

Q. Camp has been an integral part of our program for so many years; why would you close such a treasure?

A. We understand that it can be emotional for some members with the loss of a camp, but we want to assure them that we are focused on enabling their girls to have similar experiences through other venues and programs. Girl Scouting continues to provide unmatched camping experiences that are adapting to the needs of today's girls. We know GSSI wants to ensure that as many girls as possible have access and opportunity to build friendships and learn leadership skills in the outdoors. Our decision to close a camp(s) is not made lightly, and it is done with vast input from community members as well as cost-benefit analysis of our properties. Managing properties is very complex and expensive, and it's important that we maintain our camps to ensure we continue to attract more girls to outdoor experiences.

Q. Do we know when these camps will close?

A. Camp Whispering Oaks: Sept. 30, 2015

Camp Cedar Point: Sept. 30, 2016 (lease expires 2016; GSSI doesn't own property)

Camp Chan Ya Ta: 18-24 months (depends on Camp Torqua enhancements and/or collaborations that provide resources needed). We will keep our members informed of any changes to this timeline.

Q. How do you address concerns that your decision has made camp impossible for some families who no longer have a camp in their community?

A. We want to ensure that as many girls as possible have access and opportunity to build friendships and learn leadership skills in the outdoors. GSSI operates several other camps that will provide first-rate camp and outdoor experiences for our girls. (Camp Torqua, Camp Wassatoga and Camp Butterfly). We are also continuously looking for partners in all communities to help us provide outdoor experiences. We also plan to build relationships and collaborations with other camps in our area.

Q. What factors were used to determine which camp(s) to close?

A. We worked with Kaleidoscope, Inc., a company with considerable expertise in assessing and planning for camp properties since 1984. They have also worked with numerous non-profits including eight Girl Scout councils. In addition, we used the vast knowledge of our volunteers who served on our Property Assessment and Planning Committee, our Property Task Force and our Board of Directors. The Decision to close a camp was not made lightly and done with vast input from community members as well as cost-benefit analyses of our properties. Managing properties is very complex and expensive, and it's important that we maintain our camps to ensure we continue to attract more girls to outdoor experiences. The following "lenses" were used to access each camp separately:

- Site usage
- Financial impact
- Survey results (input from girls, volunteers, parents)
- Property assessment
- Regional representation
- Criteria rankings

Please view survey results, town hall conversations, Kaleidoscope Property Summary and other background on our website under the Property Assessment and Planning button.

Q. Why wasn't the data from the Carbondale Town Hall Meeting made available on 8.11.15?

A. We made a commitment to members attending the first round of town hall meeting that we would share the Board of Directors decisions face-to-face...at their request. After fulfilling that commitment, we shared the BODs decisions on our website, Facebook page, the Delegate Portal and sent out an e-blast.

Q. What will you do with the money from the sale of a camp(s)?

A. Camp and providing girls an outdoor experience is a priority for GSSI. Proceeds from the sale of any property will support providing leadership and outdoor experiences for our girls.

Q. What will you do for camping experiences now that camps are 2+ hours away for some members?

A. We will seek intentional collaborations with other camps so that even if a GSSI owned camp is not close by, girls can still enjoy a Girl Scout camping experience at another camp close by.

Q. What quality of information gathering really occurred...(look at the stats). The intended population actually surveyed is less than 4%, absurd! Statistically meaningless?

A. We had more than 1,100 girls, volunteers and parents participate in the survey. We encouraged everyone to complete the survey, and advertised it on the website, Facebook, Delegate Portal, Link to Leaders, in several Family, Friends and Volunteer e-blasts. In addition, this information was shared at delegate meetings, town hall meetings and at SU meetings. A volunteer even handed out town hall meeting flyers on the street in her community. Although we wanted more people to participate in the survey, Kaleidoscope was pleased to see the number of people completing the survey.

Q. What is happening to camps when they close?

A. Camp Whispering Oaks and Camp Chan Ya Ta will be sold. Camp Cedar Point will be returned to United States Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service from whom it is leased.

Q. Why do we have to lose CCP when Butterfly isn't in Illinois? Why are you keeping a camp that is outside our council jurisdiction (Camp Butterfly), but closing three that are within it?

A. Camp Butterfly was scored very high due to its unique, irreplaceable features and its potential to be a destination/specialized camp in the future. None of the other camps owned by GSSI have the same potential.

Q. You say that some of the cookie proceeds go to improving and maintaining camp properties, and our cookie sale was up this year. Why are we now closing half of our camps?

A. Our cookie revenue supports a variety of Girl Scout programs, outdoor programs, as well as camps. Using cookie revenue to support six camps that are underutilized is not a good use of our limited resources or the hard earned money raised by our girls.

Q. What did GSSI do to communicate?

A. We promoted the dates and times of all meetings and shared the importance of everyone attending and having a voice. The meetings were shared on the GSSI website, Facebook, Delegate Portal, e-blasts, Link to Leaders, and through SUs, etc.

Q Who pays to put the land back according to the lease? Making business decisions must be hard when they aren't looking at the end result. This could be costly for the council.

A. We will meet with the United States Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service to discuss the terms of the lease and the conditions under which the property will be returned.

Q. What was done to prevent this from happening?

A. We have been encouraging members to use our camp properties and will continue to do so through Delegate meetings, Service Unit meetings, our GSSI website, on Facebook, in the Link to Leaders, etc.

Q. Why weren't camps & financial assistance advertised more?

A. Camps have been advertised widely through many platforms...e-Chronicle Magazine, GSSI website, Link to Leaders, e-blast emails, Facebook, Delegate Portal, etc. Also, staff have announced camp at Service Unit meeting.

Q. Are any other camps accessible to the disabled?

A. All of our camps have some accessible areas for the disabled but all of them need to be upgraded. We will continue to work on this issue.

Q. If we earned enough money to pay all the maintenance issues, could we keep the camp or is this a worthless endeavor?

A. The expense and liability involved in maintaining camps is a responsibility that volunteers alone would not be able to undertake. We welcome volunteer help and participation in our remaining camps.

Q. What monetary investment has been given to Camp Cedar Point?

A. All six GSSI camps have been maintained on an ongoing basis. Some of the major improvements/repairs undertaken at Camp Cedar Point include: roof replaced at Sunny Hall, buckling wall at Sunny Hall repaired as well as other improvements. For more information contact Jonathan Stanley, Director of Property.

Q. How did it occur the Kaleidoscope was selected for an opinion?

A. Based on referrals from other councils, we selected several agencies to submit bids. Of these, we selected a couple to come and make presentations to our Board of Directors. The BOD then selected Kaleidoscope from these finalists.

Q. Were these decisions really decided before the Town Hall meetings?

A. Throughout the entire process we have been open, transparent and encouraged everyone to participate. The status of the deliberations by the Property Assessment and Planning Committee, the Property Task Force and the GSSI Board of Directors have all been shared on our website.

Q. Is GSSI planning to ignore the southern part of the council?

A. GSSI is committed to serving the needs of all our members in all 40 ½ counties.

Q. Are the reasons usage is so low in the south because of poverty?

A. Camp usage rates throughout the country for both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts has declined over the years. Poverty in southern Illinois may be one of the contributing factors.

Q. I would like to know what is included in phase 1 and phase 2 for Camp Butterfly.

A. We will keep our members informed as plans are developed.

Q. What if girls can't afford the new options?

A. We will work hard to forge collaborations that are accessible and affordable. We will also continue to provide financial assistance to those that qualify.