

GIRL SCOUTS – NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL PINES
2009 ANNUAL MEETING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Properties Task Group Overview
Annual Meeting Breakout Session
March 7, 2009

The Properties Task Group Overview began with presentations by Lucy Austin, member of both the Board of Directors and the Properties and Facilities Assessment Task Group; and John Braun, Property Executive for GSNCCP. The information included an explanation and anticipated timeline of the property evaluation process and a general description of the scope of GSNCCP camp and administrative properties. A slideshow depicting the variety of natural features, buildings, and program facilities owned or leased by the council supplemented the presentation.

An explanation of the collegial relationship between the Program and Property departments was accompanied by the following information in hand-out form –

Outdoor Program Goal Statement/October, 2008

Girl Scouts - North Carolina Coastal Pines believes in the importance of providing opportunities for girls to connect and gain respect for the out-of-doors through outdoor education and environmental awareness. Girls will...

- be empowered to be self aware and build a greater appreciation of differences in others through working together;
- strengthen their sense of community by being enabled to make new friends and build a sense of belonging;
- be provided opportunities to take appropriate risks and increase self confidence through learning by doing;
- become environmental stewards by becoming a part of the environmental movement locally and globally;
- benefit from progressive opportunities that will reinforce a lifetime of learning, from beginning camper to counselor to lifetime Girl Scout;
- and enhance leadership through skill building and challenges as they discover, connect and take action in the out-of-doors in ways that build courage, confidence and character.

Property Management Goal Statement/December, 2008

Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines owns and leases camp and administrative properties to make it possible for girls to participate in creative and educational program experiences in a group living setting. Operation of those properties takes into account several considerations:

- the camps will provide opportunities for diverse populations to experience a broad selection of programs;
- property, buildings, and facilities will be physically safe and in compliance with applicable risk management entities including GSUSA, the State of North Carolina, and other local and federal regulatory agencies, and the American Camping Association;
- the camp properties and operations will exercise in all areas, a responsible and caring stewardship of the land and its' resources by demonstrating through intentional action, environmental values and ecologically sound practices;
- operations will be conducted in a way that is efficient, fiscally sound and meets the fiduciary goals and obligations of the council;
- camps and properties will be accessible, functional, innovative, and attractive.

Questions and discussion addressed the following concerns:

- while the primary reason for operating camps is to provide Girl programs, adult volunteer training is an important component of campsite use
- this presentation and others to follow are a part of the Task Group and Board efforts to keep lines of communication open during the process and solicit input regarding potential recommendations
- lease-out or the sale of some properties may be a viable long-term funding source to assure financial security for the operation of camp sites
- concern for the low water levels in the pond at Camp Pretty Pond
- \$400,000 in income which is primarily program fees annually - \$2 million in expenses allocated to the operation of all camp and administrative properties annually

Survey responses revealed the following trends:

- of the 18 responses, the average tenure as a volunteer was 19 years
- troop and group camping, followed by resident camp were the primary uses of sites
- Camp Mary Atkinson, Graham and Pretty Pond were the favorite three sites and the three camps that attendees used most, followed by Hardee Mu-Sha-Ni and Homestead
- cabins, lodges and platform tents were preferred in that order
- most individuals were willing to travel 75 – 100 miles to use a camp
- the top three favorite camp activities were traditional camp programs such as hiking and outdoor skills, swimming, and cooking and social activities
- the natural environment was the top appeal for going to camp with buildings and program facilities following
- Spring and Fall were the preferred seasons to use the camps with a tendency for under-utilization during the Winter and Summer months
- facilities that attendees wanted to see developed at sites included bathrooms, craft and environmental and buildings, dining hall, kitchen, swimming pool, tree houses, troop houses
- one half of the group thought a 10% increase in fees was acceptable; the remainder were divided between 0% and 20%

Advocacy Overview

Annual Meeting Breakout Session

March 7, 2009

Approximately 45 people attended the Advocacy Training Session conducted by Margaret Webb, the Council's Director of Advocacy. In her presentation, she discussed definitions of advocacy, how advocacy differed from lobbying, and why the Council leadership had chosen to pursue advocacy as an appropriate course of action in the fulfillment of its mission.

Webb then discussed Girl Scouts USA's advocacy initiatives and brought the attendees up to date on Girl Scouts USA's recent activities, including its efforts to seek Congressional approval of a Girl Scout centennial commemorative coin. She went on to talk about the March 11 Girl Scout Cookies and Milk Reception at the North Carolina General Assembly, and urged volunteers to attend and bring their troops and their daughters.

The audience had questions on the commemorative coin and about the upcoming legislative event. The surveys were universally positive, with almost all attendees applauding the Council's decision to advocate at the state level on behalf of the health and well-being of girls.

Girl Scout Leadership Experience Overview

Annual Meeting Breakout Session

March 7, 2009

The session opened with a Power Point presentation about where we've been, where we are now, and where we are going.

Where we've been: GS-NCCP has provided one set of Journey books to each troop based on the majority grade level in that troop. We've provided Leadership Essentials for new troop leaders and an update for returning leaders.

Where we are now: Over 400 new leaders have taken our Leadership Essentials course and over 900 returning leaders have participated in our Leadership Essentials update.

The next part of the conversation revolved around the Journeys themselves. When asked if their troops were using the new resources, participants responded in a variety of ways. Many were very excited about the discussions generated by the Journeys. Many volunteers shared that their girls seemed to enjoy the Journeys, even if they themselves did not like them. Girls like having their own book; however, some volunteers expressed concern with the cost per family of purchasing the books in these economic times.

We also discussed how troops introduced the Journeys. One volunteer shared that her daughter's troop leader had a parents' meeting at the same time the girls were being introduced to the books. The co-leader discussed with the parents how the Journeys were excellent conversation starters. The parents were then empowered to read along with the girls and have conversations outside of the meetings about what was discussed in the Journeys and at their meetings.

Concerns were expressed about the Girl Scout Junior Journey, Agent of Change. This resource seems more school like than the others.

The application of the Discover, Connect, Take Action model seems to be successful. Overall the audience felt that the girls were enjoying using that model with their Girl Scout activities.

The mindset behind the new resources, generally speaking, is not new, just the material is. However, we discussed how it serves as a good reminder to all of us that, as a volunteer stated it, this is not "leader Scouting, but Girl Scouting," and that our girls should lead the discussions, the activities and overall be the driving force behind all activities.

Not every troop has transitioned to the new resources yet, but we urge everyone to start reviewing the Journeys, as we are about half way through our 2-year transition period.

The surveys we received from this session reflect the thoughts above as well. The surveys did show that not every troop understood that GSUSA was definitely transitioning into this model, which means that everyone must soon start using these resources. Volunteers expressed an interest in learning more about Bridging with the Journeys, they requested additional staff support as they transition by more staff visits at area meetings, more timely communication, and additional knowledge about the resources and how to use them.