



Statement of the Board of Directors of Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania on long range planning decision, November 2, 2017

On November 2, 2017, the Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania (GSHPA) Board of Directors decided on the future of the seven camps owned and operated by the council. Over the last year, GSHPA has conducted a strategic and comprehensive evaluation of outdoor programs and properties throughout its 30-county footprint.

Properties were evaluated individually based upon utilization rates by Girl Scout Troops, operating costs, and the need for infrastructure improvements. Direct feedback from girls and volunteers was collected throughout the year-long evaluation project to ensure a decision that would provide girls, leaders and families with an optimal Girl Scout experience going forward.

Maintaining all seven camps in acceptable condition would have required 57 percent of GSHPA's annual operating budget. "As difficult as these decisions are, they enable us to continue to create progressively challenging outdoor experiences and memories for girls while reallocating finite council resources to deliver more of the programs and activities that girls are asking for," said Kathy McCorkle, Board Chair.

The board made the decision to **retain, review** or **retire** each of the seven properties.

Properties that will be **retained** are defined as properties for which the plan is the continued use for residential camp and other programming. Maintenance and ownership will continue to be the responsibility of the council.

Retain: Camp Small Valley located in Halifax, PA.

Properties that will be **reviewed** are defined as those in which the intention is the continued use for troop camping, day camping and other membership-related activities but with an additional review over the course of three years against defined utilization and financial guidelines established by the board.

Review:

- Approximately 144 acres of Camp Archbald, located in Kingsley, PA will be retained and reviewed. An additional portion of Camp Archbald, also measuring approximately 144 acres, will be retired.
- Approximately 50 acres of Camp Furnace Hills located to the east of Girl Scout Road will be retained and reviewed. This represents an amendment to a previous Board decision, made in August 2017, to retain only 10 acres of the property. The remainder of Camp Furnace Hills, which measures approximately 175 acres, will be retired.
- The entirety of Camp Happy Valley, located in Fairfield, PA, will be retained under review.



The next steps for properties under review will include the development of a property plan to identify clean-up, repair and renovation needs to optimize the outdoor experiences offered at each location. The properties named in the review category will undergo an annual review of utilization rates and financial performance. In the coming months, GSHPA will work with girl and adult members to ensure a supportive and collaborative process in an effort to maximize the success of these camps. As GSHPA proceeds with the next steps in preparing the retained camps for expanded use, member input will be an important part of the process to ensure that girls' needs are met at each property.

Finally, the following properties will be **retired**, which means that plans will be made to end all use, maintenance and ownership of the property by GSHPA:

- Camp Echo Trail, located in Felton, PA
- Camp Golden Pond, located in Petersburg, PA
- Camp Louise, located in Shickshinny, PA, with a commitment to work with the Friends of Camp Louise to further their interest of the purchase of all or part of the camp property based on a mutually agreed upon timeline.

The process of retiring these camps will take many months. Proceeds from divestment of any camp properties will be kept in a separate fund and will require Board approval to be utilized. GSHPA is committed to communicating openly as the process unfolds and is sensitive to the concerns of local members and communities.

Following two years of careful financial management, the Board and staff of GSHPA are proud to report a stronger financial position. Approximately \$234,000 in the 2018 operating budget is targeted to provide financial assistance to enable more girls to benefit from Girl Scouting.

As part of a national Girl Scouts initiative to modernize girl scouting, new and innovative programs are being developed to focus on the 21st century skills that girls need to be go-getters, innovators, risk-takers and leaders (G.I.R.L.). Outdoor experiences build these skills as do other important programs like hands-on, innovative STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) opportunities.

GSHPA is committed to growing its membership by investing more in exciting, challenging programs that allow girls to take the lead in a range of activities—from kayaking, canoeing, rock-climbing, archery, and other outdoor experiences to STEM, robotics, and financial literacy training—in a supportive, encouraging environment where they feel safe. New membership and renewing membership rates continue to increase, as of October 1, 2017, the beginning of the new membership year.