



The Cachalotter

News, Information, and Memories by and for the Members of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association

Fame: Now Accepting Nominations

First-Ever Camp Cachalot "Wall of Fame" Inductions to be Held at Homecoming 2010

Over the past five years, the Cachalot Alumni Association has been helping to document the history of Camp Cachalot and the former Moby Dick Council, pulling together the history of parts of the camp itself and sharing it with the local Scouting community through the *Cachalotter*, our web site, our events, and visits to other Scouting functions in the area. Now, it's time for the next step: helping to recognize those people and organizations who have done so much to make Cachalot what it is today. Cachalot is a special place, but it's the people who have made it so special.

To do this, we are thrilled to announce that nominations are now open for the first-ever balloting for induction onto the Camp Cachalot Wall of Fame!

Nominations for induction onto the Wall of Fame may be made by anyone (although individuals may not nominate themselves). To be eligible, a nominee must have had their first involvement with Camp Cachalot no less than 20 years prior to the year in which they are nominated. Those making nominations

should document which category or categories (see the panel below for information on the four categories someone may be nominated for) they believe the nominee is eligible for induction in and provide clear evidence of the nominee's contributions in that category. We cannot stress enough how important it is to provide as much background as you can with a nomination: the committees reviewing nominations for inclusion on the ballot, and the Alumni members doing the voting, may not be as familiar with the nominee as the person making the nomination. The more information you can provide, the stronger the case for inducting that person. Nominations are reviewed for completeness and appropriateness by the Vetting, Veteran's, and Executive Committees of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association. Nominees approved by these committees are then placed on that year's ballot. **Only members of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association currently registered during the voting period are eligible to vote.** Each voter may select up to four nominees on their ballot for induction. Paper and electronic ballots will be available.

To be inducted onto the Wall of Fame, a nominee must receive votes from at least 50% of the voters, must be one of the top four vote-getters overall, and must receive final approval of the Executive Committee. Inductions will take place at the annual Homecoming of the Alumni Association.

Nominations for 2010 are open now and close on March 15th, 2010. Voting will run from March 17th through April 30th, 2010. This year's Homecoming and Wall of Fame induction ceremony will take place on July 10th, 2010, at Camp Cachalot, from noon until 5:00PM. Homecoming is free and open to all. Look for more information on Homecoming 2010 in the Spring issue of the *Cachalotter*.

Nomination paperwork and additional information is available on our web site at:

<http://www.cachalotalumni.org/walloffame/>

Make sure we don't lose track of the important people in Cachalot's history. Nominate someone today! 🐻



SERVICE

Nominees for Service are the unsung hammer-swingers and brush-clearers; those whose volunteered sweat and toil have kept Cachalot's facilities, equipment, and grounds usable by all.



PROGRAM

To be considered for Program, nominees will have kept Scouts and Scouters entertained, informed, and educated by providing memorable programs and activities at Cachalot, Winter, Spring, Summer, or Fall.



PROFESSIONAL

For those employees of Councils past and present, be they executives, office staff, Rangers, or summer camp staffers, who have had impact on Camp Cachalot far beyond their job requirements.



FINANCIAL

Financial nominees are those who have made significant financial contributions not just to Scouting, but explicitly for the betterment of Camp Cachalot's facilities or program

The Cachaletter

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The Cachaletter is the newsletter of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association. It is published twice annually: once in the spring and once in the fall, by the Communications Committee.

Questions or other feedback related to *The Cachaletter* can be sent via email to cachaletter@cachalotalumni.org.

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The Camp Cachalot Alumni Association

The Camp Cachalot Alumni Association was founded in 2004 with the express purpose of supporting Camp Cachalot and being a social organization for the extended family of the Camp. Anyone who has ever had any involvement with Camp Cachalot, the former Moby Dick Council, or any of the predecessor camps or Councils is eligible for membership. It is a not-for-profit organization operated under the auspices of the Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Our membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th, and all membership fees contribute directly to our endowment fund, the proceeds of which go directly towards the support of Camp Cachalot.

More information about the Alumni Association, including membership forms, back issues of *The Cachaletter*, Camp history, and online discussion forums, can be found online at our web site:

<http://www.cachalotalumni.org/>

We can also be reached via US Mail at the following address:

Camp Cachalot Alumni Association
c/o Narragansett Council, BSA
P.O. Box 14777
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...the World Go 'Round

Jeffrey P. Dumais, Association Chairman

Belated Greetings Alumni!

As I write to you today, Old Man Winter has settled in, Father Christmas has come and gone, and the Baby New Year is all around us. It was my hope that by this point in the year, I could be speaking of successes in fund-raising, upcoming events and the rosy future ahead. Unfortunately, that isn't the case.

As you may have noticed, the Winter Gathering that is usually around the corner has been cancelled. It was a hard decision, but one we needed to make, as you will hear over the next couple of *Cachaletter* issues. Besides having locked ourselves into a date we found couldn't be easily accommodated, we were faced with the distinct possibility of having to pay a considerably larger amount than in the past for reserving a location. Considering that we have been operating "fee free" events for the last couple of years, we just couldn't justify the cost.

I had also hoped to be able to announce our plans to hand to Narragansett Council funds to assist with procuring much needed equipment in support of the year-round program at Cachalot. Unfortunately, this also has had to go by the wayside for a long-range plan to be determined.

What all this boils down to is money, the green stuff we all need for one reason or another. Over the past year, as with the rest of America, the Alumni's finances have seen more than a little difficulty. We have chosen to maintain our core services: The *Cachaletter*, the Alumni web site, our Staff scholarships and Homecoming. Until we get a clearer picture of our future financial state, and we hope to be able to report positively on that later this spring, we will need to be very careful not to overspend our limited income.

We will be keeping the Alumni camping weekends on Memorial Day and Labor Day, as the benefits, both in social gathering and elbow grease provided to Cachalot are too important to the Association.

Please feel free to drop a line through cachalotalumni.org to any of the Committee to lend your support to the Association.

Thanks to all you 'men of faith and courage!' 🐟

Over the past year...
the Alumni's finances
have seen more than
a little difficulty.

Fantastic!

Michael Brown, Camp Director



The summer of 2009 was in a word... FANTASTIC! In my first full season as Camp Director, we started a couple of new programs which were extremely successful, one being Space Exploration Merit Badge, which is taught by the Nature staff. Over the course of the summer over 50 kids learned about the stars and built and launched model rockets in Tom Cullen Field. Another cool new program at camp last summer was the over lunch bike trek through the forest, which many troops took advantage of and enjoyed the delicious peanut butter and jelly sandwiches prepared by our culinary master Harry Weissman. I think our most exciting new program was the paint ball range!! Scouts could try their

...2010 looks as if it is going to be the best summer ever!

luck at the newest of Mr. Richard's ranges, they could try for accuracy and shoot the cow bell or they could just open up and have fun.

But the most exciting thing this summer was an increase in attendance by of more than 50 kids! We served nearly 500 kids this summer and are looking to expand on that next summer. The troop traveling farthest to Cachalot this summer came all the way from the Virgin Islands!

Over the next couple of months, George Ramos (the 2010 Program Director) and I will be working on building the 2010 management team and developing new programs and publicity. 2010 looks as if it is going to be the best summer ever!!

District Updates

Peter W. Ashworth, Cachalot District Executive



2009 turned out to be another banner year for the Cachalot and Massasoit District. Both former Moby Dick Districts (at one time, each their own council) are showing growth in membership. Cachalot lead the Council with 26 more youth this fall than last, so far, and has started 3 new units (that's a Pack, Troop or Crew) for a total of 47 units. Massasoit is keeping pace with 16 more youth so far this fall, along with 4 new units (40 units total). Both districts will continue to try to reach more kids with the program by starting more units in the coming year, including re-starting Pack 1 New Bedford (the Pack is looking for help). Together these districts boasted 1635 Scouts at the end of the year.

But what did all these Scouts do? Boy Scout summer camp hosted of 182 Scouts from both districts with additional attending without their unit as Cadre or in the Eagle Camp program. Cachalot Day Camp was light with only 35 Scouts, but Massasoit had 68 at their camp at the Fall River Rod and Gun Club in Westport. Both districts competed in the Boy Scout Olympics, with shooting, geocaching, first aid challenges, races, and other scout skills tested. The Cachalot and Massasoit Chapters of the Abnaki Lodge have over 30 new ordeal members while 20+ completed their brotherhood. Cachalot Chapter Chief, Cam Souza, is also serving as the Lodge Ceremonies Chair. Our partnership with the Buttonwood Park Zoo continues to grow as Cub Scouts and their families attend Pin and Belt Loop days and sleep overnight there. Troop 3 New Bedford hosted a Merit Badge College with New Bedford Vocational High School with over 100 boys in attendance.

Both districts have made great strides in finding leadership on the both the unit and district levels, but could always use more help. Fernando Garcia, of Fall River Ford, is serving superbly as District Chairman of the Massasoit District, while the Cachalot District is close to having a new chair. Derrick Jones has taken the mantel of District Commissioner while Jack Staskiewicz continues admirably as Massasoit District Commissioner.

Thank you to all the alumni that continue to support the local Scouting program by giving of their time and/or Friends of Scouting dollars to keep the tradition alive. 2010 will be the Boy Scout's of America's Centennial year, and both the Cachalot and Massasoit Districts are poised to enter the next 100 years strong.

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

May 28th through May 31st, 2009

Memorial Day Family Camping Weekend
Camp Cachalot, Plymouth, MA

June 30th, 2010

End of 2008-2009 Membership Year

July 10th, 2010

12:00PM through 5:00PM

Alumni Homecoming 2010
Camp Cachalot, Plymouth, MA

September 3rd through

September 6th, 2009

Labor Day Family Camping Weekend
Camp Cachalot, Plymouth, MA

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Wild Cachalot: The Turtles of Cachalot

How Much Do You Know About These Nature Area Perennials?

BY BRIAN BASTARACHE

Most of us have seen Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) lazily swim by on a summer day around Five Mile Pond. A few of us have had the unfortunate task of removing the hook from ones boney mouth while fishing with night crawlers. Many of us also have a favorite story of a giant snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) from Five Mile (termed a "mongo" by many Cachalot campers) or one of our other beautiful ponds. The turtle always seems to become even more of a "mongo" with each telling. These two common species can be found in nearly every river, lake, pond and marsh in southern New England, but merely two of many Bay State turtles.

Painted and Snapping Turtles are the two most commonly observed turtles in Massachusetts, but fifteen species of turtles can be found in the Bay State. Five of our turtles are sea turtles (Green Turtle, *Chelonia mydas*; Hawksbill, *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Kemp's Ridley Turtle, *Lepidochelys kiempii*; Loggerhead Turtle, *Caretta caretta*; Leatherback, *Dermochelys coreacia*) and therefore are not found in camp. The Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) does not occur in camp either, as it only lives in estuaries. The Bog Turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenburgii*) is a small species whose Bay State range is restricted to the calcareous fens of southern Berkshire County. With nearly half the crowd eliminated, eight species (including Painted Turtles and Snappers) are left that may occur at Cachalot.

The shy and nocturnal Musk Turtle or Stinkpot (*Sternotherus odoratus*) is rarely seen. This small species (adults rarely reach more than 5.5 inches in length) is most easily found at night. I have observed several at one time by leaving bait (chopped hotdogs) after sunset near the shore of Little Five Mile Pond. Try this and then check the bait every 15 minutes with a flashlight and you should find some too. All three names of this little turtle refer to its ability to release an unpleasant odor when captured.

Two local species are terrestrial (live on land). The Box Turtle (*Terrepenne carolina*) and the Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) are NOT tortoises even though they are most often found out of the water. (Tortoises have specialized feet.) Wood Turtles require cool streams in which to spend the winter months. Such required winter habitats do not occur at Cachalot and—to my knowledge—no one has ever reported finding a Wood Turtle in camp.

Box Turtles have occasionally been found in camp. Box Turtles are omnivorous but have a serious taste for meat. Worms, snails, slugs and insects make up a very important part of their diet. These invertebrates are few and far between in the dry sands of Cachalot and so are box turtles. The occasional specimen found at camp is likely moving through and feeding on the rich crop of mushrooms that grow in the Pine Barrens.

The most famous turtle of the southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens is the Northern Red-bellied Cooter (*Pseudemys rubriventris*), formally known as the Plymouth Red-bellied Turtle. This dark colored turtle with a bright coral to red belly is sometimes confused with the Painted Turtle. The carapace (top shell) of the Cooter is completely dark with a few dark red streaks. Painted Turtles have a light colored tic-tac-toe pattern on their carapace and a yellow to orange plastron (bottom shell). Adult Northern Red-bellied Cooters can grow to a foot long and ten pounds!

The Northern Red-bellied Cooters occur from Virginia to New Jersey. The Plymouth County population is disjunct from the rest of the species range. Although isolated bones from local Native American middens prove that Cooters have been in the ponds of southern Plymouth County before the Pilgrims were. Midden remains also indicate that the species range was once continuous from Massachusetts to the Carolinas.

This herbivorous species is listed as Endangered

under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) and Threatened under the US Endangered Species Act.

At least two ponds within Myles Standish State Forest and one nearby pond has healthy populations of Northern Red-bellied Cooters. The large ponds of Cachalot (Five Mile, Little Five Mile, Abner's and Little Long Ponds) offer suitable habitat for this species. It wouldn't be surprising for a cooter or two to eventually show up in a camp pond.

Spotted Turtles (*Clemmys guttata*) are small turtles that inhabit shallow wetlands. Most of the ponds in the Pine Barrens are kettle holes with fairly steep topography. In the 1980's I found a pair of spotted turtles in Tom Cullen field. While that may seem an unlikely place for a wetland animal, the shrub swamp located near the archery range would be ideal habitat for these beautiful little creatures. Keep an eye out for this rare little animal at the Bogs, the Archery Range area and in the shallow wetlands near Abner's Pond.

Blanding's Turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*) also require shallow wetlands. Unlike the Spotted Turtle, these large animals have a high-domed shell, long neck and a brilliant yellow throat. Our local Cooters are a northern population of a southern species, the Blanding's is most definitely a northern animal. The species' stronghold is in the northern Midwest. Populations also occur in New York, Nova Scotia and Massachusetts. Blanding's Turtles are listed as Threatened under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

In the early 1990's an adult Blanding's Turtle was captured by some campers in Little Five Mile Pond and promptly brought to the Nature Area. Then-Nature-Director Frank Shultz knew that he had something special. Frank called me and I came down to photograph the animal. Since the only known populations in the commonwealth were in northern Worcester County the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife personnel theorized that the animal was most likely picked up while crossing a road and later released at a beautiful camp to live happily ever after. A few years later during the Massachusetts Herpetological Atlas Project a population of Blanding's Turtles was discovered in the Middleborough area. The Cachalot Blanding's Turtle was most likely a Middleborough animal expanding its territory. So be on the look out for this large, and also terribly shy, turtle.

Many Scouters remember the days of buying little green turtles at the local Five and Dime. Those animals were hatchling Red-eared Sliders (*Trachemys scripta*). Sliders are native to the southeastern US and raised on turtle farms by the tens of thousands. Even though selling



A Blanding's Turtle (photo by the author)

turtles less than four inches in length has since been outlawed, Red-eared Sliders are still the most common turtle in the pet trade. (Check out your local Petco.) Many people are unfamiliar with the commitment and demands of caring for aquatic turtles soon tire of the burden and release their once beloved pets. Red-eared Sliders have now been documented in every county in Massachusetts. Unfortunately it is likely only a matter of time before one shows up at camp.

Turtle Conservation

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has been head-starting Northern Red-bellied Cooters for two decades. Head-started hatchlings are collected from nests and raised in captivity. Hatchlings are kept warm and well fed over their first winter. By the spring the not quite one year old turtles are the size of five year olds! When the head-started turtles are released in their first spring they have outgrown most of the predators that would naturally prey upon them.

One the edge of the Myles Standish State Forest is a US Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Management Area. This area protects one of the strongest populations of Northern Red-bellied Cooters in Massachusetts. Public entrance is strictly forbidden. You can see these rare turtles in East Head Reservoir. I suggest launching a canoe at the boat

“ramp” near the Myles Standish State Forest Headquarters. Paddle quietly around the lake on a sunny morning in April or May. Bring binoculars. These turtles get big, but they are very shy!

The Natural Resources Management Department at the Bristol County Agricultural School, Oxbow Associates and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have begun a program to head-start Blanding’s Turtles in a cooperative conservation effort to secure the future of the Worcester County populations. Seventy-two hatchling Blanding’s Turtles are currently being head-started at the aggie school. They will be released in the spring of 2010. Hopefully in the future these efforts will be extended to the southeastern populations as well. 🐢

Additional Information About Our Turtles

Turtle Conservation Website at www.turtle-conservationproject.org.

MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Website at www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/wildlife/facts/reptiles/reptiles.htm

Massachusetts Wildlife Magazine Volume LIX, Number 2: Field Guide to the Reptiles of Massachusetts



Turtle Tips

While not all listed, all of the turtles in Massachusetts are in trouble. We have conspired against them in several ways, but there are a few things that you can do to help conserve our native turtles. Many of them are prescribed in the principles of The Outdoor Code and Leave No Trace.

1. **NEVER** release pets. Released pets transmit disease to wild populations and/or compete with native animals for finite resources. Releasing an unwanted pet is NOT a humane act.
2. Secure trash and do NOT leave pet food outdoors. Human comensals (e.g., skunks, raccoons, foxes and coyotes) occur in far greater numbers near human habitation than out in wild areas. Our trash and pet foods feed these turtle egg eaters and boost their populations. Their numbers are so large that few turtle nest have any chance of surviving. Don’t subsidize these nest predators. Be sure to secure your trash while camping too.
3. Watch for turtles while driving. Adult turtle mortality due to traffic volume is one of the biggest conservation issues faced by all turtle species. Turtles on the road are typically adult females looking for a nesting site. These individuals are the most valuable to a population and the ones that we are killing with our network of roads. Every new road increases turtle mortality. Do your part to conserve wildlife habitat.
4. Always put a turtle on the side of the road to which it was headed when you found it. Otherwise it stubbornly will turn right around and try to cross again. Please be careful not to experience road mortality yourself!
5. Take only pictures. It is legal to keep up to two individual Snapping, Painted and/or Musk turtles. It is illegal to possess all other species without a permit in Massachusetts.

It’s still not a good idea to take wild turtles home to become pets. We need all the turtles in their habitats to be reproducing to offset all of the above issues. If you really want a pet turtle purchase a captive bred animal from a reputable pet store. Be sure to read all about it before you bring one home. Any native turtle exposed to pet store animals (including feeder fish) may carry disease. Such animals should **NEVER** be released for reasons prescribed in #1 above.
6. Be a citizen scientist. Report turtle sightings at www.turtleatlas.org.

Painted Turtles sunning themselves (photo by the author)



Spotted Turtle (photo by the author)

Summer 2009

A Few Pictures from the Association's Summer Activities

Alumni Ron LeBlanc (L) and John Reale at Homecoming 2009



Some of the forest fire-fighting tools on display at Homecoming 2009

Jeff Dumais (L) and Brian Bastarache explain how some of the fire fighting tools are used at Homecoming 2009



Alum' Tom Whelan fishing with his family in the lagoon of Five Mile Pond at our Labor Day Family Camping Weekend



Members of the Alumni Association helping to repaint the exteriors of Cabins I and II during our Labor Day Family Camping Weekend



Staff Scholarships Awarded

Cachalot's Program Director Wins the Chairman's Scholarship, and We Have Our First Repeat Winner

During the Staff banquet at the conclusion of the 2009 Summer Camp season at Cachalot, our chairman, Jeff Dumais, presented the award letters for this year's Summer Camp Staff Scholarships to two very worthy recipients. The \$500 "Thomas P. Whelan Chairman's Scholarship" was awarded to George Ramos of Wareham, who stepped in to serve as Cachalot's Program Director this year; while the other \$250 Alumni Scholarship was presented to Paul Kelly, Jr. of Carver, who, as the recipient of last year's Chairman's Scholarship, becomes our first repeat winner.

George, an Eagle Scout and member of Troop 93 in Wareham, is a junior pursuing a Television Studies (Communications) major

at Lyndon State College in Lyndon, Vermont. 2009 was his seventh consecutive year on Cachalot's staff, where he's progressed from a Counselor-in-Training to Dining Hall Steward to Program Commissioner/CIT Director, finally assuming the role of Program Director this summer. He also ran this past year's Survivor-themed district camporee, and serves as the Youth Liason to the Alumni Association's executive committee. He plans to return to Cachalot in 2010, once again as the Program Director.

Paul, also an Eagle Scout, is a member of Troop 48 in Carver. He is in his sophomore year at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. This is his sixth year on Cachalot's staff,

where he serves as the Ecology Director.

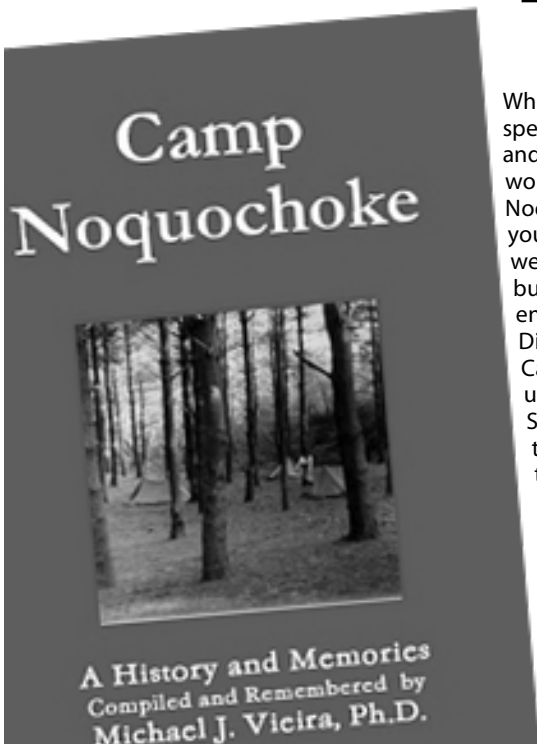
Both of these young men make a positive impact on hundreds of youths each summer in their staff positions, and the Association is very pleased to award them these scholarships. Congratulations to George, Paul, and their families!

Our scholarship programs are made possible through the generous donations of our members, and we are working to increase our scholarship endowment to provide for more, larger scholarships in the future. If you'd like to contribute, or would like to learn more about our scholarship program, please contact us at staffscholarship@cachalotalumni.org. 🖊



Memories of Noquochoke

Alum Mike Vieira Completes His History of One of Our 'Predecessor' Camps



When he was still a teenager, Mike Vieira spent many hours poring over the archives and scrapbooks of the Massasoit Council, working to assemble a history of Camp Noquochoke in Westport. As with many such youthful endeavors, life intervened. Mike went on to college, family life, and career, but writing and Scouting remained a presence (after the merger that resulted in Moby Dick Council, he even served as Cachalot's Camp Director in the mid 1970s), and the urge to finish writing the history of his Scout camp never really went away. When the Alumni Association approached Mike to speak on his memories of Noquochoke at our 2008 Winter Gathering, it prompted him to dust off his manuscript and get it published. The Alumni Association made its records and photo archive available to Mike (an archive to which Mike had made significant contributions himself), and the result is *Camp Noquochoke: A History and Memories*, which he self-published late last year.

This 100-page book is both a history of the camp from its beginnings in 1921 through its eventual closing in 1978 and a personal reflection on Mike's own experiences as a Scout and staffer at Noquochoke. He plans to donate the proceeds from the sale of the book to support a campership in the memory of fellow Noquochoke staffer David Pereira and to support the ongoing efforts of the Cachalot Alumni Association to preserve the history of Scouting in the Southcoast.

The book is available in both paperback and downloadable formats from Mike's section on lulu.com, for \$14.50 or \$5.00, respectively. If you want to learn more about Camp Noquochoke, we heartily recommend checking it out:

<http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/a-history-of-camp-noquochoke/5531292>

Congratulations and thanks to Mike for this great accomplishment! 🖊

Winning “The Battle of Dining Hall Hill”

Our Ranger Fills Us In On... Some Filling In

BY KARRIE DUMAIS, RANGER, CAMP CACHALOT

Fellow Alumni,

Finally, a battle has been won here at Cachalot, one skirmish in a long-fought war against the forces of nature herself. I call it “The Battle of Dining Hall Hill”. This erosion problem haunted me for a very long time. How many of you have walked up to the hill near the Dining Hall to take in the beautiful view of Five Mile Pond, look down, and thought “Uh-oh! Where did the hill go!?” That side of the hill has been disappearing into Five Mile Pond at an alarming rate for years. What caused it? A combination of many years of human traffic, poorly managed run off from the roof of the Dining Hall itself, and simple weather and gravity causing much erosion. After many attempts I was fearful that I would never get a force of volunteers to take up

the daunting task. Finally, in the fall of 2008, my worst fears seemed imminent: torrential downpours threatened to undermine the “ice house” situated in the middle of the erosion on the hill. This was also a huge safety issue: if the erosion removed much more of the earth beneath the structure, it could roll down the hill, possibly causing injury or death! The Cachalot Chapter of our Order of the Arrow Abnaki Lodge rallied at this point and made a temporary fix to divert the run off until more permanent measures could be taken.

All of this was only the prelude to the historic battle to come. I remember it like this; September, Cachalot Ordeal Weekend 2009. The day started out rainy and miserable. Tired, hungry, and wet candidates shuffled into the Dining Hall to await their fate for the day. I stood there looking at these resilient Scouts and thinking “these are the ones that will get

it done”. None of us knew how vital our task was that day... Mother Nature had a surprise in store for us. Rain. Lots of it.

We set to work immediately, to shore up the hill with terraces. We worked hard. It was a grueling task of digging wet, heavy sand; dredging it up from the pond; redepositing it on the hill. Hauling huge timbers down the hill to build the large (and, surprisingly, level) terraces that would have to hold against the onslaught yet to come. “It will clear up by noon” the weather man said at the start of that day, but still the rain persisted, soaking our clothes and weighing us down. Well, we also persisted. I gave the Ordeal candidates the option to trade tasks. “No way!” they said, “Lets see it to the finish!” And they did.

We accomplished. 

Camp Cachalot Alumni Association

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