

Luxury tent camp in Montana mountains provides a posh setup

BY ANNE Z. COOKE The Dallas Morning News
Sunday, May 15, 2011

GREENOUGH, Mont. — From where I sat, on a log in front of a crackling campfire near Bull Creek, deep in the heart of Montana's Lolo National Forest, all the world seemed wilderness.

WANT TO GO?

For more information, visit www.pawsup.com or call (800) 473-0601.

Above us, the night sky was alight with stars. Beneath our feet, the piney scent of freshly scuffed earth summoned a long-forgotten memory, an echo from ancient days when primitive people gathered together after dark, not in front of a television but around a campfire.

Under any other circumstances, you'd have thought the nine of us were roughing it. But this was the Encampment at Bull Creek, the luxury tent camp run by the Resort at Paws Up, a guest ranch and resort 30 miles east of Missoula. Accessible only by horseback, the Encampment was a new concept, the kind I could get used to.

The next day dawned bright and clear. Hastily exchanging names with the other guests on the ride, we piled into a shuttle van for the 27-mile drive to the horse corral and trailhead. Stuffing our water bottles, cameras and aspirin into the saddle bags, we mounted our horses while wranglers rushed from horse to horse, tightening cinches and adjusting stirrups.

The horses, accustomed to the 12-mile walk, patiently fell in line behind Beach.

With the corral receding behind us, we headed through the trees for a seven-hour ride that wound through the deep shade of old forests, climbed alpine valleys and ascended rocky canyons. In midafternoon, we reached the Monture River, following it into camp.

Hearing us, Curtis Davey, the camp boss, put down the ax.

"Welcome to Bull Creek," said Davey, grabbing my horse's bridle. "We're expecting you. When you've straightened out the kinks in your legs, get a cold drink and tell me about your ride."

At first glance, the Encampment at Bull Creek, accessible only by foot or on horseback, reminded me of the photos taken of 19th-century mining camps. Wet socks and towels hung on poles, storage containers stood next to the cook tent, and a pile of firewood lay in the dirt.

Ten tents were pitched along the creek, five of them reserved for guests. The cook tent stood in the middle, heated by an old-timey wood stove. Long counters held crates of groceries and three propane stoves next to boxes, pots, frying pans and utensils stacked on two rows of shelves. At the rear, water from the creek supplied a purifier, the sink and a long drain board. A slab of wood served as lunch and dinner table, with benches long enough to seat seven on a side.

Two luxurious outdoor showers near the creek delivered enough hot water for a short but decent scrub while the privy, with two canvas-shielded stalls, stood 100 feet away at the end of a narrow path. The stables, improvised for the summer, consisted of the corral, a long hitching rail and a shed for storing saddles, bridles and grain.

Our duffles, delivered earlier by mule, had been placed in the tents, each outfitted with two cots made up with fresh linens and down quilts. In the corner stood a compact stove and a stack of firewood, to be laid and lighted at bedtime by one of the wranglers.

Camp living is lovely when you don't have chores. We petted the horses, practiced fly-casting in the

ADVERTISEMENT

CAMP MOR
Everyday Low Prices!
FREE SHIPPING on orders over \$100!

GEAR UP FOR FALL

Shop Now

www.Campmor.com
Ads by Google

RATINGS AND REVIEWS

Everythingmidmo.com
Shop. Find. Save. Go.

ss 2-Tool Com
Timer Drill and Impact Driver
\$399.99
\$299.00

Automatic Tool & Fastener
1809 Santa Fe Pl, Columbia
Open today until 5 p.m.

Restaurants · Retail · Services · Coupons

ADVERTISEMENT

TOYOTA
BLACK FRIDAY
SALES EVENT

STARTING
FRIDAY MORNING
NO PAYMENTS UNTIL
FEBRUARY 2012
ON ALL NEW TOYOTAS

VIEW SPECIAL OFFERS >

New on ColumbiaTribune.com:

Searchable **University of Missouri Salary database.**

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF THE COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

our town
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR EVERYTHING COLUMBIA
2011

communitykitchen
COLUMBIA'S PLACE FOR CULINARY ADVENTURES

Most Visited Stories

Teens arrested after gunfire near school
(27 comments)

Judge dismisses lawsuit over SWAT raid
(18 comments)

Occupy CoMo tent goes down at City Hall
(15 comments)

meadow, read a book in the shade and hiked up the hillside. At mealtimes, the cook produced broiled steaks, salads, sauces, vegetable dishes and cake, with wine or beer.

The second day included a horseback ride to Dead Horse Lake on a trail that included 50-degree slopes, teetered on cliff edges and a melting snowbank suspended over the Middle Fork of the Monture River.

Our last campfire came too soon. Meanwhile, the rest of our family had relaxed at Paws Up, enjoying the patio barbecues, spa treatments, bike rides and kayaking. I'm sure we had a better time than they did. But to each his own.

This article was published on page E10 of the Sunday, May 15, 2011 edition of The Columbia Daily Tribune. [Click here to Subscribe.](#)



Recommend Sign Up to see what your friends recommend.

More like this story

- [GRAND OPENING: New business in Columbia](#)- April 2, 2011 2 a.m.
- [Central Florida's wild side offers escape from tourist rush](#)- February 14, 2010 8 a.m.
- [Olympian offers pointers](#)- October 17, 2009 7 a.m.
- [Ranchers forced to diversify income](#)- August 6, 2009 1:59 p.m.
- [Full range of experience](#)- May 7, 2009 1:40 p.m.

[Comment](#) [E-mail to a friend](#) facebook Tweet digg reddit



Use the comment form below to begin a discussion about this content.

[See more recent comments >](#)

Post a comment

Our policy regarding reader comments

Be courteous. Don't post comments that are abusive, defamatory, illegal, libelous or obscene. It is possible to debate without engaging in personal attacks. We cannot review every comment, but we reserve the right to remove or delete comments at any time. For more information, read our [commenting guidelines](#) or [FAQ's regarding comments](#).

Want to join the discussion?

[Subscribe](#) to Columbia Tribune Premium Online Access
Already a subscriber? [Login below.](#)

Username

Password

([Forgot your password?](#))

[Alleged sex act with girl leads to arrest](#)
(11 comments)

[Pinkel speaking of DWI arrest: 'I failed miserably'](#)
(33 comments)

Most E-mailed Stories

Recent Comments

Facebook Recommendations

Recent Blog Entries

Community Kitchen
**White Wine and
Mushroom Cream
Sauce**

By Christina Penn



jobWizard Featured Jobs

[Copywriter](#)

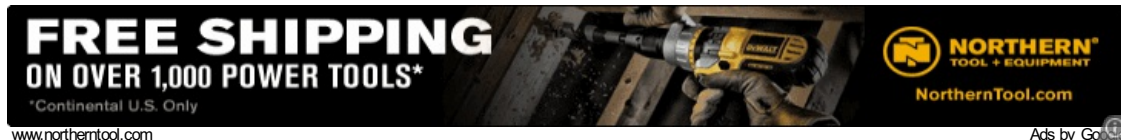
MO - Columbia | MBS Direct

[Commercial Sales Manager](#)

MO-Columbia/Jefferson C | Mediacom

Events Calendar

November 2011						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10



News

Home
Local News
Sports
Business
Commentary
Obituaries
For the Record
Special Sections
Browse the Archive

Features

Columnists
Darkow Cartoons
Food
Go! Magazine
Ovation
Pulse
Slide Shows

Online Extras

Mobile Edition
Daily Deal
Everything Md Mo
Coupons
Facebook
Twitter
RSS feeds
Blogs
Podcasts
Puzzles

Company Info

Advertise in the Tribune
Subscribe
2011 HERO Awards
Tribune In Education
Tribune Regional
Spelling Bee
Tribune Jobs
Tribune Publishing
Tribune Store
Lucky Sunday
Contest Rules

Contact Us

Anonymous Tips
Circulation Staff
Newsroom Staff and
Contributor Directory
Letters to the Editor
Wedding Announcements
Frequently Asked Questions
Premium Online Access FAQ

© 2011 The Columbia Daily Tribune. Read our [terms of use](#) and our [privacy policy](#).