

Camp has been closed now since March, and not having any campers in camp has a critical downside—no revenue stream. But not having any campers in camp has an upside as well—the camp is in recovery from years of constant use.

Folks have asked how Camp is doing financially without any campers. Please read more about that in this newsletter under “Help Save de Benneville Pines for the Future”. To address the notion of Camp’s “recovery time”, first know that the camp has been running full speed ahead for many years now. With just about all weekends booked to church retreats and outside lease groups, Camp de Benneville Pines is one of the few year-round camps in our area. Add 12 straight weeks of summer camps, one after another, and the busy pace is daunting. And lest I forget, add to that schedule some mid-week school groups in the fall and spring, and our camp is in constant motion and commotion!

With thousands of camper-feet tromping around and enjoying activities in the forest, one might say our camp was NOT a very peaceful place for the critters living in our woods. Without campers, I have made friends with a raccoon family in my front yard. Each evening they find fresh water in an empty flowerpot. It



is fun to watch them wash their masked faces and comb each other’s fur-dos with their fingers. The lizard population seems to have quadrupled, but maybe not, perhaps they were just hiding under rocks all this time, protecting their tails from young campers. The birds have built nests under the eaves, inside of attics, on top of floodlights, in the amphitheater, behind the kitchen and in the pavilion. They seem bolder and noisier as they chatter to me when I walk by. I had to change a light bulb outside of my office last week, and within a moment of reaching up to unscrew the bulb, a mama blue jay began to dive-bomb the light and chattered angrily from her branch on the pine, “How dare you get close to my babies!” She had built a nest on top of the light fixture. *I shall wait until those babies fly off to change the bulb.*



Daisy Doodle and I have had several visits from a very curious gray squirrel. She climbs down the pine tree outside of the office window and just stares at us through the glass. It drives Daisy crazy and she barks and jumps at the window trying to get to the squirrel. And yet, that squirrel has moxie. She just stares back at Daisy with defiant pleasure.



The forest and camp are in recovery this summer as the animals have moved back in. And our cabins are in recovery too. The on-site staff members are painting the interiors of cabins and fixing toilet flappers and squeaky doors. Volunteers are staining the outside of our cabins and installing LED lights in all cabin bedrooms. When campers return, they will find a camp that has been well maintained. You will find photos of the work being done under “Camp Happenings”.

From the mountain top to your house, I wish you well. I look forward to the day when I see your shining face in camp, without a mask on!

Janet James
Executive Director