

Camp Wittman History

Camp Wittman was established in 1986 as a facility to serve youth and resource educators. Camp Wittman was developed through partnering efforts of the Valley Boys and Girls Club, Wittman Farms, and contributions of time, labor and resources from a variety of area volunteers.

The camp is an extension of the Wittman Farms commitment to education, conservation and environmental stewardship. In addition to serving the Boys and Girls Club's programs, the camp was designed to be available for environmental education programs for area schools and others interested in promoting natural resource education.

Primary Uses

Outdoor/Environmental Education

The camp serves local school needs for environmental education by providing an outdoor classroom, with overnight camping, located among a farm, ranch, and timber operation. It has been used by many schools for environmental education.

A Camp Curriculum Committee was formed with representatives from the Boys and Girls Club, Wittman Farms, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Lewiston School District, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Fish and Game, the University of Idaho, Potlatch Corporation, Lewis-Clark State College and several area farmers. The committee gathered resources to provide multi-disciplinary curriculum in the areas of wildlife, forestry, water, soil, farming & ranching. The focus was on the concepts of *multiple-use*, *conservation*, and *sustainability*.

Team & Leadership Development

The challenge course facilitates team building and creative thinking/problem-solving activities. The camp has served youth & adult leadership teams, sports teams, international exchange student retreats, workshops, explorers, state training workshops, and others.

Tours and Business Retreats

The camp has been a popular stop for tours by farm conservation groups, legislative teams and ag industry policy forums. The camp has expanded its outreach in recent years to serve other businesses desiring a location to hold meetings and retreats for strategic planning and business teamwork enhancement. The meeting facilities and natural resource setting are ideal for these purposes and provides a revenue generating opportunity to fund Camp Wittman programs.

Private Events

The camp has recently expanded to include private events such as weddings, reunions, and recreation. This use has been added as a fundraising opportunity for camp maintenance and improvements, and administrative overhead.

Fellowship & Preserving Traditions

Fireside sing-a-longs have been a legacy of the Wittman family for generations, and the camp is helping to keep the tradition alive. The tradition is being partially preserved through the Camp Wittman "hootenanny" – a sing-a-long requiring audience participation, with lyrics provided in the Camp Wittman songbook containing old cowboy/country ballads and a few more contemporary classics.

As Camp Wittman has evolved from a simple fire pit with bleachers to a rustic retreat with bunkhouses, lodge, water and solar systems, etc. The camp has sustained its educational and recreational purpose over these last 40 years thanks to the investment of donors, grants, and volunteers. We look forward to continuing our mission and vision for many years to come.

Camp Facilities

- **Natural Resource and Outdoor Education Center (The Lodge):** Built in 1997 with contributed funds and labor from a variety of local, state and government sources, the log-style lodge provides protection from the elements and a variety of hands-on learning materials for environmental and wildlife education.
- **Sleeping Quarters:** Two permanent 10-12 person dormitories provide sleeping quarters for campers. The camp also has a retrofitted “private cabin” commonly referred to as the “Cook’s Corner.”
- **Shower House and Bathrooms:** A basic wood shower house with a French drain and propane-heated water heaters provides a rustic showering option in the camp environment. Permanent outhouse-style bathrooms are provided.
- **Fire Pit:** A gazebo/amphitheater over the fire pit provides an ideal location for formal presentations and discussions, fireside chats, skits, hootenannies and fellowship.
- **Challenge Course:** The challenge course was constructed in 1995 with funds from an Environmental Education grant. The course includes cable-walks, trust fall platform, balance beam logs and a climbing wall. It provides team-building and leadership development training opportunities.
- **Kitchen, Covered Grill and Eating Area:** a retrofitted Wittman farm building with added roof cover in 1991 doubles as area for cooking/eating and arts & crafts. This was also the first area with rain protection for campers in the early years of the camp, prior to construction of the log lodge.
- **Solar System:** The camp is powered by a 12-volt solar collector and 110-Volt inverter furnished by Clearwater Power. Powers audio-visuals, water system replenishment, and on-site construction.
- **Water Reservoir:** A 2,000 gallon cement reservoir was installed near the camp to remedy water supply and pressure needs that couldn’t be provided from pumping water from the spring “on demand.”