

The History of Camp Minsi

Over a Century of Scouting from the Gap to the Poconos

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Dedication

To Matt Feigley (1969–2025).



We had quite a run, you and I, a friendship that lasted nearly forty years. We experienced so much together that I could write a book about it, too. You influenced my life in so many ways, and I thank you for that.

I always believed that someday you and I would be the old guys still coming to Camp, telling the staff, “That’s not how you do it,” and “Back in my day,” just to bust their chops. I thought we would get to be those guys together. I guess that wasn’t in the cards. I miss you, my friend. I think about you every day. You will be with me in my heart and mind until we meet again.

Preface

I first attended Camp Minsi in 1984 as a Scout with Troop 63 of St. John’s United Church of Christ in Whitehall, Pennsylvania. At the time, our troop belonged to the Minsi Trails Council North Valley District and usually attended Camp Trexler. We chose Camp Minsi that summer, returned in 1985 and 1986, and then went back to Trexler in 1987. Like most Scouts, I did not think much about the Camp’s history. I knew the place as I found it. Its layout, routines, and stories all seemed settled, and I accepted them without asking where they came from.

My connection to Camp deepened in 1986, when I joined the Camp Leadership Corps (CLC), the predecessor to what is now the Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program. At the time, Scouts had to be 16 to serve on staff, but 14- and 15-year-olds who had earned First Class could participate in the Camp Leadership Corps. My brother and I signed up in 1985 because it sounded like something we wanted to do, without realizing that the program required participants to be at least 14. I was still 12 when I signed up and turned 13 shortly after camp that summer.

Before the summer of 1986, Camp Director Pete Fazio called me. We talked for a while, and he allowed me to enter the program a year early because I had already earned First Class and would turn 14 that September. My brother’s participation may also have helped. That decision mattered far more than he knew. At a time when I had begun to lose interest in Scouting, being a CLC kept me involved and changed the course of my life. The program built my confidence and developed my leadership skills. I remained in the program through 1988, and during my second and third summers, I stayed at Camp for nearly the entire season, leaving only for the week when my troop attended summer camp.

I joined the summer camp staff in 1989 and stayed through 1994. During those years, I worked in several roles, including Ecology Aide, Scoutcraft Aide, Commissioner, Scoutcraft Director, Ecology Director, and Program Director. I returned to Camp Minsi in 1998 as a full-time volunteer and again in 2009 as a paid staff member, serving as CIT Director. I remain active in Scouting today as an associate advisor with Venturing Crew 940 and as a member of the Minsi Trails Council Camping Committee and Heritage Collection Committee. Camp Minsi has shaped much of my life, and my long history with it is one reason I wanted to understand its past more fully.

For years, I accepted Camp Minsi’s history much the same way I accepted the rest of Camp. Over time, however, I began to question how much of that history was actually accurate. During my years on staff, I developed an interest in how the Camp came to be and wrote a short historical document in the 1990s. Like many versions of Camp history that

Chapter 1

The Place

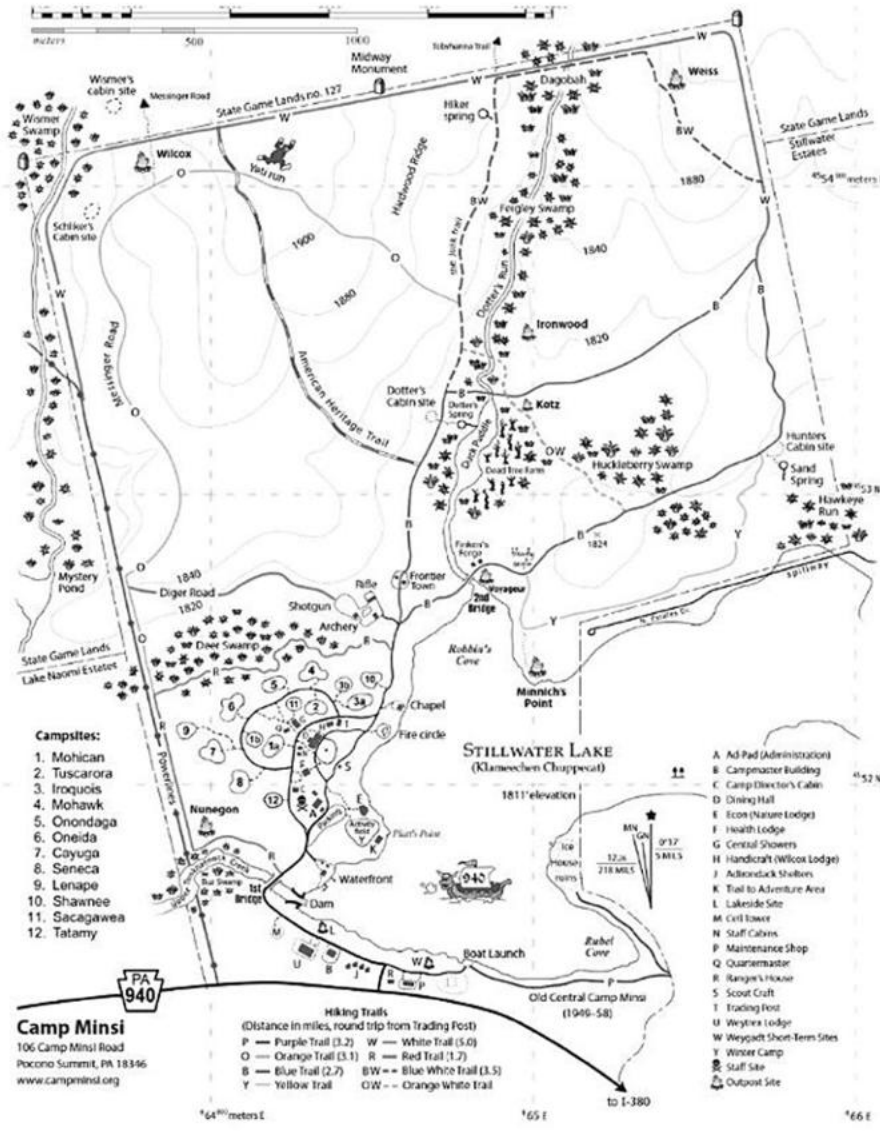


Lake Stillwater, Camp Minsi, the jetty near Econ, 2025.

When you pull into Camp Minsi, the Ranger’s house stands on the right, and the Camp sign faces you ahead. Trees partly conceal Lake Stillwater, but not completely. You never see the full lake from the road. You only catch enough of it to understand how big it is.

The entrance road leads to a T. A left turn brings you into central camp. As you make that turn, the lake flickers through the trees on the right. As you continue forward, the sound of Route 940 begins to fade. Before reaching First Bridge, a short service road branches off toward the dam. From that point, at just the right spot, the trees open just enough to give one of the clearest views of the lake from the road. Further in, you cross First Bridge and approach the Waterfront near the parking lot, where a portion of the lake becomes visible again. If you continue past that point, the trees close in and hide it once more.

On foot, the lake reveals itself more fully, but only in specific places. It opens at the Waterfront, the dam, Second Bridge, the Econ Lodge, Derrer Pavilion, along the shoreline from Econ to the chapel, and from Scoutcraft and the Dining Hall. In most other parts of camp, the lake remains out of sight. The ground rises away from it, and the trees block the view. Unless you are on the road to the rifle range or in the areas around Scoutcraft and the Dining Hall, you may not see the lake at all—only brief glimpses through the trees.



Camp Minsi Property Map, 2026.