

Properties Strategic Plan 2012-2016

Approved by the Executive Board on 9-15-05.

Updated 2013 (update still under review).

Goal

Our goal is to offer excellent facilities and programs to support quality Scouting experiences for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers in the Inland Northwest Council. We want our camps to be recognized as destinations for adventure. It is also our goal to make our camping programs more financially self-supporting so that we can continue to operate three camps and so that all of the camps are maintained to a higher standard and offer excellent facilities for all levels of Scouts, leaders and parents.

Cornerstones of this plan are:

1. Further develop our Cub Scout resident camp programs at Cub Country at Cowles Scout Reservation to include a new dining lodge and new campsites.
2. Operate Boy Scout camp programs at capacity with quality programs for new Scouts, returning Scouts, and experienced Scouts.
3. Develop improved training facilities at Cowles Scout Reservation.
4. Provide a variety of leadership training and high adventure programs for Varsity Scouts & Venturers.

Specifically, this plan is designed to

- ✓ Increase the attendance of Boy Scouts at our camps.
- ✓ Strengthen all levels of our programs with improved summer camping opportunities
- ✓ Increase the retention of youth in our programs
- ✓ Increase the transition of Webelos into Boy Scouts
- ✓ Better utilize all of our facilities
- ✓ Improve the quality of facilities to better support all Scouting programs
- ✓ Improve the financial sustainability of our camps by moving from a net financial loss at camps to operating self-sustaining operations that generate resources annually to reinvest in our properties.

It is a luxury for a council our size to have 3 magnificent Scout camp properties. It is our goal to develop the programs and the financial model that allows us to continue operating them while at the same time providing stronger programs and better facilities. If we do not achieve our objectives, however, we are putting our ability to own and operate 3 Scout camps in jeopardy.

Overview

We have three camp properties that can be used to support Scouting programs in the Inland Northwest. All of the facilities are in need of various capital improvements in order to adequately support programs. Since 2005, we have improved significantly the financial performance of our camps and now are able to reinvest more into our program equipment, maintenance, and improvements but we are not able to keep up with necessary maintenance and improvements and some of our facilities are less than adequate.

However, the operating, maintenance, and capital needs of the camps still outstrips revenue produced by the camps, Friends of Scouting, popcorn sales and other revenue sources.

We have very committed volunteers and units that contribute countless hours and resources to maintaining and improving the camps and are eager to do more. It is vital that we have full and actively engaged committees for each of our camps.

We do not have the resources or demand to offer all programs at all camps. By consolidating our Boy Scout camp programs at two camps, we have improved our performance at operating camps at capacity. By focusing our resources and offering special programs at each camp, we make each camp more attractive to in- and out-of-council units, plus we create a variety of programs for our in-council troops so that fewer units will go to out-of-council camps. Plus, by focusing our resources at each camp, we will be able to offer better equipment and staffing for the special programs.

We are faced with ever growing financial challenges: United Way funding has dropped from providing close to 50% of our annual budget to providing only 3% of our annual budget over the last 25 years. Property insurance for our camps has been rising astronomically. Insurance and taxes for rangers and camp staff have risen dramatically in the last 8 years. Food and trash removal costs have risen substantially since 2008. Fuel costs are driving up maintenance, food and other expenses.

We have improved substantially the capacity of our program operation to match demand and have been developing unique specialties at each camp, develop revenue generating tactics including outside rentals, additional training programs, modest fees for unit use of camps and improved management of existing programs. Concurrently, we will conduct a capital campaign to fund major improvements to support the vision for each camp.

Finally, we recommend transferring the ownership of the camps to the Inland Northwest Endowment Foundation since they are long-term assets of the council and we recommend exploring setting up portions or the entirety of Cowles Scout Reservation and Camp Easton into conservation easements if doing so generates funds to endow the camps and protect the properties for future generations of Scouts.

A clear and compelling vision for the future of the camps is instrumental to our success in raising money for capital improvements. This vision and strategic plan will serve as the roadmap for the future development of our camps. It is not a wish list of things to do at each camp. Rather, it is the criteria that we will use to evaluate and prioritize the wish list. We will use this plan to steer all improvements, additions and staffing of the camps.

Progress Report (September, 2013)

1. Consolidated Boy Scout Camp operations from 3 to 2 camps: Camp Grizzly and Camp Easton. These two camps have now been operating at or near capacity for 4 consecutive years.

2. Construction of Cub Country at Cowles Scout Reservation: One themed program area constructed (tree house), new BB gun range, RC track, new firebowl, improvements to waterfront, BMX bikes course, more.
3. Training Center still needs improvements
4. Forest management plans at Cowles Scout Reservation and Camp Easton are current and being followed.
5. Development of large encampment area at Camp Sunrise on Cowles Scout Reservation. LDS encampment held in 2012 with 4,000 participants. Council spring camporee for Camp Sunrise scheduled in 2014 and a Blue Mountain LDS Encampment scheduled for 2015.
6. Renovated restrooms and shower houses at Cowles Scout Reservation and new shower/restroom facilities at Camp Easton and Camp Grizzly (being constructed in preparation for summer 2014). Have additional restroom facilities at Cowles Scout Reservation to renovate.
7. New and expanded specialty programs at the camps: ATV's, action archery, mountain biking at Camp Grizzly. Kayaks, paddle boards, expanded sailing and motorboating, new war canoes, new shotgun range, improved .22 range, more at Camp Easton.

Experience Teaches Us

Our ability to attract participants and keep them coming back year-after-year is contingent on

1. Enthusiastic, experienced staff that is focused on our customers. More progress needs to be made so that we can retain our top staff members while they go to college.
2. Great food service with quality food, balanced menus, appropriate quantities and served on time.
3. Great program options for 1st year campers, returning campers, and experienced Scouts.
4. Good shower and restroom facilities.
5. Active and engaged volunteer committees to help maintain and improve the camp.

Operating Philosophy

Our overall camping program vision is committed to following these methods of operation:

- **Core programs:** Boy Scout summer camps will offer core programs: basic aquatics, archery and rifle, ecology, Scoutcraft, Eagle required merit badges and first-year camper programs. Beyond that, each camp will specialize, offering in-depth merit badge programs that can't or won't be done at the other camps. Some badges will be only offered at certain camps. Provide a unique mix of entry-level, mid-level, and advanced-level programs at each camp. This will allow us to make better use of financial resources and provide greater variety among our camps. This will offer our units two unique Boy Scout summer camp experiences within the council.
- **Specialty programs:** Instead of each camp trying to do all things, we will specialize at each camp. We will not offer every program at each camp. We will purposefully not offer the same programs such as COPE, shotgun shooting, black powder shooting, mountain biking and sailing at each camp.

- **Operate at Capacity:** We consolidated all Boy Scout summer camping into two, not three camps, so that we could match our capacity to demand. Our council does not need and cannot fill three Boy Scout camp operations. Doing so stretches our resources (maintenance and program funds, staffing availability) too thin. We will adjust the number of sessions so that our capacity is in line with our demand. We must look at our camps as a whole, not individually: Each camp and its programs designed to fill a part of our overall camping goals and needs, not each camp trying to do all things for all people.
- **Match facilities with strategic plan:** We do not have the resources to fix and maintain every facility the council owns. We will raise money for capital improvements that directly accomplish this strategic plan. Facilities that no longer meet the strategic plan should be torn down in order to reduce our infrastructure and maintenance costs. All proposed building and improvement projects should be evaluated by the camping committee and staff to ensure that the projects are tied to the properties strategic plan and meet all council building guidelines.
- **Increase revenue:** To increase revenue for maintenance and improvements at the camps, we will add improvements so we can attract both Scouting and non-Scouting groups to rent the facilities in the off-season. This will require increased winterized facilities to include sleeping rooms, winterized bathrooms, showers and meeting rooms and improved kitchen facilities that will meet the standards necessary to draw school, church and other groups to our camps. In addition, we need to gain greater support and participation in the Friends of Scouting campaign, popcorn sale and other fundraising.
- **Use Fees:** We have tremendous use of our properties by Scout groups, but very little income to help pay for this use and for ongoing maintenance. Every time a group uses the camps, there is ordinary wear and tear of the property and facilities and sometimes supplies that are used. Use fees help offset these expenses so that additional funds can be directed to maintenance and improvements. Units that participate fully in the Family Friends of Scouting campaign and the popcorn sale will be recognized with discounted or free use of camps. Higher fees will be charged to non-Scouting groups and to out-of-council units.
- **In-Council vs. Out-of-Council:** It is our philosophy that our council exists to serve units in the Inland Northwest Council, not units from other councils. However, providing camping programs that attract and serve out-of-council units enables us, through increased revenue, to offer better programs to our own units.

Our Boy Scout camps attract a large number of out-of-council units (45%-55% depending on the year). Even Cub Country attracts a sizable number of out-of-council units (10%-15%). In addition, a significant number of council troops travel to out-of-council camps each year to vary their experiences. It is our goal to provide premiere summer camps, each unique, so that our troops will regularly attend our camps. However, it is not our expectation that council troops will only attend our camps. There are many excellent camps in the northwest that offer unique programs that troops want to and should experience. Our strategy is to make sure that Camp Grizzly and Camp Easton also offer premiere, unique Boy Scout summer camp programs so that they continue to attract out-of-council units. This allows us to operate both camps at

full capacity. If we were to lose all or most of our out-of-council customers, we would need to shut down one of our Boy Scout summer camp operations.

Regarding fees, it is our philosophy to reward in-council units that actively support council operations (and therefore our camps) through Family Friends of Scouting and the popcorn sale with discounts on camp fees and/or rentals. Out-of-council units that or in-council units that don't adequately support our council's Friends of Scouting campaign or popcorn sale should pay a higher rate that better reflects the actual costs of providing the camp program.

- **Improve appearance of properties:** All camps should have an attractive and impressive entrance area to make a great first impression, junk will be removed, dilapidated buildings removed, and a comprehensive plan put in place for noxious weed control. In addition, each camp needs a sign code so that all signage throughout the camps is consistent and attractive.
- **Multiple use:** All new or renovated facilities will be designed and constructed for multiple use. Winterized for use year-round, handicap accessible, designed for both Scout and non-Scout group use, designed to be energy efficient, and with a flexible design so that the use of the facility can change as the need changes.
- **Staffing:** The key to a successful camp program is a great staff. Fantastic facilities will not make up for poor staff. Our goal is to improve staff housing at all three camps and to expand our camp staff scholarship fund whereby top staff, that return year-after-year, can earn scholarship funds for college. In addition, we plan to implement a staff recognition program that creates pride in serving on camp staff and in returning year-after-year. This will help us attract and retain high quality staff for the camps.
- **Sustainability:** It is our goal to make our camping operations more sustainable. This means that we want to become more energy efficient, and more efficient with use of resources such as water. We want to reduce our environmental impact through proper waste water treatment and reducing our garbage through reducing materials used and recycling everything that we can. We will support the BSA Outdoor Ethics program, Sustainability merit badge, and expand our sustainability education and practices at the camps possibly to include a designated "sustainability officer" on the staff of each camp and an award program for units that complete certain objectives.

Cowles Scout Reservation on Diamond Lake

Cowles Scout Reservation becomes the premiere Cub Scout camp, training center and Venturing destination in the Northwest, offering an advanced COPE program.

- Develop special emphasis on the Project COPE program, Japeechen program and ecology programs. Develop a separate Cub Scout camping and program area in the Camp Cowles area of Cowles Scout Reservation (CSR).
- Move Boy Scout summer camp programs to Camp Easton and Camp Grizzly. (completed)
- Better promote and utilize CSR for weekend troop camping year-round.
- Develop a Cub Scout resident camp, weekend programs, and day camps. Construct program facilities and theme areas for Cub Scouts in Camp Cowles on CSR.
- Further develop areas for training programs including Brownsea, Woodbadge, Outdoor Leadership Skills, Powderhorn, National Camp School, and Order of the Arrow.

- Develop facilities for and promote outside group rentals of Carbon Lodge and the Camp Fosseen area during the summer and of Camp Fosseen and Camp Cowles areas in the off-season. Possibly offer food service and COPE program to groups renting Camp Fosseen (includes Carbon Lodge) during the summer.
- Construct heated, year-round, comfortable sleeping quarters for staff in the summer and to support training programs, retreats, National Camp School, and rentals to non-Scouting groups. These facilities can be simple and rustic, yet clean and comfortable so that they provide an attractive option for staff to live in for the summer and for participants to stay in for programs throughout the year.
- Add facilities and programs for coed Venturing including an advanced leadership event, land-navigation course, and expanded COPE program. Perhaps add rock climbing.
- Develop a rustic, but large camp area to support camporees, klondikes, and encampments in Camp Sunrise. (completed and ongoing)

Camp Easton on Lake Coeur d'Alene

Camp Easton becomes the premiere aquatics camp in the Northwest. We will expand the aquatics program through the addition of equipment and staff for a greater variety and depth of aquatics activities including sailing, kayaking, war canoes, snorkeling, motor-boating, water-skiing, and scuba. Perhaps even add kayaking on the North Fork Clearwater River and/or one-day whitewater rafting trips on the Clark Fork River or other area rivers.

We also will develop additional year-round facilities so the camp can be used year-round and rented to outside groups. Key objectives include constructing a safe, permanent highway crossing (probably a tunnel), significant improvements to the waste water treatment systems, renovation of the kitchen and food storage facilities, improvements to the water system, and renovation of the parade grounds to include a sprinkler system. In addition, we will work with new developments on the north and south of camp to negotiate potential new program facilities in partnership with our incoming neighbors.

Camp Grizzly on the Palouse River

Camp Grizzly becomes the premiere camp for field sports and mountain biking in the Northwest. We will develop and expand skeet shooting, sporting clays, black powder shooting, action archery, and expanded rifle shooting. The mountain biking program can be significantly expanded through the purchase of additional bikes and setting up a storage and maintenance facility for the biking program. There are many possibilities for expansion of this program due to surrounding National Forest Service Property. Also, add sporting facilities such as volleyball, baseball, and soccer for all groups, but especially Varsity teams.

North Idaho High Adventure Base on the Salmon River

We have had ups and downs with attendance in our white water rafting program. It attracts many groups from throughout the Western United States. This program offers a great experience for older Scouts and Venturers. When attendance is strong, this program produces excess revenue for the council. To build more consistent attendance in this

program, we need to reevaluate our current operational methods, and perhaps broaden the program through the addition of an “extreme mountain biking” trek, a kayaking program, rock climbing, backpacking and/or a low-level whitewater rafting program for younger Scouts. Need to increase promotion and advertising for the high adventure programs to units in the central and western United States in order to keep participation up.

Ownership of Camps by the Inland Northwest Council Endowment Foundation

The council moved the ownership of Cowles Scout Reservation, Camp Easton, and Camp Grizzly to the Inland Northwest Council Endowment Foundation which manages the long-term assets of the council. The camps are used by the council in a use agreement with the foundation. The foundation exists to support Scouting programs in the Inland Northwest Council. It also manages the endowment fund for the council.

The camp properties are long-term assets of the council and should be managed like other long-term assets of the council. It is the goal of the foundation to grow its gifts and investments in order to better support all Scouting programs, including the camping programs.

We will explore setting up part or all of both Camp Easton and Cowles Scout Reservation into conservation easements as a possible way of generating funds to permanently endow the camps and to protect the properties for future generations of Scouts.

\\SCOUT\Users\tmccandl\Properties\Properties Strategic Plan\Properties Strategic Plan 2012-2016 2013 Update.doc 10/15/13