

# CAMP STIGWANDISH

## FAQ's

Questions & Answers:

### **Why was it determined that a properties assessment was needed?**

In the fall of 2018, the Lake Erie Council executive board adopted several strategic and tactical priorities for 2019. One of those priorities was to assess all the Lake Erie Council properties. This assessment was to give the new Council an understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of each of the 4 properties (Beaumont Scout Reservation, Camp Stigwandish, Firelands Scout Reservation, and the Unit Service Center.) This assessment focused on occupancy, usage, condition, programs, and financial sustainability.

### **How was the properties assessment conducted?**

The assessment included an independent review earlier this year led by a volunteer Scouter familiar with properties and camp operations. This team conducted a thorough assessment that looked at many aspects of our properties including land features, program potential, infrastructure (roads, waste treatment, utilities), physical size, camp layout, costs to bring the facilities to a **brand positive** level, operations costs, competition with other camps in the area, land use restrictions and ecological diversity (range of terrain, plant and animal life, water bodies, etc.)

**Brand positive** level meets or exceeds the expectations of our current and future campers.

### **Doesn't the Boy Scouts of America already assess our camps?**

Yes, part of NCAP (National Camp Accreditation Program) is the assessment of our properties and camp operations. The purpose of the NCAP is to help councils elevate camps to new levels of excellence in delivering Scouting's promise to youth. Councils engage in a rigorous review of camps and properties, continuous improvement, and correction or elimination of substandard practices. Tools and metrics from NCAP were used in the Lake Erie Council properties assessment.

### **What did the assessment reveal?**

The assessment team estimated that the cost for needed improvements at our camps would exceed \$6 million. The team pointed out that two (Camp Stigwandish and Firelands Scout Reservation) of our three camps have and continue to operate at an annual loss. In 2017, the loss ranged from a combined high of \$235,000 to improve in 2019 to a combined loss of \$150,000. The team emphasized that this is not a sustainable model; the Executive Board agreed. These operating losses do NOT include the SIGNIFICANT capital investments made at all three camps since the Lake Erie Council came into existence.

### **Was attendance and camp use considered?**

Yes. The committee looked at all aspects of camp attendance including year-round and summer specific. They also considered whether summer camp programs and other traditional activities could be accommodated at other properties.

### **Why are camp properties operating at a loss?**

Camp properties are expensive to maintain, and we are always looking for ways to be more efficient. Expenses include camp upkeep, utilities, facility improvements, staff, insurance, equipment and maintenance.

In addition, infrastructure improvements often require significant investments. We've invested more than \$2.2 million in necessary infrastructure improvements during the past three years alone.

### **Would it help to charge more for camping and use of the camps?**

We keep the cost of camping low to encourage attendance and make camping affordable for the 22,000 campers (including summer campers) who visit our properties each year. This includes many campers from other councils that benefit from the support needed to operate camps. We would have to raise rates a considerable amount to cover all our operating costs plus capital improvements for three camps.

### **Why can we not leave Camp Stigwandish "as is" and still improve our other camps.**

Camp properties, just like your house, have an annual cost of operating, but they also have infrastructure costs that are much larger than just painting a building or repairing a water leak. Camps are like small towns, and need investment to keep their infrastructure like roads, sewer systems, electrical grids, water sources, and facilities safe and functional. This infrastructure investment cost that is currently estimated to make Camp Stigwandish brand positive does not include any new program features, it is just bringing our current facilities to a positive standard.

### **What is the plan for Camp Stigwandish?**

The Executive Board of Directors unanimously passed a resolution to approve of the divestment of Camp Stigwandish.

### **When will operations cease at Camp Stigwandish?**

Operations will cease on May 4, 2020

### **What happens to currently scheduled events at Camp Stigwandish?**

All events and unit reservations will go on as planned until May 4, 2020. This covers all major program items currently on the calendar. This covers all major program items currently on the calendar except for Adventure camp and NYLT both of which will be addressed in the coming weeks.

### **Is it possible to save Camp Stigwandish?**

No, as of May 30, 2020 Camp Stigwandish will cease to be a council owned property.

### **Who is buying the property?**

That is unknown. We have contracted outside help to aide in that process.

### **Where will the money from the divestment of Camp Stigwandish go?**

The Executive Board of Directors has designated the use of proceeds from the divestment of Camp Stigwandish to go to program improvement including the remaining properties or other significant program ventures as approved by the board.

**Were other properties considered for closure?**

All properties were examined during the assessment including Firelands, Beaumont, Stigwandish and the Unit Service Center. While we note Firelands has been operating at a loss for several years, there has been significant improvement on lowering the operating deficit. Additionally, Firelands is geographically positioned to more conveniently serve our Scouts and families on the west side of Lake Erie Council.

**My question isn't listed here**

While we know that there are many questions, we answered what we thought would be some of the most common. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to Marc Ryan at [Marc.Ryan@scouting.org](mailto:Marc.Ryan@scouting.org).