

Jack Graves Scout Reservation



(2014 Early Bird Registration Patch)

As late as 1943 coal was being mined at the rate of 1,000 tons per day from strip pits south and east of Broken Arrow. The land is now known as the Graves Scout Reservation.

A Boy Scout camp was established in 1944 when L. Russell Kelce, president of Seneca Coal Company, St. Louis, donated the first of two parcels of abandoned coal-pit land to Broken Arrow Boy Scout Troop 104, naming then Scoutmaster Marvin Tucker, as the sole trustee. Kelce made a second donation to bring the total acreage to 435. The abandoned coal pits were stocked with fish, pine seedlings were planted on the massive piles of tailings, and a swimming pool was added to the outdoor Scout training and camping area.

In 1969, Mr. Tucker no longer wanted the responsibility of management of the property and sought to transfer ownership to the Indian Nations Council. However in seeking the camp to remain managed by local citizens, the Wagoner County District Court appointed five Broken Arrow businessmen as camp trustees.

As the years passed, the Troops of Broken Arrow were the primary users of the camp. In 1981 the trustees requested the City of Broken Arrow to develop a recreational plan for the camp. In June, 1989 the Camp Russell trustees announced an agreement with the City of Broken Arrow in which the city would develop 125 acres of the camp within five years for use by the Boy Scouts, and the remaining 285 acres over 15 years as a city recreation complex. This announcement was a total surprise to the Scouting community.

An ad hoc committee of Scoutmasters of the Broken Arrow Troops began meeting with the Trustees in an effort to provide some direction for the development of the Scout facility. It became apparent that the Troops did not have the resources to develop or maintain such property and requested that the Trustees and the City of Broken Arrow recognize the Indian Nations Council as the primary representative in any further negotiations thus allowing all the Scouting units in the Council to be the beneficiaries of the property.

In September, 1991 the case was settled before the Oklahoma Supreme Court, giving the Indian Nations Council right to continue negotiations with the Trustees and the City. Early in 1993, a tentative agreement was reached for the sale of eastern portion of the property to the City pending a successful bond issue.

The Camp Russell Scouters' Task Force was commissioned with its mission: to provide a vision for the development of the camp, promote the camp among all council units, and to encourage all Scouting families in Broken Arrow to help get the bond issue passed. The effort proved successful, with the voter turnout exceeding expectations by over 40%. The proceeds of the eventual sale were placed in trust for the development of Camp Russell. The development on the west side of the property became reality in late 1994.

Since that time Camp Russell has been the site of Council and District Day Camps, 18 years of Fall Festival, many Adult and Youth Leadership Training courses, twenty Troop 999 "Broken Arrow Special Camporees", and numerous unit activities and events.

In 2005 the Outer Limits was created as the most challenging ropes course in the area. It serves as a experiential leadership training opportunity for both Scouting and non-Scouting groups.

In 2012, the Jack Graves Educational Center was dedicated to the Scouts and Scouters of the Indian Nations Council. With that gift the overall property is now known as the Jack Graves Scout Reservation.