

The Pine Needle

Belgrade Lakes, Maine

July 2026

The Mid-Summer Pine Needle is a collection of articles, stories, and artwork that seeks to provide a glimpse into the creative, imaginative, and active lives campers lead at Pine Island.

Message in a Bottle

By Graham Cousino, Sam Price, and
Brayden Kasben-Loften

Date: Monday, July 13

Mission: Set out on an expedition beyond Oak Island to Runoia, the girls' camp on Great Pond, in hopes of establishing contact with the campers.

Our crew: Graham Cousino, Sam Price, Brayden Kasben-Loften, and Spencer Davis.



We embarked in *Betsy*, one of PIC's catboats. The wind was in our favor, and after about 20 minutes, we made it to the cove of Runoia. Nobody was in sight, but after a few minutes a couple of girls appeared. One of them ran to spread the word: Pine Island campers in the cove!

Moments later, hordes of campers came sprinting down the road to see if the rumor was true. We had brought a PIC water bottle with notes inside, consisting of our names, where to write us letters and other ways of contacting us, and launched it towards their shore with a hearty throw. The plan went perfectly and they received the notes.

That evening, Alex received an email from Runoia saying they thought the idea was cute and to expect mail soon!

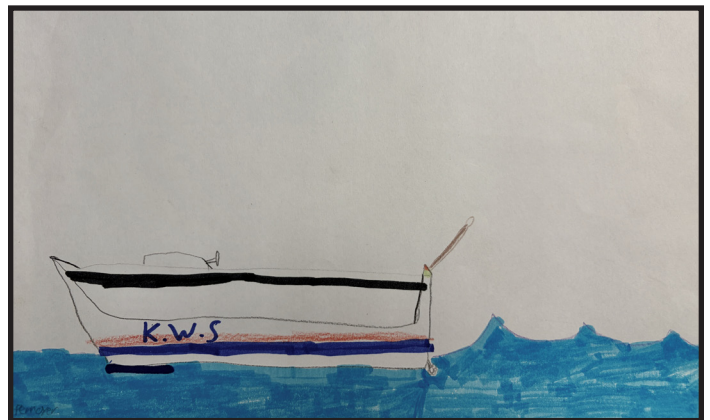
The K.W.S.

By Ben Pennoyer

The K.W.S. has lots of uses here at Pine Island. If you want to hear about them, read this.

First off, the K.W.S. brings food, supplies, and much more to us on the island. Another reason to like the K.W.S. is because it brings us to the Mainland for trips and activities, and to the island on the first day of camp.

Just saying, the K.W.S. is really important, so let's respect it, protect it, and conserve it. Let's give a round of applause to Sawyer for driving our wonderful boat!



K.W.S. by Ben Pennoyer

Feathered Neighbors: The Ospreys of PIC

By Ben Ohly

It's a nice, bright morning at Pine Island, as campers clean their tents and sign up for activities. The only sound is the chatter of the campers, until suddenly, a rhythmic *Chee-chee-chee!* starts to echo across the

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More Birds of PIC!

By Darius Morgan

Common Loon

The loons are a bit annoying at night with their crazy-sounding calls. They usually go diving into the water. I am guessing it's because they are catching fish. They are black and white, with a ton of patterns. Their head is kind of green in some parts, their eyes are red, and their beak is really pointy.



Common Loon by Darius Morgan

Mallard Duck

The mallards are pretty funny. For example, the babies often split off from their mother and then they go under the dock and sometimes they jump off the dock and land sideways.



Mallard Duck by Darius Morgan

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Trip Report: St. Croix

By Hudson Eklund

St. Croix is a four-day, three-night trip for 12- to 14-year-olds. You travel 35-ish miles of the St. Croix River, which forms part of the border between eastern Maine and Canada.

This year, the trip was only senior campers. The first day was 12 miles, then 20 on Day Two, then three miles on Day Three and zero on the last day, so it was basically done in two days.

Because we've been getting plenty of rain this summer, the rapids on the St. Croix were (relatively) extreme. Two canoes flipped on this trip, one on Day One and another on Day Two. All the gear was tied in, though, so nothing was lost, luckily.

In my opinion, this was an extremely fun and exciting canoeing trip that everyone would enjoy.

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Feathered Neighbors: The Ospreys of PIC

By Ben Ohly

island. This, of course, is the call of the ospreys with which we share the island.

An osprey is a medium-sized bird of prey with a wingspan of up to five feet. They have distinctively large yellow eyes and brown wings, with white legs and underbelly. They are specially adapted to catch fish and often live near water.

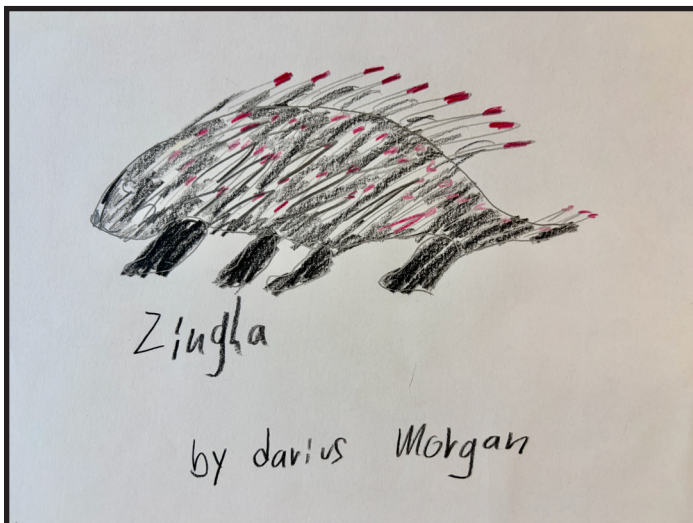
On Pine Island, a family of ospreys has built a nest in the tallest tree directly above the Dust Court. There are at least three fully-grown adults this year, but we don't know how many chicks live in the nest. We often see them soaring over the lake searching for fish, and hear their distinctive screeching call. Every so often, they will even drop dead fish from their nest onto the Dust Court below.

They have also been known to fight with other birds. The swallows that live around the island have often been seen chasing and harassing the ospreys, despite being much smaller. But the ospreys also have to deal with much bigger birds. In 2022, while canoeing around Oak Island, me and a group of other campers saw an osprey flying by with a fish in its talons. Then a bald eagle suddenly came charging out of the trees

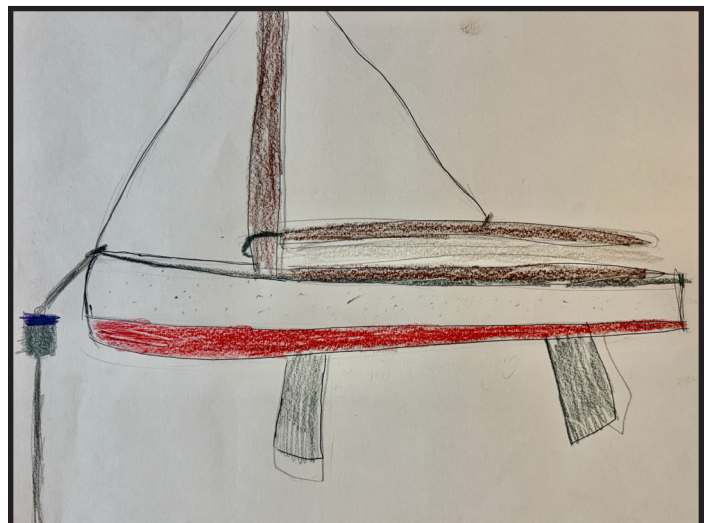
and attacked the osprey! Since the eagle was much bigger, the osprey was forced to retreat and drop its fish. The eagle then caught the fish out of mid-air and flew back to a tree to eat the osprey's catch. This is actually very common, with eagles often stealing from ospreys due to their larger size.

In far more recent news, in the middle of Campfire just the other night on July 10th, we saw a great blue heron land at the tip of Needle Point. Then one of the ospreys dove out of its nest, swooped in and attacked the heron with its talons! The heron ducked and the osprey continued on, but one of the swallows flew after it and chased it back to its nest. The whole incident only lasted about five seconds, but plenty of people saw it.

The ospreys of Pine Island have lived here for many years and have always been a big part of life here at camp. From the wake-up screeches we hear each morning, to the smelly surprises we sometimes find on our dustball court, the ospreys make camp a little more fun every day. We hope they will continue to nest on the island for generations to come.



Zingla by Darius Morgan



A Moored Bazumarang by Ford Skogen



Trip Report: Saddleback

By Lucas Baum

Day 1: We arrived at the Appalachian Trail parking lot and ate a four-course meal of: GORP, Bagels, Chicken Creations packets, and half a Chewy bar. (P.S. GORP stands for Good Old Raisins and Peanuts, but instead of raisins and peanuts we had granola and M&Ms.) During lunch, we played a game called “Contact” and another game called “Best of Werewolf,” and we proceeded to play both these games a lot on the trip.

After setting up our tents at the campsite, we went on a small little hike to a place called Piazza Rock. It was a very, very big rock where you can do some very light rock climbing. When we got to the top of the rock we began a game called “Assassin” that was supposed to last the whole trip, but...it was only five minutes long. So we played multiple games that lasted the entire trip.

Day 2: We began our treacherous journey to the peak. It was 4.5 miles from our campsite to the peak. And Saddleback is famous for its false peaks—nine of them, to be exact! And Adlai (our trip leader) fooled most of us every time by saying, “Look guys, there’s the peak!” And when we saw the real peak (and keep in mind, we didn’t know it was the real peak), Adlai said, “It’s a false peak again!”

Everyone was so happy when we got to the top, where it was perfect weather with a beautiful view.

(And, funny little story from earlier: the trip announcement for Saddleback was Adlai wearing a long blonde wig and a dress, playing a princess named Elle who was so sad that she went to the top of the mountain, and we had to go and get Sad Elle Back... Saddleback...get it?)

Anyway, for dinner we had Spammies, which is Spam mixed with Annie’s mac and cheese. It was really good, but since there was leftover food and no one wanted another serving, we played a game called “Yum Yum.” Everyone went around in a circle and the person whose turn it was said “Yum yum!” once they ate their spoonful. And you might think that doesn’t sound so fun, but it was funny now that I look back on it.

Day 3: We hiked back down and met the van and went to a little family-owned pizza place for store stop. (After trips, you go to a store or a restaurant and every camper gets \$10 to spend.) Anyway, Saddleback was a really cool and fun trip!

Campers help build trails on Mount Phillip!

This spring, Pine Island alumni and friends raised over \$25,000 for 7 Lakes Alliance, our neighbor and local watershed conservation organization, to help purchase land on the north side of Mount Phillip and support its long-term stewardship and maintenance. That work began this summer! A hard-working group of campers spent the day moving rocks and helping to build a durable, sustainable hiking trail.





Woodcraft Area by Ford Skogen



Fish by Darius Morgan

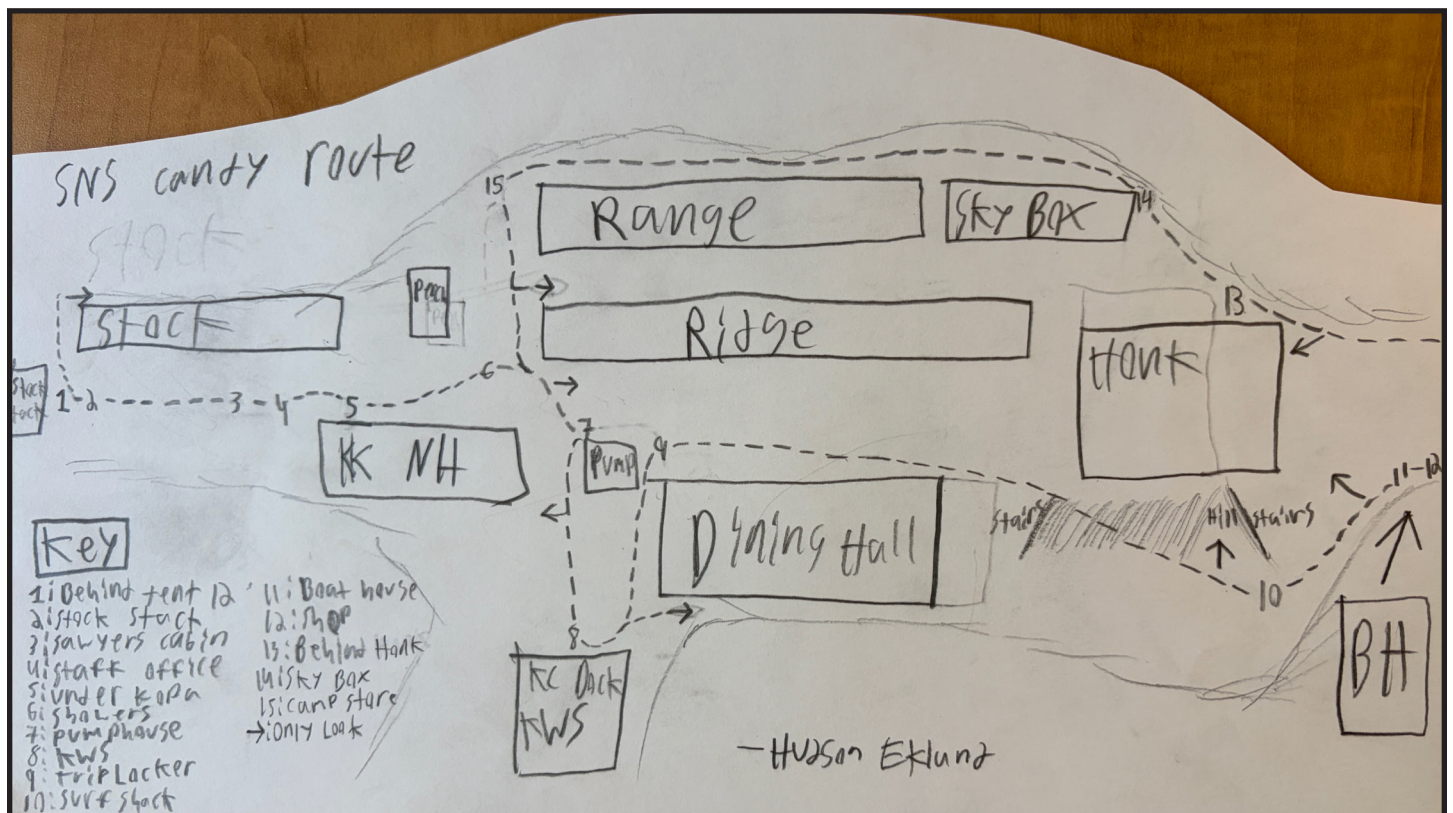
SNS Candy Route!

By Hudson Eklund

A long while ago, the candy that we're allowed on Saturday nights was only available at the Camp Store. But recently, not only has Alex reduced the candy ration from two pieces to one, but now the candy sale is hidden in a new place each week!

SNS candy is known as being "first come, first served," so I have carefully put together this route that will ensure you will always be first.

Good luck!

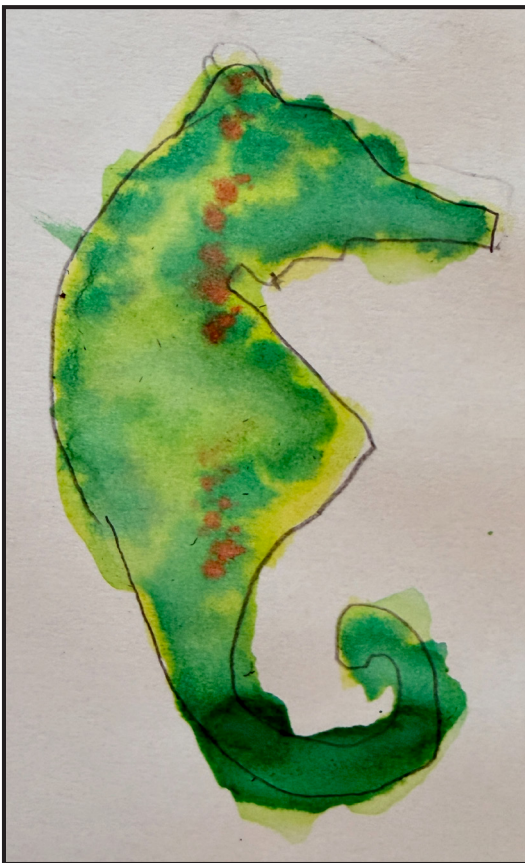


Pine Island Connections

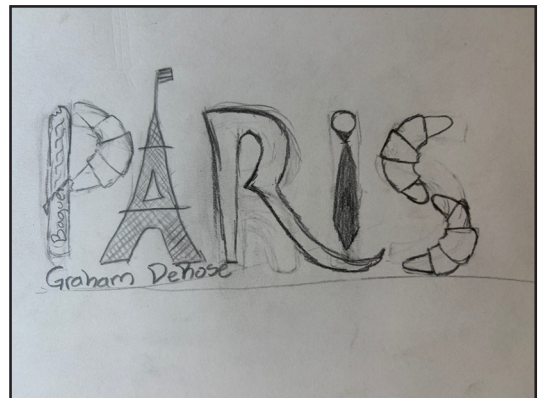
By Ford Skogen

Find four groups of four related words.

GRAND OARSMEN	G	TENT	MUSKETEER
POT	O	OLD TOWN	R
SWIMMER	NECKY	P	PAN
WHISPERLITE	NAUTICAL	MOUNTAINEER	WHALER



Seahorse by Ben Pennoyer



Paris by Graham DeRose



Mushroom by Sam Price

Life at PIC

By Charlie Sparandara Bauer



Pine Island Connections Answer Key

Green GORP; G, O, R, P

Yellow Camping Supplies: Pot, Pan, Tent, Whisperlite

Blue Second Ranks: Grand Oarsmen, Mountaineer, Musketeer, Swimmer

Purple Company-based nicknames of PIC waterfront: Nautical, Necky, Old Town, Whaler