



## **Sept. 12, 2023 – Property Task Force Committee Progress Report**

Since it's introductory meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Property Taskforce Committee has met several times throughout the summer on the following dates:

- Tuesday, May 23, 2023
- Tuesday, June 6, 2023
- Tuesday, June 27, 2023
- Tuesday, July 11, 2023
- Tuesday, July 25, 2023
- Tuesday, August 1, 2023
- Saturday, August 26, 2023 – Property Task Force Committee Retreat
- Tuesday, August 29, 2023
- Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Between these meetings, each Subcommittee, as defined below, has held several meetings to prepare recommendations for the GSCB Board of Directors on action steps regarding that subcommittee's focus area. At each meeting of the Property Taskforce, each subcommittee shares their progress with the whole group.

- Finance
- Program
- Marketing/Communications
- Property Maintenance

### **Finance Subcommittee**

The Finance Subcommittee has been using our property financial information, along with utilization data from the past 6 years, to evaluate current rental rates and expenses to support the creation of a more sustainable property plan. Additionally, we've been looking for new funding sources to offset the current and ongoing high rate of subsidization required to operate our camps and programs annually.

### **Property Maintenance Subcommittee**

The Property Maintenance Subcommittee has conducted site visits, having visited Camp Grove Point and Camp Country Center. We will be visiting Camp Todd in the coming weeks.

- Recommendations: We have made recommendations regarding ongoing maintenance procedures and staffing for all GSCB properties.
- Renovation needs at the two camps visited so far have been discussed and shared with GSCB leadership.

### **Program Subcommittee**

- Brainstorming sessions to determine program ideas and barriers regarding camping for girls and their families.

- Marketplace Analysis - The Program Subcommittee has completed research on 58 small councils nationwide to document each council's camp offerings - property, programs, and cost.
- Development of survey questions regarding camping to be used for the Volunteer Summit, and online for girls, volunteers, and caregivers.
- Development of short-term outdoor program ideas that will generate revenue.
- Documenting barriers to camp usage by troops and service units.
- Development of a list of potential partnerships for specialty outdoor programs.

## **Marketing/Communications Subcommittee**

- Volunteer Summit Focus Group
  - At the August 19th Volunteer Summit, the Marketing/Communications Subcommittee facilitated two focus group sessions. Among those in attendance were new and veteran volunteers including Troop Leaders and Troop Support Volunteers, Service Unit Volunteers, Gold Award Mentors, Outdoor Facilitators, and Instructors, etc. Claudia Peña Porretti, CEO, and Ashley Bulley, COO, were also in attendance.
    - Findings can be found in the last section of this document “Volunteer Focus Group Findings.”
- Google Search Audits
  - A variety of search terms were utilized to determine how GSCB property landing pages currently rank among Google search results. It was discovered that the Camp Country Center landing page appears most often, however, occasionally falls behind marketplace competitors, including other Girl Scout councils and Scout BSA councils.
  - Initial recommendations are to add new and different keywords, increase SEO optimization, as well as explore paid search opportunities.
- Website Functionality
  - A major roadblock was quickly identified, external parties and members alike had difficulty in locating the “Reserve a Property” web page on [www.gscb.org](http://www.gscb.org).
  - Initial recommendation from the subcommittee was to include a property or camp callout on the main navigation of the website. This change was implemented in July – membership feedback has since been positive.
- Marketplace Analysis
  - Extensive marketplace research has been conducted to identify what our competitors are offering, at what price, where, and how. Included in this analysis are neighboring Girl Scout councils as well as Girl Scout councils of similar size and membership demographics, Scouts BSA and other “scouting” organizations, religious/sports/arts/science camps, and beyond.
- Marketing Brainstorming
  - Recommendations that drive greater opportunities for GSCB to market properties to both external and internal (members) audiences, have been developed. Please note that these are recommendations only and do not represent actual plans.
    - External Audiences:

- Family Reunions, Corporate Retreats, Weddings, Baby/Bridal showers, Birthday Parties, etc.
- Field destination for photographers.
- Build partnerships with local vendors/businesses who may be able to recommend our properties to their customers (i.e., tent rental companies, inflatable companies, local attractions) – providing them with marketing assets like brochures or flyers.
- Direct advertising on websites such as TheKnot.com or WeddingWire.com, TheBump.com, HipCamp.com, CampSpot.com, TheDyrt.com.
- Utilizing influencer marketing.
- Advertising to other Girl Scout councils – Delmarva as a destination, experience our unique and beautiful footprint.
- Internal Audiences:
  - Camping with Claudia.
  - Progressive Troop Leader training opportunities on property.
  - Large scale events – holiday events (Fall Fest, New Years Party, etc.).
- Marketing Obstacles
  - We have identified several major obstacles to not only repairing the reputation of our camp properties but also, in good conscience, inviting people to stay on the properties. It is their recommendation that these issues be addressed as a priority before initiating new marketing ideas (as listed above). Those obstacles include, but are not limited to:
    - Reliable Wi-fi (especially for corporate retreats).
    - Clean and up-to-date restroom facilities.
    - Pest control (ants indoors, swarming bees, wasp nests).
    - Regular site maintenance (Site monitors check in and check out groups, sites are inspected at least a week prior to booked stays).

## **Next Steps**

In the coming weeks, all subcommittees will continue working collaboratively on a list of written recommendations for the GSCB Board of Directors based on the work outlined above. Once complete, the Board will take all recommendations into consideration relative to past, current, and future property decisions. Subsequently, the work of the Property Task Force will have been completed.

## Marketing/Communications Subcommittee

### Volunteer Focus Group Findings

The Marketing/Communications subcommittee has identified a priority of recovering the reputation of our properties, as well as our ability to maintain said properties. To level-set for the work it will take to recover our reputation, one of the questions asked was “In one word, how would you describe your current perspective of GSCB Properties?”

- The responses were overwhelmingly negative - “endangered”, “Unkept”, and “Needing Improvement” summing up the majority.
- Additionally, words like “vital”, “heart”, and “irreplaceable”, were a reminder that the work of the Property Taskforce is valuable and necessary.
- Additional feedback on barriers to visiting GSCB Camp Properties:
  - Maintenance and upkeep
  - Not enough site availability
  - No emergency support (no on-site rangers, volunteers feel insecure)
  - Cost
  - Over-scheduled girls
  - Closed amenities
  - ADA Compliance (not accessible for girls/volunteers with disabilities)
- Additional feedback on desired amenities and programs:
  - Sleeping accommodation variety
  - Climbing wall
  - Treehouses
  - Program-in-a-box onsite
  - Badge weekends
  - Girl Leadership weekends
  - Older Girl Getaways
  - Horses
  - Arts