

Skymont 2022

We set out on a drive that would be miniscule compared to the car trip that would take us, weeks later, to Washington D.C. Once we reached our usual campsite, Breezy Point, we began to claim tents and unload the trailer, as well as make preparations for dinner. The meal for the night was spaghetti, salad, and garlic bread, all prepared by Miller and John, with help from a few adults. The meal was, overall, a success, as was setting up camp. Some members of the troop had planned to cot hike every night possible, and there were at least a few scouts who slept by the fire every night we were at Skymont.

The next day, we cooked brunch, made several more preparations, and waited for our troop guide for the week, Baaj, who is a member of the troop, to give us an overview of the camp as a whole and inform us of changes made to the camp overall. That night was the first time dinner would be served, and it seemed to be better than the meal served the previous year. The next morning, we left for our various badge classes.

From Monday, the week sped by quickly, with the entire troop easily acclimating to the schedule of classes and various other duties, such as the much-disputed cleaning of the latrines. Adding to the various activities was the Troop 48 tradition of building a picnic table for the use of the camp each year. This proved somewhat difficult, as, in the heat of the afternoon, using power tools was quite taxing. Near the end of the week, it was completed, and joined the several other tables the troop had built.

Some sessions of evening free time were spent at the waterfront, where many activities were open, including canoeing, kayaking, paddleboarding, and swimming, and some were spent at camp, where the troop played ERS and other card games. Several nights, the troop made campfires, which were enjoyed by all. On Wednesday, the designated 'staff night out,' the scouts made their own pack-out dinners, which were more thoroughly cooked than in 2021.

The camp's emergency siren was something most doubted would be necessary to use at all during that particular week. Weather seemed to be stable and consistently without storms or any rain to speak of, and the chances of any other sort of emergency arising were slim. However, toward the end of the week, the siren began to wail as thunder boomed. A sudden storm was directly above

the camp, and the lightning that accompanied it seemed quite close. The entire camp assembled in the dining hall, and lunch was served. Within a few minutes, the storm had passed.

On Friday, the final full day of Skymont, a few of the scouts walked to Signature Rock, an overhanging formation that contains many chiseled names of individuals who traveled across the country in the late 1800s. The location is not only quite interesting and intriguing, but also cooler than most of the camp, as it is in a densely forested area, and under a rock ledge. Friday mornings at Skymont are usually reserved for merit badge completion, and this block provides additional time to redo specific requirements or hear instructions for some of the longer and more involved merit badges. After this block of time was over, we began to clean the camp and remove what we had built, such as the gateway and the awning under which the picnic tables had been placed. Later on Friday afternoon, camp games took place, and were enjoyed much more by the scouts than the games that had been held during the previous year. The activities ranged from charades, to tug-of-war, to a stretcher relay. However, out of the various activities, tug-of-war seemed to be the most popular. Scouts and staff faced each other in numerous competitions, and Troop 48 did quite well.

That night, our closing campfire took place, which also served as a camp awards ceremony. Troop 48, having won the cracked skillet award during the week, a recognition for the cleanest campsite in Skymont on a particular day, also won the golden dustpan. This was quite exciting, as, despite winning the skillet twice in 2021, we were not awarded the dustpan that year. We also won an award for having the most scout spirit, which is known as the Montaski Moccasin award.

Our roses and thorns session, usually what marks the end of a Troop 48 trip, was filled with remarks about many enjoyable and unique experiences during the week that brought the entire troop closer together, and created lasting memories for individuals that will be recalled during Skymont for years to come. As ever, Skymont was a meaningful experience filled with growth. It created high expectations for 2023.