

Camping Opportunities Update  
December 27, 2006

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In our last Update we outlined the strategy the Camping Opportunities Committee plans to follow to move forward in addressing the Boy Scout Camping issue and the status of our two Wisconsin camps. In brief, that strategy calls for the Committee to:

- Review the information and analysis carried out by the Committee over the last two years to assure that it has a clear picture of the facts involving our camping program, the assets and capital needs of our camps, and the financial resources available or obtainable to support these activities and facilities.
- Plan and carry out a survey of our Unit Leaders and appropriate others within our Council seeking their perspectives on what characteristics a “best Camping Program” should reflect. This will be followed up with one-on-one or small group meetings with these leaders as needed to help the Committee determine what really is required in camping resources to best fulfill the promise of the Scouting program.

Part of this plan involved reaching out to other councils to see what lessons we can learn from their experiences. As part of this, a Committee delegation visited with the Calumet Council and attended their Camping Program “Expo” in Munster, IN, November 15. Calumet Council owns no camps of its own, but offers a camping program for its units at the camps of neighboring, and remote, other councils. The Committee’s goal was to learn more about this approach and the possibility that aspects of an “Expo” event might benefit our own Council. The Committee also wanted to see how our own camps compared with others in such a marketing-type event, and how out-of-council use of our camps might be enhanced.

The Committee met on December 11 to discuss the visit to Calumet Council’s “Expo” and to advance plans for the survey effort. Although sole reliance on such an event to offer a camping program, as Calumet Council does, is an option, it seems unlikely to be a successful one for our Council, where there is very strong identification with our existing camps. However, our camping statistics for 2006 clearly indicate that a substantial number of units, about 21%, now camp at non-DPVC facilities. The Committee is considering the possibility that an Expo-type event could enrich and inform the choices and experiences of units that are looking for a new or different camp, and perhaps stimulate a greater level of camping overall. (Currently, about 59% of our units engage in some form of long-term camping.) Another conclusion was that some additional investment in promotional materials and, perhaps, a pop-up type exhibit unit with graphics could enhance our Council’s own marketing of our camps at such events.

The Committee also discussed the possibility that a partnership with another Council, similar in concept to our Joint Venture with Three Fires Council on the Cub Scout Adventure Camp, might also be possible for Boy Scout camping. We expect to explore possible collaborations that might involve two or more Councils using the same facilities if both improved efficiency and the quality of the program could result. This might involve our own camps or those of other councils.

Plans for conducting a survey of unit leaders and others in 2007 are also advancing and a sub-committee was formed to develop the survey tool. The idea is to use the survey to get a broad sense of the Council's grass-roots leadership on our camping program and what we need in our camp or camps to deliver the very best Scouting program for our youth. The survey would be followed by one-on-one and/or small group meetings to permit more in-depth discussion of specific issues of concern. The Committee recognizes that a broad consensus on the camp issue may not be achievable, but wishes to hear the views of those on the front line in delivering the Scouting program before formulating any recommendations to the Executive Board for decision.

Another subcommittee was formed to review the information available on the capital development needs of our camps and to identify any gaps in our understanding of what is needed to continue providing a safe and effective program at each of them.

The Committee briefly discussed the Joint Venture with Three Fires and the Capital Campaign getting started in our Council. The first step in that effort will be securing the commitment and support of our own Executive Board, which will begin in earnest in the next few weeks. The Committee also discussed the need to better inform our units and leaderships about the details as plans for the new Cub Scout Adventure Camp are developed. While the Executive Board has been briefed and kept informed on status, little information has been made available so far for the unit leaders and other Scouters. That needs to be accomplished as soon as possible to help maintain and build enthusiasm and support for this key project.

Please watch [CyberNews](#) for new Updates as our plans advance and we have more information to share. Information will also be posted regularly on the Camping Opportunities section of the Council Web Site:

[http://www.bsa-dpvc.org/council\\_information/CampingProgram.html](http://www.bsa-dpvc.org/council_information/CampingProgram.html)