



GSCB Property Taskforce Report

October 2023

GSCB Council Members

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Introduction

The GSCB Property Taskforce Committee began their work with an introductory meeting on May 9, 2023, and they met throughout the summer and early fall to discuss and prepare recommendations for the GSCB Board of Directors. The Property Taskforce Committee was comprised of eight GSCB Volunteers/Caregivers and two Community Members. To create clear and succinct recommendations to the board of directors, four working groups were established, focusing on key areas of review: Finance, Marketing/Communications, Program, and Property Maintenance. These four working groups were charged with:

- Developing and monitoring long-term property plans.
- Developing and monitoring strategies that maximize our ability to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Developing and monitoring strategies that maximize our resources.
- Developing and monitoring strategies that maximize the accomplishment of GSCB's strategic priorities.

The following report is the Property Taskforce Committee's analysis of existing data and resources that has culminated in the subsequent recommendations for consideration of the GSCB Board of Directors as they contemplate and review all future property decisions.

GSCB Property Taskforce Synopsis

Finance

Comprised of four team members: Crystal Wheatley, Adam Schaeffer, Clark Bjorke and Mary Neutz, the finance team began their task of analyzing GSCB finances as they relate to our properties with the assistance of GSCB CEO Claudia Pena Porretti. Members of the finance team created a market analysis comparing the amenities and costs of top summer camp destinations in the country as well as locally operated private, state, and non-profit camp properties. The finance team also analyzed usage data and revenue and expenses of our own camps from 2017-2022 to find the actual cost to camp on our properties. All information was used to determine our camps are underpriced for both our membership as well as outside parties. Additionally, the finance team found property utilization rates are incredibly low resulting in significant annual loss each year for all camp properties. Using the collected data, a comprehensive rental pricing proposal was created and provided to the GSCB Board of Directors along with suggestions to increase the amount and diversity of rental sites on camp properties. Finally, suggestions to increase camp property revenue by way of event overnight combo packages, fundraising initiatives, and a volunteer-led camp partnership group were included in hopes of increasing camp property revenue and member utilization.

Property

The property management subcommittee of the Property Task Force made the following recommendations:

1. GSCB must establish a designated fund for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of facilities at camp properties.
2. GSCB must establish a maintenance, repair, and replacement schedule and budget for facilities and equipment at camp properties.
3. Camp property use culture needs to change to one of shared responsibility and stewardship.
4. A GSCB employee needs to be responsible for overseeing maintenance and upkeep of GSCB properties, including monthly walk-through inspections as well as renewing all required state and local licenses and inspections.

5. By April 1 each year all camp properties need to be made ready for seasonal camp occupancy, and maintenance issues addressed.
6. Camp Grove Point will require a substantial investment to return the entire property and facilities to a condition where it can support a full-capacity residential summer camp. The Program Center with its surrounding cabins and campsites could be made into a much smaller camp at much less cost to repair and maintain, suitable for troop camping or weekend use by GSCB or short-term rentals.
7. The establishment of an on-site presence of staff or volunteers at GSCB camps, at least during times the camps will be occupied by troops, should be considered a safety priority.

Marketing and Communications

The Marketing and Communications Team, or MarComm, consisted of four GSCB volunteer team members: Elaine Madjeski, Crystal Wheatley, Lauralee Rappleye and Pat Bjorke, along with oversight/assistance from GSCB's Director of Marketing and Communications, Lauren Wells. The MarComm Team began the task of analyzing current GSCB marketing and communication analytics with a series of Google searches using specific terms relating to Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay properties and programming. Various methods to increase the flow of online traffic to GSCBs Camp Property and Summer camp pages as well as the efficiency of our website and programming communications were brainstormed utilizing the Google search results along with research results from various other GSUSA council sites. New marketing opportunities to increase property rentals from both GSCB membership as well as outside groups were brainstormed, along with ideas and suggestions for new outdoor program marketing. Knowing several GSCB properties will be sold the MarComm team was also tasked with creating a suggested messaging strategy for the rollout of any property decisions made by the BoD. Finally, the MarComm team suggested a comprehensive plan to create focus groups to ensure the GSCB membership has a voice when it comes time to reinvest in our remaining camp properties.

Program

GSCB volunteers: Karen Sommers, Lauralee Rappleye, Natalie Surles, Pat Bjorke, and Terri Mullikin.

- The program committee met bi-weekly from late May until early October 2023.
- We conducted brainstorming sessions to determine program ideas and barriers regarding camping for girls and their families.
- We did extensive research on 58 small councils nationwide to document each council's camp offerings - property, programs, and cost. We found that camps with a lot of summer camping options were in councils that had updated facilities, such as flush or compostable toilets, and rangers or volunteers onsite for troop camping.
- We developed survey questions regarding camping that were used for the Volunteer Summit; we anticipated an online survey would be offered for girls, volunteers, and caregivers.
- We developed Short-term outdoor Program ideas that will generate revenue.
- We documented barriers to camp usage by troops and service units.
- We developed an extended list of potential partnerships for specialty outdoor programs.
- We highly recommend the formation of a Volunteer Program Group to assist in planning and executing programs that can be held at camp.

Recommendations

Finance

Rental Pricing Model, new camp rental pricing structure and fees

Camp Todd

- 2020-2022 Camp Todd property expenses (excludes program costs) average \$135,953 annual camp cost, this figure includes an approximated \$15,000 annual property insurance. In total the three-year average expense for Camp Todd is \$11,329 per month.
 - For the purpose of creating a new rental rate system the overall expense calculation includes an average of \$36,164 depreciation each year, which we left as a placeholder for anticipated maintenance and upkeep.
 - Camp Todd currently has 8 rentable overnight sites which cost an average of \$16,994 per site annually or \$327 per site per week. *Note- The site total does not include the pavilion, craft room, or dining room.*

- In 2022, Camp Todd had the following clientele reserve sites one or more nights or days: 1 staff, 20 troops, 3 Service Units, 5 nonprofits, 5 outside troops and 1 private entity. These renters stayed on property a combined total of 245 nights/days, resulting in a total of \$21,229 in rental income, which averages \$87 per day/night.
- To break even each site rental would have had to be rented out at the rate of \$555 per night.

Camp Country Center

- 2020-2022 Country Center property expenses (excludes program costs) average \$138,355 annual camp cost which includes an approximated \$15,000 annual property insurance. In total the three-year average expense for Camp Country Center is \$11,530 per month.
 - To create a new rental rate system the overall expense calculation includes an average of \$63,322 depreciation each year, which we left in as a placeholder for anticipated maintenance and upkeep.
 - Camp Country Center currently has 6 rentable sites which cost an average of \$23,059 per site annually or \$443 per site per week. *Note- This site total does not include pavilions, stem lab, or media center.*
 - In 2022 Camp Country Center had the following clientele reserve sites one or more nights or days: 5 staff, 16 troops, 1 SU, 6 nonprofits, 1 outside troop and 2 private entities. These renters stayed on property a combined total of 71 nights/days, resulting in a total of \$7,407 in rental income which averages to \$104 per day/night.
 - To break even each site rental would have had to be rented out at the rate of \$1,949 per night.

Camp Grove Point

- 2020-2022 Grove Point property expenses (excludes program costs) average \$229,318 annual camp cost which includes an approximated \$15,000 annual property insurance. In total the three-year average expense for Grove Point is \$19,110 per month.

- For creating a new rental rate system, the overall expense calculation includes an average of \$91,510 depreciation each year, which we left in as a placeholder for anticipated maintenance and upkeep.
- Grove Point currently has 10 rentable sites which cost an average of \$22,932 per site annually or \$441 per site per week.
- In 2022 Camp Grove Point had the following clientele reserve sites one or more nights or days: 4 staff, 22 troops, 4 SUs, 2 businesses, 3 nonprofits, 3 outside troops and 1 private entity. These renters stayed on property a combined total of 133 nights/days, resulting in a total of \$15,404 in rental income which averages to \$115 per day/night.
- To break even each site rental would have had to be charged \$1724 per night.

GSCB camps are underpriced for both our membership as well as outside groups. The finance team believes increasing rental costs in order to be more in line with other nearby private and state campgrounds will help offset property costs. While camp stays will still need to be partially subsidized by cookie sales and other fundraising initiatives, we believe the adage “you get what you pay for” will help show our troops as well as outside groups what we feel a stay on our property is worth. We have proposed a minimal increase in rental rates using a system that classified our accommodation types according to structure type and amenities and utilized the listed capacity to make sense of our pricing system and to ensure our proposal is a fair yet competitive rental cost model.

In conjunction with the program team, we would also like to propose a usage fee of up to \$25 or \$3-\$5 per person to be assessed per visiting group and applied towards camp property maintenance. This fee would offset costs when our camps are visited for the day and a site is not rented, as well as allow events and trainings held on camp properties to pay for the upkeep of the properties they are otherwise utilizing for free.

The finance team is also proposing a 2-night minimum rental when renting Friday or Saturday nights. This change would ensure troops wishing to stay for the entire weekend would not be blocked by others only choosing to stay 1 night, resulting in increased usage and income for the property. This proposal could be incorporated into a new reservation window model, outlined below, which should be clarified for all members and potential renters. Note- while this is simply a proposal, we do feel troops who wish to plan ahead to

spend a full weekend on site should be able to do so before troops who will only be utilizing one night on property have the opportunity to make their short-term reservations. Additionally, outside groups often plan for big events further out than the currently allowed 9-month reservation window.

- GSCB Events- asap
- GSCB Trainings- 12 months
- Service Unit Encampments-15 months
- Whole Camp Reservations- 15 months
- GSCB Troop 2+ night weekends- 12 months
- GSCB 1-night Reservations - 3 months
- Outside Groups- 12 months

Finally, the finance team, in conjunction with the property team, would propose GSCB add additional sites to our remaining camps as well as making small improvements to a few existing sites. The addition of hammock and primitive, or bring your own tent, sites would increase camp capacity as well as add new opportunities for troops and future visitors to utilize. These additions would be a relatively low-cost addition to our camp rental availability and increase the camps overnight capacity. Adding screen fronts to the Adirondacks at Camp Country Center would be another low-cost project. This minor fix would bring these rental units more in line with those at Camp Todd and Grove Point, keep our proposed pricing in line with that of Camp Todd and Grove Point and make the units a more desirable rental option. At Camp Todd the Adirondack units are currently available as 4 separate units. As proposed below, the option for GSCB members to rent ½ of an Adirondack unit or 4-5 individual Adirondacks would allow for a lower cost model and potentially allow more troops on property at one time. While these troops would need to share the unit house and facilities, if advance notice was given troops could potentially work together to have an even more enjoyable camp experience.

Other Funding Sources

- Annual Signature Events- Fundraisers and events throughout the Peninsula repeated annually.
 - Bridging on DE Inlet Bridge (turn it green)
 - Women of Distinction
 - Smorevivor challenge- FUN, corporate, girl, family, troop categories

- Sponsor Breakfast/ Luncheon- byo sponsor to learn about GSCB.
- Multi location Thin Mint 5 k
- Dessert before Dinner- Sponsor gathering- finger foods and sweets.
 - Feature celebrity chef desserts and girl winner desserts from a girl event.
- Girl programming and events on property. Save outside venue rental fees and bring new girls/leaders/parents to GSCB camps for annually repeating events.
- Country Center easement
- CAMP Partnership-volunteer led group facilitating events to raise funds that go towards property.
 - Halloween Fantasy Trail
 - Themed camp weekends
 - Movie nights
 - Council wide dine and donate
- New sites- hammock, tents, premium/unique site additions
- Improved sites- screen on Adirondacks at Country Center
- Public rentals- CC and Todd pavilions- BBQs/birthday parties
- Wedding/reunion packages w lodging day use vs weekend.
- Event packages- combo pricing when staying for an event. Per person/unit, not site.
- Fall school, summer roundup, etc.- per person usage fee to offset property maintenance and upkeep.
- Summer camp, VIC, Programming- percentage of income should be coded towards property.
- How to Help Campaign- If each troop spent just one weekend each year on GSCB property that would result in \$xxxxx.00 back to our properties annually.

Ways to Save

- Decrease mowing areas- leave it to the pollinators.
- Decrease leaf removal- i.e., Todd- Leave No Trace plus decaying leaves=topsoil/habitat and prevent soil erosion.

Talking Points, Camp Sales

- Usage rates averaging less than 16% of GSCB membership numbers do not support the narrative to keep 4 camps.

- Grove Point alone needs an approximate 3 to 5-million-dollar investment to bring it back to its full potential.
- Less than 16% of our current membership has stayed overnight on one of our GSCB camp properties according to usage rates from 2017-2021.

Property Management

The mission of Girl Scouts is to provide life-enhancing experiences to girls. Camp has long been the most memorable and formative experience for girls who participate in scouting. GSCB has the opportunity to continue to provide high-quality camp experiences to girls in our area and should consider this a vital part of its mission.

The property management subcommittee of the Property Task Force recommends the following regarding the management of the properties going forward.

1. GSCB must establish a designated fund for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of facilities.

Without a dedicated fund, maintenance becomes deferred until it reaches the point of major deterioration of property and buildings, requiring a crisis intervention plan bearing an even greater financial investment to bring them back to operational standards.

2. GSCB must establish a maintenance, repair, and replacement schedule for facilities and equipment at camp properties.

Budgeting for these items must become a standard practice, as well as follow through with achieving the recommended schedule. This will alleviate the downward spiral of deferring maintenance to detrimental and excessively expensive levels.

3. Camp property use culture needs to change to one of responsibility and stewardship.

Use of GSCB properties must include responsibility and accountability for adhering to reasonable expectations for use of properties.

- GSCB website contains a highly detailed *GSCB Property Rental Guide* under the Camp section for each property. This guide needs to be emphasized in all correspondence with those renting and using GSCB properties.
- Expectations for use of properties need to be a written part of any camp rental agreement for both external and internal customers. Specific instructions for how a camp property is to be left after use are detailed in the Check Out section on page

28 of the *GSCB Property Rental Guide* found on the website. This could be incorporated easily into a signed agreement with the troop/group leader or person in charge and would increase accountability.

- If these measures do not provide adequate improvement of the condition of camp property as left by the groups using them, then consequences should be considered. In a membership organization such as Girl Scouts that emphasizes values, peer pressure could prove to be more effective than other measures.

4. The completion of a camp service project should be an expectation of all Girl Scout members using a property.

These projects should be curated and overseen by a GSCB staff member to ensure they are appropriate.

- A list of service projects designed to maintain and improve our properties, designated by age level and skill level, with a list of critical materials and tools needed to complete the project, can be posted on the web site, regularly updated, and troops/groups completing the project need to be identified and publicly celebrated.
- Troops should be encouraged to sign up for the service project at the time of camp use registration - or within a specified amount of time after reserving a site.
- They could also be given the opportunity to suggest an alternate project and request Council approval to undertake it.
- The list of projects should include projects that could easily be accommodated with other camp activities planned for an overnight or weekend stay.

5. Peninsula Days of Service should be increased to include multiple weekends in both spring and fall, in order to give members and troops flexibility and options that would increase participation.

- To be maximally effective, projects should be created with an emphasis on *preparing camp properties for the camping season* in the spring and *preparing camp properties for winter closure* in the fall.

6. Our observation, and anecdotal evidence from service unit and troop leaders lead us to believe that the use of these camps by Girl Scout troops or by outside groups is made difficult because the properties are not consistently made ready for their use.

Some conditions found present real hazards.

- We recommend that each property owned or occupied by GSCB be assigned a GSCB employee who is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of that property.
- Buildings and grounds that are used by Girl Scouts or outside groups should be checked, and corrections made to any deficits before and after each occupancy.

We have received anecdotal evidence of buildings without heat in winter, clogged and overflowing toilets, unavailability of potable water and downed trees blocking roads. On our visit to Grove Point we helped to get water running for a group staying at Osprey, one of the most popular sites at the camp. Even then, water was backing up through a floor drain, which the group felt that they could live with.

7. We recommend that each property have a walk-through inspection monthly and a checklist be kept at each property documenting these inspections.

- Items such as refrigerator temperatures, operability of smoke detectors, emergency lights, fire extinguishers, toilets and sinks, hot water temperatures HVAC systems, AEDs and access roads would be included on this checklist.

8. We recommend that by April 1 each year all camp properties are made ready for seasonal camp occupancy.

- Commercial kitchens require hood and filter cleaning by a qualified, licensed contractor.
- Kitchen fire suppression systems must be serviced, fire extinguishers and any sprinkler systems and central station smoke detectors, fire alarms and AED units need to be inspected and serviced by a qualified, licensed contractor. GSCB is fortunate to do business with Hoopes Fire Suppression, which can do most of these tasks.
- All smoke detectors, not part of the central station system and all emergency lights and exit signs should be inspected monthly by the responsible GSCB employee.
- A file should be kept documenting all of these inspections and services.
- Upon completion of these items a representative of the Maryland State Fire Marshal should inspect each property, shepherded by the responsible GSCB employee and a copy of the Fire Marshal's report kept on file.

9. Each year by April 1, the Health Department, in the county where each property that has a commercial kitchen, should inspect the kitchen.

The Health Department report should be kept on file.

10. The State of Maryland requires the annual renewal of licenses to operate a summer Camp, a commercial kitchen, or a swimming pool.

A GSCB employee should be given the responsibility of making these renewals happen for each site.

11. These recommendations are intended to help GSCB camps meet American Camp Association standards.

They do not address ACA standards regarding program or other Areas. ACA renews its certification of camps on a 5-year cycle.

- A GSCB employee should be assigned the task of shepherding GSCB through these certifications.
- Alternatively, camps can be inspected annually by the health departments of the states of Delaware and Maryland.

12. Camp Grove Point will require a substantial investment to return the entire property and facilities to a condition where it can support residential summer camp use (Addendum A: Site Visits Conditions Report.)

- The Program Center with its surrounding cabins and camp sites could be made into a much smaller camp at much less cost. This area would be more suitable for troop camps or weekend use by GSCB or short-term rentals.

Marketing and Communications

Focus Groups, Organize and Messaging

- Create focus groups in each Association or Geographical area to discuss everyone's vision for the future of our camp properties.
- Target groups:
 - Girls: (Brownie and up)
 - VIC's
 - Summer Camp attendees
 - Non attending troops
 - Volunteers
 - Mix of years of service
 - Engage non-camping troops.

Possibly use existing events where the target group will be attending to engage parents attending with their girls. Focus group facilitators should be a neutral party. Someone non girl facing.

Community Forums, Host and Messaging

- Community Forum held in each Association or Geographical area in person.
- Solicit questions in advance and answer those questions during the meeting.
- Claudia, Ashley, and the Board should be presenting alongside available members of the taskforce.

New Marketing Opportunities for Outdoor Programming

- Add to program guides and event registration system, “You’re already at camp, book an overnight stay” or “would you like to add an overnight stay” option at checkout.
- One-sheeter sent to families with bare bones info with all programs for the year and camp registration fees (DelMarVa council example). Add QR code to guide “for more information” with the details of the events.
- HelloFresh type of situation for meals utilizing partnership with Sysco. When troops book an overnight stay, they could add a meal prep package. “we’ll take the prep work out of it for you.”
- Destinations close to camps include some local grocery stores and places to eat nearby.
- Camp With Claudia, or Camp with the Board. “If they can overcome their fear of bugs, you can too!”
- Adopt A Site should be heavily pushed and marketed with clear guidelines on what members are allowed to do at these sites.

Program

Overview

The 5 volunteer members of the Program Sub-committee met bi-weekly May to September 2023. The meetings included:

- Brainstorming sessions to determine girls’ interests, program ideas, competing activities for girls, and barriers regarding camping for girls and their families.
- Research on 58 GSUSA small councils to document each council's camp offerings - property, programs, and cost for troop and summer camping.

- Documentation of barriers to camp usage by troops and service units.
- Development of survey questions regarding camping to be used for the GSCB Volunteer Summit in August 2023, and online for girls, volunteers, and caregivers. Responses were recorded.
- Development of outdoor Program ideas that will generate revenue in the short term.
- Development of additional Program ideas for implementation as our camps are improved.
- Development of a list of potential partnerships for specialty outdoor programs.

The Program Committee's research was predicated on these principles:

- Girl Scouts (girls and adult volunteers) drive council programs; council programs can drive camp usage, support increased membership and retention, and provide revenue for our Council.
- Increased revenue based on programs at our camps is dependent on how and when our camp properties are improved.
- Providing an active outdoor/camp program is a critical pillar of Girl Scout program that should be inclusive, creative, and progressive.

Identified Barriers to Property Rental by GSCB Troops/SU's

- Campsite latrines: Research on other GSUSA councils' camps & campsites indicates that flushable/compostable toilets are predominant, highly desired, and expected by campers.
- Lack of ADA accessibility to buildings and campsites.
- No camp ranger or volunteer site manager for safety and security.
- Conditions of the camps: In addition to deferred maintenance, equipment that is available at most sites is not listed online or is missing when a troop arrives.
- The Doubleknot reservation system is a hindrance; availability is often incorrect.
- Not enough trained adults are available to take troops camping. Troops often do not have enough adult volunteers willing to camp with their troop.
- For Grove Point specifically, after receiving notice of the decision to sell the camp, many leaders have hesitated to reserve a site there that may become unavailable in six to nine months, which would disappoint the girls.

Eliminating barriers to Property Rental by Troops/SU's.

Many require funding from property sales.

- Implement flushable/compostable toilets for all rental units.
- Implement ADA accessibility to camp buildings and property features.
- Many campsites can accommodate 20-30 campers; most troops are much smaller. Reconfigure campsites for fewer tents and/or with additional troop houses so that more troops can camp at any property.
- Implement campsites with unique features, such as hammocks, tree houses, teepees, yurts.
- Camps need an onsite presence for weekends to check in and check out troops; recruit and utilize volunteer site managers.
- Provide standard inventory of equipment at all sites, maintained in good condition; replaced as necessary through donations, documentation provided if any equipment is relocated so that facilitators know what to expect.
- Implement monitoring of campsite/facility condition as a troop prepares to leave so the next troop has the best experience.
- Recruit volunteers/older girls who could be a resource for troop leaders needing someone more experienced to camp with their troop.

Current Property Activities Evaluation

- At Camp Todd many activities are currently enjoyed such as the zipline, archery, 9 square in the air, a climbing wall, Ninja course, High ropes, Low Challenge Course, disc golf, Volleyball, Art in the Trees, Music in the Woods, human foosball, tetherball, and an adventure/fitness trail. Most are in good condition, but equipment needs inspection and maintenance regularly.
- Adding many of these same activities to Country Center would be challenging due to its small size, topography (especially the lack of flat land) and proximity of neighbors and neighborhoods.
- The chart below details the activities available at the camps, the current conditions, and numbers of registered attendees in 2023 & 2023 if available.
- Grove Point: In addition to those activities in the chart below, there are nature trails (Guides & markers need updating), Hatchet & Knife Throwing (equipment needs maintenance), Low Challenge course (closed for repairs), swamp (bridge needs repair) and Music Garden.
- Country Center also has a low challenge course that is closed for repairs, and Music in the Woods.

- Sandy Pines has archery, Low Challenge course, tetherball, volleyball, Music in the Woods. All conditions are unknown.
- A list of activities at each camp needs to be kept current on the GSCB web site and be available for reservation.
- Activity equipment needs to be regularly maintained and/or replaced as required.
- Each camp has a usable GaGa pit.
- All camp trails require annual inspection and clearance, and markers require periodic refurbishment.
- Trail and program guides exist for each of the GSCB camps.
- Many of the camp trail guides are dated and require verification and updating. Some were prepared by the Delaware Nature Education Society; updating them would likely benefit from a renewed partnership with the organization.

New Program Activities on Camp Properties

Many of these Program ideas can be short term revenue generating for GSCB.

- Offer a Fall and/or Spring council wide special activity for girls at a camp each year on the same weekend to assist in a Troop's planning and participation.
- Offer an equestrian program provided a local resource is available. This is a valued activity for girls in summer camp, as found in our council surveys.
- Offer Hatchet & ax throwing, knife and slingshot in addition to archery at all camps.
- Implement summer camp options for Troops with meals and activities provided, for attendance by girls and leaders (no counselors needed). Such activities could be volunteer led.
- Provide Program "in a box" resources, especially environmental programs, for rental to troop leaders to use at camp.
- Offer as unique programs or summer camp specialties: Astronomy, composting, advanced outdoor cooking, video & media presentation, nature photography, backpacking, theater, music. Programs can offer/encourage overnight stay for an added fee.
- Use the volunteer led Summer Roundup, Fall School, and Summer Camp models to plan & execute similar activities in other locations throughout our council.
- Special competitions - rain gutter regattas, rope runners, cardboard boat races, dessert wars, for example. Competitions could be between Service Units, with a fee to participate and offer/encourage overnight stay by participants for an added fee.

- Offer themed camp weekends- Chocolate weekend, pirates, pets, science, etc. Troops bring their girls to camp, and volunteers/facilitators have all activities and entertainment setup.
- The program committee recognizes that GSCB currently has limited staff. We strongly recommend the formation of a Volunteer Program Group to assist in planning, organizing, and executing Program Activities.

Additional Program Ideas

- **Camping:**
- Request examples of successful encampments from volunteers and service units to use as a basis for planning Council-wide encampment events.
- Encourage Service Units to open their encampments to the entire council.
- Encourage Service Units to repeat successful encampments.
- Develop short term (2-3 day) camp experiences for younger Girl Scouts.
- Primitive Camp Sites – market any that we have so that volunteers know where they are.
- Develop “Camp reunion events” just before or just after summer camp registration opens so that Girl Scouts can reconnect with camp friends from previous years and get excited about coming to camp this year. This could be combined with a camp preview and have mini programs that match some of the themes of the upcoming camp season.
- Consider summer camps that can be run from a state or local park that would provide opportunities for girls to be involved in their communities, learning a skill, and providing service.
- Develop a list of former Girl Scouts who have graduated, earned the Gold Award, or worked at camp. Start a “Friends Of xx” organization.
- **Older Girl Scout retention:**
- Provide High Adventure Experiences that require greater skills – Paddle & sailing excursions, backpacking, white water rafting.
- Trek and Travel – Excursions from Summer Camp to support progression of skills or interesting experiences.
- Use camps as landing spots for experiences provided by other partners.
- Use other Girl Scout camps for travel to special events (for example, to see the 2024 solar eclipse.)

3. Partnerships:

- Consider Universities and colleges for partnerships to provide specialty camp experiences.
- Develop partnerships with other organizations (for example LACC, La Esperanza, CACC, Nanticoke Indian Association, Special Olympics) to develop joint programming that would encourage Girl Scout participation.
- Develop partnerships with other individuals, organizations, and trade unions to build programming that supports the development of life skills and encourages future career paths.
- Consider partnerships with mechanics, automotive dealers or others interested in cars (for example race car drivers, which could include the Dover Racetrack for fun programming including earning the automotive badge.
- Pursue possible mentorship with Women in Business – what made them successful and how that help girls be successful in school and life.
- Partner with an animal caregiver (vet, zookeeper, farm manager, etc.) and combine with a Take Action project to make things better for animals (for example, volunteer at a shelter, make toys for shelter animals, etc.)
- Learn about entrepreneurship through partnership with different successful small businesswomen, shadow a female business manager, and use skills learned to do a service project.

4. New Property Activities

Many of these ideas may require upgrades to our camp properties.

- Develop STEAM or STEAM (includes architecture) Centers – add activities and supplies to existing Program Centers at the camp properties to support full range of STEAM/STEAM programming.
- Add a horizontal traverse climbing wall to the 2nd camp property we retain like the one at Todd.
- Add a hammock site for primitive or alternate camping experience at one or both camps that are retained.
- Convert remaining tent units to A-frame tents like at Osprey (these require less maintenance.)
- Add a site for Tree Houses and Hobbit Houses.

- Offer “Destinations to Delmarva” older girl national Destinations travel experience through GSUSA. Our Council area has a wealth of resources for a 7–14-day travel experience that could include Wallops Island, Smith Island, Assateague, Chesapeake Bay Foundation/Sultana/Echo Hill/North Bay programs on the Chesapeake Bay, Cape Henlopen, horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay, Ocean City, Maritime Museum in St Michaels, Winterthur, DuPont, Mt. Cuba, Underground RR National Scenic Byway, Harriett Tubman National Park, etc. Washington College has a Chesapeake semester and U of MD. Eastern Shore has a similar locally based program that could provide direction and/or opportunities for partnership.
- Consider Council-wide Older Girl get away weekends – Murder Mystery Weekend; Training for Gold-Award, PA, CIT; Girl leadership weekend (as in the past); weekend Kayak excursions such as kayaking down the Choptank River; other weekend travel excursions.
- Special Weekend activities - New Year’s Eve party, Leap Year party, St Patrick’s Day party.
- Consider swimming and water safety instruction, lifeguard training, perhaps SCUBA instruction to generate revenue for operating and maintenance costs.
- Acquire peddle boats, water cycles, and/or Corcls (small, extremely buoyant double hulled boats) to provide additional water-front activities.
- Construct/identify outdoor nature education areas (arts, drama, music, ecology).
- Target Shooting, Letterboxing – a mystery to solve.
- Consider a “risky” play area utilizing natural and recycled materials (fallen trees as climbing and balance logs or ramps, logs as seats, wood sections for building).
- FIRST: For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology – international club for Robotics (Lego) FIRST® inspires young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science.
- Consider adding a pool at Todd. This would allow for diversification of water- based activities, fun and instruction, and continuity of program offerings when the lake is unusable. If insurance would allow, offer pool(s) to community or other organizations.
- Consider a water quality/sampling shed at Todd for the girls to begin learning about and monitoring their water.
- Plan themed weekends at camp

- Plan Camping for a Cause event – to raise funds for camp.
- Offer items that could be available for troops to rent - tents, tarps, propane lanterns & stoves, nested kettles, Dutch ovens, pocketknives, parachutes, compasses.
- Developing themed “camp” experiences that can be launched from a location(s) other than the camps we intend to retain has numerous benefits:
 - provide new opportunities for “camp” experience for girls who may not want to participate in a traditional camp.
 - can allow GSCB to serve some of the underserved areas of our Council.
 - can address interests and provide programming that does not fit into the traditional camp experience.
 - can provide refreshed progression-based skills programming in innovative ways.

5. Partnerships with Specialty Program Providers

- GSCB.org currently includes a list of Program Partnerships on the “Get Involved” tab. They are grouped as follows: STEM, Arts, Outdoor, Life skills, and Other. NOTE: All the links open in the same window as GSCB.org rather than opening another window. Opening another window would be more efficient for the user.
- The listings include links for companies, businesses, and organizations and what they offer as a Program Partner; a link to become a Program Partner; and a link for volunteers, caregivers, and stakeholders to suggest potential partnerships.
- We need to publicize this portion of our website to members and caregivers to suggest activities/programs that are available, and we need to encourage members and caregivers to suggest additional partnerships. It is recommended that this be included periodically in Council newsletters as well as discussed during Service Unit meetings and leader training opportunities.
 - An example of a little-known partner is Woodworks on Wheels (Life Skills). Participants in a Council-sponsored program at Camp Todd recently were taught age-appropriate woodworking skills (including use of tools) that resulted in a finished projects: younger girls made racing cars and older girls made charcuterie boards. This type of program could be offered as a troop, service unit or family event.

6. Partnerships with Other Entities

- Delaware State Fire School has funding to provide fire safety education programs as well as a junior fire fighter program.
- Fall Fest or some other fun event - or even an annual public fundraiser for camp renovations, held at our camps and asking for corporate sponsorships. We could have sponsors for food trucks, water ice trucks, other refreshments; we could have hatchet-throwing sponsors and Zipline sponsors.
- Mary Washington College/UD or West Chester to provide archeology experience; Mary Washington has an interest in conducting archaeological testing at Grove Point, but all 3 schools could likely provide both field and lab experiences for Girl Scouts.
- UD's Engineering Department has provided Stem-based fun programming – jewelry based on chemical alteration of materials, etc.
- UD College of Marine Studies, U Md Eastern Shore, or other colleges for environmental programming.
- Partnerships to hold family-oriented Sponsored Events/Competitions (5K runs, Triathlons, Apple chunking with rubber band-like slingshots).
- Partnerships to provide housing for regional events such as the hot air balloon festival at Triple Creek Winery could generate revenue and provide opportunities for service to the community, helping to elevate visibility.
- Equestrian programs at stables proximate to GSCB properties. This could also be a summer program that does not require residence at a summer camp.
- Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve (DNERR) to participate in the annual Delaware Bay Horseshoe Crab Spawning Survey
- Marine Education, Research and Rehabilitation Institute (MEER) for programming and to participate in the annual dolphin count.
- Partnerships with Regional Theater groups to develop camp or other programs focused on the many aspects of theater arts. Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia sponsors a camp-type program that could provide an example.
- Developing partnerships with local/regional teams (Club, University and/or Professional) for sports nights, special events and clinics would appeal to many Girl Scouts who are heavily invested in sports.
- Partnerships with Artists, Studios, Dealers, Museums could introduce girls and give them some experience with various media. Art can provide manual dexterity skills, coping strategies for a stressed life, a creative outlet, and a career path.

- Music-Program Partners to address an interest in music are wide-ranging and could include among others musical artists (David Bromberg is in Wilmington), bands, performance/concert venues, radio stations, DJ's etc. Considerable thought goes into programming a radio station - Learning how to create a great playlist could be fun!
- JoAnn's Fabrics has an established relationship with Girl Scouts and offers classes. They also partner with a company selling sewing machines. Partnering with them for programming could address many of the interests in decorative arts and needlecrafts that have been identified by leaders.

Volunteer Program Group

Premise: The Program sub-committee recognizes that GSCB has limited staff. Involving more volunteers in the planning and delivery of programs should boost attendance at events, since volunteers have an extensive network and will share the things they are involved in and encourage troops and caregivers to have their Girl Scouts attend.

Potential Responsibilities of a Volunteer Program Group

- Develop a list of programming ideas for an upcoming year and ask for Girl Scouts' input.
- Review evaluations from camp and program events to identify what was great about the program, ideas for changes, and future program ideas.
- Request Program ideas from Girl Scouts and families –may include identifying new contacts to provide programming.
- Research programming ideas from other Councils. (For example, one Council has developed a *GS Vest = Superhero Cape* program that uses story-boarding techniques to craft a digital comic book that highlights the impact Girl Scouts has had on the world.)
- Consider programming that teaches about the outdoors and environmental stewardship for those who do not want to camp. GSUSA's Dream Labs can provide the model.
- Revamp water-based programs to include clearly defined progression for waterfront skills/programs and watersports for activities at camp. Consider activities away from camp also (for example water or inflatable park, whitewater rafting, kite boarding.)
- Look for programming opportunities throughout the Council to encourage girls and volunteers to learn more about and experience the diversity of our geographic area.
- Consider programs specifically for the southern areas of our council.

- Consider the Chesapeake Bay area and its rich environment for more programming ideas and partners.
- Develop programming around social media. Social media is an integral part of many Girl Scouts' lives and GSUSA has included components that address this in their Dream Labs. Harness it for "good". Ideas can include development of a "media center" or studio where Girl Scouts and volunteers can develop podcasts, short videos, TikTok's and other media (with appropriate supervision and review.)
- Explore more Programming opportunities in Maryland and Virginia.

Cultivating Partnerships with Specialty Program Providers

- Ideally, programs would be held on council property.
- The GSCB website currently lists Program Partnerships under the "Get Involved" tab, however many leaders may not be aware that this information exists. This resource should be advertised.
- Partnerships to provide funding and procedures for family-oriented events & competitions (5K runs, triathlons, apple chunking) and food trucks for these events.
- Partnerships with the Performing and Fine Arts communities (theater groups, art leagues and studios, dance groups, etc.) to develop programming and events.
- Partnerships with local & regional teams (club, university, professional) for sports nights, special events and clinics.
- Partnerships with music providers, including local musicians, bands, concert venues, radio stations, DJ's.
- Partnership with JoAnn Fabrics locally to provide programming related to decorative arts and needlecrafts.
- Partnership with the Delaware Fire School for example to provide "Junior Firefighting" training, allowing girls to learn skills and about becoming a volunteer fire fighter and/or EMT.
- Partnerships with local colleges & universities for marine education, archeology, engineering & STEAM/ activities.

Cultivating Partnerships with State and National Parks

- Partnerships with local state parks could provide facilities for Girl Scout summer camp and program opportunities in addition to the retained GSCB camps.
- Local State and National parks could be destinations for GSCB summer camp programming, offering unique outdoor experiences for the campers.

New Property Activity Revenue

- New property activity revenue is dependent on the upgrades and renovations of the GSCB camps after the property sales. Proposals for new programs that will generate program & property revenue have been detailed in New Program activities above and in Addendum B. Pricing for any additional programs to be implemented needs to be determined.

Camp Activity Pricing Model

- Our analysis of 58 GSUSA councils of similar size to GSCB provided a range of summer and troop camping charges and was typically dependent on the type of camp property that was used (GS owned or community owned), the area of the nation, and especially the type and quality of the facilities. Some councils with an abundance of summer camp properties and opportunities provided appealing videos with girls describing the camp facilities and the fun that campers would have if they attended.

Conclusion

GSCB camp properties provide unique, and not yet fully realized, opportunities to teach our Girl Scouts, their families, and our volunteers about responsibility for our properties and stewardship of our environment.

Family involvement in the use of camp properties is critical to attracting Girl Scouts to camp and retaining membership. Family involvement in GSCB programs provides time for families to be together and helps us to be competitive with other youth activities and organizations.

With camp improvements that will be financially possible with the sale of council properties and the expenses that are saved because of the sales, GSCB will be able to offer additional programs at camps. The implementation of a Volunteer Program Group and effective communication and marketing to membership and the community would be expected to result in a significant increase in camp usage.

Finally, any Girl Scout Council would need to be in the full-time business of camp with revenue from cookies, other products, and camping fees and all council resources allocated exclusively to camp in order to approach a "self-sustainable" camp model. Girl

Scout councils are not just camps, nor are Girl Scouts. Our Program and Marketing committees have documented many great ideas to increase council revenue and support membership growth and retention. These ideas are expected to support a sustainable budget after property sales are complete, with camp maintenance included. Clearly property sales and camp improvements are required before many of the plans can be implemented.