



## Camping Program's New Vision Task Force Appointed

### Background

The Boy Scouts of America's mission is to work with youth to build character and instill values that last a lifetime. Scouting does this by providing high-quality programs. One of the key signatures of Scouting is its outdoor programs, which include camping and Scout camps.

Not all BSA councils own camps. While there are several large councils that operate multiple camps, Winnebago Council's entire membership would be less than the size of a single district in one of those large councils. Councils the size of Winnebago Council owning multiple camps are also financially distressed due to the inherent personnel and maintenance costs associated with running those camps.

### History

In 1971, the Winnebago and Wapsipinicon Councils of the Boy Scouts of America combined to become the Winnebago Council. The new council served more than 12,000 Scouts in northeast Iowa. As a result of the merger, the council owned two Scout camps -- Winnebago Scout Reservation, near Marble Rock, and Camp Ingawanis, near Waverly.

Today, the council serves approximately 3,800 boys and still maintains two camps. The camps have never been self-supporting and have been subsidized by other Scouting programs for the past 40 years.

The concept of scaling back to one Scout camp has been raised at least twice during the last 40 years, but was not acted on either time. Each camp has a large number of passionate supporters. The issue of maintaining the two camps is highly charged.

### Situation

Beginning in 2013, all BSA camping programs must be sustainable in order to meet the requirements for accreditation. Sustainability is defined in the camp standards as meeting one of the following criteria in 4 of the last 5 years:

1. The camping program adds net revenues to the council, and the council is funding depreciation (Standard for Gold Accreditation).
2. The camping program adds net revenues to the council, and the council is not funding depreciation (Standard for Silver Accreditation).
3. The camping program receives a limited subsidy from the gross revenues of the council, is not forecast to increase, and the council budget is in surplus and forecast to remain in surplus for the next five years;

or

The camping program receives a greater subsidy from the gross revenues of the council,





the amount of the subsidy is stable or trending downward, the council does not exhibit an unusually low ratio of unit serving executives to total available youth, and the council budget is in surplus and forecast to remain in surplus for the next five years. (Minimum standard for accreditation).

Unfortunately, our camping operations do not meet any of those criteria. In order to continue camping operations, the Winnebago Council must take action to make its camping program sustainable over time.

#### **Effects -- short-term**

The 2012 Summer Camp schedule is established and will not change. Scouts and Scouters can rest assured that the plans they have in place for summer camp will not change.

#### **Effects -- long-term**

The Winnebago Council Board of Directors has established a special Second Century Camping New Vision Commission. The commission is made up of board members, community leaders, and Scouters from throughout the council. It is led by Ed Narigon of Cedar Falls.

The commission's charge is to thoroughly examine the council outdoor program and its needs. It will present preliminary recommendations to the board in February 2012. Final recommendations will be due in April 2012.

The bottom-line goals are straightforward:

What matters first are **the young people we serve today and the needs of young people in the next 10 - 20 years.** Keeping that in mind above all other considerations this commission will:

1. Make changes to quickly establish a sustainable, self-supporting approach to providing high-quality outdoor programs.
2. Establish a vision and plan for Winnebago Council outdoor programs for the next 10 -20 years.
3. Make recommendations on Council sustainability as impacted by our outdoor programs model.

The first meeting of the Commission will be Wednesday January 4, 2012, in Charles City. Thorough minutes of all meetings will be available and published here routinely. Contact information of Commission members and how to add input will also be available after the first meeting.

