



A/U RANCHES NEWS | FALL 2025

# Mountain Memo



## New Adult Workshops, New Inspiration

When you picture camp activities at the A/U Ranches, you likely envision horseback riding, whitewater rafting, peaking mountains, and other high-adventure pursuits. And we love all of these! But what about offerings for participants who would like more variety or something quieter?

Two always-popular a la carte options are fly fishing and art workshops – so we thought, why not offer them as *programs*, too?

For the first time this summer, we included a watercolor workshop and fly fishing clinic during Adult Mini Camp in August. And, given how well they were received, we're excited to offer more programs like this in future years.

### Fly fishing adventures

Participants in the fly fishing workshop learned basic fly casting at camp from local professional fly fishing guides.

They then spent two guided days on the Arkansas River, either float fishing or wade fishing. Lots of new skills were learned, and many fish were caught!

A/U Ranches co-director Aaron Morris, an avid fisherman in his own right, is already planning future fly fishing adventures for camp – some local, perhaps some further afield. If you have an interest in fishing (as a novice or enthusiast), keep a lookout for more opportunities to come.

### Watercolor inspiration

For the watercolor workshop, we invited Kelly Foxtan, a professional artist who leads monthly online watercolor classes for DiscoveryBound (DB) Outreach, to join us. Kelly brought her extensive skills and experience to camp and taught participants a variety of techniques and tricks to elevate their painting.

Using our natural settings at camp as inspiration, our participant artists learned techniques such as dry vs. wet painting, color mixing, and brush handling. After spending three days focused around the art studio at camp, they took their new skills to Aspen for the day for some plein air painting!

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# Demonstrations Every Day



A note from Aaron & K.C. Morris, Ranch Co-directors

Daily decisions punctuate our work at camp. Some decisions feel large: What programs should we offer? Which building is next on the list for upgrades? And others seem comparatively small: Which flowers should we plant in the barrels by the Hub doors? What color should we choose for the new t-shirt design?

Over the past year, the idea that every decision made at camp should be a Christian Science demonstration has come into clearer focus. It's really what work at camp is all about – opportunities to see the Science of the Christ demonstrated, to pause and listen for God's way forward, to lean on divine Mind in every instance, even the ones that don't feel complicated.

We're reminded of Mary Baker Eddy's statement in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (p. 340):

*"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus xx. 3.) The First Commandment is my favorite text. It demonstrates Christian Science.*

It's such a blessing to consider how this commandment should anchor our decision-making at camp (and in life). When we make the conscious decision to have only one God, the idea that anything else could influence us falls away. At camp, this shows up in many beautiful ways. A mountain camper completes a ropes course element when they recognize that fear cannot direct their experience. A horsemanship camper canters for the first time while understanding how infinite Spirit is impelling them forward. A rafting camper guides a rapid on the river with precise Principle-led commands. The flower beds in front of Valerie Lodge bloom joyfully as a reflection of perfect Soul.

And decisions? The right ones for camp come naturally, because they flow from the basis of demonstrating Christian Science at every step. How grateful we are!

*Aaron Morris K.C. Morris*

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Kelly's workshop has inspired us to include more artistic endeavors in our programs, in addition to the well-loved arts and crafts opportunities that participants already enjoy. Keep a lookout for more workshops to come – and in the meantime, give one of DB Outreach's virtual watercolor classes a try! Check out the DB calendar for upcoming sessions: [bit.ly/dbo-events](http://bit.ly/dbo-events)

## Changes Ahead in 2026

For 2026, we're asking, how can we offer the greatest good to the greatest number of people? It's led to some summer schedule adjustments:

- First session of Youth Camp will remain 15 days to coincide with two sessions of Family & Adult Camp. Now, **the one-week Youth Camp option will align with the first Family & Adult Camp week**, so families can travel together!
- **Second and third sessions of Youth Camp will each be 13 days.** Ending third session earlier will allow staff and campers to participate in the full program before heading back to school. We will continue to offer a half session during third session.
- We have some exciting ideas in the works for **new family and adult programs** that will utilize the extra days available in August resulting from this schedule adjustment. Stay tuned!

We look forward to a new camp year based around this slight change of session lengths, while still enjoying camp-favorite activities! Every program offers opportunities to make lasting friendships, try new activities, and grow closer to God.



## Safe During a Wildfire

The call came just after lunchtime: There was a growing wildfire about 6 miles north of camp. Dry conditions and strong winds meant a fire could move quickly, endangering camp's property and the nearby town. Campers were in the midst of a program day – riding horses, paddling on the lake, navigating the ropes course, and hiking or riding on backcountry trips. We practice a fire drill every session, gathering to test our emergency procedures, but we were now faced with the unprecedented possibility of needing to evacuate.



We knew this was another opportunity to demonstrate our 2025 metaphysical theme: "Love's work and Love must fit" (*Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 51). It was clear right away that Love was in control then and there – Love was the still, small voice guiding each step and meeting "every human need" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 494).

The summer management team met to discuss first steps. We gathered staff and campers on the lawn, made contact with trips in the backcountry, staged camp vehicles in a central location, and prepared

an evacuation plan for campers, staff, and horses. Adventure Unlimited staff based in Denver facilitated communication with camper families to keep them informed and to request their prayerful support.

The first verse of a well-loved hymn at camp, No. 148, includes these lines:

*The storm may roar without me,  
My heart may low be laid;  
But God is round about me,  
And can I be dismayed?*

One of the clearest signs of Love's work as we waited for updates was how campers and staff stayed calm, peaceful, and patient. Everyone responded quickly to directives – leaving program activities to return to cabins and gather supplies for a "go bag" – and then waited together on the lawn.

As the afternoon progressed, we were grateful to learn that early firefighting efforts were effective, stalling the growth of the fire. And as prayerful ideas were shared during a late-afternoon meeting of our summer management team, the strength of the wind noticeably subsided. The team kept watch throughout the night, supported by our prayer.

In just two days, the fire was fully contained, and there was no need to evacuate our property. In fact, memory of the entire incident was quickly supplanted by joyful adventures of all the wonderful moments that define camp. Not even the "smell of fire" lingered on our experience that session. Love's work stayed with us all.

## Camp Connections+

Find groups of four camp terms with something in common. Use **four different colored pens** or marks (for example: + \ O X) to identify the categories.

Answers are on back page.

Rather play online?  
Scan here!



LOVE	RIDING	FIVE FINGERS	BLANKET
CARABINER	BIKING	BELL	TRUTH
RAFTING	WAGON WHEEL	PAINTING	PENDANT
HORSESHOE	HIKING	SPIRIT	MIND



## New Round-Up Adventures

Planning for the summer always includes discussions about what new program offerings might be a hit with campers. This year, Round-Up (high school) campers enthusiastically jumped into new challenges on the river and in the mountains.

### Rafting



On the river, Rafting Outcamp was a popular addition to our third-session programs. This opportunity, highlighted by a five-day overnight rafting trip (instead of the traditional three days), was a tremendous success for our rafters, who loved their extra days on the world-renowned Arkansas River. The additional trip days gave campers and staff more time guiding and solidified the already strong bond that develops within all our rafting programs. Those in Rafting Outcamp covered a total of 56 miles on the Arkansas River and paddled through 25 different rapids during their outtrip. It was so successful that we're excited to offer this program again in 2026!

### Peaking



In the mountains during third session, as a result of camper and staff requests, Conquerors tacked two days onto their usual five-day trip and spent seven days in the backcountry. The group started just outside the small village of Twin Lakes. They hiked up to Hope Pass and then successfully completed a series of three peaks over 24 hours: Quail Mountain (a thirteener), La Plata, and Huron. The group traveled fast and strong for more than 30 miles, covering 12,000+ feet of elevation gain, often surpassing their program head's expectations. When they returned to camp, joyful stories of their adventures abounded.



## The Power of Staff Ownership at 100 Elk

Last year, we encouraged the 100 Elk Outdoor Center staff to take more ownership of the programming we provide to schools – to apply their own skills and to grow and develop as effective leaders and facilitators. They began to recognize this special opportunity to improve our offerings for schools and received great feedback for their efforts.

For example, when a school asked us to help meet their state curriculum requirements in habitat ecology and the water cycle, our staff took on the idea, and the students and teachers felt we went above and beyond their expectations.

This season, we're carrying that energy forward, finding out what staff members are interested in doing, and then also saying, "Here's the need; here's the feedback we got last year. How can we use it to refresh what we offer?"

We get a lot of returning schools at 100 Elk, so the feedback is invaluable. Last fall, one school shared that the backcountry skills rotation felt a little dry. We asked staff to rethink that rotation to get the kids active with the content. The staff took on the challenge wholeheartedly, and schools this season have responded positively to the change.

For staff, this is not just about coming to work, but about having input and taking ownership of what we do. The staff members who were able to put something together were excited and encouraged by the feedback from teachers and students. It left them feeling, "Wow, I did something to make the program better."

The impact is really twofold. When we're putting our best foot forward, we're invested in it, and that shows up. The students feel that from the staff. Creating unique outdoor education adventures helps students learn and explore in impactful ways.

## Staff Leadership Awards

The **Cap Andrews Award for Moral Leadership** recognizes staff who exemplify the Christian Science way of life to campers and fellow staff members, as modeled by Adventure Unlimited's founder, John "Cap" Andrews.



**Jon Proctor**  
Chuckwagon lodge manager

Jon is a constant source of inspiration and guidance to those around him. He sets high standards and upholds them through love, compassion, and generosity. His work is grounded in prayer and spiritual intuition, which shows through the interactions he has with coworkers and campers. This summer, Jon served as a mentor to staff and set the tone for community and camaraderie. The example Jon set encouraged others to stretch further and do better.



**Julia Stevermer**  
Sky Valley horsemanship counselor

Julia always follows her highest sense of right. Her dedication to the practice of Christian Science makes her a source of comfort and inspiration. Julia's peers say she "is always upbeat and gentle while being firm about doing the right thing." She "always demonstrates an immense amount of integrity and brings so much to camp culture." Julia's leadership is exemplified through her humility, selflessness, integrity, and principle. She leads by example, modeling the way for her peers.

The **Marianne Andrews Award for Selfless Service** values staff who graciously serve campers and fellow staff members with the dedication, compassion, and good cheer exemplified by Marianne Andrews, co-founder of the A/U Ranches.



**Bailey Peticolas**  
Rafting program head

Bailey is widely recognized by his peers as selfless and full of service. His attention to detail, focus on providing a high-quality experience for all, and unconditional love for camp make him an invaluable leader. As a program head, Bailey expresses tireless work in the rafting program and around camp. From designing and leading a new five-day rafting outtrip to covering cabins at the drop of a hat and leading all camp activities, he maintains a calm demeanor, positive attitude, and dedication to making everyone feel loved and valued.



**Caroline Kerr**  
Conquerors program head

Caroline serves consistently, joyfully, and humbly. She uplifts those around her, and she speaks and acts from the basis of what camp is all about. She makes each day more special than ordinary. Her campers learn tons, grow in innumerable ways, challenge themselves enthusiastically, and excel – in large part because of how Caroline guides and supports them. Outside of the program, Caroline often volunteers to meet daily needs, even at a moment's notice, and her willingness is accompanied by a cheerful smile and kind words.

The **Leroy Williams Horsemanship Award** honors corral staff who have consistently demonstrated the highest degree of dedication, courage, and commitment in advancing their own horsemanship skills while enriching the experience of campers in their charge through their love of horses.

### Julia Stevermer (pictured above)

Julia demonstrated unwavering grit this summer, despite enduring every physically challenging situation a horse can present. Not only was she physically tough, but her mental toughness carried her fellow staff and campers through a variety of situations. Julia always eagerly took on challenges and found her way through them with patience, humility, and honesty. While this year she demonstrated a higher degree of confidence in herself than in the past, her humility was steadfast.



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Adventure Unlimited's vision is life-changing spiritual growth through joyful adventures in an environment where Christian Science is lived.

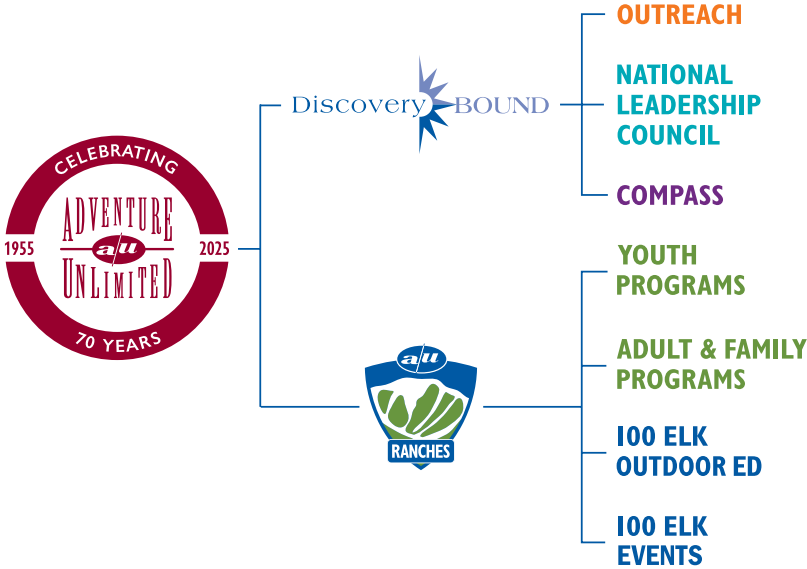
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## Enjoy all of our programs!



# Mountain Memo Fall Newsletter

## 2026 PROGRAM DATES

<b>Service Weekend</b>	May 22-25
<b>Youth Camp</b>	Session 1: June 18 – July 2* <i>Camp United</i> Session 2: July 4-16 Session 3: July 18-30*
<b>Family &amp; Adult Camp</b>	Week 1: June 18-24 Week 2: June 26 – July 2 Week 3: August 3-9*
<b>Adult Mini Camp</b>	August 10-16*
<b>CS Homeschool Families Retreat</b>	September 24-28
<b>Bible Study</b>	October 29 – November 2
<b>Christmas Camp</b>	December 21-27*

\*Half sessions available



## Giving Tuesday

Create ripples of impact

Donate by December 2 to reach \$100,000 match

Scan to donate



[AdventureUnlimited.org/givingtuesday](https://AdventureUnlimited.org/givingtuesday)

CAMP CONNECTIONS+ ANSWERS (ranked from most straightforward to trickiest)  
SYNONYMS FOR GOD EXPRESSED AT CAMP - LOVE, TRUTH, SPIRIT, MIND  
ACTIVITIES CAMP OFFERS - RIDING, HIKING, RAFTING, BIKING  
A/U RANCHES LONGEVITY GIFTS - CARABINER, PENDANT, BLANKET, PAINTING  
COMMON CAMP SYMBOLS - WAGON WHEEL, FIVE FINGERS, HORSESHOE, BELL