



West Texas Scouting History

All pages with the header shown above on the Scouting Memories Project are taken from Frank T. Hilton's remarkable website, www.westtexasscoutinghistory.net, with his permission. The website is a comprehensive history of four modern west Texas councils, the Buffalo Trails Council, the South Plains Council, the Texas Southwest Council and the Texas Trails Council. Web links in these pages are to Frank's original website.

Camp Ed Murphy

Buffalo Trail Council

One good volunteer Scouter Lyle Deffebach from Snyder was a friend of Mr. Ed. Murphy, who had a lot of property on the new Lake J. B. Thomas in Borden County. Lyle got Mr. Murphy to give the council 40 acres on the lake to build a Scout Camp, which was named Camp Ed Murphy in his honor. A camp development committee was formed and met in 1958.

A meeting was held by the Camp Ed Murphy Development Committee on March 5, 1958 in the Nolan Von Roeder's Lodge, Lake J. B Thomas, with Nolan Von Roeder, presiding as Chairman. P. V. Thorson, Scout Executive, discussed the need for more camping facilities because of growth of the council in membership. The council needed an Expansion Campaign to pay for improvements at the Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch, development of Camp Ed Murphy and the construction of a needed office building to house the council's headquarters. When they asked about owning the mineral right, the committee was told that the property in this area was not sold with mineral rights, and that the council only had surface rights to Camp Ed Murphy. The committee voted to accept the proposed camp site and that their acceptance be submitted to the Executive Board for their approval.

Committees were then appointed by Chairman Von Roeder for the following projects:

Cause way - W. D. Caldwell

Electric Power - Nolan Von Roeder

Dining Facilities - B. J. Bartels

Aquatic Facilities - Decided to wait until after the Boy Scouts of America Engineer visited the Camp Ed Murphy project and made his recommendations.

Cost Estimate and Clearing Committee - Lyle Deffebach, Chairman, Wayland G. Holt and W. W. Greif, Committee members

Small Island, west of Camp Ed Murphy Project - Joe Pickle was appointed Chairman to gather a committee and see Mr. Lowen McDowell and Lake J. B. Thomas officials and endeavor to secure the mentioned island.

A representative group of the committee was to meet with the Boy Scouts of America Engineer at the camp site April 21, 1958. The engineer was to be in the council for three days.

The following development costs were estimated:

Camp Entrance, Road and Fence - \$2,000

Water System - \$5,000

Sanitation - \$5,000

Dining Hall & Caretakers Quarters (use old school bldg.) \$10,000

Boat Dock and Piers - \$10,000

10 Boats and Canoes - \$1,500

Total Cost - \$33,500

The camp was being used by the council as early as 1958. The following regulations governed the use of the camp.

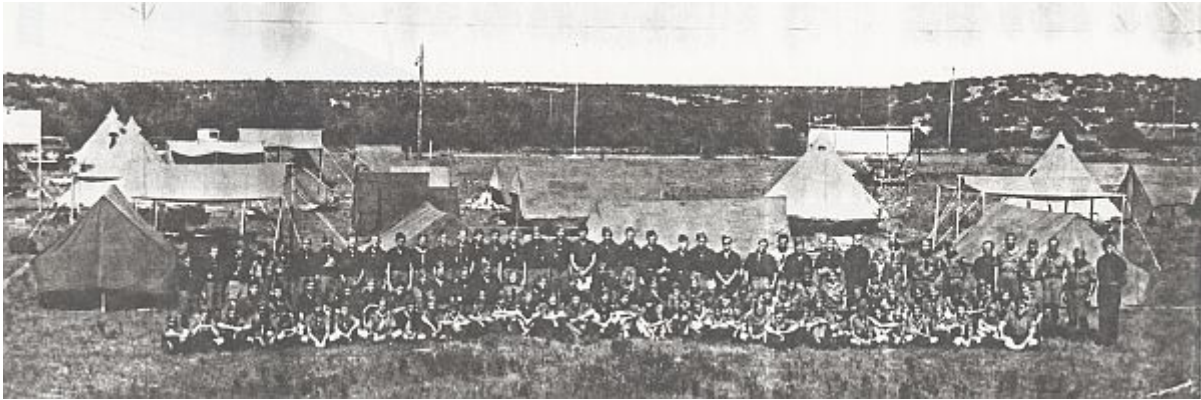


Camp Ed Murphy is owned and operated by the Buffalo Trail Council, Inc., Boy Scouts of America. This camp was secured and developed for the boys registered in Scout in the Council area. The first objective in the operation of the camp is the welfare of boys. Second is the preservation and maintenance of the facilities for their use. Third, to properly use the camp to the fullest extent to further the Scouting Program. All will recognize the responsibility of the Council through its authorized committees to conduct and operate the camp predicated on the above objectives. To carry out these objectives required certain rules and regulations for the protection of boys and leaders as well as the camp properties.

In conformance with the above statements the Council has adopted the following rules and regulations for Camp Ed Murphy as recommended by the Council's Camping and Activities Committee and the Health and Safety Committee:

1. Any registered Scout Troop or Explorer Post in the Council area may camp at Camp Ed Murphy so long as they have competent, qualified adult leadership with them and provided they send in a written request for use of the camp grounds to the Council Office at least 10 days prior to their use of the camp. The Council will send written confirmation back to the unit leader and a copy to the camp ranger of the camp. By this method the unit leader will know the camp is reserved for him and the Ranger will have everything in order for the unit's arrival.
2. Camp Buildings will not be made available for over-night camping to units.
3. Canoes and Row Boats shall be used only at such events as summer or winter camps or at Council-conducted activities and not by individual units.
4. Swimming at Camp Ed Murphy will be permitted only under the following conditions:
 - (a) Any unit swimming at camp must have with them a competent, qualified leader or older scout that is trained in "Red Cross Water Safety" or Red Cross Senior Life Guard or Scout Life Guard or Scouting's eight points of Defense in Water Safety.
 - (b) Unit must run each and every swim on the Buddy System and comply with the Health and Safety Rule of not having any swim last more than 45 minutes with at least two hours between swims.
5. There will be no firearms permitted in camp at any time.
6. Out of Council Units may camp at Camp Ed Murphy using the grounds only, for a cost of \$2.00 per day. They must comply with all rules and regulations of the camp.
7. Out of Scouting Organizations use of the camp will be permitted only to a limited few organizations. They will make application for use of the camp to the Buffalo Trail Council and must be approved by the Council's Camping and Activities Committee before permission can be granted.
8. Out of Scouting organizations using the Dining Lodge and other camp facilities at Camp Ed Murphy will pay \$40.00 per day for use of said camp. The Council must have a written guarantee from said organization that they will pay for any or all damages or breakage that might occur while they are using camp. That they will clean up said camp and leave it as clean as they found it. Also any organization using Camp Ed Murphy must give the Buffalo Trail Council a written certificate of insurance showing that said organization has provided their own insurance covering their group for any or all accidents that may occur while in camp whereby completely releasing the Buffalo Trail Council of this liability.
9. District Meetings may be held in Camp so long as reservations are made 10 days ahead in Council Office and provided the Chairman of the group will be responsible for clean-up after meeting is over.
10. Any unit of Scouting or other organization using the Camp agrees not to trespass on neighboring property without first obtaining permission from the owner or his representative.

October 4, 1958
Buffalo Trail Council, Inc.
Boy Scouts of America



A Jamboree Shakedown camp was held at Camp Ed Murphy but we have no details as to which troops were involved or when it was held.

It was used for just 5 or 6 years as an aquatic summer camp site...until the lake dried up! It was a good lake for the council because they started there at the time of the initial filling, which was five years ahead of its supposed rate. Enough water had fallen on the watershed to keep good water in the lake for a number of years.

Camp Murphy was located on the upper reaches, only about a half mile from where the incoming river became a lake. This seemed to be a good location, because at the time there was enough water a mile upstream from the camp for fishing camps and cabins. The lake just dried up faster than anybody thought possible, eventually shutting down the camp portion of the lake and putting the council out of the camping business there. Another primary reason the council had to abandon the camp and move out was because there was no drinking water near. Wells only produced gyp water not suitable for drinking.

So, the camp was sold. A letter, dated January 9, 1981, to Steven Odom, Scout Executive, stated "In connection with the sale of the Borden County property to Brent Murphy, I enclosed herewith two checks totaling \$7,518.50. This amount represents the purchase of the 44.79 acres of land for \$6,718.50 and the purchase of personal property for the sum of \$800.00. The deed was delivered to Mr. Murphy today." The letter was signed by Dan Cotton of Cotton & Cotton Attorney-At-Law, Snyder, Texas. This was the sale of Camp Ed Murphy to Brent Murphy.

For more information on Camp Murphy go to: [Newell Hughes Remembers Camp Murphy](#)

The council looked for new lake property on Lake Colorado City and leased property there for sixteen years. You can read about that camp at [Camp Lake Colorado City](#).

In 1933 the council acquired land for a camp at [Lake Sweetwater](#).

| [Other Camps of BTC](#) | [Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch](#) | [Hughes Aquatic Base](#) |

We want to thank David O'Neill for providing us with this information on Camp Ed Murphy.