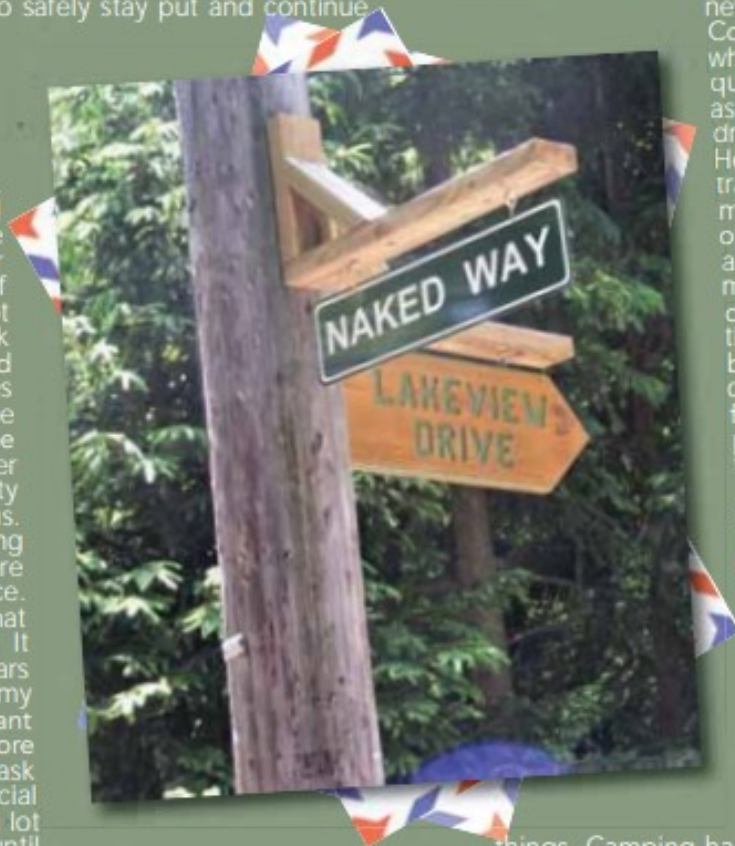


The Woods Camping Resort Updates

A Conversation with Pat Gremling

Stephen Libby: Covid has been very challenging for most businesses and some unfortunately have not survived the pandemic. How did The Woods respond to Covid over the past year?

Pat Gremling: It sucks to see businesses close because of Covid. It was one of those things that nobody saw coming and every business freaked out and had hardly any time to prepare anything to deal with it. I did see some pretty impressive pivots made by some businesses to keep afloat – a survival move for themselves and their employees. There are some real creative thinkers out there. They'll come through this on top. The Woods Camping Resort had several advantages. First, because we're seasonal, we had a few months to coordinate changes. Second, camping is an outdoor activity which is a much safer environment. In fact, it was one of the first business categories approved to reopen by the governor. The Woods is large – stretched out over 161 acres. Camping guests had the choice to safely stay put and continue to quarantine at their campsite even though there were hundreds of others at the resort. We made it easy for them to "participate" by broadcasting our DJ's over FM radio throughout the property. And last season, we launched "LOL Radio" which is a free, commercial free continuous streaming dance music channel available for download. We've had a bunch of people tell us "LOL Radio" has kept them sane during the long break over the winter! It's all upbeat and offers an easy escape to better times getting drunk and dancing in the club! Back to your question... The Woods also had to do what all other businesses did. Implement safety precautions throughout the campus. Signage was everywhere reminding people that even though they were on a "vacation" rules were in place. We recorded announcements that were played every 30 minutes. It was hilarious to see some regulars even choreographed a routine to my announcement ala flight attendant safety drill style! We hired more security who strictly enforced the mask wearing rule in places where social separation wasn't possible. I saw a lot of people raise their mask only until security turned around - acting like a 4 year old trying to get away with shit behind their parents back. Funny until we kicked them off the dance floor for ignoring the rules over and over. Bye Felicia!



SL: How did the campers react to the safety precautions you've had in place?

PG: It was mixed and it was based on how serious they were taking the virus. Some were super appreciative how we were enforcing things. They recognized how bad it must have sucked for our staff to work twice as hard to run things with a "business as usual" persona. Meanwhile, behind the curtain we were really holding the weight of responsibility of keeping a few thousand people safe each week. Others were holding a "Who cares if I get it? I'm young and healthy and I'm not gonna die!" attitude. The problem was that nobody knew anything for sure. But we had to be responsible and enforce our Covid rules. Many were surprised we did that. But they weren't thinking of The Woods as their home for the weekend. They saw a relaxed party environment free for all. Seemingly different than the other places they usually recreate. But those places were closed last summer. When they got tapped on the shoulder for not wearing their mask in the pool (yes we required mask wearing in our pool, even if they weren't wearing anything else), then they realized we were serious, and they had to be as well.

SL: How will things change this season?

PG: At first, our plan is not to change. We will repeat everything we implemented last season. But obviously, people are now getting vaccinated and several will be fully vaccinated by the time we open. But several won't. So what do you do with that? There's no chip being implanted in the neck of fully vaccinated people. Do those folks expect us to give them a break with mask rules and social separation? Once that happens, then so will falsified documents. It'll be like back in the day getting a fake ID to get into bars! Last season we proved we can still have fun and stay safe at the same time. We'll keep an eye on the CDC and Commonwealth of PA guidelines and make decisions as info becomes available. By the time this interview is published, maybe half the stuff I wrote won't even be applicable any more. But some good things came from last year that will benefit the current camping season. We adapted a lot of our events and learned we can do some really fun

new stuff which we will be repeating Covid or not! The Ladies of Leighton is what we call our extremely talented drag queens at The Woods. Last season, they asked if they could organize a traveling drag show. The queens used our big Heyy-Ride wagon and performed a traveling show on the camp roads. It made the stage "open air" and spread out the crowd! It was a huge success and will become a regular event moving forward. Another example is our Woods Lake party. We put a DJ on the dock of our lake and camp guests brought their rafts, tubes, pool floats, dinghies – whatever they had that floated and we had a floating dance party! We had so much fun we plan to do this several times this season.

SL: What do you think things will look like post-covid?

PG: It's going to be tough to just drop everything we have made SOP over the past year. Ever try driving your car without your seat belt? Feels weird. Handshakes will be like that. Leaving the house without checking your pockets for a mask. And going to a counter without a window separating you from the employee. People have learned how to do things differently, but they've also learned about new things. Camping has been a huge beneficiary of a "stay-cation" trend. Not only couldn't we travel like we used to (overseas or on a cruise ship or even state to state in some cases), so we researched new stuff. Our favorite bars, restaurants and even beaches were closing or had heavy restrictions. But camping came up over and over as an allowed, safe activity. People learned that tents and campers were no longer the mildewy junk our parents had back in the 80's. They were stylish and equipped with all kinds of tech! And private parks like The Woods were VERY different than the state parks our parents took us to. RV dealers are selling everything off their lots. Private camper sales went through the roof. Campgrounds were selling out every site! Soon working from home was possible by working from camp so weekdays were also selling out like never before! Wi-Fi at a camp is now as important as hot water in the showers. And this is not going to end now that vaccines are being given. People are hooked. Everything I've read about this industry is saying this is at least a 5 year trend. We welcome that challenge and are doing even more reinvestment in our facility to absorb that increased demand. We're buckling up for a busier-than-ever season and feel well prepared. I get excited for this time of year like my "kids" are coming home for the summer. Their anticipation has been building for 6 months – I see it everyday on their social media posts. The entire Woods team will gladly take on the responsibility to make the term "Happy Camper" a reality for our resort guests! See you at the pool!