

Camping Opportunities Committee Update

January 13, 2006

Bill Seith – Council President

This Update is intended to inform you of two important developments involving our Camping Opportunities Committee and its activities: 1) some changes to the Committee leadership and membership; and 2) new information and next steps on the proposed Joint Venture Agreement with Three Fires Council to establish a new joint Cub Scout Camp/training facility, at the property currently known as TFC Ranch in Rochelle, IL.

After long service that has brought the Committee and Council forward in exploring an exciting new opportunity to provide our Cub Scouts with an excellent new camping facility, John Zick has stepped down from the role of Chairman he filled so well. Everyone in the Council owes John a debt of gratitude for his excellent service to Scouting. Please join me in thanking John.

I am pleased to inform the Council that long-time Scouter, Board Member, and strong supporter of the Des Plaines Valley Council, Ross Johnson, has agreed to take on the challenging leadership of the Camping Opportunities Committee.

Most of you know Ross from his many years of service to the Council. This includes Council President. Ross is the chief executive of Johnson Printers, which has generously served the Council's printing needs for many years.

In one of his first acts as our new Chairman, Ross has expanded the Camping Opportunities Committee with addition of four new members drawn from our Board. The diverse backgrounds and experience of these new members will enrich the Committee and add new perspectives to its future work. The new members are:

Mike Harkins – Mike's broad background in Scouting includes roles as Council Commissioner, District Chairman, Scoutmaster, Varsity Team Leader/Coach, Cubmaster, Assistant Cubmaster, Webelos Leader, Den Leader, and Tiger Cub Coach. He has participated in courses and other activities at Philmont and has coached and sponsored troops and teams at National Rifle Association sharpshooter events. He was also a Color Guard sponsor and coach. His camping experiences are extensive and diverse, involving Camps Tomo and Shin-go-Beek, as well as a number of other Scout camps across the country. He is a professional educator, currently Department Chair of History & Political Science at William Harper College.

Jim Honan – Jim's extensive years of Scouting background includes his active involvement with Pack 33 in La Grange as Den Leader, Webelos Leader, Committee Chairman, and Cubmaster. He served as Assistant Scoutmaster and Chartered Organization Representative with Troop 33 in La Grange, District Chairman for Voyager Trace District, and as a member of the Communications Committee. He currently serves as Vice President of Administration. His experiences in Scouting include many camping experiences at Tomo and Mach. Jim is currently Vice President-General Manager of Illinois Tool Works, managing multiple companies in this country and overseas.

Gary Pitchford – Gary has currently served on the Executive Board for more than ten years and in past years has been involved with the Council on specific communications projects since the mid-1970s. He leads our Communications Committee, which has helped enhance and revamp Council communications, including the establishment and development of our web site. Gary is Director of Communications for the U.S. Department of Energy Chicago Office, located on the Argonne National Laboratory Site.

Bill Sarther – Bill has been active as an adult leader in BSA since 1991. He has served in most "shirted" positions from Den Leader to Venture Advisor, as well as Committee Chair in his local troop. In addition Bill has served at the District and Council level in many positions including District Commissioner and Council Advancement Chair. He has camped numerous times at the DPVC camps and outside Council in another half a dozen camps. Bill also has been a trainer in numerous courses provided by the council. Bill currently is a Loan Officer at a local mortgage lender. Prior to that he was the Chief Financial Officer at two technology based companies that he helped take public. In addition, Bill has been a co-founder in several other small entrepreneurial businesses.

Regarding the proposed collaboration with Three Fires Council, discussions taking place over the summer and fall have now resulted in agreement between our two councils about the value of the property being considered for the new joint venture: \$2,417,400. This is the result of a new, independent appraisal that satisfied both organizations.

On December 14, 2005, Three Fires Council Executive Board met and approved a proposed agreement based on the valuation to form a Joint Venture with our Council. Under the proposed draft agreement the Des Plaines Valley Council would contribute fifty percent of the value of the Three Fires property as its initial contribution to the venture, or \$1,207,200. An additional \$1,207,200 would be contributed by our Council and matched by the Three Fires Council, to be placed

in a Trust Fund created by the Joint Venture to endow the property and program. A new Joint Venture Board would be formed, with equal representation from each council, to lead development of the new Cub Scout Camp. Additional funds would be needed to develop the property for programmatic purposes.

This latest version of the agreement was reviewed by DVPC Legal Advisor Tom Allen, as well as by the newly reconstituted Camping Opportunities Committee, and discussed at a meeting on January 10. Committee members had a number of questions and identified several issues that need to be discussed with representatives of Three Fires Council. Most of these involve the details about each Council's responsibilities for capital contributions that would be needed to develop the proposed Cub Scout Camp and how fund-raising would be carried out.

One key question involves the funds that will be needed to develop the new camp. Architect John Steward from National Headquarters is working with our Committee and Three Fires Council to develop the design for the proposed Camp and an associated cost estimate for its development. This information will be needed before the Committee can fully evaluate the financial aspects of the proposed agreement and, ultimately, make a recommendation to the Board. It is expected that a preliminary estimate of costs will be available from Mr. Steward by the beginning of April.

Among the issues being considered by the Committee is the possible sale of Camp Tomo Chi Chi Knolls to provide the funds for the DPVC share of the new Joint Venture property. In order to ultimately present the Board with a clear idea about capital funding options, the Committee is also proceeding to more specifically define the value of the camp and what the Council could expect to realize from a possible sale. This will involve discussions with a number of parties that have expressed interest in the property in the past and others familiar with the area real estate market. Our representatives will make it clear, however, that the property is not on the market at this time.

Since the possible sale is expected to yield more funds than would be immediately needed to meet the proposed agreement, the Committee anticipates that any remaining funds would be placed in the Council endowment to address current and future needs. It is also expected that the Council would continue to use Camp Tomo under any sale agreement until another facility could meet our needs.

Everyone should carefully note that none of the steps I have outlined will be taken until: 1) the Camping Opportunities Committee presents the proposed agreement with Three Fires Council and a specific proposal for development of the Camp, to our Board; 2) the Board carefully considers the proposal and the draft agreement; and 3) the Board formally votes to approve or reject the Committee's proposal. No actions other than discussions and fact-finding are taking place at this time.

It is also important that we all keep in mind that the proposed agreement and sale involves providing improved camping opportunities for our Cub Scouts. Boy Scout camping issues and the status of our Wisconsin properties will be more fully addressed by the Camping Opportunities Committee once the Joint Venture proposal has been resolved and the challenges of the Cub Scouting camping program have been successfully addressed.

As always, we are committed to keeping you fully informed about this proposal and future Camping Opportunities Committee activities. Please watch for Updates in Cybernews and on the DPVC web site.