



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®  
PATHWAY TO ADVENTURE COUNCIL

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UTILIZATION OF CAMP FACILITIES & PROGRAMS

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## 2016



# Memo

**To:** Craig Burkhardt, Council President  
**From:** John Makowski, Vice President of Properties  
**cc:** PTAC Operating Board  
**Date:** September 18, 2015  
**Re:** Recommendation for utilization of PTAC Properties for 2016

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**Background and Mission:** The Pathway to Adventure Council (PTAC) Operating Board established 4 committees to look at the utilization, financial well-being, and sustainability of all PTAC properties going forward starting with the 2016 camping season. The 4 separate committees included:

1. **PTAC Facilities Committee**- chaired by John Makowski
2. **PTAC Boy Scout Program Committee**- chaired by Tim Melan
3. **PTAC Future Camp Program Committee**-chaired by Mike Tangen
4. **National Facilities/Program Task Force Committee:** which included a group of specialists who are trained to evaluate current and future BSA properties by using an objective approach looking at sustainability, program features, facilities, and financial feasibility of council properties within the BSA.

**Properties:** The 4 committees were each separately tasked with recommending which camps should operate in 2016. The camps that were evaluated included:

1. [Adventure Camp- Rochelle, IL](#)
2. [Camp Frank S. Betz- Berrien Springs, MI](#)
3. [Camp Lakota-Woodstock, IL](#)
4. [Camp Mach-Kin-O-Siew-Elcho, WI](#)
5. [Camp Napowan-Wild Rose, WI](#)
6. [Owasippe Scout Reservation-Twin Lake, MI](#) (Camp Blackhawk, Camp Wolverine, Reneker Family Camp)
7. [Camp Shin-Go-Beek- Waupaca, WI](#)

**Considerations:** The committees were each given a list of data, including; budgets, utilization and capacity history, National Camp Accreditation (NCAP) documents, maps, program documents, and numerous other resources to help each committee make an objective decision on which camp facilities and programs to operate in 2016.

Faced with significant capital improvement, depreciation, declining attendance, and underutilization, the committees were forced to look at all facts and figures prior to coming up with a recommendation. Each committee met several times throughout the last nine months and took tours at separate times to evaluate PTAC's current programs and facilities during the 2015 camping season.

All of PTAC's properties and programs include a rich history of quality camping experiences for numerous generations of Scouts and Scouters.

**Conclusion:** The following conclusion was compiled using the 4 separate committee recommendations for 2016.

1. **Adventure Camp Recommendation** –

- With its proximity to Chicagoland, the committee recommends that PTAC move all Resident Camp opportunities for the Cub Scout program to Adventure Camp.
- The committee recommends that PTAC assume operational ownership of the camp and work with councils within the area to serve as a regional-based Cub Scout camp.
- The committee recommends that PTAC invest in Adventure Camp to continue Cub Scout camping operations and weekend use.

2. **Camp Frank S. Betz Recommendation-**

- With its proximity to Camp Rota-Ka-Wan (Kalamazoo, MI), which has a strong program and remarkable Cub Scout family facilities, the committee recommends PTAC cease Cub Scout Resident Camp operations at Camp Betz and focus the property on a mission-critical facility (district events, trainings, weekend camping) camp for weekend usage.
- The committee recommends that PTAC work with neighboring Michigan Crossroads Council and foster a strong relationship to bolster Cub Scout operations for families who live on the east side of PTAC.

3. **Camp Lakota Recommendation-**

- It is the committee's recommendation to cease all Cub Scout Resident Camp operations at Camp Lakota, and focus those programs at Adventure Camp in Rochelle,

IL. With its proximity to wetlands and lack of adequate room for development, the committee recommends PTAC use Camp Lakota for a mission-critical facility (district events, trainings, weekend camping) and focus on reducing expenses at Camp Lakota.

- The committee favors that PTAC cease investing capital into Camp Lakota. It also recommends that once Adventure Camp is developed, PTAC ends operations at Camp Lakota.

#### 4. **Camp Mach-O-Siew-**

- It is the recommendation of the committee to cease all operations at Camp Mach-O-Siew in 2016. The Boy Scout Camping committee recommended running the camp for another year, but with the decline in use and growing revenue losses, that recommendation would not be economically feasible. With other premier BSA Camp properties within a 45-minute radius of the camp, the declining condition of its building, maintenance, and utilization, Camp Mach-O-Siew should cease operations.
- The committee discussed adding patrol-style cooking to another PTAC Resident Camp operation to continue the patrol-style camping traditions that so many have enjoyed over the years.

#### 5. **Camp Napowan-**

- With Camp Napowan's history of strong attendance, and its financial sustainability over the last several years, the committee recommends PTAC continue Resident Camp Operations and invest capital into improving current facilities at the camp. Significant financial support from PTAC will be immediately needed to improve overall maintenance for camp. PTAC should focus on staff housing facilities immediately for the 2016 camp season. The committee also recommends that the camp seek to employ a full-time resident Camp Ranger.

#### 6. **Owasippe Scout Reservation (OSR):**

- Owasippe Scout Reservation has a strong, rich camping tradition with 3 solid camps. It is the recommendation of the committee that PTAC continue all operations at OSR and add the Webelos Camping program back into its offerings for 2016.
- The committee recommends marketing OSR to outside ventures to build financial sustainability for the operating budget.
- Other recommendations from the committee include partnering with Michigan Crossroad Council (Camp Gerber) to add new and innovative program offerings for all Scouts, continuing to invest in the Family Camp concept at Camp Reneker, marketing to families outside of Scouting, and creating a plan to rest Camp Blackhawk within the next year to allow the camp to rejuvenate its beauty by reducing the number of footprints allowed to access the camp.

## 7. Camp Shin-Go-Beek:

- It is the overall recommendation of the committee to cease all program operations for 2016 at Camp Shin-Go-Beek. Camp Shin-Go-Beek is not financially feasible for PTAC to continue to operate based in part on its proximity to Camp Napowan, which has room to increase its utilization.
- The cost of facility improvements and catch-up of depreciation costs for the camp, along with underutilization, make it impossible to include Shin-Go-Beek in PTAC's future. Camp Shin-Go-Beek has a strong tradition of top-notch quality staff for its service to campers. It is the hope of the committee, that this rich history can be transplanted into another viable PTAC Resident Camp operation.

**Opportunity to Comment:** Much of the data and resources will be posted to PTAC's website over the next several days on the recommendation of the committee. It has been the priority from day one to provide 100% transparent information on the recommendation. The committee wanted to release its recommendation on September 18, 2015 as that is what has been communicated with PTAC communities.

We have established an [online portal](#) to collect feedback from all PTAC registered members to express comments about the recommendation. All feedback will be shared collectively with PTAC Operating Board on October 7, 2015 prior to the special meeting scheduled to draft a resolution to the recommendation. The only requirement for submitting feedback is to be a registered member of PTAC. Membership will be verified before it is submitted to Operating Board.

[CLICK HERE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK](#)

This recommendation will be hard for many of our PTAC families. These camps have provided many generations strong favorable memories. The committee feels with these recommendations that we can continue to offer the same quality experiences and reduce our operating costs, and improve utilization. PTAC is committed to growing the camping program over the next several years and enhance the experience for our current and future generations for many years to come. Please use the [online portal](#) to submit any feedback regarding the recommendation.