

CAMP SHAW-WAW-NAS-SEE

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Camp Shaw-waw-nas-see, more affectionately known as Camp Shaw, is primarily a 4-H camp and accredited by the American Camping Association. When summer camp is not in session, scouts and scouters can rent out campsites or cabins for the weekend. Located right next to Kankakee, Camp Shaw is a short trip away for a fun and inexpensive weekend. The camp rangers will even let scout troops camp for free if they provide service for the camp (clearing brush, removing invasive species, creek bank improving, etc.) The camp has plenty of activities for scouts of all ages and abilities. Accommodations are made for scouts with disabilities.

Recently the camp has acquired a horseback riding program, and is a great place for scouts to work on Horsemanship merit badge. For a small fee, scouts can not only ride horses, but also learn how to groom, train, and feed them.

Additional Comments: Camp Shaw is a very scout-friendly camp. Many of the camp staff are or were scouts themselves, and enjoy showing their camp to scout units that camp for the summer or the weekend. Free lodging/use of camp grounds for units that provide service to the camp is something that every troop should take advantage of, because it helps the camp, and the helps the boys earn service hours for rank advancement.

Activities Inside the Camp: The camp has an in-ground pool, open from June to September, an archery range, and over 8 miles of hiking trails that link up to the Kankakee State Park trail system. Along these trails you will find waterfalls, fossil beds, rare plants, limestone cliffs, and the gravesite of Potawatomi Chief Shaw-waw-nas-see. The camp also offers a low ropes course and a zip line over Rock Creek. It also maintains a butterfly garden, a small working farm and petting zoo, and offers horseback riding. Camp Shaw also provides opportunities for scouts to practice First Aid skills, lashing and pioneering projects, camping skills, fire building, and outdoor cooking.



Area Attractions: The grave site of Chief Shaw-waw-naw-see is at nearby Rock Creek, and is commemorated by a boulder along the nature trail. After the Potawatomi ceded all of their land along the Kankakee and Illinois rivers to the United States, most Potawatomi left the area. Chief Shaw-waw-naw-see was granted a land reserve and stayed behind. When he died in 1834, he was interred in a seated position above ground near Rock Creek, his pipe, tobacco, knife, rifle, tomahawk, and other artifacts entombed with him. In 1838, the chief was buried, and a large boulder bearing his name and the date the Potawatomi departed was left at the burial site.

Kankakee River State Park is also nearby, and is a great place for river activities. The river is dotted with outfitters for canoes, kayaks, and even paddleboats (or you can bring your own). Fishing along the Kankakee River is fun, and in fact the state record walleye, a 14-pounder, was taken from the river in 1961. The river contains populations of smallmouth and largemouth bass, rock bass, clack and white crappie, channel catfish, northern pike, bluegill and walleye.

Authored by Chris Brown