapids to capture photos of the Scouts running this rapid.

Crew A:



Crew A:





Crew B:



Crew B:





Looking Upstream at the Lower Keeney Rapids

The crew stopped for lunch right before Hook 99 Rapid. This Class III rapid, also called Harmon’s Hole, is named after one of the first boaters on the New River, John Harmon. One year during a downriver kayak race, Harmon found himself pinned by the current against a boulder at the top of the rapid. He was able to free himself, but his kayak stayed there. His racing number was 66, but with the kayak pinned vertically against the boulder, it looked like 99, marking the rapid for the rest of the racers.



View of Hook 99 Rapid



The rafts were beached at the lunch spot



Travis Anglin and Jake Patrick leading grace before lunch



Lunch line

At Miller’s Folly Rapid, another Class IV rapid, the Scouts had another opportunity to try surfing. Chaz had asked Wesley Anglin if he wanted a challenge. Wesley seemed a bit perplexed as to what this meant, but he seemed up for a challenge, so he said yes. Chaz instructed Wesley to go to the front of the boat and kneel, then lean forward over the front tube. This part of the boat bucks a lot during surfing and gets hit with a lot of the waves, making this an adrenaline inducing ride.

During one surfing run, Ben Adkins was thrown from Crew A's boat. Crew B was able to pick him out of the water. Ben at first sat down in the middle of the boat, but Chaz quickly handed him a paddle and told him to take Wesley's original spot on the side of the boat. Chaz told him under no uncertain terms "Hey! If you're gonna be in my raft, you're gonna get to work!". Ben joked that he was being kidnapped and made to do forced labor. Ben stayed in the raft until they got to a calm spot where he could get back to his boat.



Surfing in Miller's Folly Rapid



Crew A has just surfed and is getting back in line to go again



One of the other troops surfing



One of the other troops surfing



One of the other troops surfing



One of the other troops surfing

Later, Chaz turned to Wesley Anglin asked him if he was up for another challenge. Wesley said yes. Chaz, without explaining what he had in mind, told Wesley to jump in the water. Chaz then tried to explain a fun way for someone to be pulled back into the raft. Nathan Young pulled Wesley in, but the communication wasn't clear, and the method didn't quite work as well as Chaz was intending.



Nathan Young pulling Wesley Anglin back into the boat



Nathan Young pulling Wesley Anglin back into the boat



Wesley Anglin, Chaz

During the last rapid of the day, the Scouts could once again jump in and float through the rapid. During this rapid, Petey Wilkens and Wesley Anglin were given the opportunity to “ride the bull”. For this the Scout would sit on the front of the raft with their legs hanging over the front tube. Both made it down the rapid without falling off.



Scouts swimming the last rapid of the trek



Scouts swimming the last rapid of the trek



Regrouping on the boats after the swimming rapid

At the end of the rafting trip, the Scouts saw two iconic bridges over the New River. The first is the Fayette Station Bridge. The bridge is also called the Tunney Hunsaker Bridge, named after a boxer and former chief of police from the nearby town of Fayetteville, WV.

The bridge is a single lane truss bridge and was originally built in 1889. The bridge was the first bridge to cross the New River in Fayette County. The bridge allowed travelers to cross the gorge without having to ford the New River.

The second bridge is the New River Gorge Bridge. Opened in 1977 the bridge is a steel arch bridge that spans 3,030 feet over the New River, and for many years was the world's longest single span arch bridge. At its tallest, the roadbed is 876 feet above the New River. The bridge is a huge boon for transportation in the area, as it cuts vehicle travel time to cross the New River Gorge from about 45 minutes to 45 seconds. The bridge has become an iconic symbol of West Virginia



The Fayette Station and New River Gorge Bridges

The crew pulled off the river at Fayette Station, in the shadow of the New River Gorge Bridge. Once the rafts and gear were loaded the crew rode the bus back to the outfitter to return the rafting gear and then it was back to Summit.



Crew A carrying their boat off the river to the transport truck



Crew B carrying their boat off the river to the transport truck

Once at Summit, the Scouts had the opportunity to ride the Big Zip. This is a 3200' long zipline with three separate lines. At one point it is 160' above ground, and riders can get up to 60 mph towards the end of the ride. It takes about a minute to get from the start to finish.



Mr. Wilkens completing the Big Zip



Mr. Wilkens completing the Big Zip

After the zipline, the Scouts stopped at the gift shop for souvenirs and a cold drink. The original plan called for the Scouts to have dinner in the dining hall, but an audible was called and the decision was made to go into Fayetteville for a pizza dinner. The crew was able to make reservations at Pies and Pints.

Once in Fayetteville, the Scouts had some time before the reservation, so they walked around to explore the town for a bit, eventually stopping at an antique store called Enjoyed Again. The Scouts enjoyed looking around at the various treasures in the store. Several scouts purchased items. Declan McGrath purchased a stylish Hawaiian shirt, and several adults bought some handmade candy, including freeze-dried skittles. Several Scouts bought cans of cotton-candy flavored Coke.



An old Ben Franklin store in town



Fayette County Courthouse



Declan McGrath



Petey Wilkens



Austin Young

Once at the restaurant, the Scouts really enjoyed the hot pizza and cold drinks.



Enjoying a pizza dinner



Not even a single slice of pizza was left over



Dinner spot – Pies and Pints



Back at camp, the Scouts were able to take showers and hang out for a while. Nathan Hoffman had a Board of Review for Second Class Rank with Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Young, and Mr. Anglin, and Declan McGrath had a Scoutmaster Conference with Mr. Lohmueller for an Eagle Palm. The Scouts also completed the last of the requirements for Summit's Duty to God and Sustainability awards. Afterwards, everyone called it a night.



Nathan Hoffman, Mr. Anglin, Mr. Young, and Mr. Wilkens during Nathan's Board of Review



Declan McGrath and Mr. Lohmueller during Declan's Scoutmaster Conference

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	0.0	36.0
Rafting	7.0	7.0
Hiking	0.0	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>

**Friday**  
**June 20**

After breakfast it was time to pack up everyone’s gear into the vehicles and start the drive home. It was a grey and rainy trip home. The goal was to be back to BTAP in time for lunch. They made it to Washington Courthouse for a restroom break and snacks. Everyone loaded up on sugar and caffeine, and the caravan was back on the road. Shortly after getting onto I71, though, traffic was stop and go. The crew was 80 miles north of Cincinnati in farm country in the middle of nowhere, so the heavy traffic was very surprising. As it turns out, a lot of this traffic was Cincinnati-bound, heading there for the Taylor Swift concert that evening. Lots of Swifties. As one of the Scouts noted, “I have never seen so many teenage girls on the highway at once in my entire life!”



View of Camp D from the dining hall



Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman

## After the trek

During the trek the Scouts were working to earn the 50-Miler award. The main requirement for this patch is that the Scouts have to complete at least a 50-mile trek using non-powered modes of transportation over the course of at least 5 days. In addition, the Scouts need to complete 10 hours of conservation service time. Summit offered to count 3 hours towards this requirement from the time during the trek. The Troop organized three opportunities for the Scouts to complete their hours. First, the Scouts worked at Gorman Heritage Farm repairing trail water bars to help prevent erosion. Second, the Scouts participated in Camp Conservation Day at Camp Friedlander, where they were also repairing water bars and doing other trail maintenance on the We-Hin-Ay-Pe trail. Lastly, the Scouts worked again at Gorman Heritage Farm raking leaves to clear out a drainage culvert.

### Gorman Farm

#### Trail maintenance work project

The focus of the work on this day was to repair the water bars that had been placed on the trail. Water bars consist of large pieces of wood placed on a trail diagonally to the direction of travel. The purpose of the water bars is to direct water off the trail to help prevent erosion. Over time, however, dirt fills in above the water bar, making them ineffective. Water also erodes the dirt downstream of the water bar, making them unstable. The job for the scouts was to remove dirt upstream of the water bar so water could be properly redirected, and then place the dirt downstream of the water bar to stabilize it.



Aiden Fischesser



Declan McGrath



Ben Adkins



A properly maintained water bar



Nathan Hoffman, Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Ben Adkins



Declan McGrath



Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins



Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Lohmueller, Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath



Taking a break in the upper shelter house:  
Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath, Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman,  
Mr. Lohmueller



Nathan Hoffman, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser, Mr. McGrath, Ben Adkins

Camp Friedlander  
Camp Conservation Day work project

Dan Beard Council organizes a council wide service day at Camp Friedlander every spring and again every fall. The goal is to provide an opportunity for Scouts to come out to provide service for the benefit of the camp. Typical activities performed are trail maintenance, tree planting, and invasive species removal.

On this day, several Scouts started with clearing vegetation on the side of the trail and removing honeysuckle, which is an invasive species. As such, honeysuckle is very harmful to native ecosystems.



Travis Anglin



Mr. Wilkens



Mr. Anglin

Most of the work throughout the morning was spent on repairing and building new water bars in the trail. The Scouts were working on the trail leading from Camp Craig down to Cub World. The trail is somewhat steep in this area and is prone to erosion. Water bars are used in the trail to help prevent this erosion. Camp Friedlander uses a style of water bars that consist of shallow trenches dug across the trail to direct water off the side of the trail rather than allowing it to run down the length of the trail.



Nathan Young



Wesley Anglin



Austin Young



Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Mr. Wilkens, Austin Young, Tyler Fischesser, Matthew Shelhamer, Nathan Young, Mr. Anglin, Mr. Lohmueller

Gorman Farm  
Leaf raking

For this service project, the Scouts raked leaves and removed dirt out of a drainage culvert next to the farm's parking lot



Starting the project



The handle of a rake broke, and Nathan Young jumped at the chance to use the kiddie rake



Aiden Fischesser



The Scouts used a tarp to help move the leaves into the woods



Jake Patrick, Camden Casto, Austin Young



Nathan Hoffman and Jake Patrick



Hauling the leaves to dump them in the woods





The end of the drainage ravine had a lot of dirt buildup



Austin Young



The end result



Austin Young, Mr. Lohmueller, Nathan Hoffman, Nathan Young, Mr. Anglin, Aiden Fischesser, Camden Casto, Jake Patrick, Mr. Wilkens, Travis Anglin

## Patches and Awards

The Scouts had the opportunity to earn the following patches while at Summit.

### Paul R Christen High Adventure Base Award

This patch is awarded to any participant who completes a trek at Summit

The entire crew earned this patch.



### 50 Miler Award

This award is designed to stimulate interest in outdoor adventure and to promote activities that improve personal fitness, self-reliance, knowledge of the outdoors, and a connection to conservation.

To earn the patch Scouts have to complete a minimum 50-mile, 5-day trek by an unmotorized means, such as biking, boating, hiking, or canoeing. Each participant also needs to complete 10 hours of conservation.

The entire crew earned this patch.



### Duty to God

The "Duty to God" program is designed to encourage Scouts to reflect on their experience at camp and their faith.

The patch was earned by Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Austin Young, Aiden Fischesser, Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, Jake Patrick, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Brad Wilkens, Mr. Luke Wilkens, Mr. Young, Mr. Anglin.



Summit Sustainability Award

The Summit Sustainability award is designed to encourage Scouts to learn about how they can live a more sustainable lifestyle and how the decisions they make can affect the world in which they live in.

The entire crew earned this patch



Triple Crown of National High Adventure Award

The Triple Crown award is given to those who have attended three of the four national high adventure bases. The Troop has attended Sea Base, Philmont, and Summit Bechtel Reserve.

The patch was earned by Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Wilkens.



Kayaking Merit Badge

The merit badge was completed by Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, and Jake Patrick



Whitewater Merit Badge

The merit badge was completed by Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Austin Young, Aiden Fischesser, Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, and Jake Patrick.



## Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes





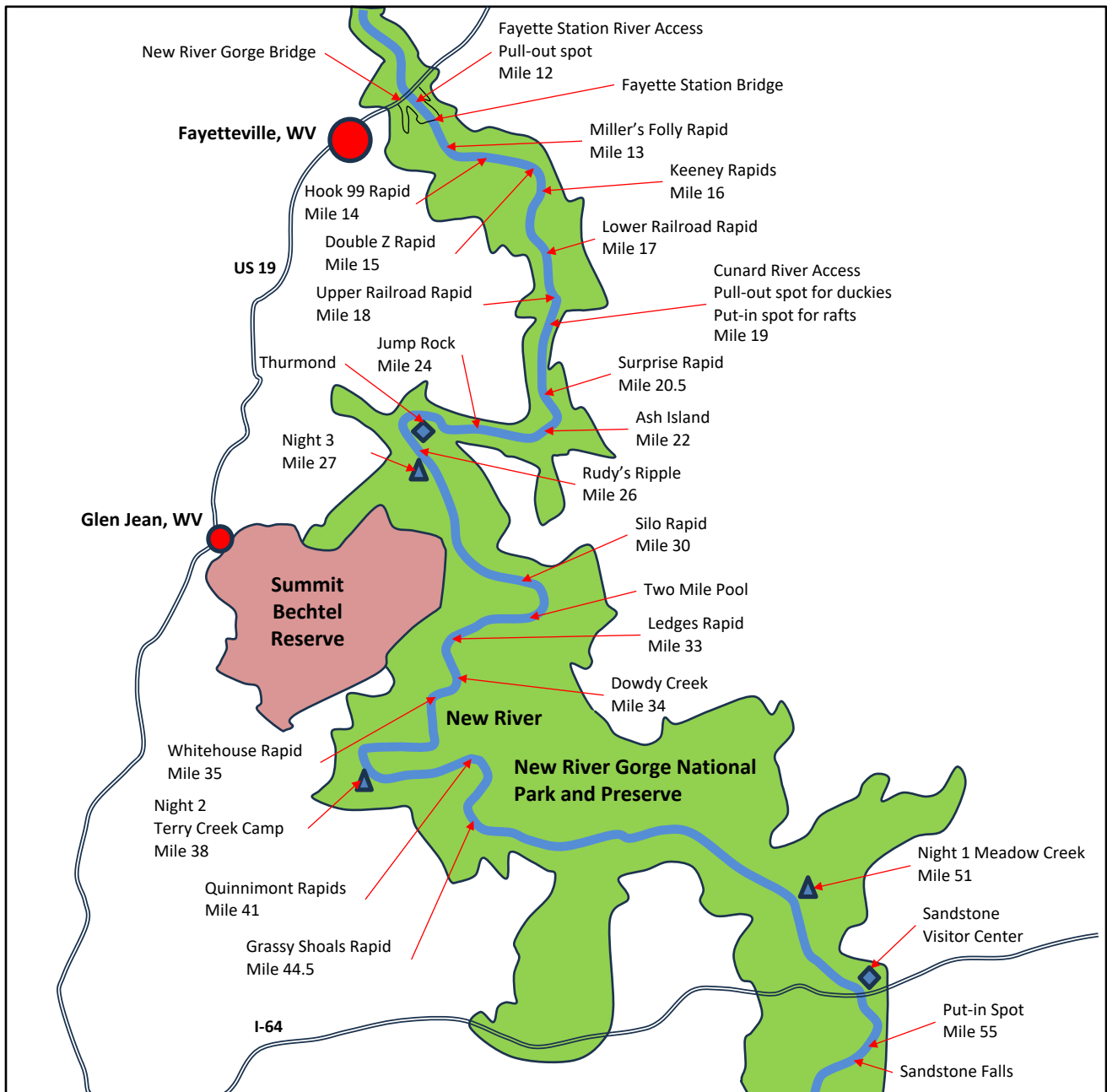
**Background**

As part of the Evendale Troop 598's high adventure program, the Scouts from the Troop participated in a 6-day trek at the Summit Bechtel Reserve, located in Glen Jean, WV. The Troop was assigned the crew number NR062423-AB. The "NR" refers to the fact that the trek was the New River Gorge trek, the "062423" was the assigned arrival date, and the "AB" refers to the fact that the Troop had 2 crews.

The trek covered 36 miles of the New River over 4 days in individual ducky kayaks and 7 miles of the New River over 1 day in 8-person rafts. Nights were spent at campsites along the river.



Map showing the location of Summit Bechtel Reserve relative to Evendale, Ohio



Map showing Summit Bechtel Reserve and the new River Gorge National Park

## **History of the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve**

The Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve, often shortened as Summit Bechtel Reserve, is BSA's newest high adventure base, joining the existing bases Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, Sea Base in Florida, and Northern Tier in Minnesota. The Summit is in Glen Jean, West Virginia.

The history of the Summit began in 2007 when the BSA leadership started looking for a permanent home for the National Scout Jamboree. At the time, the Jamboree was held at US Army property at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia. Being a military base, the BSA was not allowed to build any permanent structures. Each Jamboree the BSA was required to set up temporary housing, activities, dining halls, etc. Having a permanent home would allow the BSA to improve the experience for the attendees.

In addition to obtaining a permanent home for the Jamboree, the BSA wanted to open another high adventure base for the large number of Scouts who are wait-listed each year at the other three high adventure bases.

More than 80 sites in 28 states were evaluated over an 18-month span as possible venue sites. The sites were whittled down to three sites in 2008: Arkansas, Virginia, and West Virginia. In November 2009, BSA announced that it had selected the West Virginia site as the final decision. One of the key deciding factors in choosing the West Virginia site was its adjacency to the New River Gorge National Park. More than 13 miles of the Summit property borders the park, giving Scouts access to the more than 72,000 acres within the federal property. Over 14,000 acres were purchased, with construction on the various facilities starting in 2010. The Summit's opening event was the 2013 National Jamboree.

The Summit Bechtel National Scout Reserve comprises three main components of activity:

- James C. Justice National Scout Camp  
The National Scout Camp operates week-long summer camps and offers units a resource for camping.
- Paul R. Christen National High Adventure Base  
The high adventure base operates six different organized treks:
  - New River Experience: This trek offers 50+ miles of backpacking style travel on inflatable kayaks and rafts. This is the part of Summit that the Troop experienced.
  - Summit Experience: This trek offers introductory level experiences at each of the nine Summit high adventure venues
  - Bikepacking Experience: This trek offers 50+ miles of backpacking style travel on bikes
  - Polaris ATV Experience: This trek offers 60+ miles of exploration using ATVs.
  - Marksman Experience: This trek offers a variety of shooting sports activities
  - Pack N' Paddle Experience: This trek offers 40+ miles of hiking and rafting
- John D. Tickle Training and Leadership Center  
The leadership training center offers youth and adult training throughout the year.

## **The New River and The New River Gorge National Park**

The New River is approximately 360 miles long. The river originates in North Carolina and passes through Virginia and West Virginia. In West Virginia, the New River joins with the Gauley River to form the Kanawha River, ultimately flowing into the Ohio River.

There isn't any evidence to explain the origins of the name of the river. Despite its name, the New River is considered by some geologists to be one of the oldest rivers in the world.

In West Virginia, most of the New River is contained in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. The river was designated as a National River in 1978 and redesignated as the National Park and Preserve in 2020 under the control of the National Park Service. The park contains 53 miles of the river and over 72,000 acres of the surrounding land. The high adventure trek took place fully within that stretch of the river.

The New River Gorge area is home to a very diverse plant and animal habitat, including many endangered species. The rock cliffs that form the walls of the gorge provide a rich display of geological features. The human history of the area is dominated by the lumber and coal mining industries, made possible by the introduction of the railroad into the gorge. Many abandoned places related to these past industries dot the hillsides along the gorge.

## **Explanation of rapid classification**

Whitewater rapids are typically assigned a classification number to communicate the relative difficulty of the rapid as well as the danger associated with that rapid. Several factors are used to determine a rapid's classification: volume of water, gradient drop, the number of obstacles, the technical skill required, difficulty of rescue, and the risk of harm. The generally accepted classification system goes from Class I to Class VI. The definition for each classification is detailed below.

### Class I:

Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

### Class II:

Easy rapids with smaller waves and clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering might be required.

### Class III:

Rapids with high, irregular waves and narrow passages that often require precise maneuvering.

### Class IV:

Long, difficult rapids with constricted passages that often require complex maneuvering in turbulent water. The course may be hard to determine, and scouting is often necessary.

### Class V:

Extremely difficult, long and very violent rapids with highly congested routes, which should be scouted from shore. Rescue conditions are difficult and there is significant hazard to life in the event of a mishap. Class V is the upper limit of what is possible in a commercial raft.

### Class VI:

Nearly impossible and very dangerous. For teams of experts only. Involves the risk of loss of life. Class VI rapids are not commercially navigable.

On the Summit trek, the crew kayaked Class I – III rapids in the ducky inflatables and rafted Class I – V rapids in the full-size rafts.

**Crew Photos**

Crew A



Declan McGrath, Crew Leader



Jake Patrick, Chaplain



Nathan Hoffman, Outdoor Ethics



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens

**Crew Photos**

Crew B



Nathan Young, Crew Leader



Travis Anglin, Chaplain



Austin Young, Outdoor Ethics



Wesley Anglin



Aiden Fischesser

**Crew Photos**

Crew A



Mr. Tim McGrath



Mr. Brad Wilkens



Mr. Luke Wilkens

Crew B



Mr. Jess Anglin



Mr. Steve Lohmueller



Mr. Nick Young



**Saturday**  
**June 24**

The Troop started the day out by meeting at the BTAP at 7:00 am. After collecting the last of the paperwork, stowing the gear, and taking a group photo, the Scouts were on the road by 7:30.

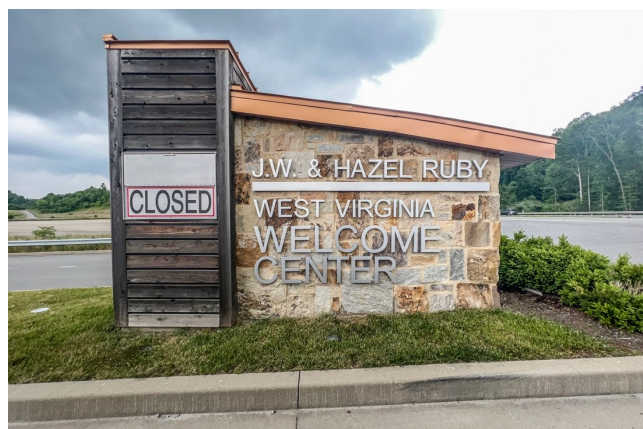


Jake Patrick, Wesley Anglin, Ben Adkins, Nathan Young, Nathan Hoffman, Mr. Wilkens, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Lohmueller, Petey Wilkens, Travis Anglin, Mr. Young, Austin Young, Mr. Anglin, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. McGrath

Mr. McGrath, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Young, and Mr. Lohmueller drove. The drive was easy with no traffic issues. The Troop stopped at a Subway restaurant for lunch just east of Charleston, WV, and arrived at Summit's Ruby Welcome Center around 1:30 pm.



Stopping for lunch at Subway



The Troop arrived at the Welcome Center for Summit to check in

The check-in building was empty of Scouts, with only a few staff members around. Eventually, another Scout troop did show up as well.

While going through check in, everyone filled out their buddy tags, did a quick pass-through for the medical recheck, and several people got their picture taken with a large stuffed bear in the lobby. They were then off to their campsite.



Mr. McGrath explaining expectations during the check-in process



Mr. Lohmueller with his new friend

The Troop's campsite was in Base Camp D. It started to rain just as they had arrived in the campsite. Everyone hunkered down next to the shower house to stay dry while they waited for information as to which tents they were assigned to. After about 15-20 minutes the rain stopped, and they were able to check out the tents. The tents were two-person and were palatial in size.

A little bit later the Scouts were able to meet their staff guides. The Scouts received their dry bags, and the staff gave them pointers on what to pack and what to leave behind, running through a quick shakedown of everyone's gear. The guides also talked about what to expect on the river.



The Scouts meeting the staff guides and getting their gear



Listening to instructions

The crew, consisting of three separate Troops, would have 4 staff members present for the duration of the trek. Melinda, or Lindy, was the leader. She is local, having grown up just a few miles from camp. This is her fourth year at Summit. Emilio is from Puerto Rico, and this is his third year at Summit. Zeke is from Texas, and this is his second year on staff. The fourth staff member, Cat, also from West Virginia, was not present and would meet the crew in the morning.

After the shakedown, the Scouts went to the trading post to purchase souvenirs. Afterwards everyone went back to the campsite for a bit before walking up to the dining hall for dinner. Everyone was impressed with the quality of the food. After dinner, the Scouts had their crew photos taken.



View of the camp



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, and Jake Patrick hanging out amongst the tents



Austin Young playing frisbee golf



Aiden Fischesser playing frisbee golf



Base Camp D



Mr. Wilkens inside one of the tents



Austin Young



Rounding up the Scouts for dinner



View of the camp from the dining hall



Inside the dining hall



Crew A:  
Mr. Wilkens, Jake Patrick, Mr. Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman,  
Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, Petey Wilkens, Mr. McGrath



Crew B:  
Mr. Anglin, Wesley Anglin, Austin Young, Nathan Young,  
Travis Anglin, Mr. Lohmueller, Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Young

In the evening, the Scouts gathered around the Gaga ball pit. At first, the Scouts just kicked the ball back and forth while talking. After a while, though, the Scouts got actual games of Gaga ball going.



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young



Wesley Anglin



Sitting around the Gaga ball pit talking



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath, Wesley Anglin



Ben Adkins, Mr. Young



Mr. Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman, ,Nathan Young



Nathan Hoffman against Austin Young, with Ben Adkins, Travis Anglin, and Petey Wilkens watching



Travis Anglin against Aiden Fischesser, with Wesley Anglin and Austin Young in the background tossing a ball



Jake Patrick, Declan McGrath



Smooth move by Petey Wilkens, with Ben Adkins and Nathan Young watching



Nathan Young against Declan McGrath, with Petey Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman, and Mr. Wilkens watching



Aiden Fischesser against Travis Anglin, with Mr. Wilkens, Nathan Young, Austin Young, and Nathan Hoffman watching



Declan McGrath, Jake Patrick, Aiden Fischesser tossing a ball



Jake Patrick, Declan McGrath tossing a ball

Later that evening, Mr. McGrath called the Scouts together to hold a short crew meeting to talk about expectations for the trek ahead.



Chaplain's Aides Jake Patrick and Travis Anglin speaking to the crews about the Duty to God award



Outdoor Ethics guides Nathan Hoffman and Austin Young planning on how to earn Summit's Sustainability Award

Towards the end of the evening, a storm blew through the area, chasing everyone into their tents. Fortunately, the storm did not last long.



Approaching rainstorm



Approaching rainstorm

**Sunday**  
**June 25**

The Scouts got up around 6:00 and everyone was able to get most of their gear packed before heading to breakfast in the dining hall. Everyone agreed that breakfast was amazing for a camp meal.

After breakfast everyone finished their packing and headed over to the meet-up spot in Basecamp Charlie by 8:00 to begin the trek. Each member of the crew received their PFD and helmet and packed their gear on the gear truck. The crew boarded the bus and were on the road by 9:30 am.



The crew just prior to departure for the trek, in front of everyone's dry bags



Aiden Fischesser with everyone's dry bags

Together there were 3 Scout troops on this trek. In addition to Troop 598, there was Troop 1441 from Cleveland, OH and Troop 810 from Galveston, Texas.

The bus ride to the put-in spot near the town of Hinton, WV took about 1.25 hours. The put-in spot is just downstream of Sandstone Falls at river mile 55. These falls are the tallest falls on the New River at about 16' of vertical drop. The falls are 1050' long and span the entire width of the river. The crew would put in downstream of the falls and travel 43 miles downriver to the pull-out spot at the New River Gorge Bridge.

Once at the river, the crew took a ¼ mile hike from the parking lot to an overlook to see Sandstone Falls. The staff crew leader, Melinda, explained some of what the crew could expect on the trek.



View of Sandstone Falls





View of Sandstone Falls from the observation deck



View of Sandstone Falls from the trail to the observation deck



Jake Patrick



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens



Mr. Lohmueller

The crew grabbed lunches and the gear they wanted on the river and walked to the put-in spot for lunch. The lunches were Philmont lunches. Several of the lunches had lemon pepper tuna, which didn't go over well with the Scouts. Several people believed in forest fairies.

During this time, Austin Young was very anxious to get started. About every 15 minutes he'd say "NOW are we going to get in the water?". After lunch and a talk from Melinda about safety and what to expect on the river, the crew donned their life vests, stowed gear on the duckies, and got on the water.



Melinda giving the safety instructions prior to the crews getting on the water

Melinda mentioned that the river was currently flowing at around 9,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) of water. The average for this time of year is around 4,000 CFS. This meant that the current was going to be strong and flowing well. Melinda mentioned that she likes rafting the best when the water flow is in the 8,000 to 10,000 CFS range.

The area of the put-in is a calm pool, so the first thing the crew did was to practice getting into their duckies. Everyone had to jump out of their ducky and get back in without assistance.



Once on the river everyone grouped together for Melinda to give some additional instructions



Mr. McGrath practicing self-rescue



Several scouts practicing self-rescues



A scout practicing self-rescue



Wesley Anglin



Declan McGrath



Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman

The crew hit the first Class 2 rapid around mile 53.5. Wesley got flipped and had to swim down the rapid. A bit further down the river, the river opened into a pool, and the Scouts were allowed to get out of the kayaks and swim. Widespread tipping of kayaks took place.



Petey Wilkens



Good natured kayak-tipping



Petey Wilkens attempting to flip Ben Adkins's kayak



Petey Wilkens swimming away after successfully tipping Aiden Fischesser's kayak

The first day was relatively short, only covering about 4 miles of river. The crew stopped at Meadow Creek for the evening. Everyone carried their kayaks up the boat ramp and stowed them next to the campsite.



Everyone's kayaks stowed for the night



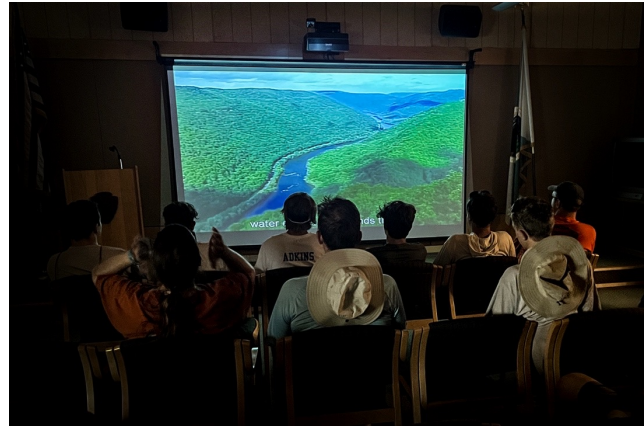
Travis Anglin and Austin Young took the opportunity to practice throwing the safety rope

After getting tents set up, the crew took a hike to the Sandstone Visitor Center. The visitor center is part of the New River Gorge National Park. The hike was about 2 miles each way and was on public roads the entire way. The Scouts didn't seem to mind the walk, but they were not too engaged with the displays at the visitor center. They did get a chance to watch a video about the history of the area that they seemed to enjoy.

One of the displays that did get the attention of the boys was a sandbox with augmented reality. The user could sculpt the sand and the augmented reality would create the contour lines which would be projected onto the sand. The augmented reality would then portray a rainstorm, showing how the water would flow across the land based on the contours.



Sandstone Visitor Center entrance



The Scouts watched a video highlighting the geography of the area



Scouts playing with the augmented reality display



Mr. Brad Wilkens, Mr. Luke Wilkens, Nathan Young



Nathan Young

Once back at camp, Emilio put out chips and salsa for a snack. The Scouts played football with the other 2 troops or tossed a whiffle ball, until it was time for dinner. For dinner, the crew had tacos.



Ben Adkins, Petey Wilkens



Petey Wilkens, Austin Young, Travis Anglin



Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman



Petey Wilkens, Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens



Austin Young, Wesley Anglin, Nathan Hoffman



All three troops played football together in a field next to the campsite



Ben Adkins



Austin Young



Wesley Anglin, Ben Adkins



Austin Young



Travis Anglin



Nathan Young



Nathan Hoffman



Wesley Anglin



Jake Patrick

For each meal, several scouts from the three Troops would be responsible for cooking the meal for the three troops and staff.

Before each meal, the crew was expected to say Grace. Like the other high adventure bases, Summit has a grace specific to Summit.

*Summit Grace*

*For this time and this place  
For your goodness and grace  
For each friend we embrace  
We thank you, O Lord.*

*Amen*

On the way back from the visitor center, Emilio mentioned to the crew that they would be baking cobbler for dinner that night. One of the scouts mentioned that Mr. Lohmueller makes yummy cobbler. Melinda then mentioned to the Scouts that she was the two-time Raleigh County Cobbler Queen. She then challenged Mr. Lohmueller to a bake off.

The quartermaster had provided a large box of cake batter and 7 lbs of cherry pie filling to make 2 cobblers. This is about 2-3 times what would be needed to make just 2 cobblers. Not to waste anything, Melinda wanted to use it all to make the cobblers. Due to the extra volume, it took about 1.5 hours to bake, and they still weren't quite done. Mr. Lohmueller's was mostly done, but Melinda's was still runny. One person jokingly referred to her cobbler as cobbler pudding. The consensus amongst the Scouts was that Mr. Lohmueller had won this competition. Melinda wasn't quite ready to admit defeat though.





Nathan Young, Travis Anglin, and Austin Young making dinner



Mr. McGrath in the dinner line



Declan McGrath working on dishes after dinner



Mr. Lohmueller making his cobbler



Melinda with the 2 cobblers ready for baking



Melinda asserting her role as Two-Time Raleigh County Cobbler Queen



Melinda and Mr. Lohmueller working together to check on the cobblers



Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Wilkens, and Mr. Young hanging out while the Scouts played football



Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, Mr. Wilkens, and Ben Adkins playing cards while waiting for the cobbler to bake. It was during this card game that Mr. Wilkens offered some wisdom: "I'm going to give you some advice that will really make a difference in your life. Listen more. Speak less."



Mr. Lohmueller's cherry cobbler



Emilio serving up the cobbler to Declan McGrath and Aiden Fischesser



Emilio serving up the cobbler



Declan McGrath giving his impression of the cobbler



View of the hillsides surrounding the campsite

After the cobbler, Melinda led the crews in a version of Roses, Thorns, and Buds, with her version being along Summit themes. Her version was High Side, Low Side and Horizons. Each person was expected to share their experiences of the day through these items. High Side refers to a highlight or something positive of the day. Low Side refers to something that wasn't so good or was difficult. Horizon refers to something that the person was looking forward to in the days ahead. The intent of this exercise was to help crew members process the day and to build comradery through the sharing of their thoughts and experiences. As a Scout was sharing, they would hold a spatula, affectionately called the talking spatula. This was to showcase that the Scout had the floor and that everyone else should be quiet and attentive to the speaker. Once the Scout was done sharing, he would pass the spatula to the next person.

Each person also had to answer the question of the day. Today's question was "Cheesecake – is it pie or cake?"

While on the river, Nathan Hoffman lost a camera to the river, Melinda lost a phone, and another adult from one of the other troops also lost her phone.

Once it got dark, the hillsides surrounding the campsite were lit up by a multitude of lightning bugs. The stars were out and there was a half-moon in the sky. It was a pretty night.

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	4.0	4.0
Hiking	4.0	4.0
Total	8.0	8.0

**Monday**  
**June 26**

Emilio gave a loud rooster call at 7:00 am to wake up the cooks. Around 7:30 Mr. Lohmueller presented another episode of the Morning Show. The other two troops had not been told about the Morning Show, so it took them by surprise, but they seemed to enjoy it. This was the first time that the Morning Show was presented to more than just Troop 598.



View of the area around the campsite



View of the area around the campsite

While waiting for breakfast several Scouts spent the time tossing a wiffle ball. The crew had breakfast burritos for breakfast. After cleaning up and packing away all the gear onto the gear truck, the crew was on the river by around 10:00 am. The river report stated that the river was running around 11,025 CFS.



Scouts tossing a wiffle ball in the field next to the campsite



Scouts tossing a ball



Jake Patrick and Travis Anglin leading grace before breakfast



In line for breakfast



Wesley Anglin, Emilio, Austin Young, Declan McGrath and Aiden Fischesser at breakfast time

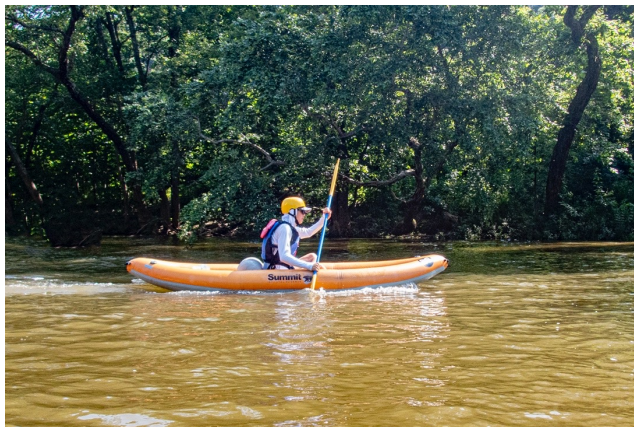


Mr. Young, Petey Wilkens, Mr. Lohmueller, Jake Patrick and Mr. Anglin at breakfast time

Melinda did not have a watch, so right before she got on the river, she took a red marker and drew one on her wrist. For the rest of the day if someone asked her what time it was, she would look at the “watch” on her wrist and say that it’s 10:00.

On several occasions throughout the day when the crew got to long pools on the river, Melinda would allow the Scouts to swim. Inevitably, the swimming turned to tipping others. Many ducky battles took place. In addition, several Scouts wanted to earn Kayaking and Whitewater Merit Badges, so Mr. McGrath would work with the Scouts on the requirements while floating down the pools.

During one of these pools, Melinda shared with Petey a new activity. You would flip a ducky over and two people would climb on and stand atop the ducky. They were not allowed to touch each other, and the goal was to get the other person to fall off the ducky by rocking the boat. The winner was the one left standing on the ducky. This became known as ducky wars.



Nathan Young



Petey Wilkens



Mr. McGrath, Austin Young



Wesley Anglin



Everyone lining up in preparation for running a rapid



Everyone in a line ahead of running a rapid



Nathan Young



Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser



Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Declan McGrath



Everyone lining up in preparation for running a rapid



Ducky war between Nathan Young and Petey Wilkens



Ducky war between Declan McGrath and Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman, Wesley Anglin



Nathan Young rowing the gear boat



Mr. Wilkens



Austin Young



Austin Young



Nathan Hoffman



Declan McGrath



Petey Wilkens found a log floating in the river and started bench pressing it



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath



Nathan Young and Petey Wilkens in a ducky war



Travis Anglin, Austin Young



Looking downstream



Aiden Fischesser



Ducky war between Nathan Hoffman and Petey Wilkens





Nathan Young



Several of the adults taking a break



Nathan Hoffman and Petey Wilkens in a ducky war



Nathan Hoffman in a victory stance against Petey Wilkens



Mr. Lohmueller



Aiden Fischesser



Austin Young, Nathan Hoffman



Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins



Austin Young



Nathan Young



Petey Wilkens

Grassy Shoals Rapid was the first Class III rapid of the trek. The rapid has a big hole followed by a long wave train, making for an exciting introduction to class III rapids.



The crew grouped up so Melinda could give instructions on how to run the rapid



Lining up in preparation of running the rapid

For lunch, the crew stopped at a beach area just downstream of Grassy Shoals Rapid. Lunch consisted of deli sandwiches and snacks.



The crew used an upside-down ducky as the table for the lunch line



Lunch was on a rocky beach riverside



Petey Wilkens extolling the contents of his sandwich



Lunch



Nathan Hoffman, Aiden Fischesser



Melinda giving instructions for the rapid coming up next



Wesley Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins

After lunch, the crew had another Class III rapid, Quinnimont Rapids. Quinnimont is French for “Five Mountains”, referring to the five mountain peaks surrounding the town by the same name that existed next to the river. After the rapids, the Scouts were able to enjoy another pool for swimming and playing in the water.



View approaching Quinnimont Rapids



View looking down river as the scouts regroup after Quinnimont Rapids



Austin Young trying his hand at being at the helm of the big gear boat



Jake Patrick



Mr. Wilkens ferrying several kayaks for Scouts who were playing in the pool of the river



Nathan Young attacking Petey Wilkens's kayak



Aiden Fischesser and Declan McGrath in a ducky war



Nathan Young trying a new way to paddle his kayak

Near mile marker 38, the crew arrived at the campsite for the night. The area is called Terry Creek. Summit owns a small strip of land there to house the campsite. The site is about 100 yards deep and 400-500 yards wide right on the river's edge and is mostly sandy beach.

After everyone got their tents up, it rained for about half an hour. After the rain stopped, Emilio brought out a snack of crackers, cheese cubes, and slices of pepperoni and salami. The Scouts devoured the snack.



The first job once the Scouts got to camp was to unload the gear truck



Mr. McGrath



View of the kayaks stowed riverside



View looking downstream



Mr. Anglin



The Scouts set up their tents on the edge of the sandy beach



Nathan Hoffman getting gear from his kayak



There was a lot of bamboo growing around the campsite



Mr. Young



Dinner line



View of the kitchen area of the campsite

After dinner, Ben started a small fire to hang around. Melinda started the High Side/Low Side/Horizons discussion for the Scouts to share about their day. The Question of the Day that everyone had to answer was "If you were a kitchen appliance, what would you be?". After the discussion, Emilio brought out the fixings for Smores. Mr. McGrath also finished up working with several scouts to complete Kayaking Merit Badge. Wesley, Travis, Nathan Hoffman, Ben, and Jake Patrick completed the merit badge.



Wesley Anglin cleaning up after dinner



Declan McGrath, Ben Adkins



Campfire for roasting marshmallows



Ben Adkins



Hanging out around the campfire



Austin Young, Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman, Aiden Fischesser,  
Declan McGrath



Nathan Young



Mr. Wilkens helping to get the fire going



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, and Wesley Anglin

It started to rain hard and thunder around 11:00 pm. The storm lasted for about 1 hour.

At one point on the river, several scouts were talking to Cat about the agenda for the rest of the trek. Cat mentioned that on Wednesday night they would be camping on top of the hill away from the river and that they would be taking a bus from the river. Ben asked incredulously, “A bus? What is high adventure about that?”

The day started out at 66°F with a predicted high temperature of 79°F. Other than the rain before dinner and after bedtime, it was sunny throughout the day.

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	13.0	17.0
Hiking	0.0	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>21.0</b>



**Tuesday**  
**June 27**

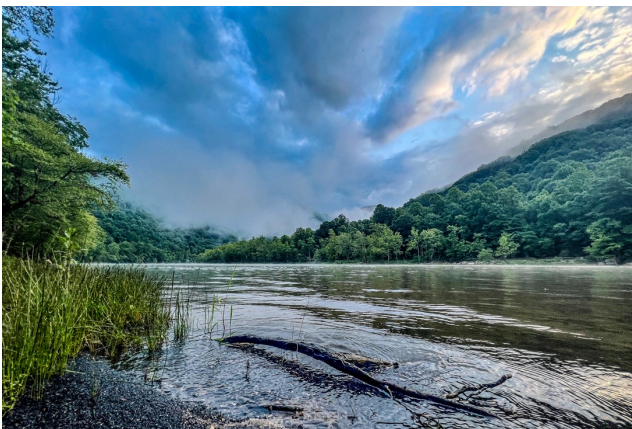
The morning started out somewhat cool, with partly cloudy skies, and a nice sunrise.



Panorama view of the river from the campsite (flowing right to left)



View of the campsite early in the morning



Early morning sunrise with clouds filling the gorge, looking downstream



Early morning sunrise with clouds filling the gorge, looking upstream



Nathan Hoffman, Wesley Anglin, Petey Wilkens



Mr. McGrath journaling notes on the trip



Nathan Hoffman



Chow line



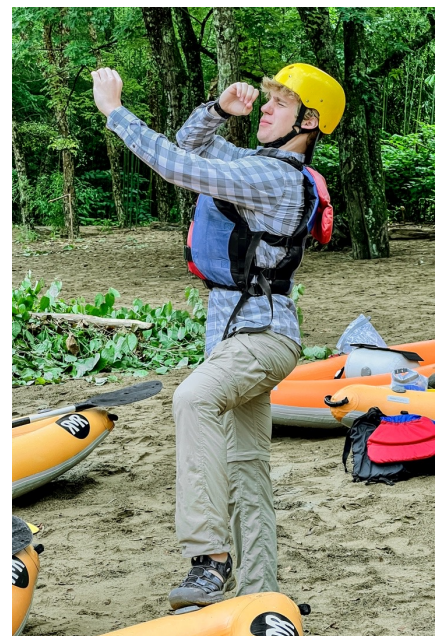
Everyone was responsible for cleaning their own dishes



Mr. Wilkens ready to get on the water



Mr. Young ready to get on the water



Petey Wilkens plotting the route ahead

The crew was on the river by around 10:00. Around mile 36 the crew came to a Class II rapid. Up to this point, Melinda gave instructions on the route to take through each rapid and everyone was expected to file one after the other through the rapid. This was called a duckie line. With this rapid, however, Melinda allowed everyone to pick their own route through the rapid.



Getting on the river in the morning



Starting another day of kayaking

The next rapid was Whitehouse Rapid, the first Class III rapid of the day. The rapid was named for the fact that there used to be a white house on the water's edge. The rapid is also called Duckie Muncher. While traversing this rapid, Nathan Young was thrown from his kayak, but ended up landing in Luke Wilkens' kayak. The two finished up going through the rest of the rapid together on Luke's kayak before retrieving Nathan's kayak.



Melinda giving instructions on how to run Whitehouse Rapids



Forming a ducky line while approaching Whitehouse Rapids



Nathan Young



Nathan Hoffman

At Dowdy Creek, the crew pulled off the river on river right. They were able to take a short hike through a culvert tunnel to a small waterfall. The waterfall had a drop of around 25 feet. Some of the Scouts enjoyed standing under the falling water.

Back at camp in the morning, Melinda brought out a ballerina tutu and was wearing it all morning. At the waterfall, she offered it to anyone to wear. Petey Wilkens immediately jumped at the chance.



Culvert tunnel that provided access to the waterfall



Approaching the waterfall on Dowdy Creek



The waterfall on Dowdy Creek



Group shot with the waterfall on Dowdy Creek



Petey Wilkens



Travis Anglin



Nathan Young



Mr. Wilkens



Austin Young



Austin Young



Melinda



Petey Wilkens rocking the tutu



Nathan Hoffman rocking the tutu

After the waterfall, the crew crossed over to river left and stopped at a beach for lunch.



Travis Anglin leading grace before lunch



An old tree trunk was used for the lunch table



Petey Wilkens



Petey Wilkens



Mr. Wilkens, Petey Wilkens,  
Nathan Young



Kayaks stowed riverside during lunch



Before leaving the Scouts policed the lunch area to make sure they didn't leave any trash

Immediately downriver from the lunch spot was the Ledges Rapid. This rapid is a series of three large ledges on the riverbed, creating great wave trains. In preparation for running the rapid, Melinda and Mr. Young went ahead of the group, with the rest of the crew following behind at some distance. This allowed Mr. Young to position himself downstream of the rapid to video everyone as they ran the rapid.



Melinda used the sandy beach to draw out the upcoming Ledges Rapid to show how to run the rapid



Queen Melinda knighting Declan McGrath



Grouping up on the river after lunch before running the Ledges Rapid



Melinda calling everyone to form a ducky line before running the Ledges Rapid



Mr. Young with his GoPro camera



The Scouts tossed a wiffle ball while Mr. Young and Melinda went ahead to videotape the Scouts running the rapid

Downriver from Ledges Rapid is Two Mile Pool. This is a long stretch of water that is calm. The crew floated most of the length of this stretch of river, which allowed the Scouts to get in the water and play around. Numerous rounds of ducky wars took place, as well as other shenanigans. Several people tried stand up kayaking. One of the other troops made a barge out of numerous kayaks. Each layer of the barge consisted of 3 kayaks and there were 5 total layers. Zeke joined in on the fun by stealing other people's kayaks. Mr. McGrath also started working with Scouts who were interested in earning Whitewater Merit Badge.



Mr. Anglin carrying a Scout's kayak



Mr. Young



Travis Anglin in Zeke's kayak



Ben Adkins attacking Petey Wilkens' kayak



Jake Patrick taking a quiet rest as his kayak drifts down the river



Petey Wilkens flipping Austin Young's kayak





Nathan Young



Jake Patrick



Mr. Wilkens



Travis Anglin



Emilio challenged Melinda to a ducky war. Get ready, set, ....



Go! Let the battle begin



Melinda wins



A second later Melinda lost her balance and fell in



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins



Mr. Young



Melinda



Kayak barge



Travis Anglin



Petey Wilkens attacking Austin Young's kayak



Emilio bringing up the rear with the gear boat

While the Scouts were on the trek, there were a huge number of forest fires that were burning in Canada. The smoke from these fires was extending down into the US. Although it wasn't strong enough to affect breathing, it did cause the air to look hazy. Views down the gorge frequently are clear and the color of the forested hillsides a vibrant green. On this trek, everything looked muted and hazy.



Ben Adkins attacking Petey Wilkens



Mr. Young

During the Two Mile Pool, Melinda introduced another fun activity. She provided a piece of webbing and a carabiner. The carabiner would be attached to the front of the kayak. The Scout would then stand on the back of the kayak, and by pulling the webbing, attempt to get the kayak to flip end over end.



Austin Young



Travis Anglin



Zeke attacking Petey Wilkens's kayak while Petey is jumping onto Ben Adkins' kayak



Mr. Anglin ferrying a Scout's kayak



Jake Patrick



Nathan Hoffman and Austin Young in a ducky war



Mr. McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Petey Wilkens



Mr. Young



Austin Young and Travis Anglin attacking Petey Wilkens



Ben Adkins and Petey Wilkens in a ducky war



Tim McGrath



Mr. Wilkens



Nathan Hoffman



Travis Anglin takes over Zeke's kayak as Zeke goes out looking for someone to tip



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser, Nathan Hoffman

The last rapid of the day was the Class III rapid, Silo Rapid. The rapid provided a great run and an awesome way to end the day. The rapid is named for the storage silos near the river that were used for storing sand. The sand was quarried from the sandstone near the rim of the gorge and was used in glassmaking. Though no longer used, the silos can still be seen from the river.



Coming out of Silos Rapid



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath

After the Silo Rapid, there was another pool where the Scouts could play in the water.



Mr. Anglin



Mr. Anglin



Travis Anglin and Austin Young



Mr. Wilkens

As the crew was nearing the campsite, many people got excited to see that the campsite already had wall tents set up for the Scouts to use. The camp is semi-permanent, with base-camp style wall tents on platforms.



Approaching the campsite



View of the campsite



Each tent had 2 bunk beds



The campsite had a large shelter with picnic tables



View of the campsite from the river's edge



View of the river from the campsite



Mr. Anglin



Wesley Anglin and Melinda making pineapple upside-down cake



Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Anglin, and Declan McGrath doing their dishes

After dinner, the crews took a 30-minute walk into the historic town of Thurmond. On the way the Scouts had to cross a bridge over the river. This afforded the opportunity to see one of the rapids, called Rudy's Ripple, that they would be going through in the morning. Emilio also provided some history on the bridge itself. At one point in its history, the townsfolk knew a flood was coming and were worried about the bridge. They parked a steam engine on the bridge to help weigh it down and make the bridge more stable. Unfortunately, their plan did not work, and the flood destroyed the bridge, forcing the town to rebuild the bridge. At low water levels, one can still see the steam engine downstream of the bridge. Cat then took the opportunity to explain to the Scouts how to "read the river", so that they can understand how to navigate while on the river.



Part-way through the walk, Emilio paused to give some history of the town of Thurmond and the surrounding area



Crossing on the bridge over the New River



View of the New River as it approaches the town of Thurmond, WV.



View looking upriver with Rudy's Ripple on the left-hand side



Emilio led the tour through the town and was a wealth of information on the local history. The settlement of Thurmond, WV was incorporated as a town in 1900 and was established by Captain W. D Thurmond, who had been living in the area since 1844. The town was built on property that was given to Thurmond as payment for a surveying job. The town remained small until the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway established a rail stop in the town. This allowed the town to prosper, in large part because of the many businesses and facilities that were established to support the railroad. The stop also allowed for the movement of goods in and out of town. The railroad also allowed for coal mined in the area to be hauled to market. In its heyday more than 12 passenger trains stopped at the train depot daily.

Captain Thurmond did not allow alcohol on his property, which comprised the originally incorporated portion of town. Although there was already a hotel in town, a second hotel was established just outside the incorporated boundaries, thus sidestepping the ban on alcohol. This hotel, the Dun Glen, was opened in 1901 and quickly became a nationally known resort. The hotel burned down, however, in 1930, marking the beginning of the decline in the town. The decline was driven in large part by diminishing outputs from the local coal mines. By the 1950s, it was mostly abandoned. Today, there are only 3 people who live in the town. There are still some remaining buildings from its heyday. Most of the town is currently owned by the National Park Service.

The first stop in the tour of Thurmond was the train depot. The first passenger station for Thurmond was built in 1897 but burned down in 1903. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, which operated the depot, announced that it would rebuild the station, making it one of the largest on the line. The new station opened in 1904. The first floor provided services for passengers and the second floor was used for railroad offices. In the 1960s, due to decline in passenger trains, the entire building was converted into offices. These offices were used until the mid-1980s, when the railroad stopped using the building. The National Park Service purchased the building in the late-1980s and restored it to its classic early 1900s appearance. Today the National Park Service uses the building as a visitor center, and Amtrak operates a flag stop for one of its passenger trains, the Cardinal line.



Emilio explaining the history of the train station



View looking down the tracks to the train station

The main street of Thurmond was called Commercial Row, due to the string of businesses that operated along the street. At the far end of Commercial Row stood the National Bank of Thurmond building. The building was erected in 1917 and originally housed a jewelry store and a clothing store on the first floor, and offices and apartments on the second floor. The Bank of Thurmond moved into the building in 1923 and operated there until the bank failed in 1931 in the early days of the Great Depression. After the bank closed, the building housed a dry good store for many years. In the 1970s new life was breathed into the buildings when two Thurmond residents bought the buildings along Commercial Row to establish the Banker's Club. The Banker's Club consisted of a hotel, restaurant, and club, catering to whitewater rafters. The Banker's Club closed in 1988.



View looking down Commercial Row



National Bank of Thurmond building

Another prominent feature in Thurmond is the coaling tower. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway built the large cement tower in 1922 to provide coal to the steam engines. The tower can hold up to 500 tons of coal. A series of elevators lifted the coal into the top of the tower. Tracks on either side of the tower allowed the steam engines to pull up close to the tower. The coal then fell down chutes on the side of the tower into the tender cars of the locomotives. Once the railroad switch to diesel-electric locomotives, the tower was no longer needed, and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway abandoned the tower in 1960.



View down the tracks towards the coal tower



Abandoned coal tower



View from the coal tower towards the train station



Emilio offering some more history of the buildings in Thurmond



One of the handful of abandoned houses in Thurmond



There are still 3 people who live in Thurmond, and this building serves as the town hall.



CSX still operates frequent freight trains through Thurmond

Back at camp the crew had pineapple upside down cake and did the High Side/Low Side/Horizons sharing. Then Jake Patrick led a daily devotional before everyone called it a night. Austin Young had his Scoutmaster Conference for First Class this evening as well.

The weather was overcast and somewhat cool throughout the day.



High side / Low side / Horizons discussion

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	11.0	28.0
Hiking	3.0	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>35.0</b>

Wednesday  
June 28



Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Travis Anglin



Mr. Young improvising a strap for his sunglasses



View of the campsite



Policing the campsite to leave no trace



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young

It was a chilly morning to start the day. Nothing dried overnight, so everyone started out with wet clothing. The crew was on the river by around 10:00. The first rapid of the day was Rudy's Ripple. This is a Class III rapid that starts out with a challenging hole, following by a strong and long wave train. Mr. Anglin, Travis Anglin, and Petey Wilkens ended up flipping in the rapid.



In a ducky line in preparation for running Rudy's Ripple



Regrouping after running Rudy's Ripple

The next rapid is called Swimmers Rapid. This is a Class II rapid, and the guides allowed the Scouts to swim the length of the rapid. About half the crew took the opportunity to swim the rapid.

The next point of adventure was Jump Rock. This is a large boulder on the river's edge that towers about 10-12' over a deep pool of water. The crew pulled off to the side of the river and about half the crew climbed on top of the boulder, taking turns jumping into the water below.



Nathan Young



Travis Anglin



Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens



Declan McGrath



Mr. Wilkens



Jake Patrick



Aiden Fischesser



Mr. Lohmueller



Wesley Anglin



Mr. Young

After Jump Rock, the river flows into a long pool and the Scouts were able to swim once again. This time the energy level was more subdued. It was during this time that the crew saw the Amtrak train, the Cardinal, passing through the gorge. The train stops at the Thurmond station three times a week as it heads east to New York and again three times a week as it heads west to Chicago.



Mr. Anglin taking it easy while ferrying a Scout's kayak



Petey Wilkens, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins



One of the other troops created a new challenge. They used carabiners to connect a series of kayaks and the challenge was to run the length of the kayak chain without falling off.



Travis Anglin



The Young family taking a quiet rest break



Jake Patrick



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens attacking Nathan Hoffman



Mr. Wilkens at the helm of the gear boat



Ben Adkins, Petey Wilkens



The crew stopped for lunch riverside at around mile 22, just upstream of Ash Island.



The crew used an upside-down kayak as the lunch line table



Petey Wilkens, Declan McGrath, Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman



View of the lunch beach



Cat, Melinda, Emilio, Zeke

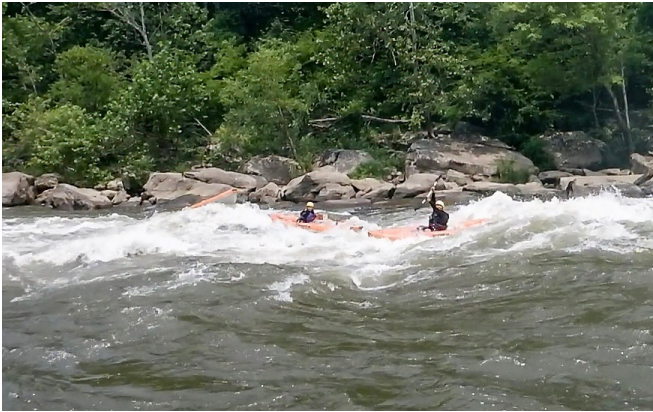
After lunch, the crew entered Surprise Rapid, which is a Class III rapid.

Previously, the guides had placed bets amongst themselves as to how many people in the crew would get ejected in Surprise. The predictions ranged from 15 to 20, out of the 34 people in the crew. The guides also picked their top 3 people they expected to have to swim the rapid.

The rapid is a bit misleading. As you approach the rapid, you see a large hole created by water as it flows over a boulder, but the view is not too intimidating. What you don't see until you are in the hole is that there is a wave of water at the bottom of the hole that shoots sideways, smacking the side of your kayak. This makes it very difficult to keep the kayak upright.

One of the guides took Mr. Young's GoPro camera and videotaped everyone as they came through the rapid.

Views of the Scouts as they kayaked through Surprise Rapids



In the end 17 people ended up flipping in the rapid, including two of the guides. This was an exhilarating way to end the kayaking stretch of the trek, as this was the last rapid the crew would float through on kayaks. There was a long pool downstream of the rapid, and then the crew arrived at the pull-out spot.



Looking upriver towards Surprise Rapids at the end of the kayaking portion of the trek



Pulling off the river at the Cunard River Access

While the crew was getting the duckies deflated and stored on the trailers, another rafting company had arrived and was bringing 4 8-person rafts to the waters edge. All the riders were young girls and were struggling under the weight of the rafts to carry them down the ramp and to the water. The Scouts cheered them on.

As the girls were climbing into the boats at the edge of the river, you could tell that they were apprehensive about getting their feet wet. The guide told them quite plainly “I realize that you probably don’t want to get wet. You picked the wrong activity!”

The crew had about a 20-minute bus ride to the night’s campsite. The bus driver had no fear driving up the winding and narrow road. She was very liberal in using both lanes to get around bends in the road.

Once at the campsite, the crew saw that the tents that they would sleep in that night had already been set up and were dry and clean. After getting settled in tents, the crew set up their wet and sandy tents from the previous days to dry out, before repacking for the next group going through a trek. Then, work on dinner began. This meal was a little different, in the sense that the adults did the cooking. The adults served a steak and potato dinner.



Mr. Lohmueller and Mr. Young cutting the steaks for grilling



Mr. Lohmueller grilling the steaks



Mr. Young grilling steaks for dinner



The dinner serving line is set



The Scoutmaster from one of the other troops and Mr. Wilkens doing the dishes

Nathan Hoffman came down with a bit of a fever and started feeling under the weather. He took some Tylenol and napped for a bit and was feeling better by the end of the day.

Cat and Emilio set up the branding station and were able to brand various items for the Scouts. They branded water bottles, boots, hats, cups, and other items. Cat, the self-proclaimed Branding Queen, was confident that she could brand almost anything. She came through with brilliant colors.



View of the campsite from the dining fly area



Propane furnace to heat the branding irons



Cat in action



Emilio branding an item for Travis Anglin



Emilio branding a hat for Declan McGrath



View of the campsite and dining fly area on top of the hill



Watching Mr. Young's GoPro video of the Scouts running Surprise Rapid

Mr. McGrath and the Scouts were able to complete the requirements for Whitewater Merit Badge. Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Aiden Fischesser, Austin Young, Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, and Jake Patrick earned the merit badge.

Before the trek had started, Austin Young asked Mr. Lohmueller to give him a Scoutmaster Challenge. Recently Austin had learned about challenge coins, and seeing one in the gift shop, he wanted to complete a challenge of some sort on the trek so that he could earn the right to purchase one. Mr. Lohmueller decided to challenge Austin to coordinate a campfire program that evening. Austin invited the other two troops to participate in the campfire program and one accepted. Mr. Lohmueller expanded the challenge to the rest of Troop 598 by challenging the two crews of 598 to see who could come up with the best skit. The Scouts had only a few hours to plan and practice their skits before the campfire program. Crew A chose a skit called "Prison Scene" while Crew B chose the classic "If I Weren't a Boy Scout" song, modified to fit the trek. The guides were then asked to be the judges of the competition. Mr. McGrath led the crew in one of his favorite songs about meeting a bear. Wesley Anglin sang a rendition of Abba's *Dancing Queen* but changed the words in honor of Melinda to *Cobbler Queen*. After several skits and songs

the two Troop 598 crews presented their skits for the competition. The Scoutmaster from one of the other troops presented a Scoutmaster Minute, and then the judges revealed their final decision. The members of Crew B were crowned the winners.

After the campfire program, several Scouts made Smores over the fire. The Troop then had a short devotional led by Travis Anglin, and then everyone called it a night.



Waiting for the campfire program to start



Austin Young leading the campfire program



Mr. McGrath, Ben Adkins



Travis Anglin

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	8.0	36.0
Hiking	0.0	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>43.0</b>

**Thursday**  
**June 29**

The day started early at 6:30. The temperature was somewhat chilly and there was thick fog. Everyone's dry bags had to be fully packed and stowed on trailer by 7:00. The crew was out of camp by 8:00.



Everyone had a dry bag like this to store their gear throughout the trek



In the morning everyone had to take their gear up the hill to stow on the gear truck



It was a foggy morning



Jake Patrick  
Everyone helped tear down the dining area and carry the gear to the gear truck



Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath  
Everyone helped tear down the dining area and carry the gear to the gear truck



Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman  
Everyone helped tear down the dining area and carry the gear to the gear truck



Foggy view of the campsite



Loading the gear truck

The crew rode the bus back to the spot where they pulled off the river the day before. Today, the crew would be riding with an established river rafting company called River Expeditions. The Troop would be split between 2 8-person rafts.



Crew A:  
 Petey Wilkens, Jake Patrick, Mr. McGrath, Declan McGrath,  
 Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Wilkens, Emilio



Crew B:  
 Mr. Lohmueller, Travis Anglin, Wesley Anglin,  
 Aiden Fischesser, Austin Young, Nathan Young, Mr. Young,  
 Mr. Anglin, Emilio

The river guide for Crew A was named Katie. She was relatively new to guiding rafting trips on the Lower New River.

The river guide for Crew B was named Chaz. While on the river he wouldn't tell the Scouts how long he has been guiding river trips. All he would say is that he just started the week before, but not to worry, he spent all week watching YouTube videos, so he feels confident that he knows how to guide the boat successfully. Afterwards the Scouts learned that he has 34 years of experience leading rafting trips. Chaz has a dry sense of humor and comes across a bit as a stern, crusty person. One of the Scouts mentioned that he was a fun guide, in a drill sergeant kind of way. On the river, it became obvious that he did in fact know what he was doing.



After putting into the river, the Scouts quickly arrived at the first rapid of the day, the Class IV Upper Railroad Rapid. The rapid is named for the railroad bridge that crosses the river right after the rapid.

Immediately after Upper Railroad Rapid is the Lower Railroad Rapid, which is a Class III rapid. The rafting company had a photographer on the shore at this rapid to get photos of the Scouts as they came through the rapid.

Crew A:



Crew B:



After making it through the Lower Railroad Rapid the Scouts were introduced to the concept of whitewater surfing. This is an exhilarating experience. To surf, one paddles upstream to a hydraulic. A hydraulic occurs when water flows over an obstacle below the surface and cascades down the back side of the obstacle, creating a hole downstream of the obstacle. The guides navigate the raft into this hole and the surging water causes the boat to be stuck in the hole. The boat bucks and thrashes, but stays in the hole, giving a heart pumping ride. After a while the hole spits the boat out.

The four boats in the crew had the chance to get into the hydraulic at the end of the rapid and surf. Once the boat got spit out of the hole, the boat would paddle to the side of the river and get back in line to surf again. Each boat got the chance to surf 3 or 4 times.



Looking upstream at the Lower Railroad Rapids. The leftmost boat is about to enter the hydraulic to go surfing

After the Lower Railroad Rapid the Scouts had another Swimmers' Rapid where they could float through the rapid. After a few more rapids, the Scouts were presented with another Jump Rock, just before the Double Z Rapid. This jump was about about a 15-foot drop into the water below.



Jake Patrick



Ben Adkins

The rafting company also had a photographer positioned at the Keeney Rapids to capture photos of the Scouts running this rapid.

Crew A:



Crew A:



Crew B:



Crew B:





Looking Upstream at the Lower Keeney Rapids

The crew stopped for lunch right before Hook 99 Rapid. This Class III rapid, also called Harmon’s Hole, is named after one of the first boaters on the New River, John Harmon. One year during a downriver kayak race, Harmon found himself pinned by the current against a boulder at the top of the rapid. He was able to free himself, but his kayak stayed there. His racing number was 66, but with the kayak pinned vertically against the boulder, it looked like 99, marking the rapid for the rest of the racers.



View of Hook 99 Rapid



The rafts were beached at the lunch spot



Travis Anglin and Jake Patrick leading grace before lunch



Lunch line

At Miller’s Folly Rapid, another Class IV rapid, the Scouts had another opportunity to try surfing. Chaz had asked Wesley Anglin if he wanted a challenge. Wesley seemed a bit perplexed as to what this meant, but he seemed up for a challenge, so he said yes. Chaz instructed Wesley to go to the front of the boat and kneel, then lean forward over the front tube. This part of the boat bucks a lot during surfing and gets hit with a lot of the waves, making this an adrenaline inducing ride.



During one surfing run, Ben Adkins was thrown from Crew A's boat. Crew B was able to pick him out of the water. Ben at first sat down in the middle of the boat, but Chaz quickly handed him a paddle and told him to take Wesley's original spot on the side of the boat. Chaz told him under no uncertain terms "Hey! If you're gonna be in my raft, you're gonna get to work!". Ben joked that he was being kidnapped and made to do forced labor. Ben stayed in the raft until they got to a calm spot where he could get back to his boat.



Surfing in Miller's Folly Rapid



Crew A has just surfed and is getting back in line to go again



One of the other troops surfing



One of the other troops surfing



One of the other troops surfing



One of the other troops surfing

Later, Chaz turned to Wesley Anglin asked him if he was up for another challenge. Wesley said yes. Chaz, without explaining what he had in mind, told Wesley to jump in the water. Chaz then tried to explain a fun way for someone to be pulled back into the raft. Nathan Young pulled Wesley in, but the communication wasn't clear, and the method didn't quite work as well as Chaz was intending.



Nathan Young pulling Wesley Anglin back into the boat



Nathan Young pulling Wesley Anglin back into the boat



Wesley Anglin, Chaz

During the last rapid of the day, the Scouts could once again jump in and float through the rapid. During this rapid, Petey Wilkens and Wesley Anglin were given the opportunity to “ride the bull”. For this the Scout would sit on the front of the raft with their legs hanging over the front tube. Both made it down the rapid without falling off.



Scouts swimming the last rapid of the trek



Scouts swimming the last rapid of the trek



Regrouping on the boats after the swimming rapid

At the end of the rafting trip, the Scouts saw two iconic bridges over the New River. The first is the Fayette Station Bridge. The bridge is also called the Tunney Hunsaker Bridge, named after a boxer and former chief of police from the nearby town of Fayetteville, WV.

The bridge is a single lane truss bridge and was originally built in 1889. The bridge was the first bridge to cross the New River in Fayette County. The bridge allowed travelers to cross the gorge without having to ford the New River.

The second bridge is the New River Gorge Bridge. Opened in 1977 the bridge is a steel arch bridge that spans 3,030 feet over the New River, and for many years was the world's longest single span arch bridge. At its tallest, the roadbed is 876 feet above the New River. The bridge is a huge boon for transportation in the area, as it cuts vehicle travel time to cross the New River Gorge from about 45 minutes to 45 seconds. The bridge has become an iconic symbol of West Virginia



The Fayette Station and New River Gorge Bridges

The crew pulled off the river at Fayette Station, in the shadow of the New River Gorge Bridge. Once the rafts and gear were loaded the crew rode the bus back to the outfitter to return the rafting gear and then it was back to Summit.



Crew A carrying their boat off the river to the transport truck



Crew B carrying their boat off the river to the transport truck

Once at Summit, the Scouts had the opportunity to ride the Big Zip. This is a 3200' long zipline with three separate lines. At one point it is 160' above ground, and riders can get up to 60 mph towards the end of the ride. It takes about a minute to get from the start to finish.



Mr. Wilkens completing the Big Zip



Mr. Wilkens completing the Big Zip

After the zipline, the Scouts stopped at the gift shop for souvenirs and a cold drink. The original plan called for the Scouts to have dinner in the dining hall, but an audible was called and the decision was made to go into Fayetteville for a pizza dinner. The crew was able to make reservations at Pies and Pints.

Once in Fayetteville, the Scouts had some time before the reservation, so they walked around to explore the town for a bit, eventually stopping at an antique store called Enjoyed Again. The Scouts enjoyed looking around at the various treasures in the store. Several scouts purchased items. Declan McGrath purchased a stylish Hawaiian shirt, and several adults bought some handmade candy, including freeze-dried skittles. Several Scouts bought cans of cotton-candy flavored Coke.



An old Ben Franklin store in town



Fayette County Courthouse



Declan McGrath



Petey Wilkens



Austin Young

Once at the restaurant, the Scouts really enjoyed the hot pizza and cold drinks.



Enjoying a pizza dinner



Not even a single slice of pizza was left over



Dinner spot – Pies and Pints

Back at camp, the Scouts were able to take showers and hang out for a while. Nathan Hoffman had a Board of Review for Second Class Rank with Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Young, and Mr. Anglin, and Declan McGrath had a Scoutmaster Conference with Mr. Lohmueller for an Eagle Palm. The Scouts also completed the last of the requirements for Summit's Duty to God and Sustainability awards. Afterwards, everyone called it a night.



Nathan Hoffman, Mr. Anglin, Mr. Young, and Mr. Wilkens during Nathan's Board of Review



Declan McGrath and Mr. Lohmueller during Declan's Scoutmaster Conference

<b>Miles Traveled</b>		
Method:	Today	Trek Total
Kayaking	0.0	36.0
Rafting	7.0	7.0
Hiking	0.0	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>

**Friday**  
**June 20**

After breakfast it was time to pack up everyone’s gear into the vehicles and start the drive home. It was a grey and rainy trip home. The goal was to be back to BTAP in time for lunch. They made it to Washington Courthouse for a restroom break and snacks. Everyone loaded up on sugar and caffeine, and the caravan was back on the road. Shortly after getting onto I71, though, traffic was stop and go. The crew was 80 miles north of Cincinnati in farm country in the middle of nowhere, so the heavy traffic was very surprising. As it turns out, a lot of this traffic was Cincinnati-bound, heading there for the Taylor Swift concert that evening. Lots of Swifties. As one of the Scouts noted, “I have never seen so many teenage girls on the highway at once in my entire life!”



View of Camp D from the dining hall



Ben Adkins



Nathan Hoffman

## After the trek

During the trek the Scouts were working to earn the 50-Miler award. The main requirement for this patch is that the Scouts have to complete at least a 50-mile trek using non-powered modes of transportation over the course of at least 5 days. In addition, the Scouts need to complete 10 hours of conservation service time. Summit offered to count 3 hours towards this requirement from the time during the trek. The Troop organized three opportunities for the Scouts to complete their hours. First, the Scouts worked at Gorman Heritage Farm repairing trail water bars to help prevent erosion. Second, the Scouts participated in Camp Conservation Day at Camp Friedlander, where they were also repairing water bars and doing other trail maintenance on the We-Hin-Ay-Pe trail. Lastly, the Scouts worked again at Gorman Heritage Farm raking leaves to clear out a drainage culvert.

### Gorman Farm

#### Trail maintenance work project

The focus of the work on this day was to repair the water bars that had been placed on the trail. Water bars consist of large pieces of wood placed on a trail diagonally to the direction of travel. The purpose of the water bars is to direct water off the trail to help prevent erosion. Over time, however, dirt fills in above the water bar, making them ineffective. Water also erodes the dirt downstream of the water bar, making them unstable. The job for the scouts was to remove dirt upstream of the water bar so water could be properly redirected, and then place the dirt downstream of the water bar to stabilize it.



Aiden Fischesser



Declan McGrath



Ben Adkins





A properly maintained water bar



Nathan Hoffman, Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Ben Adkins



Declan McGrath



Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins



Aiden Fischesser, Mr. Lohmueller, Nathan Hoffman



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath



Taking a break in the upper shelter house:  
Aiden Fischesser, Declan McGrath, Ben Adkins, Nathan Hoffman,  
Mr. Lohmueller



Nathan Hoffman, Declan McGrath, Aiden Fischesser, Mr. McGrath, Ben Adkins

Camp Friedlander  
Camp Conservation Day work project

Dan Beard Council organizes a council wide service day at Camp Friedlander every spring and again every fall. The goal is to provide an opportunity for Scouts to come out to provide service for the benefit of the camp. Typical activities performed are trail maintenance, tree planting, and invasive species removal.

On this day, several Scouts started with clearing vegetation on the side of the trail and removing honeysuckle, which is an invasive species. As such, honeysuckle is very harmful to native ecosystems.



Travis Anglin



Mr. Wilkens



Mr. Anglin

Most of the work throughout the morning was spent on repairing and building new water bars in the trail. The Scouts were working on the trail leading from Camp Craig down to Cub World. The trail is somewhat steep in this area and is prone to erosion. Water bars are used in the trail to help prevent this erosion. Camp Friedlander uses a style of water bars that consist of shallow trenches dug across the trail to direct water off the side of the trail rather than allowing it to run down the length of the trail.



Nathan Young



Wesley Anglin



Austin Young



Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Mr. Wilkens, Austin Young, Tyler Fischesser, Matthew Shelhamer, Nathan Young, Mr. Anglin, Mr. Lohmueller

Gorman Farm  
Leaf raking

For this service project, the Scouts raked leaves and removed dirt out of a drainage culvert next to the farm's parking lot



Starting the project



The handle of a rake broke, and Nathan Young jumped at the chance to use the kiddie rake



Aiden Fischesser



The Scouts used a tarp to help move the leaves into the woods



Jake Patrick, Camden Casto, Austin Young



Nathan Hoffman and Jake Patrick



Hauling the leaves to dump them in the woods



The end of the drainage ravine had a lot of dirt buildup



Austin Young



The end result



Austin Young, Mr. Lohmueller, Nathan Hoffman, Nathan Young, Mr. Anglin, Aiden Fischesser, Camden Casto, Jake Patrick, Mr. Wilkens, Travis Anglin

## Patches and Awards

The Scouts had the opportunity to earn the following patches while at Summit.

### Paul R Christen High Adventure Base Award

This patch is awarded to any participant who completes a trek at Summit

The entire crew earned this patch.



### 50 Miler Award

This award is designed to stimulate interest in outdoor adventure and to promote activities that improve personal fitness, self-reliance, knowledge of the outdoors, and a connection to conservation.

To earn the patch Scouts have to complete a minimum 50-mile, 5-day trek by an unmotorized means, such as biking, boating, hiking, or canoeing. Each participant also needs to complete 10 hours of conservation.

The entire crew earned this patch.



### Duty to God

The "Duty to God" program is designed to encourage Scouts to reflect on their experience at camp and their faith.

The patch was earned by Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Austin Young, Aiden Fischesser, Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, Jake Patrick, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Brad Wilkens, Mr. Luke Wilkens, Mr. Young, Mr. Anglin.



Summit Sustainability Award

The Summit Sustainability award is designed to encourage Scouts to learn about how they can live a more sustainable lifestyle and how the decisions they make can affect the world in which they live in.

The entire crew earned this patch



Triple Crown of National High Adventure Award

The Triple Crown award is given to those who have attended three of the four national high adventure bases. The Troop has attended Sea Base, Philmont, and Summit Bechtel Reserve.

The patch was earned by Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Wilkens.



Kayaking Merit Badge

The merit badge was completed by Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, and Jake Patrick



Whitewater Merit Badge

The merit badge was completed by Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Austin Young, Aiden Fischesser, Wesley Anglin, Travis Anglin, Nathan Hoffman, Ben Adkins, and Jake Patrick.



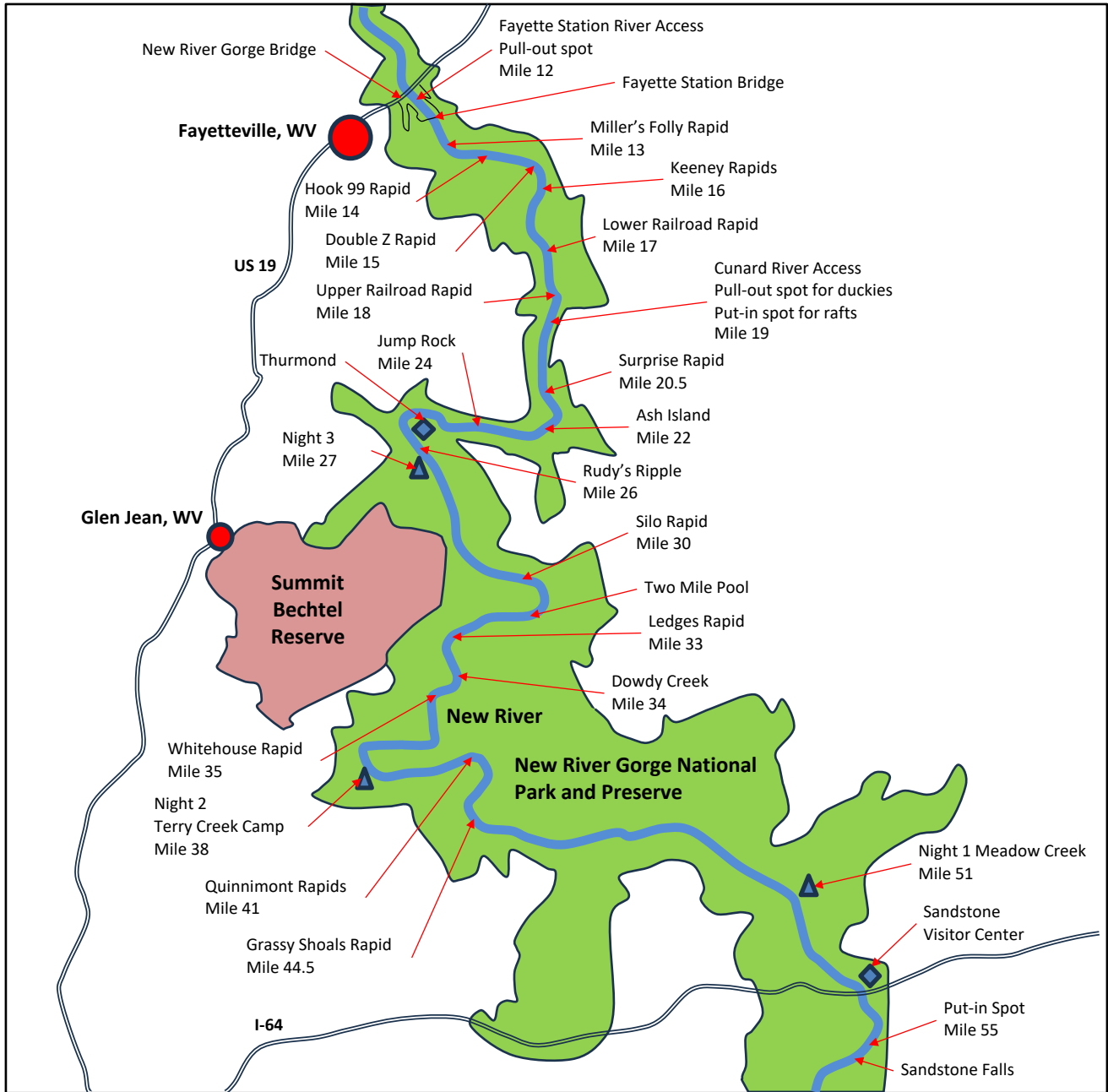


Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes



Miles Traveled	
Method:	Trek Total
Kayaking	36.0
Rafting	7.0
Hiking	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50.0</b>