



Friends of Hidden Valley, Inc.

The mission of the Friends of Hidden Valley is to provide support to the Lawrence Hidden Valley Committee, Inc., in programs, development, maintenance and goals that promote and benefit Hidden Valley Camp.
www.friendshv.org

Winter Newsletter (February, 2010)

Mystery woodpiles bewilder camp hikers

By Jill Baringer,
Friends Board Member

One of the great pleasures of living close to Hidden Valley is the ability to easily hike the area as part of the Hiking Patrol Group.

Each week, one or two people will hike the camp and look things over to make sure doors are secure and equipment has not been left exposed to the elements. We report back to management if we find loose boards, downed trees blocking trails, or any other curiosities.

So, it was with great anticipation of connecting with nature once again that I set out from the Redbud shelter this fall down the trail. The leaves were beginning to change color and the air had that crisp feeling with just a hint of winter ahead.

I crossed the small bridge at the edge of the Redbud site and was confronted with a small pile of sticks just slightly right of center at the trailing edge of the bridge. The sticks were of various sizes in circumference, about 5 to 10 inches in length and laying in no particular pattern but still out of place.

I looked around the bridge to see if perhaps the water rising with the rains might have caused some floating sticks to congregate there, but that didn't look likely. I decided that a small child was probably the architect, and because the sticks were a hazard to unwary hikers I carefully moved the pile of sticks out of the way with my foot and continued on.



The photo on the left shows a woodrat nest under the ramp leading to the Yurt in Dogwood Forest. On the right is one of the persistent piles of sticks on top of the ramp. These piles on bridges/ramps puzzled our Hiking Patrol group.

Nothing more of consequence was found on the hike that day. However, I mentioned it to the other members in my e-mail to the Hiking Patrol Group. This elicited quite a response, as several of the other hikers had also come across small piles of wood, not only at the Redbud site but also at the end of the ramp behind the yurt in Dogwood Forest. They, too, had moved the piles aside. Then, apparently, the piles on the Redbud bridge and the yurt ramp would mysteriously reappear.

Over the next several weeks the appearance and reappearance of these small wood piles were intensely discussed by e-mail amongst various hikers.

We tried to find a pattern to them, or look for signs of an entrance hole that would indicate rodent activity, all to no avail. We even went so far as to accuse the Site Manager, Durand Reiber, of deliberately setting up these piles in two widespread parts of the camp just to see how long it took the Hiking Patrol to find them and set things back to normal.

Finally we noticed that far under the bridge and ramp both, there was a much larger pile of wood that looked just like those a wood rat will build. Eureka! It was pretty clear that any self-respecting wood rat, also called a pack rat, would know that to have a decent house it has to be just so tall. If a bridge or ramp gets in the way of the proper height, then the structure needs to be continued on the other side. In effect, these busy rodents were just placing a capstone on their masterpieces, and here we humans kept coming along and destroying the effect time and again.

Now, we Friends believe the packrats have as much right to live at camp as just about any creature, but rats under bridges where girls may be playing are unfortunately not a good idea. We've also done battle with the rats on other fronts at camp (they will chew the wires of ANY machinery, for example) so this a tentative relationship at best! The battle of the bridges will continue on.

If you are a member of Friends of Hidden Valley, hiking privileges are a great perk! If you agree to join the Hiking Patrol and report on what you see, that is especially helpful. Get started by e-mailing Sandy Beverly, at sbeverly@sunflower.com and she'll put you on her list for notices requesting hikers. Our hiking procedures are on our website: www.friendshv.org

Fall '09 workday

Volunteers focus on the honeysuckle

Volunteers enjoyed the re-scheduled workday of Nov. 29 under partly sunny skies and near perfect temperatures in the low 50s. Sixty-five hardworking individuals came, ranging from Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts, to board directors, Friends members and new faces from KU and the community, including a Big Brother/Little Brother duo!

Concentrating on Mary's Meadow and Dogwood Forest, FHV Volunteer Coordinators Durand Reiber, Margaret Verhage, Sandy Beverly, and our new KU intern Kylee Clendenen met at noon



Scouts haul water for newly-planted trees in Dogwood Forest.

to set up. Jill Baringer came early to start the brush burning fire at Dogwood Forest, while Leesa Terry and daughter Sommer began the fire at the Gathering

Place. Sarah Corliss and Cindy Riling set up hot chocolate and s'mores and, with Annie Stevens, took over the fire when Leesa left.

The main activity was: HONEYSUCKLE ERADICATION! This included hauling and burning an enormous amount of previously cut brush of tree trimmings and honeysuckle. New volunteers like Maxey Lawrence and Gail Gribble with "Little Brother" Jack helped with this job.

New board member Sarah Corliss was dutifully indoctrinated with singed hair. We later learned that Jill B. also singed her hair...again! (What these ladies will do to win that prestigious "Hot Chick Award!").

Many volunteers attacked the live honeysuckle using various tools: poppers, loppers, pocket chainsaws, pruners, reciprocating saws...and finally, the chainsaw for the really big ones. We now have a new, huge mountain of brush to chip for mulch. "Honeysuckle Warriors" included Cris Bandle, Christine Graves, Mary Burchill, the Schenkel family, Girl Scouts, Benji and Flora Wyatt, and probably many others, including the *original* Honeysuckle Warrior, Karen Warner.

Meanwhile, Mary Beth and David Petr



Making s'mores near the brush burning fire at the Gathering Place.

cut down hedge trees, Shane Schenkel provided more chainsaw work around the camp, and Friends members David and Carol Kyner assisted in a variety of ways. Over in Dogwood Forest, Girl Scout troops and helpers performed a variety of jobs, from cutting and burning honeysuckle, transplanting clumps of sedge and flag iris, and planting three new trees. In the wetland, Cub Scouts and helpers donned rubber boots and worked the entire afternoon cutting and raking out dead cattails in the wetland. Another scout troop worked around Sumac unit site mulching saplings and trees.

Thank you to *everyone* for making this another fun and successful day. You are part of the long and wonderful legacy of volunteerism at Hidden Valley Camp!

Why worry about eradicating honeysuckle?

By Durand Reiber,

Friends Board Member/Camp Manager

Every winter, many people ask me "What *is* that beautiful bush with the bright red berries all over Hidden Valley?" Commonly called Amur, Morrow's Bush or Japanese Honeysuckle, depending on your location, it's easy to fall in love with the shrub. It is the first bush to green up in the spring, and the last to lose its leaves in winter. It grows quickly, with gracefully

arching branches. The oldest and largest at the camp are almost treelike, reaching nearly 20 feet tall. The pretty white trumpet flowers of spring are slightly fragrant, and the berries that come on in fall are absolutely gorgeous, especially in the winter when encased in ice or surrounded by snow. And birds LOVE those berries, so why are we at Hidden Valley so concerned with getting rid of honeysuckle?

First, *Lonicera maackii* is *not* a native shrub, but was imported in the 1800's from Asia. Because of their love for the berry, birds are the main reason it has spread so much, and like most invasive plants, it flourishes everywhere, shade or sun, wet or dry soil, alone or crowded. Because the thickets of shrubs leaf out before anything else, they shade out everything growing underneath, inhibiting forest
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Getting rid of honeysuckle (Continued from P. 2)

regeneration. As mature trees die, there will be no younger trees to take their place. In the camp woods, these bushes have totally filled in the understory in many places, creating a monoculture, and making it almost impossible to penetrate the woods.

But, you say, “The birds eat the berries!” True, but these berries have no nutritional value....they’re like *junk food for the birds!*

Also, birds nesting in these rather open shrubs experience a higher incidence of predation. Throughout much of the United States, the decline of bird species is due not only to habitat loss, but to loss of *quality, native habitat*. Many states, including Missouri, have declared war on this species, because it has changed the entire makeup of the woods.

At Hidden Valley, the board has always managed the land with wildlife in mind. Unfortunately, this shrub got the better of us in spite of our long-standing policy of *planting* only native species. Nature was allowed to take its course as the land reverted from overgrazed pasture with few trees, to heavily wooded acreage. No doubt, everyone thought this shrub was a great natural addition, as it provided privacy from advancing urbanization. However, the honeysuckle has become a huge headache. It crowds trails in the summer, and reduces the size of unit sites and all open areas by 5-7 feet per year. Each June, volunteers cut back branches, creating a mountain of brush to deal with.



A scout uses a pocket chainsaw to take down a honey suckle shrub.

And yet, each year, those same bushes come right back, with more branches.

Last year, we decided to stop simply cutting and turned our attention to complete eradication. We received a grant from the Elizabeth Schultz Fund at the Douglas County Community Foundation for a three-phased Environmental Restoration Project. Previous newsletters have told the story of the streambank

stabilization and riparian habitat restoration phases. Now we turn our attention to the native woods restoration phase, taking out the honeysuckle and replanting with native

trees and shrubs. With grant funds, we’ve purchased tools (poppers that rip the entire plant out of the ground, hand saws, etc), and some replacement plants.

Honeysuckle eradication probably won’t be accomplished in my lifetime! Forty acres is a large amount of land to cover with volunteers and hand tools! But we’ll keep popping away, and hope that others will also work to rid their yards of this harmful, invasive shrub. There are many websites to help you identify and get rid of this harmful plant.

If your organization is looking for a community service project, please consider Hidden Valley honeysuckle eradication. Contact Durand Reiber at 841-3567 or durandi@sunflower.com

Brownies, Friends make tree for charity



Girl Scout Troop #3326, second and third grade Brownies from Prairie Park School, decorated the Friends of Hidden Valley Christmas tree, “A Hidden Valley Christmas” for the 2009 Festival of Trees.

Before they started decorating, the Brownies took a hike at Hidden Valley with troop leaders Kim Murphy and Jean Appelhanz. Margaret Townsend, Friends Board Member, led the hike and the girls found natural materials for the tree ornaments. The Brownies then worked with their leaders and troop parents to make the decorations.

Christmas trees are auctioned at the annual Festival of Trees, a fundraiser for The Shelter, Inc., a Lawrence agency that provides juveniles with temporary housing. The Hiddn Valley tree was auctioned to the highest bidder, Jack Graham, so a troop project that also got kids out having fun at camp will assist needy kids in our community!



Troop #3326

Friends Annual Meeting: Food, Fun, Awards

Helping to disperse awards and recognitions at the Annual Meeting, **Cindy Riling** was more than a little suspicious when everyone in attendance was asked to move over to the Friends Memorial Butterfly Garden for a special announcement, especially when her own family unexpectedly appeared.

Still, she was quite surprised and humbled to become the 2009 “Honored Friend of Hidden Valley.” This award is reserved for volunteers who have made truly significant contributions of time, talent, and “sweat equity” for the betterment of Hidden Valley Camp. The honoree must have demonstrated a commitment to and concern for the value of the camp as a recreational and educational facility for Girl Scouts. A name plate for each recipient is installed on the Honor Bench in the garden. Past honorees have been Durand Reiber, Ellyn Owen, and Mary Beth Petr.

The LHVC and Friends boards provided a chorus of reasons why Cindy should become our newest honoree. Members said things like: “Cindy is always so quick to offer help with just about everything and always with a smile. . . She works tirelessly and never complains. . . She is very deserving. . . Cindy is just amazing in her energy and dedication, and keeps a sense of humor throughout.”

Cindy has done just about everything in Girl Scouting, including troop leader and Day Camp director. She was in charge of tents and training for who knows how long! She served on the LHVC board for two terms and is currently serving her second term on the Friends board, becoming the Chair for 2010. She chaired several committees for the 50th Birthday Bash in 2006, and then chaired the committee for the Year of Arcalooka this past year. She attends almost every workday and has helped in many other



Cindy Riling (right) was presented with the “Honored Friend” award, by Durand Reiber (left).

ways, including taking a day off to help with the stream revetment, helping install the picnic tables, and helping install the Honor Bench to which her name will be added! Yes, she is truly a fabulous choice! Thank you, Cindy, for your dedication and commitment to Hidden Valley Camp!

Also at the Annual Meeting, the following Friends members were recognized for their service to Hidden Valley this past year:

Sandy Beverly received the **Best New Friend Award**. She joined the Friends after coming to the Birthday Bash celebrations in 2006, and this year became the Hiking Patrol Coordinator. She was presented with a 50th Anniversary t-shirt, patch and Arcalooka cabin notecards.

Christine Graves received the **White Gloves Award** for working so hard cleaning up the cabin this year.

The Hiking Award went to **Jill Baringer**, for signing up to hike the most, and for her wonderful reports back to the patrol. She received the coveted “Spider Stick” for her fall hikes, as well as insect spray and a snake guide.

Hot Chick Award went to **Leesa Terry**, who took on the very hot job of tending our workday brush fires. She was also in charge of the Iron Chef competitions during Arcalooka Adventure. She received a roasting stick, marshmallows, and a cool-gel neck tie for those hot times!

Margaret Verhage received the **Honeysuckle Warrior Award**. Margaret

has become our professional “honeysuckle popper,” around Red Oak and Coralberry. She received a Honeysuckle Warrior picture, camouflage bandana, insect spray and snake guide.

Our new **Behind the Scenes Recognition** went to **Margaret Townsend**, the workhorse of so many projects of the Friends. She received a basket of spa goodies to pamper herself.

Our 2009 Volunteer of the Year went to **Christine Graves**, another behind the scenes person who gets the job done. Christine has been coming to workdays since the early days of Friends, when she also brought her GS troop, and has been one of our most frequent Hiking Patrol hikers over the years. She has completed three terms on LHVC. She is always willing to do the sometimes hazardous job of parking coordinator for Day Camp and other big camp events.

Christine received a framed picture of Hidden Valley, a basket of camp-related goodies, and the book “Last Child in the Woods.” Thank you, Christine, for all your years of dedication to Hidden Valley!

Our outgoing board members, **Jan McElwain, Jackie Bogner and David Reber** were awarded a framed picture of HV and a vase of wildflowers. David also has a pair of leather gloves for the next time he comes to a workday! (He’s done a lot of chainsaw work!)



Friends members during the actual “meeting” at our Annual Meeting on Sept. 17, 2009

Your donations at work! Thanks, Members!

In 2009, we improved the cabin, replaced a bridge, built steps

We focused on Arcalooka Cabin in 2009, in honor of its 50th birthday! All told, we completed tuck pointing on the exterior brick, repaired the shutters and chimney, and replaced the roof, skylights and two propane furnaces. These upgrades were possible thanks to money generated from donations during the celebrations, combined with funds contributed by both LHVC and Friends. Special thanks to Karl Ramburg for donating his time and materials to the brick work.

Other major improvements funded at camp by Friends were a new bridge to the Coralberry Unit Site and new limestone steps leading from Mary's Meadow to the latrine at the top of the hill. The Friends' share in the cost of these improvements was made possible through the generous contributions from our membership dues...our main fundraising tool. Thank you, Friends!



Friends funded native limestone steps to replace rotting railroad tie steps.



KU students worked hard during a day of service, pulling out the rotting ties of the Coralberry bridge.



Longtime Friend, former Friends Board member and Girl Scout leader extraordinaire, Cris Bandle, made new signs for Hidden Valley!



Friends funded a new bridge to Coralberry, complete with handrails.

It is membership renewal time again. Renew online at www.friendshv.org or contact Flora Wyatt, Membership Chair, 843-8028 or at bfwyatt@sunflower.com

Membership donations and volunteer sweat FUEL our camp. Thank you!

Optimists designate camp to receive significant support

The Lawrence Breakfast Optimist Club (LBOC) has chosen to support our cause with significant donations to Friends of Hidden Valley the past two years.

These donations have gone directly to the camp for special projects and repairs, youth events, supplies and materials used by Scouts, and much more.

LBOC's mission is to empower organizations that cater to youth, and to promote the spirit of optimism in our community. The group meets weekly over breakfast to strategize about helping youth organizations achieve their mission through LBOC volunteer and financial assistance.

Durand Reiber, Friends Board Member and Site Manager, spoke about the camp at the LBOC meeting on Oct. 27, 2009.

See Hidden Valley volunteers in action!

A KU journalism student, Brenna Long, completed video and print pieces about Hidden Valley, getting a lot of footage at the Nov. 29 workday. Of course, our wonderful volunteers were praised by the Friends Board Members who were interviewed.

See her work here: <http://reporting.journalism.ku.edu/fall09/adler-crawford/author/brenna-long/>

From the new Friends Board Chair . . .

By **Cindy Riling,**

Chair, Friends of Hidden Valley, Inc.

Have you ever wondered what marks our time here? If one life can really make an impact on the world...or if the choices we make matter?

I believe our choices do matter, and the choices we make can impact our part of the world. For me that "corner" is Hidden Valley. As we begin a new decade at Hidden Valley, we have the opportunity to continue the work of so many who took care of the camp before us.

As Chair of the Friends of Hidden Valley Board, I ask that you continue to join me as we protect the camp and keep it a safe outdoor learning center for Scouts and a refuge for wildlife. There will be many opportunities to volunteer your time this year, and your donations will assist in maintaining the camp as a unique and diverse wildlife area.

The past year brought changes to our procedures at Hidden Valley. A donation was made to Hidden Valley, and the

governing board of the Lawrence Hidden Valley Committee decided new zip-lines would be a great use of the funds. The old zip-line used at camp in recent years was wonderful, but some research showed us that it did not meet industry standards and could not be certified. So, new zip-lines were installed and volunteers began training so the ziplines could be used for the first time at Day Camp in June.

In preparing for this new and exciting addition to the camp, the Lawrence Hidden Valley Committee completed a thorough review of Hidden Valley land use agreements, insurance and policies and procedures.

A new "hold harmless" policy

One result of that review is a new 'hold harmless agreement' to which all users of the camp must agree. Hidden Valley is not a groomed park, but a semi-primitive natural area, complete with poison ivy, big thorns, downed trees, stumps, uneven terrain and wild animals. As a user of the

camp, you agree to hold harmless The Lawrence Hidden Valley Committee, Inc. for any injuries or damages to the user or the user's charges or to the Hidden Valley Camp. Friends will soon begin asking some of our non-Girl Scout volunteers to sign a hold harmless agreement.

Thank you for your understanding as we implement this change.

Upcoming Workdays!

April 11, 1 to 4 p.m.: We'll do a whole lot of general camp maintenance, concentrating on the eastern third of the camp. We'll need YOU to help us take out hundreds (thousands?) of honeysuckle bushes around the perimeter of Flag Pole Hill and elsewhere.

June 5, 8am to noon: Trail Maintenance. We'll split up in teams to cut back and haul out...honeysuckle! It's a great way to see the entire camp as we try to cover every single trail.

People with chainsaws will be very appreciated at both workdays!

Brownie Play Day planned by older girls Water science made FUN!

By **Kayla Gore,**
Girl Scout, Troop 7658

When Girl Scout Troops #7570 and #7658 started to plan their Silver Award Project, they looked no further than Hidden Valley for the location of "Operation H₂O: A Brownie Play Day."

Hidden Valley has open space, different water features and is maintained by volunteers year-round.

The event was successful, serving more than 110 girls and adults in two sessions in early October 2009.

The Brownie Scouts learned about water conservation and the aquatic biome. They rotated through several stations, including a creek hike, an edible aquifer snack, water snooping in the creek, exploring the wetland and a water layers (density) experiment. Brownies earned the Water Drop Patch, the Water Everywhere Try-It and an event patch.

All of the girls started and finished their adventure by singing Girl Scout songs around the tree on Flag Pole Hill. It was a glorious day!



Ruthie Ozonoff, Troop #7658, gets low to observe the difference in salt versus fresh water density. The water density experiment was one of many activities at "Operation H₂O" Scouts used some materials from Habitat Packets created by Friends of Hidden Valley.

Friends Board Members:

Cindy Riling, Chair
Jill Giele, Vice Chair
Jill Baringer, Treasurer
Leesa Terry, Secretary
Sandy Beverly
Sarah Corliss
Durand Reiber
Leesa Terry
Margaret Townsend
Margaret Verhage
Marcia West
Flora Wyatt
Betty Jo Miller, Presbyterian Manor Liaison



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