

Transcript: ForestEd Podcast, Episode 3: Clare Boerigter

Episode: <http://z.umn.edu/Camp8podcast>

00:00 (19:17:23)

Sagor: Welcome back to Camp 8. This is Eli Sagor, back again with Kyle Gill. Welcome Kyle!

Gill: Thanks Eli. So today's episode is all about Camp 8, the podcast and the physical Camp 8 at the Cloquet Forestry Center. As two foresters who see the world in a certain way, we're happy to be joined by Clare Boerigter. Clare is the creative nonfiction writer at the University of Minnesota, who spent the summer of 2019 researching and Camp 8, so that story can be documented and known for current and future generations. Welcome Clare.

Boerigter: Thanks guys, it's great to be here.

00:30:

Sagor: So here's the story. About a year ago I got one of those great emails from Clare, as a creative nonfiction writer and former wildland firefighter, wondering if we had any stories that you might write about. Well I almost fell out of my chair. The forestry world is full of colorful people and great stories, but we're not always so good at telling those stories and the opportunity to work with a professional storyteller was just too good to pass up. So long story short, we scraped together a few dollars to pay Clare told her a bit about Camp 8, and off she went. So today, the three of us are going to talk about what happened next, and about the story of Camp 8.

So we still haven't told you what it is. So let's start there. Let's, let's get to it. What is Camp 8:

Gill: What is Camp 8 really depends on your perspective to me as the forest manager and research coordinator at the Cloquet Forestry Center. It's primarily a 44 acre portion of the Cloquet for us to center that's been set aside as a reserve since around 1909, which is when the university was donated the land.

It's a portion of the forest that has 200 to 250 year old red pines and white pines in the canopy. Plus many other ecological community members such as our malara red maple deer flies deer ticks paper birch wintergreen blueberry beaked hazel, raspberry, jack pine, maple so on and so forth. And it's all growing on very sandy soil that was the result of sand out wash playing back when the glaciers were there.

It's a place that also has many subjective values laden descriptions and interpretations that are as unique as each of us are. And so to know what Camp 8 is depends on who you are, whether you're standing in the stand or you're seeing it from afar,

2:00 as a forester I see it as a mature red pine stand that fits into the reserve management style within landscape tread conceptual framework as an ecologist I'd see it as FDN 33, a northern dry mixed woodland that's roughly 210 years into its stand from the most recent stand reinitiating disturbance, as a historian or dendrochronologist, I see the entire stand has a similar development history from stand initiation around 1813 until 1984, when the forest manager decided to split the stand into treated and untreated halves.

If I were a deer, a dog or a mosquito. I would experience the stand in an entirely different way. So Clare from your perspective as a creative writer who was invited to come get to know the stand and tell us more about it, how would you answer the question what was Camp 8?

3:00 Boerigter: So I think when I think about what is Camp 8, I go back to that time in mid May when I first got to experience the stand. I think about walking down the forest road, and just being surrounded by these big towering old red pines. I remember looking at the bark because of the signature red color but also oranges and browns.

But I remember just being so impressed. These trees are so tall and high up you can see their limbs are all twisted and send us kind of serpentine, you get a sense of the wind, moving through them. And then it's interesting because lower down the trees we don't have those lives so you get kind of is more open, bigger sentence around you. 19:21:05 And it's interesting because looking from this road you can look to one side of the stand and then to the other. And you can see that there's a difference there.

You can see that half of this stand has had some management, and other really hasn't, so one side is looking more open, while the other has a bit more overgrown brush, things like that going on.

4:00 I also think about when I think about what is Camp 8, getting to revisit the stands in the winter time. So, my first experience was in mid May and then I got to experience throughout the summer the stand and then returned in early December and actually ski there. And so I think about skiing through that beautiful place. Snow is on the branches is it all these muffled sounds.

And it was just really powerful really reverent place to be.

Gill: So you bring up the sounds when you were there in May, was there anything particularly as part of the soundscape that that you couldn't help but be aware of.

Boerigter: So I'm really bad birder, but I did hear you know the different clothes the birds. I thought was really interesting too. And one of my interviews talking to a gender criminologist about the different sounds that the wind makes the very is trees, and so I remember going into the stand and listening, just to the sound of the wind moving to the branches, and along the ground.

Gill: How about smells. Is there anything that that was noticeable about the smell when you first walked into the stand. So I will say as someone who has spent time in a ponderosa pine forest.

Boerigter: I looked at the red pines and I saw they had some similar appearances.

5:20 And so I walked up and I took a sniff from the bark, as I'm sure a lot of people know Ponderosa pines have this like cream soda smell. I didn't get that but I did you know get the sense of being outside of Minnesota that kind of humaneness on the soil,

Gill: And I'm sure you felt a few mosquitoes a deer flies.

Boerigter: A few, that's for sure.

Gill: Eli when you, when the question what is Camp 8 comes up to you. How would you answer that.

Sagor: Well it's interesting, I work mainly an extension and so I think you know I spend a lot of time bringing groups into the woods and over the 20 years or so that I've worked at the clock a forestry center I've brought more groups to Camp 8 and I've been 6:00 involved in more tours in Camp 8 than anywhere else on maybe anywhere else period. Certainly, than any other stand at the Cloquet forestry center.

And I've always loved bringing groups there because it's such you know it's a stand that's really it grabs your attention you know it really is a special place it's different from other standards that we visit. And it's different in some ways that are obvious not just to foresters or ecologist but to anyone walking into that stand you walk in and it's like walking into a cathedral. It's you got these big, huge trees, you've got this open space as Clare described in the understory. Yeah, at least on the treated side, and you've got a variety of other things nice treatments that that you mentioned, you know, that the treatments that happened out there were meant to simulate the effects of fire so basically Camp 8 is a fire dependent forest and it used to burn quite frequently, it has not burned, very much at all i don't think Kyle you might correct me but since the university, acquired it.

And so those treatments were meant to simulate the effects of fire so on the side that's been treated that understory is not completely gone but it's much lighter than it is in the untreated side where all that brush has grown up that would have otherwise been killed by fire. And so it's a fascinating place to take groups of people again whether they're professional natural resource managers or school children or whomever because they all everybody is struck by Camp 8, but different people are struck in different ways and I think, you know, this is part of what we'll talk about as part of what makes Camp 8 such an interesting place but to me it's really a place that we gather.

It's a place that gets everybody thinking about what we value about for us how we relate to for us about the role of management. Some people think well we shouldn't have done that management, this should have been as you describe it Kyle the reserve we shouldn't have touched it at all, Why did you go in and, and cut out the understory. Others might point out that wildfire was a normal ecological process and stands like this and so when we eliminated it you know management of that type would have made it a more, you know, quote unquote natural stand and, I mean, you know these words have different meanings to different people and this is exactly what makes Camp 8s such a great place such a rich, You know place to have discussions like this so.

Gill: And that's why people go ahead. That's why we decided to change the name of Camp 8 it right or change the name of the podcast, because of that sentence that you brought up that it's a place where we can learn about for us, we can learn about the values that we place on for us and we can learn about our involvement as humans in the management of these places.

9:50 I think to another thing is visually, you can see kind of backfired history as well when you're in the stand, I think, walking around and you begin to see these different fire scars kind of climbing a bark.

And you can see that history right there late into the wood and that's a really powerful thing to get to show people as well, which is exactly why couple years ago we had a dinner chronologies come in and do a fire history reconstruction because that was our ability that improved our ability to know the history of the stand at least from a biological perspective. And my understanding of why we asked you to explore this day and Clare's because we thought you'd be able to really help us be able to explore the cultural history because that's something that as a forest or I often overlook. Is that the sense that you got of what we're asking you to do is explore the cultural history of Camp 8.

Boerigter: Yeah, I did get that sense. I felt that I was to come in and kind of be this set of eyes and ears to this place and really kind of collecting all these perspectives, all these thoughts all these stories and shaping them. And I thought that that emphasis was to be placed on ecology, history, and then of course this huge component which was culture, which hadn't really been as fully explored as potentially some of the other aspects of Camp 8.

Sagor: So Clare, Kyle and I are both kind of forestry people and you have a very different kind of personal and professional outlook on the world and history. So, how did you go about telling the story of Camp 8 I mean we were, I was so excited to work with you because you do these things differently or you're a professional storyteller, tell us a bit about how you went about telling that story.

10:40

Boerigter: Yeah, so I think everything begins just a lot of long conversations, obviously, with both of you. And then with other people at the horseshoe center. And then of course those early visits into the stands and getting to walk around the Forestry Center and know the physical place.

After that, I think probably the next step was really going down into the Anderson library archives, and they have a really cool special collection there and I got to go down and speak to the librarians and they brought out, I can't remember if it was 12 or 14 boxes but they were just full of different artifacts, and so I got to kind of pull out all these old reports and documents and see charts and maps. It was really special to be in this place and to be touching these documents that were from the early 1900s and reading about all the different ways that people were investing in the forestry center in this early history.

So after kind of that archival approach. Then I started doing some more formal interviews, which really developed into this idea of capturing oral histories. So I was talking to some different retired for center folks receivers Chuck Kramer John Blanchard and Ron Severs. And then of course doing more full interviews, a lot of the current people who work at the forestry center.

12:00 I talked to Evan Larson, who Kyle brought up that dendrochronologist to identify our history there. And then some of the most important interviews happened with Vern Northrop, who is a Bureau of Indian Affairs fire specialist and an elder of the Fond du Lac band, as well as Damon Panek, who's the CIO cultural specialist at the Apostle Islands.

For me, the interviews were almost the most powerful part of this experience because I got to talk to so many different people about what this place meant to them. I think it's really interesting how different writers approach interviews, and I've talked to one of my friends who works for an NPR affiliate, and he told me that his big secret is that he will reveal something personal about himself to his interviewees, and he hopes that then they'll have the sense of intimacy and comfort with which they'll then respond to him with something equally powerful, which is interesting that's definitely not my approach I see myself more as an active listener who's really enthusiastic and excited about what I'm listening to. But that was a really great process. I also don't think anyone knows this but me, but I actually kept a document with character descriptions of everyone. He liked there that says look like my first impressions of people as well as the place and how people are interacting with place I think those things are all really important in bringing things alive.

23:20 And our memories are fallible so I tried to after I do an interview I go open a document and I just write down how I would describe this person to a friend. So the interviews were kind of this, this bedrock and then of course I did a lot of contemporary research as well, reading about fire adaptations of red pines, looking at the research evidence, and two students had conducted.

And then of course, digging into the importance of fire two different indigenous peoples on Fond du Lac band the Great Lakes and then across the United States.

And then I kind of sat with all this information just percolating, I think it was about a month or a month and a half of research. And then, in July, actually started writing. And I kind of like that I like to be swimming and a lot of information, maybe having some gaps in my knowledge but feeling pretty comfortable. Before I start writing. And I was really excited because I felt that that first scene that I wrote really flowed I was that's always kind of the time zone is I have all this information now can I story it can I make a narrative.

And I felt like I could I felt like that happened pretty easily, and I was able to slip into the stream of it.

And I think the first thing that I was aware of is that I needed to find a way to show people Camp 8 and to connect them to it and the way that I had seen it and then connected to it, because I care so much about Camp 8 and the people that I had talked to care so much about this place. And so if I could show that to readers. I knew that they were going to care too. And so that really quickly became important for me to establish what is this place and a physical ecological sense, historical sense, and a cultural sense and then how can I show people the importance of this and why we need to care.

25:10 Sagor: Clare, so you put that together the main product, at least so far it's been a story map right you produce this just fantastic story map which is a story, it's online it's digital it has a lot of photographs, it has some drone footage that Kyle shot from Camp eight up in the air flying through the canopy and a bunch of other things so why did you choose that format and, you know, why was that the best way for you to tell the story.

Boerigter: So it's interesting because initially I didn't, the tax that appears those stories was actually kind of the second iteration of what I wrote, I started out with more of a long form essay. And so you might think of a long format as being a lot a lot more wordy. I think the actual text of the story about is about 15 pages long promised I wrote is about 40 pages.

So I started out with a lot more expansive peace with more scenes dialogue with myself as a narrator very present to the story. But then, the more we started talking about the visual aspects and I started thinking about and not necessarily interactive but very much multimedia piece. I started looking around the four different models of the New York Times as a big one they do some awesome multimedia pieces and thinking about the different needs of an online multimedia article.

And so from that kind of scrolling long form essay, which I still hope to publish with some cuts, but from that I then brought in different journalistic elements, and photos and all these things to make a multimedia article. And my goal in doing that was to have the two pieces, still be distinct from one another, to have them both kind of doing operating in ways that are a little bit different. And so for me it was the mental switch of okay I have a reader for 40 pages, versus I have a reader who's online and they're interacting with these images and multimedia components and how do I want to structure differently for those two different readers.

Sagor: It's such a cool product of course we'll have a link to the story map on the Camp 8 podcast website and so listeners can go check it out and I would really encourage folks to do that it's, it's just great. It's a really nice piece of work that captures so the story you know the the history and, and some facts about Camp 8 but also some really rich, you know, personal stories and cultural history that we don't understand maybe we don't have at the front of our minds to the degree that we should so it's really a wonderful product.

So, Clare, you know we're an educational, you know we're an educational institution the cloak a forestry centers part of the University of Minnesota. And what we do is education I mentioned that you know I've taken a lot of groups out there and I do that because working for extension a big part of my job is to get people outside and thinking about what we know and and what we value how we make informed decisions about natural resource management and so on. I'd like to hear a little bit maybe Kyle from you. First, you know, what do you see as the lessons of Camp 8.

Gill: What do you think we can learn from stands like Camp 8. I think the history is the big thing and that's why it holds in the present moment, it holds such a special place and all of our minds and our beings when we walk into it because it feels different than a majority of the places that we see on the land so I mentioned earlier that we as an ecologist we would categorize it is FDN 33 dry mesic mixed woodland. But the expression of that forest community will look and feel really differently depending on if you're in a one year old stand a 50 year old stand or as in the case of Camp 8, like 220 year olds stand, what we can learn about ecologically from the stand, is what that stand development looks like. We can also learn about our historical and contemporary relationships between humans and land. I think we often see ourselves as being outside of ecology as humans, but I think we see that our both our actions and our inactions can play a particular role on how these forests, develop over time.

And in particular with this forest, or this piece of the forest, we can see that there's a long history of fire, and then we can see that European Americans had a really different relationship with fire so we primarily Sapphire is something that was bad,

bad, because we came in and we saw the potential value of the red pine trees, and so felt like we needed to keep fire out rather than seeing fire as a part of that ecological community.

19:50 So we, the, the major value of what we can learn from a stand like Camp 8 is how our relationship to land evolves over time, and how it's different, depending on your perspective.

So yeah, we see when we walk in, we can see what 220 years of stand development feels like in the present moment, and we can get a sense of our smallness and how little we can actually control to some extent, but that we do have both our direct and indirect actions. As far as managers, and as a culture can play a big difference and how that stand develops.

Clare, what about you after talking to all these people digging through the archival history and everything else What do you see as the lessons of Camp 8?

20:30 I feel like when I think about the lessons of Camp 8, I almost see it in layers, because it was one of the most interesting things about talking to people is again these different perspectives and views. And so one of the lessons that was talked about was this idea that you don't know you don't know the importance of Camp 8 as this place of old growth red pines which are pretty rare now in the state of Minnesota, and how as a place of study. This is a key spot we don't have many places where we can really look at these old trees. So that was one of the lessons that was talked about. I also just more generally feel like I learned about dedication to place, talking to Al and John and Chuck and Ron is people who just dedicated their life's work to camp eight and to the forestry center and how beautiful that can be.

I think I started to interrogate my own biases towards the land and towards wilderness and these ideas that I had about myself on the landscape and talking to you, Eli I feel like, one of the things that came up was this idea of active management, and that choice that we're making, I think, though, one of the biggest lessons that I learned was this idea that fire and culture are inextricably linked for a lot of different indigenous peoples and specifically the Great Lakes Ojibwe. And that really came through my discussions with Vern and Damon that there was this really deep cultural fire history here, that really needed to be talked about and honored.

And that was something that before this project, I wasn't necessarily as aware of as I probably should have been.

And then personally for me. This project was really eye opening, as someone who's always written about place in the environment.

22:20 These issues have always been important to me, but this was the first time where I felt that I really was this creative environmental communicator, that I was gathering and shaping a story, and hopefully people care in a way that could bring about a change. So honestly one of the lessons that I learned was how to approach this type of project, and how to tell a story, in order to make a difference. And really, in the case of Camp 8. The lesson I learned is how can I connect people, how can I make them Karen. And I hope that comes out to the story not.

Gill: I'm going to add to Eli that one of the things I like people to learn when they're there when we get to take people on tours. I like people to walk through both sides so the great learning that we try and get people to do it the foresee center is experiential learning, because we can we can learn from a book, we can learn from a podcast, but we can't necessarily.

We can learn in a really different way when we actually get to walk through an area. So the big thing the reason they made the decision in the early 1980s to do the treated in the untreated half was too, because the this idea of magnification that clear talks about in the story, quite a bit. That was already becoming known –

Sagor: What is mesophication Kyle. Can you define that.

Gill: Yeah, so the reason we use the word mesophication is because a lot of our forest systems exist on a xeric to mesic scale so xeric being quite dry to mesic being quite moist and humid. And so what we see in stands like this and this is something we've learned through Evans work and through other work across the eastern US, is that a lot of these stands exist on this gradient and our management actions are our involvement actions are our choice for inaction can really create kind of a threshold shift of if a stand like Camp 8 has had fire in the past. It will express itself on the xeric side. And if we remove that, that xerification process which is fire the drying out process, then it will then develop and trend towards a more mesic side of that gradient.

The stand was set up to demonstrate that in the early 80s because we are management choices have have changed how these standards develop and it has allowed these more non fire dependent species or the species species that would be selected against. Basically a fire was regularly in there, they start to take more impactful role in the development of that ecological community. So what I like people to get a feel for that when you walk through the untreated half, you feel the you feel the shade of the hazel that's almost 12 feet tall and you feel the balsam for as you try and swim through their limbs. And when you get over to the treated side, you can see really far you can see across basically the small valley that the Camp 8 is on you can see over to the esker, and you can see these pockets of white pine, that are regenerating or these pockets of birch so you really get a chance to feel what the difference between a structure that for structures of course structured being the vertical and horizontal arrangement of the components of that ecological community, you see that the structure is really different, and what we what we've learned is that we sometimes we talk about the modification processes being during the fire suppression era, and sure we have suppressed fires and that's been our relationship to fire. What we learned through camp eight is that we've actually removed more of the ignition source. Then we have suppressed fire so to my, the best of my knowledge, there weren't any fires that started that had to go be suppressed. Since 1909, and that lets us know that it gives some indication, I think. So it is really different, and what we what we've learned is that we it was sometimes we talked about the magnification processes being during the fire suppression era, and sure we have suppressed fires and that's been our relationship to fire.

What we learned through Camp 8 is that we've actually removed more of the ignition sources than we have suppressed fire so to my, the best of my knowledge, there weren't any fires that started that had to go be suppressed since 1909, and that lets us know that it gives some indication; I think Clare gets into this in the story give some indication that okay, well something changed it wasn't necessarily that lightning strikes or something changed but maybe the human relationship to what we wanted out of that piece of land really

changed between 1988 and 1909, and that's when the big cultural difference in in our relationship to land and how what we wanted from that piece of land.

Sagor: When the university took over management of the land, Kyle, are you referring to the fact that most fires that were historically in that stand were, we think were started by people?

Gill: That's our best guess. We weren't there. But when we listen to the stories of people like Vern and John Blanchard and other people that are part of the Fond du Lac band. We know that they were using fire, even though they weren't necessarily documenting it in the way that our culture were documented documented through their, their stories and they documented through two other ways that I don't fully understand because I'm not a part of that culture, but the way I've learned to read that story is through the fire scars and through doing dinner chronology and we can learn about that history.

We, so we don't have a "Yes I started this fire and here's my burn plan from 1842," which is roughly the first surface fire that came through after stand reinitiation was 1842; there wasn't a prescribed burn boss that put together and burn plan for that that is documented in the way that I understand it. So there's not a definite yes, this is exactly how those fires started but I think there's really strong suggestion to say, we know the Ojibwe people were using fire all across the landscape, and they had a really strong relationship there, and they knew they knew that it would produce the things that they wanted to be produced for subsistence living and other -- primarily for subsistence living. That's my understanding.

18:29:32 Boerigter: Yeah, that was something that really came out talking to, to Vern Northup was he mentioned something that there were like 700 recorded reasons for lighting fires by indigenous peoples, and in the Great Lakes region, you know that could be all different sorts of things from opening up land to kind of controlling bugs, and then a big one that I spent a lot of time researching and talking to people about were blueberries, and how after fires know blueberries tend to regenerate and heal this this was a really important part of the subsistence diet for a lot of great lakes Ojibwe. This is something that was really cool to get to see as part of one of my interviews I traveled to Stockton island with Damon Panek, who is a cultural specialist at the Apostle Islands, Stockton Island is one of those islands, and they're doing these cultural burns out there, so this place that was historically burned by different into weight groups, they're burning it again, hoping to see those blueberries coming back but then also for this just bigger cultural purpose that fire is a cultural act. And I thought that was a really cool thing to get to be on the ground and and to get to see, it's interesting when I think about the lessons of Camp 8, you know that that idea of the human influence on Camp 8, is really central to it you know

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Boerigter: Yeah, that was my understanding of, of their goal as well. And it's interesting so we can think of Forestry Center as a stand that hasn't been managed, but we've just heard to that from very early in its development, it was like, please shaped by fire and by through the actions of the people who lived there at that time.

Sagor: We also know that Camp 8 has been very much shaped by management. Since 1984 Kyle, you mentioned the treatment that occurred on a half of the Camp 8 site in order to replicate or simulate the effects of fire on that stand, you know back in the early 2000s when I was taking groups out there we would often talk about talk about management, we would talk about you know what do you see here in Camp 8.

And we talked about the financial value, there would be people in the stand and people out there who would say, "Gee, you really ought to harvest this, you know these big trees have a lot of value." And you know there are people who see forests primarily through that lens which is fine. You know, wood is a renewable product, locally produced.

There are other people who would cringe at that and say well we could never harvest this and you know it has other values and we've been talking about some of those other values today.

So to me it's always been sort of a crucible through which we can we can get to some of those stories and, and the lessons of Camp 8 I think one of the big lessons is about, you know, sometimes we think of harvesting timber as a bad thing or you know as a, as a disruption of an otherwise, good healthy system and we forget about the important role. What disturbance and and so on and so for me it's just a great place to talk about that and, you know, as with any complex issue, we don't all draw the same lessons from it.

So I want to go in a little bit of a different direction. Now, and Kyle I know you and I see this just a little bit differently but you know looking at Camp 8 and you can see in the story map, we can see that it's changing a lot right now, there is an outbreak of Armillaria, which is a fungus that causes mortality in -- when it affects trees that are stressed and you know that includes the trees in Camp 8.

We don't know if Armillaria is killing those trees or if something else is killing them but what we see is a growing pocket of mortality. In other words, we have trees that are dying and that sort of circle of dying trees is spreading out sort of radially and it's right in Camp 8 so there are a good number of these very large old red pine trees that are dying, and they're not going to live forever Camp 8 is going to change, more in the coming years. I don't know how quickly, but that raises the question to me if Camp 8 is such a special place and it's not going to be the way it is now forever, what's going to be the next Camp 8? Kyle why don't you take that one first.

Gill: Yeah, you're right, we have had, we've had some interesting discussions on that, on this question of what is or what will the next Camp 8 be, and also how to interpret current mortality and current stand development and I think it's such it to me it's so interesting to know how we answer the question of what will the next Camp 8 be, and that's why I explored this question of what is Camp 8, because it's, it plays on our cultural biases or personal biases and also so much of what our expectations are for a given stand. So my first answer is kind of confused because it's like, well, there's no plans for changing that piece of the forest, from a management perspective as long as I'm forester I plan to maintain that as a as an example of both passive and active reserve so the active reserve being, we're going to choose to be actively manipulating that stand by reintroducing fire or potentially doing mechanical treatments like have been done, or we're going to choose to not do that on the eastern half, or the untreated side, we want to maintain that fire suppression versus, no fire suppression or I guess the least of structural view of what fire suppression looks like. We want to maintain that reserve. So, again, my confusion as well, that, that is going to be there, regardless of whether or not some of the trees die, whether what his Camp 8 is interesting is is Camp 8 a geographic location.

As I kind of my immediate answers that yeah it's a geographic location that has a certain management goals, but it's also as I talked to more people it is those trees, those trees are storytellers says you've brought up in our conversations Eli they hold, They hold the key to the history for the last 210 plus years. And so to some extent yeah those, those trees can't be just plopped in anywhere. And that's the power of being able to be in the in that stand is that you see those old trees and you know that that doesn't happen overnight. So there's, we can make choices on other pieces of the forestry center property to say okay let's look ahead to hundred

and 50 years from now if we have some 50 year old red pines Is this a place where we would want to fire, and potentially help those trees develop into the future Cathedral trees. That's a management choice we could make and we have pockets of the forest where we could do that, but my, my simple answer is that that stand will be there because I see that the primary quality of that stand -- the value that I place on it, is that we can observe ecological process. Yes, those trees are important to that stand and it'll change once those trees die over the next hundred years, it will feel different. But we can choose to be involved and choose to reintroduce surface fire in order to try and make sure that that ecological process can continue.

So, we're all the next Camp 8, it'll be right there as long as I'm forest manager.

18:37:46 Clare, when you think of that question where the next Camp 8, the How to what comes to mind for you or how would you answer that question?

Boerigter: So I think when I hear that question of where will the next Camp 8 stand be I think more about like the idea of Camp 8 and less about like the actual geographic location of our current day Camp 8. And when I think about that idea kind of as, as you brought up Kyle I think of this deep sense of connectedness to place. I've moved around quite a lot in the last 10 years and yet over the span of a summer through collecting stories being in the place gathering this history about can be, I felt an immense connectedness to these trees into this place.

And so when I think about the next Camp 8, I'm thinking about where will there be a place that not only myself but all these other people feel this connection and kind of baked into that is a place where fire can be returned to the landscape. Fire was a part of a lot of different ecosystems, often are sometimes brought there by different indigenous groups. And so for me, I think the next Camp 8 is going to be a place where we have these human connections to the land, also place where we kind of recognize the cultural components of fire, we celebrate that the truth tell that and we maintain these areas with prescribed burns.

18:39:16 Robin Wall Kimmerer, the writer brings up this really interesting idea of reciprocal restoration. And this is an idea that you're going to get with ecological restoration also cultural restoration and how there's this idea of mutual flourishing. When the plants and the trees and the landscape is flourishing. So are we as people and fire played a role in this fire was part of this, and again that's going to look different in different places it's going to play out differently, but for me the next Camp 8 is going to have those components, it's going to have people connecting to the land and it is going to have in some form or another fire.

Gill: It's bringing in the term cultural is always interesting because I think, at times, we think of indigenous cultures as being of the past but it's been pointed out to us I think regularly as we get into. Not only this story but as I learned about the contemporary reality of the land in which we live. I know that indigenous people are definitely very present so when you say, when you use the word culture, cultural restoration is as demon panic brings up. Can you describe a little bit more of what how we should interpret that.

Boerigter: Yeah, so I think Damon Panek and what he's doing on Stockton Island is just as beautiful model of cultural restoration. So there is still a ton of burning occurring Mumbai different indigenous groups, but a lot of places that are under federal control on those places have certain rules around burning that might not allow fire to be present there and the way that it was for a very very long time. And so I think a really the really cool thing that Damon is doing is that he's bringing cultural fire on to a landscape that is now a national park. And so it's kind of this fusion.

And I think that is an important point to bring up that fire is still being used culturally in a lot of different places, but I think the big thing is that it needs to be used in a lot more places, especially places that have been taken from their, their stewards and are now under a different sort of landscape control, and so bringing fire back to those spaces.

Gill: And we of course have tried that we're working towards changing our relationship with fire in the land fire is just as much a part of the fire dependent native plant communities as a red plan has a really interesting thought as I was prepping for this conversation that we see fire as similar to humans. I think we see it as kind of an external process but we know that it's such an integral part of these fire dependent systems but we're not necessarily was willing to use it so we're taking what we're learning from Camp 8, and the history of fire and our relationship to fire and coming up with a what a burn plan to reintroduce fire because we see it as being a very important part of portions of our native plant communities at the forestry Center.

Our goal at the forestry center is to say, Hey, we need to have fire on the landscape, at least in certain places but it should be part of our management portfolio because if we want these fire dependent species and fire dependent systems to persist into the future and develop into the future. We need that part of the ecological community just as much as we need to be planting red pine and white pine.

18:42:44 Boerigter: Yeah, I agree with you and. And I do want to emphasize to that fire is a really blunt tool and so it is something that has to be you know handled with a lot of thought and I have seen you know devastating wildfires and what they can do to a landscape into homes into people's lives and obviously fire is something to be really thoughtful about and. And it's important to recognize that we can't ever control fire.

Gill: 18:43:10 Just like we can't fully control when storms are fully control how a tree is going to grow. We need to approach fire and reducing fire with the humility that respects that it, it is a blunt tool, at times and it can get out of control. So, we've been trying to take kind of more of a risk management rather than living in this realm of, everything is uncertain so let's not do anything.

We're trying to take a little bit more of a work with people that have worked with fire and take it, take it from a risk management perspective, but we also see that there's risks to not reintroducing fire. We think of these stands hundred to 200 years down the road. We think there's some risk and potentially not bringing fire back into the systems.

That's kind of a tangent, Eli back to the back to the question: Where do you think the next Camp 8 will be?

Sagor: Well I don't know you know, to me it's a, it's really a place that we gather like I said before we gather to talk about the things we value to hash out how best to understand and care for our woods, you know, should we do more harvesting? Should we do less harvesting? What does it look like if we manage in this way or that way. So to me, on one level the answer really relates to forest management if we want another stand that really immediately grabs, anyone in it and, and inspires all, if we, if it's these huge trees and the open understory and something about that structure that's not common across the landscape now that I think there's a lot we can do through management basically through thinning those stands so that the remaining trees have more room to grow. They get bigger, faster to produce that that structure that's so unique now about Camp 8, and so on one level I think it relates to that I think it relates to how we choose to manage our forests.

18:44:55 But on another level it's really about creating spaces where we can talk, we can go into the woods. We can listen to one another we can learn about our shared history and connections to the land around us.

18:45:06 And, you know, when you think about it that way. It's bringing us back full circle: What better name could we choose for this podcast than Camp 8?

That's really what we're trying to do here.

Gill: So Clare, do you have I think we're, we're getting kind of towards the end of our discussion here Do you have any final thoughts on the, on your process as a creative writer and getting involved in in getting to know Camp 8 and the people that have made decisions about the management there.

Boerigter: I feel really lucky to have been part of telling this story and I recognize that this part that I've ever had been a part of is a small part of this dance history and of this dance story, and just on a personal level, I'm really excited to see what the next steps are and how the story is going to continue to unfold. And again, I feel really connected to this place. And so I'm curious, in, in 10 years and 20 years and 30 years when I come back to Camp 8, what will it be what decisions will you have made, I think, I don't know I feel really hopeful about how thoughtful everyone I've spoken to is regarding management, and how we're moving forward and I'm just excited to see how this story kind of continues to play out and unfold.

18:46:29 Gill: You've been able to explore and document Camp 8 in a way that we never could have coming from our training and background and we're, we're forever indebted to the work that you've put together and very much appreciative of all the energy and the time that you've put into this producing this piece and documenting this place on the force you sending that we care about so much. Yeah, thank you so much.

Boerigter: It was an incredible summer.

Sagor: Camp 8 is produced by the Sustainable Forest Education Cooperative and supported by the University of Minnesota college of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resources Sciences, the University of Minnesota Extension, and the Cloquet Forestry Center. Thanks for tuning in and keep in touch.