

STEVENS

Dear Pirates,

This week's highlight is one that I did not get to experience firsthand but that deserves a spotlight. Last Thursday evening, a group of 13 students from every grade ventured off with two of our outdoor faculty leaders and enthusiasts—science teacher Bob McCormick and English teacher Matt Rymzo—to George Lake in California's Kaiser Wilderness, and they've shared with me a bit about their adventure.

After a night camping at Sample Meadow, the group trekked 4 miles to George Lake. At significant elevation (over 9,000 feet), this was a challenge, and one well worth it. They spent their daytime hours hiking, taking dips in the frigid lake—there was still a big patch of snow!—and fly-fishing, and then settled around the campfire in the evening to feast on Tex-Mex, listen to music and share memorable outdoor experiences from their past. Students newer to camping learned a bit of camp craft—namely how to pitch in and help out—and the group that ranged from students new to Stevenson to practiced Expo co-leaders slowly forged an identity as a group. “Being out there for them is very restorative, as hard as it is for some,” Matt shared. “They can be kids. They go swimming, and they explore. They swam to a granite island—it's great.” There's always an unpredictable element, which this year included a surprise hail shower while Matt and Bob were “cowboy camping” and the students were all snug under their flys, but the goal, as Matt relays, is for students to realize that they have the ability to keep building memorable outdoor experiences in their life, and that this weekend now counts among these memories. When the crew of 15 hiked out Sunday morning, happy about their lighter packs, they all felt a sense of connection and accomplishment. [Please enjoy a few photos passed along by Elliott Cabral '27 and Max McCormick '24.](#)

In addition to our signature Sophomore Wilderness Expedition in March and a number of outdoor experiences that will be available to grades 9-11 during X-term, we will be offering a multitude of excursions throughout the year, from surfing day trips in Santa Cruz to long weekends in Yosemite. Students will be notified of upcoming trips weeks in advance via email and through the Monday Minutes, and they simply sign up by responding to the trip announcement email with their expressed interest. Sophomore parents and guardians will also have an opportunity to learn more about Expo during Family Weekend. If you have any questions in the meantime about our outdoor education programming, feel free to connect with our director of outdoor education, Galen Merigliano.

While we didn't all get to experience the serenity of George Lake last weekend, I'm wishing you all (myself included!) some time outside this weekend—in our beautiful Monterey Peninsula or in whatever corner of our world you reside.

Sincerely,
Aimée Bates
Head of Upper Division