Youth Environment Council
South Australia

YEARBOOK
2021

GREEN ADELAIDE

What is the YEC?

The Youth Environment Council is a year-long program for young people in years 7 to 11 to develop their leadership, team building and public speaking skills through camps, workshops and forums, while meeting like-minded people who also want to make a difference to the environment.

The program involves students working on an environment or sustainability project, such as tree plantings; measuring the impact of solar panels; spreading awareness about fast fashion; and promoting pet adoption. The possibilities are endless!

A wrap-up is held in in December where students share the projects that they've developed throughout the year.

This yearbook is a memento for the members of the 2021 council to reflect on their involvement and achievements.

GREEN ADELAIDE

The Youth Environment Council of South Australia was initiated by the Department for Environment and Water in partnership with the Department for Education in 1997. It is now proudly supported and delivered by Green Adelaide Education staff and Landscape South Australia Boards.

www.yecsa.net.au

2021 Program

TERM 1

Mentor Training Day (YEC Mentors only), The Joinery

School holidays: Monday 12 April

Mentors came together to develop mentoring and facilitation skills and assist with YEC event planning.

TERM 2

Welcome Forum, Cleland Wildlife Park

Week 1: Thursday 29 April

All students were invited to attend this day, where we shared ideas, learnt new skills and got to know each other.

Online Discussion Forum

Padlet was used throughout the year from the first event to the last event so that everyone could stay in touch and share their progress or interesting experiences and discoveries.

Two-night Camp, Arbury Park Outdoor School

Week 3: Monday 10 - Wednesday 12 May

Camp was an opportunity to join in fun team building exercises, and build skills in leadership and teamwork. We further developed our skills and knowledge on environmental and sustainability themes and ways to take action.

Monthly Online Catchups via Zoom

An opportunity for members to share and troubleshoot their projects, as well as hear from guest speakers and participate in online workshops.

TERM 4

YEC Sharing Forum, Online

Week 8: Thursday 2 December

At the final event, we shared and celebrated your environmental achievements, and reflected on actions and changes as a group. We also heard from some guest speakers and past YEC members about their experiences.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

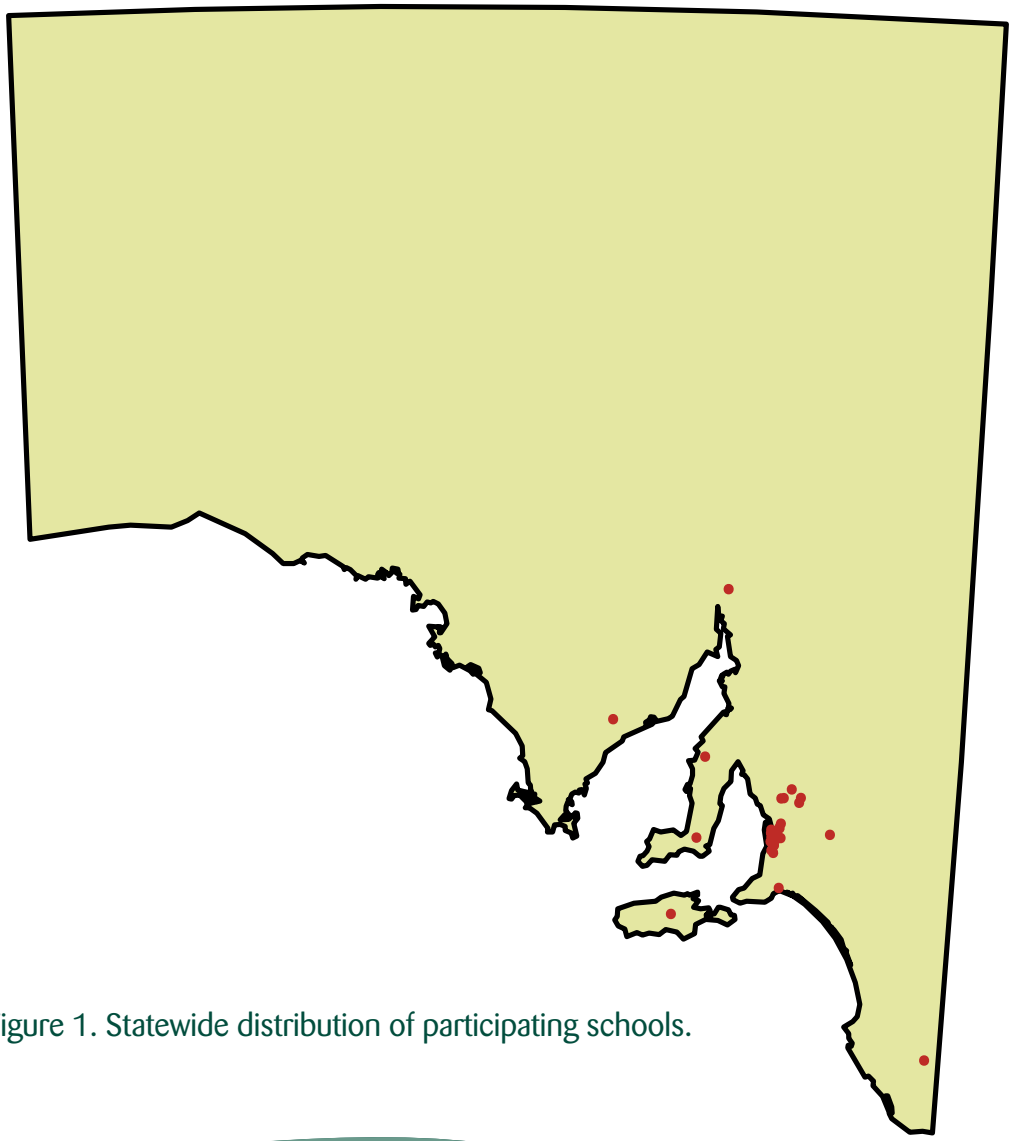


Figure 1. Statewide distribution of participating schools.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

- Athelstone Primary School
- Banksia Park Primary
- Cleve Area School
- Eastern Fleurieu School 7-12
- Faith Lutheran College
- Gawler and District College
- Glenunga International High School
- Immanuel College
- Kadina Memorial School
- Kangaroo Island Community Education Parndana
- Loreto College
- Lyndoch Primary School
- Mannum Community College
- Norwood Primary School
- Nuriootpa High School
- Parafield Gardens R-7 School
- Penola Primary School
- Quorn Area School
- Sacred Heart College
- Salisbury East High School
- Seaton High School
- Seaview High School
- Seymour College
- Southern Montessori Middle School
- St Mary's College
- St Michael's College
- St Peters College
- Stirling East Primary School
- Tenison Woods College
- Thiele Primary School
- Underdale High School
- Urrbrae Agricultural High School
- Westminster School
- Wilderness School
- Woodcroft College
- Xavier College
- Yorketown Area School

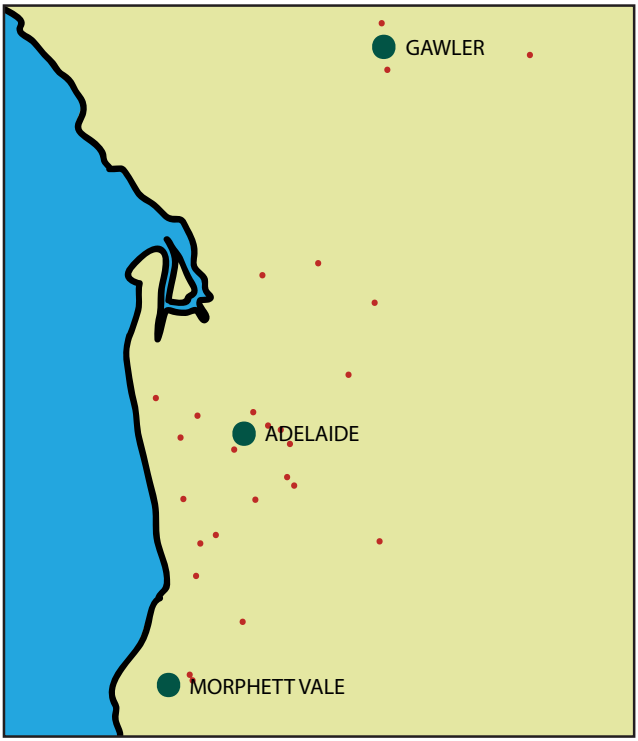


Figure 2. Locations of participating schools in Greater Adelaide.

Student mentors lead the way at the YEC mentor day

Over the years, the Youth Environment Council of South Australia (YEC) has developed an effective and engaging peer-learning model, which involves experienced YEC members being selected to support Green Adelaide staff to mentor their fellow YEC students from across SA. Students in the YEC come from years 7 to 11.

Five of this year's six mentors have just completed a training day with Green Adelaide staff at The Joinery, a community environment space in the heart of Adelaide.

They will soon be putting their leadership skills to the test at the Welcome Forum at the end of April at the Cleland Wildlife Park for the 60 or so students who have applied and been accepted as members for this year's YEC. The Welcome Forum will be followed soon after by a three day overnight camp at Arbury Park Outdoor School.

The six mentors helped Green Adelaide staff plan this year's YEC activities, and during future events they will further develop their self-confidence, leadership, public speaking and group work skills. They will support the younger students, acting as supportive role models, as well as delivering activities to help them bond into effective groups during the year.

During the training day, the mentors were asked to remember the challenges they experienced when first arriving at a YEC event, brainstorm what makes effective leaders, understand their own thinking and learning styles, develop skills in starting and holding conversations, other techniques to support their fellow members.

The YEC mentoring program is an integral part of training emerging leaders in the Youth Environment Council which has been running for over 21 years in South Australia.

2021 YEC MENTORS

Chelsea

I love biology (it's my favourite part of science). I enjoy knowing how things function and how things are created on a biological level. Understanding the science behind what you are witnessing brings an extra amount of beauty to what you are looking at.

Emily

I am passionate about the environment because it is beautiful and something that needs protecting. Nature is a precious thing that we rely on and I enjoy having the ability to have a voice about my passion for the environment.

Grace

I love that the environment provides so much adventure and happiness to the world. We are lucky enough to live in it every day. I love that there are places we can go to explore and feel free in, I love the beauty I am able to see, and I love the creatures that come from it.

Jordan

I always love learning something new about the environment, such as learning about different species of animals, plants and how they react in our ecosystems. I love the uniqueness of the native animals and plants. I like identifying these animals and plants in their natural habitat.

Keira

I am extremely passionate about the environment and I will do anything to care and protect the amazing wonders of nature. I have always loved saving the environment and looking after animals. I have been inspired to look after and protect the ocean and marine species from a very young age.

Sharif

I like taking care of the environment especially native plants and animals. I believe YEC is a brilliant program to meet new people with different ideas, to learn new experiences, to become a confident person and to find more information about the environment we live in.

Meeting new friends and being a mentor was incredible. I loved sharing my ideas with others and helping when I was needed.

YEC 2021 Welcome Forum

On Thursday 29 April, the latest cohort of Youth Environment Council (YEC) representatives were welcomed through the gates of Cleland Wildlife Park, greeted by the sunshine and Green Adelaide Education staff, to kick off the first YEC event for 2021. This event allowed the 53 students from years 7-11 to come together, with some travelling from areas as far afield as Kangaroo Island, Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, Murraylands and the South East of South Australia.

The day was focused on the students getting to know each other, sharing their ideas and passions, and thinking about the individual sustainability projects that they will work on in their schools and communities throughout the year. This was facilitated through a range of fun activities including team building and leadership exercises, sharing project ideas, discussing sustainability topics and immersing in nature throughout the wildlife park.

Four YEC mentors helped guide these activities with lots of enthusiasm and greatly assisted the Green Adelaide Education team with making their fellow YEC members feel welcome. These mentors will continue to play an important leadership role in supporting the next event for the year, a three-day leadership camp held at Arbury Park Outdoor School in Bridgewater, where the real project planning will get underway.

We can't wait!

Arbury Park Leadership Camp 2021

At the start of May Green Adelaide Education ran the annual YEC Leadership Camp at Arbury Park Outdoor School (APOS) in the Adelaide Hills. This stunning undulating property built on a hillside, contains a series of interconnected wetlands, a large area of native woodland, and other outdoors learning areas with views over the surrounding hills.

The school provides an ideal location where students can deepen their knowledge of sustainability issues and increase skills in leadership, problem solving and team building. APOS and Green Adelaide Education staff collaborated to deliver a program that encouraged the students to connect with their surroundings, challenge themselves and think deeply about their goals.

Students were involved in both outdoor and indoor activities with a focus on linking explicit learning with real world practice to further develop and plan the projects they're going to carry out as part of their involvement in the YEC.

United Nations (UN) Youth Representative Lucy Stronach came along as part of a UN Listening Tour to hear about Generation Z's views about the state of the environment. She was collecting views from youth around Australia to share at the General Assembly in New York later in the year. Issues that YEC members were particularly concerned with were not limited just to the environment though; topics discussed included climate change, fast fashion, racism, the Great Ocean Garbage Patch, mental health, alternative energy, Australia's relationship with China, electric vehicles and reducing dependence on hydrocarbons, gender equality, sacred sites, bushfires, soil health and smog. It was great to hear the passion in their voices as the members discussed these issues while maintaining respect for each other's opinions and experiences.

Other camp highlights included orienteering, a night frog walk, Landcare activities, the quiz/talent show and planning their projects.

Youth Environment Council
understory revegetation project

Inspiring South Australia's future environmental leaders

Keira was inspired by her time as part of the YEC, so applied for and won a community grant in 2020 from the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board to help protect local marine life.

Following extensive research, Keira created marine educational signage for Lipson Cove beach, on the east coast of Eyre Peninsula. The sign has now been installed and showcases some of the iconic coastal species living in and around the ocean, such as Little Penguins, Bottle-nosed Dolphins and White-bellied Sea-eagles, and details how people can help protect them.

Keira partnered with a number of other groups and organisations to deliver this project, including the District Council of Tumby Bay, which provided approval to install the signage, and Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries staff who assisted with collating information about each species. She also worked with a student from Flinders University to better understand the local marine life living around Lipson Cove beach.

The YEC team is proud of Keira's initiative and leadership to help protect local native species, so nominated her for the 2021 7NEWS Young Achiever Award, in the category of University Senior College Create Change.

Keira attended the awards ceremony in May, where she was recognised for her efforts.

YEC members have their say about container deposits

In November, YEC members were invited to have their say in SA's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) review. A group of us met online via Zoom to look at the discussion paper released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and discuss and answer some key questions.

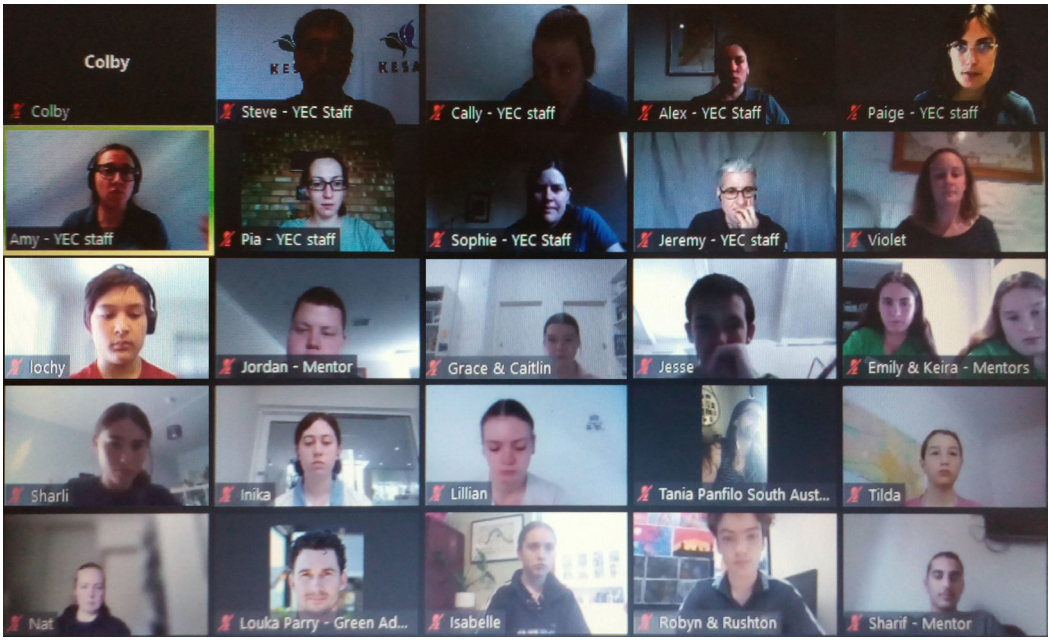
Some of the major questions we talked about were:

- reworking the current objectives of the scheme to be more specific and measurable
- increasing the scope of the CDS to include more containers (such as 2L and 3L bottles)
- expanding the use of social media to raise public awareness of the campaign
- introducing more drop off points and different types of facilities for recycling (for example, reverse vending machines).

There were some really interesting points raised and stories shared, with some members having tips from container deposit schemes they had experienced while living in and visiting other states.

Following the session, staff pulled together the key points raised into a formal submission and sent it to the EPA.

A final report will be released next year, with recommendations from the public, industries and young people incorporated. Keep an eye out for it!



Online Sharing Session

Twenty seven students from across South Australia gathered online to celebrate their involvement in the 2021 Youth Environment Council (YEC).

Due to the pandemic, the planned face-to-face get together had to be cancelled but Zoom gave us the ability to come together virually to share and celebrate. While not the same as meeting in person, it was wonderful to hear what great projects everyone had worked on throughout the year. Parents and teachers also had the opportunity to login to see their students presentations.

We were delighted to have Green Adelaide Board Member Louka Parry welcome everyone to the forum and give an acknowledgement of country. Louka praised the YEC members for their dedication and creativity, and he was inspired to learn about the hard work that these amazing young South Australians had undertaken.

YEC members' projects covered a diverse range of topics including researching how the Port Spencer deep port project proposal will affect Spencer Gulf; growing native plants for Trees for Life revegetation sites; food and biodiversity gardens, insect hotels and nest boxes; volunteering with fauna rescue, scientific research and environmental organisations; setting up online blogs; creating comics and stories about environmental issues; reducing waste in the school and community; starting environment groups at school; and much more.

As well as sharing their research and action projects, members had the opportunity to listen to and question guest speakers including a panel of past YEC members discussing their experiences since participating in YEC, and Vienna Tran from the Premier's Climate Change Council.

WHAT I LOVED MOST ABOUT BEING IN YEC

I loved going on camp and getting to know everyone better through the activities.

Getting to know how other people plan to make a difference.

The ability to raise awareness about a variety of different things, not only through school but in the wider community.

The camp was the best as i met lots of new friends and had an amazing experience.

I loved everything. The people the staff and all of the in-between.

Seeing everyone at the beginning of the year and making new friends.

I enjoyed the camp because we got to know people better.

I enjoyed zoom sessions and being part of such a great team.

The connectedness.

I enjoyed the camp as I made friends and learnt a lot.

All the people you meet, how friendly they are.

I learnt a lot through YEC, which I will never forget in my life. Thank you so much to all the YEC staff for inspiring us.

I liked that everyone was so inclusive and kind to me. I also enjoyed the fact that staff were so happy to help!

I really loved being with like-minded people, learning tons about the environment and making some really special friends, as well as the opportunities.

I enjoyed being able to come together and share what we do and learn more about the environment.

2021 YEC MEMBERS

Allison
Worked with Jessica to install mask bins at school so that old masks could be sent to council for recycling.

Angus
Looked forward to meeting new people, working in a team and learning outside.

Anita
Worked with the school's student voice council to plan their involvement in World Environment Day.

Ash
Created a TikTok with Jesse about carp and how we need to reduce their numbers - 500+ views so far.

Caitlin
Created sustainable skin care products with Grace for friends and family. Installed a small bee hotel at school.

Caleb
Looked forwarded to going on the camp and learning about what he could do to help the environment.

Chelsea
Looked forward to meeting new and old members and hoped this year's project would be a success.

Colby
Worked in the school maker space to create recycled plastic products such as skateboards from bottle caps.

Dasha
Looked forward to finding out more about the environment and improving social skills.

Elizabeth
Has a curiosity of the world around her and loves learning new things.

Ella
Was part of the Trees for Life Foundation at school and involved in the native frog pond and nature play area.

Emily
Campaigned to prevent the Port Spencer deep port project and researched effects on the local ecosystem.

Geri
Worked with local scientists to survey bat boxes and track different species along the creek.

Grace D
Created sustainable skin care products with Caitlin for friends and family. Installed a small bee hotel at school.

Grace K
Best experience in nature was swimming with the seals at her favourite beach.

The mentors showed great confidence as a group and initiative by asking to run activities. Really showing care and concern for others and stepping in to help them.

2021 YEC MEMBERS

Harley
Wanted to learn more about our planet, the school garden and encouraging people to compost food scraps.

Harrison
Worked with Lily to run nest box workshops for younger students at their school.

Inika
Researched the impacts of environmental films on people and whether they impacted behaviours.

Izzy
Researched how donations and volunteering impact on conservation organisations. Interviewed Minton Farm.

Jack
Loved collecting ant queens and watching their behaviours in the wild.

Jesse K
Created a TikTok with Ash about carp and how we need to reduce their numbers - 500+ views so far.

Jesse W
Most looked forward to doing his YEC project.

Jessica
Worked with Allison to install mask bins at school so that old masks could be sent to council for recycling.

Jordan
Led a Trees for Life project with the school Plant Club to grow plants for community revegetation projects.

Joshua
EcoSquad project to make a school courtyard a more environmental and welcoming place.

Katie
Made reusable masks with a small group of staff and students to reduce the use of disposable masks at school.

Keira
Designed and installed iconic species signs at Lipson Cove. Volunteered with Flinders Uni student on wildlife surveys.

Kenza
Wanted to make a positive difference in her school and community.

Lauren
Created reusable bags. Solar panels were installed on the school's gym roof as a result of her 2020 YEC project.

Layla
With Olivia, reinvigorated garden beds which are now providing vegetables and herbs to the Home Ec centre.

Thank you so much for being amazing role models and leaders. You have inspired us so much and we are so grateful! Keep being awesome.

2021 YEC MEMBERS

Lillian
Introduced soft plastics recycling at home and work. Working on a fast fashion website for young adults.

Lily
Worked with Harrison to run nest box workshops for younger students at their school.

Lochlan
Worked with his Dad to create a native garden on the verge strip to provide habitat for bugs, birds and lizards.

Louise
Helped the community learn to be less wasteful by producing a pamphlet and selling re-usable wraps.

Makeely
Adapted the Climate Ready Schools booklet with Mollie to suit a Year 4 class and supported them through it.

Manil
Researched endangered species, created a poster and a flyer, and shared them with other students.

Mick
Investigated sustainable trail development and the impacts trails and their upkeep have on the environment.

Mollie
Adapted the Climate Ready Schools booklet with Makeely to suit a Year 4 class and supported them through it.

Natalie
Created posters for the newly introduced collection and recycling systems so that it is clear what goes in each bin.

Noah
Made bird boxes at school and installed them with interpretive signage in the grounds and local reserve.

Olivia
With Layla, reinvigorated two garden beds which are now providing vegetables and herbs to the Home Ec centre.

Peta
Monitored wildlife use of nesting boxes.

Peyton
Planned a web comic series to capture people's attention and introduce subtle environmental themes.

Rushton
Started an environmental group. Surveyed people about the new FOGO bins and where they should be placed.

Sana
Worked with student leaders to educate classes about reducing materials going to landfill.

Thank you for leading this camp, you guys have helped make it so much fun and have shown me a dream/plan turned into action and change for good.

2021 YEC MEMBERS

Sara
Organised and promoted a community beach clean up at Port Augusta.

Seraphina
Wanted to educate students and teachers around climate change and sustainable living choices.

Sharif
Raised funds via plant sales and 10c container collection to install irrigation in the school garden.

Sharli
Started an environment group at school which meets weekly. They made their own soft plastics bins for next year.

Sienna
Ran energy efficient month at home and wrote a blog to support it. Her family was good at turning off lights.

Sophia
Created three children's stories about marine pollution and climate change and the impacts on wildlife.

Tamika
Made scrunchies and hair ties from recycled materials. Hand stitched the fabrics to reduce energy use.

Tilda
Worked with the Environment Team buddying older and younger students to build insect hotels for the school.

Violet
Created a children's book to raise awareness in younger children of food scraps and composting.

Vladimir
Wanted to explore ways to simplify processes to make sustainability more attractive to people.

You Y
Looked forward to helping rural communities and better understanding clean areas and places.

For more information about these projects and projects from other years' members, check out the website.

www.yecsa.net.au

The mentors did a really good job facilitating project planning table discussions at camp.

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