

May 30, 2026

Dear Widji Community Members,

As we reflect on the first half of 2026 and look ahead to the coming year here at Camp Widjiwagan, I'm filled with both gratitude and a deep sense of responsibility for the legacy we carry forward and the future we are actively building together.



For nearly a century, Widji has been a place where people of all ages discover resilience, confidence, connection to the natural world, and build lifelong relationships. This enduring impact continues because of our community of partners and donors like you.

We're counting down the days until our first summer trips kick off, and before the bustle of summer sets in, I'm excited to share what your support is helping to make possible.

Honoring Our History & Building Our Team

- This year marks the launch of our planning for Widji's 100th Anniversary. This meaningful achievement invites us not only to celebrate the generations who have shaped this place but to recommit ourselves to the next 100 years of impact. Ann Bancroft and Rolf Thompon are leading our Steering Committee. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, please visit our Centennial Event webpage here: 
- As part of this milestone year, we are also excited to relaunch our "Year in Review" report to share the stories, data, and impact behind our donors' incredible generosity. This is more than a report, though; it's an invitation to see, more deeply, how your support fuels transformational experiences for campers and program participants year-round. Check out and share the 2025 Year in Review here: 
- At the same time, we are continuing to strengthen the team that will carry Widji forward. This includes welcoming Abby Mans as our new FWS Program Director. This role oversees and manages our fall/winter/spring programming, helping us continue our year-round operational camp community. We are also introducing Kevin Mike as our new Food Services Manager. He brings experience not only as a former Widji camper but as a previous chef for the MN Timberwolves as well.

Strengthening the Community Behind Our Work

- In looking forward to Widji's future years and decades from now, we are focused on growing our community in ways that ensure long-term sustainability and access.

- We are placing renewed emphasis on engaging future and new Widji families, helping more young people discover camp for the first time and building a stronger, more inclusive pipeline into our offerings for year-round programming opportunities.



- Building on the success of our co-led trip model, we are continuing to refine a progression that allows staff to grow over time: developing skills, confidence, and "YUXYfg\]d with each step.

- At the same time, we are expanding how folks stay connected to Widji beyond "h\Y'gi a a Yf'gyUgcb" Early interest in cabin rentals during November and December has shown the "dchYbhjU`Zcf'bYk kays to gather, reconnect, and experience camp throughout the year.

Putting Our Mission into Action

- Last year, we engaged over 1,000 student participants through our Outdoor Learning Program in fall, winter, and spring.
- We are busy preparing to welcome more than 700 campers this summer – some new, some returning – who will build confidence, learn important skills, and create lifelong memories and friendships through outdoor exploration. Adventuring out will be five Arctic expeditions for senior campers, who will be on trail for over 35 days in the Alaskan Brooks Range and Northern Canada.



Every step forward is grounded in the same mission that has defined Widji for generations: helping individuals discover their strengths, build meaningful relationships, and develop a lasting connection to the wilderness.

Whether it's a student experiencing the outdoors for the first time through the Outdoor Learning Program, a returning camper stepping into a wood canvas canoe, or a former camper reconnecting with Widji at an alumni event, these cornerstone moments continue to shape lives – and our camp community – in lasting ways.

Thank you for being a vital part of all we do. We're honored to have you alongside us as a partner and friend through every chapter. Together, we honor Widji's past while thoughtfully building its future. Here's to another unforgettable summer!

With deep appreciation and much excitement for what's ahead,

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