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CAMP ADAMS KIDS COME TO THE RESCUE OF BEAR CREEK LAKE

Sharks, sharks!!!!

No, they're only stumps - but they're causing headaches

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Glancing out over the newly refilled lake at Bear Creek Lake Development in Penn Forest Township, one might think for a moment the lake is shark infested.

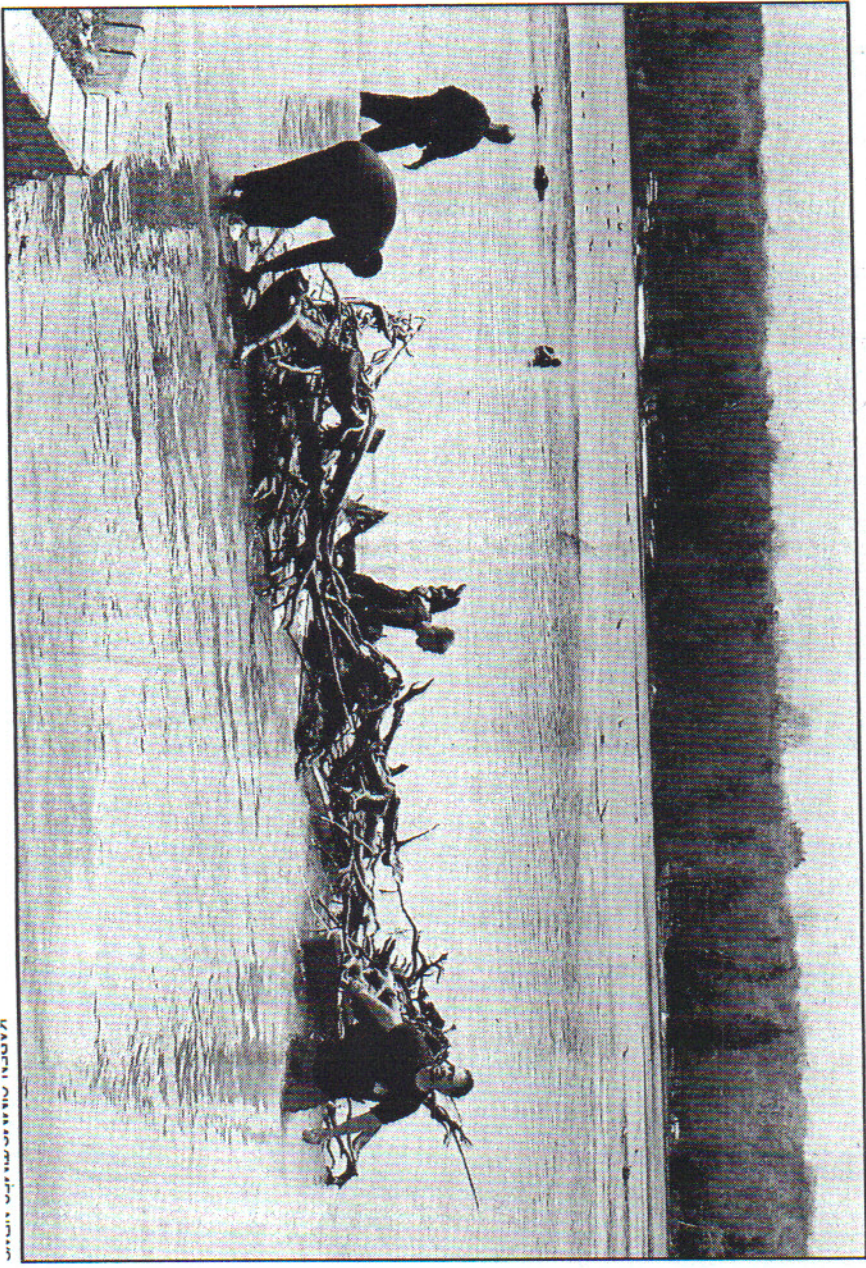
Of course that isn't possible, but the dozens and dozens of floating tree stumps can play tricks on an overactive imagination.

The stumps are the result of last fall's drawdown of the lake when Bear Creek Lake Civic Association had the dam inspected and repaired.

After sitting exposed on the bottom of the lake bed since September, the stumps have dried out. Now buoyant, they bobbed to the surface as the lake refilled.

The stumps have created quite a problem for the civic association, which has toiled for the past few weeks to remove them.

Civic association president Bob Gordon, calls the project a



Boys from Camp Adams, a residential treatment facility for at-risk youth in Penn Forest Township, help Bear Creek Lake Civic Association volunteers remove stumps from the lake. The boys routinely perform community service in Carbon County and the surrounding area. Guiding rafts loaded with stump to shore is Keith Medash, a teacher at the camp, who volunteered to supervise boys working on the project.

After three weeks, a handful of volunteers carted away about 50 truckloads of stumps, but the end was nowhere in site.

Harry Connolly, BCL resident and chairman of Penn Forest Township Board of Directors, suggested Gordon call Camp Adams, a residential treatment facility for troubled teens, to see if they could help.

Located in the township, Camp Adams is owned and operated by Youth Services Agency of Pennsylvania. It features an Adventure Challenge Treatment (ACT) program, similar to an "Outward Bound" experience.

The camp is licensed to house up to 200 boys from age 12-18. The boys are typically first-time juvenile offenders or children who are dependents of the state. Most are required to perform community service.

"These kids have been a god-send," Gordon said last week as he and other BCL volunteers, worked side-by-side with the young men. "I have no problem giving praise to these kids."

He said a "good association" has developed between the older, retired property owners and the boys.

Between six and 10 boys work at the lake two or three days a week. They are usually accompanied by Keith Medash, a landscaping teacher at Camp Adams. Other camp employees help out as well.

About three weeks ago the boys started by cleaning up the shoreline, which Gordon said was cluttered with stumps, branches, and a lot of mud. "They were in the muck up to their knees!"

In order to remove the

stumps, boats go out on the lake and drag them close to shore. Rafts have been fashioned as well and help bring in some of the lighter loads. The kids wade out and help drag the rafts or stumps in where they can be unloaded. Chains are fastened around heavier stumps and hooked to ATVs, that pull them across the boat launch where they are loaded onto waiting trucks.

With the kids' help, BCL has been able to remove an additional 50 truckloads of stumps.

In spite of the hard work, YSP employee Brad Hock said, "The kids are loving it."

Connolly said he is very impressed with the work the boys have done and with their enthusiasm.

"I think the kids are doing a great job in the short time since they started," he said.

As part of the ACT program, Camp Adams' youth perform community service. Some are required by the court and some volunteer.

"We have countless community service projects," said Judy Wink, education director at the camp. While some of the community service should be matched to the crime a juvenile has committed, Wink said they often get to pick and choose what they do.

Camp Adams residents have performed community service at such places as the Lehigh Canal, the Mine Museum in Lansford, the Carbon County Environmental Education Center, Hawk Mountain, as well as Penn Forest Streams development. They have also helped stock fish at more than a dozen county locations.

"We're out everyday with 20-30 kids."



Camp Adams youth work side-by-side with Bear Creek Lake Civic Association members. Association president Bob Gordon says the boys are a "godsend" and the two groups have developed a "good association."

Last year in Carbon County alone, Camp Adams kids performed a total of 33,338 hours of community service. Wink has an accurate count since hours must be logged for each boy to make sure they fulfill their requirements.

Greg Yeager, program coordinator and community relations liaison, says the boys performed about 25,000 hours of community service in 2000. They have logged about 18,000 hours so far this year.

Yeager doesn't hesitate to volunteer the kids for service when an opportunity in the communi-

ty arises.

At a recent Penn Forest Township meeting, Thelma Bevano of Towamensing Trails development, expressed her dismay with litter-strewn streets, particularly Township Road 516, which runs through the development.

Bevano told the board of supervisors she recently moved to the area from New Jersey, and is "shocked at the garbage in Pennsylvania." Frustrated, she said she began cleaning the road on her own.

"We should all be ashamed. Pennsylvania is a beautiful

place. We should keep it that way." Bevano asked how she could get road signs saying no to litter and offered to pay for them.

Yeager, who is attending township meetings to field questions about the camp, told Bevano about community service performed by Camp Adams residents. "Our boys might be able to help you clean up the community."

Connolly promised Bevano the township would look into road signs, but encouraged her to call Camp Adams. "They are more than willing to do this."