

RIVER VALLEYS' 2010 LONG RANGE PROPERTY DECISION

Frequently Asked Questions

January 15, 2010

What are the immediate property and program impacts to girls, volunteers, and staff?

Although implementation planning will begin immediately, ***these recommendations will not affect the current program and camp offerings planned for fiscal year 2010 (through September 30, 2010)***. All council-sponsored program events, day camps, resident camps, and site rentals at Camps Greenwood, Piper Hill, Rolling Ridges, and Sanderson will continue as scheduled for fiscal year 2010. River Valleys will work closely with volunteers and groups, including service unit encampments, regional events, and day camps, most affected by the fiscal year 2011 property changes. There are no staff reductions associated with the property changes.

Day camps, regional events, and service unit encampments are important to the Girl Scouting program because they are often the first outdoor experiences for girls. River Valleys strives to provide the opportunity to build friendships and learn leadership skills in the great outdoors to as many girls as possible. Girl Scouting provides unmatched camping experiences that will grow stronger by adapting and changing to meet today's girls' needs.

River Valleys will work to accommodate Camps Greenwood, Piper Hill, and Rolling Ridges annual volunteer-led day camps, regional events, site rentals, and service unit encampments at other camp facilities or other appropriate sites for fiscal year 2011.

Even with the changes to the program and camp offerings, a wealth of resources is still available to members. River Valleys and the property task group encourage girl and adult members to investigate, explore, and educate themselves about all of River Valleys' properties and resources.

Is the council selling properties?

The board has directed council leadership to decommission and pursue the sale of Camp Greenwood, Piper Hill, Camp Rolling Ridges, and the Munsell property (six acres located about one mile from Camp Sanderson). The council also will pursue transferring Camp Sanderson to Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines.

When are properties going to be sold?

Given the current market conditions and economy, selling properties may not be an immediate action. Taking the step of decommission with the intent to sell properties will have a realized annual operational savings of \$510,000-\$550,000.

River Valleys will make every effort to generate sales that produce acceptable financial returns and are consistent with the values of Girl Scouting. The timing of such sales will be contingent upon our ability to achieve these goals.

Does River Valleys have a real estate agent/broker?

River Valleys is working to secure a company to provide real estate services in the sale of these properties.

How are the proceeds from a future sale of property going to be used to support girls and Girl Scouting?

River Valleys will be establishing a policy directing any revenues resulting from the sale of council properties be deposited in a property fund to help with future properties needs and depreciation costs. *Money from the sale of any property will not be used for operational budget relief.*

Is there going to be a chance for girls or volunteers to be at the properties before they are decommissioned and sold?

Yes. River Valleys staff will work with girls, volunteers, camp alumnae, and donors to create celebratory events, tours, and activities at the Camps Greenwood, Piper Hills, and Rolling Ridges to honor the camps' history and legacy as part of River Valleys. If girls or volunteers are interested in participating in a planning task group, please send your contact information to girlscouts@girlscoutsv.org and put PROPERTY in the subject line.

Will Camp Whispering Hills be reopened?

Yes, starting in fiscal year 2011. According to the 2009-2010 short term plan, Camp Whispering Hills will remain closed through September 20, 2010.

Why did River Valleys do this now?

In order to effectively manage the budget, the responsible and prudent thing for River Valleys to do is regularly review its property portfolio and determine – based on needs and wants of members – what the council can continue to afford.

Today, the costs of operating and maintaining River Valleys' 17 properties far exceed the revenues generated from these sources. Although partially subsidized by cookie program revenues, there is still a large gap that must be funded from other income sources, leaving fewer dollars available to support other programs and services that girls want and volunteers need. In fiscal 2009, that funding gap exceeded \$2 million; River Valleys anticipates a \$1.3 million gap in fiscal year 2010.

With the changing needs and interests of girls, River Valleys discovered that its property portfolio did not effectively serve its membership. Making the decision to decommission and

sell a portion of River Valleys' properties was not done lightly, nor were decisions based on whether a particular camp could meet its budget numbers.

Will River Valleys be closing some of its service centers?

Staff is working on a service center plan that will be completed by the end of summer 2010, with an implementation timeline yet to be determined. While River Valleys wants its girls and volunteers to have reasonable access to Girl Scout Shops and program resources, the board's decision to consolidate River Valleys' headquarters functions into one metro location is one of operational necessity. This decision will take girl and volunteer feedback into consideration as it identifies a suitable location and timeline.

Have these property changes been communicated to Girl Scouts, volunteers, alumnae, and donors?

Girl Scout alumnae groups, service unit day camps, and donors associated with Camps Greenwood, Piper Hill, Rolling Ridges, and Sanderson received personal calls from the property task group, board members, or council leadership. The initial information about River Valleys' property decisions was emailed to all registered Girl Scout members and donors in mid-January. The property task group will present its report to all council delegates and volunteers at the annual meeting on January 30, 2010.

Who are the volunteer property task group members?

- **Sharon Hollatz** (Redwood Falls, MN), Lifetime Girl Scout member, property task group chair, former CEO of legacy Peacepipe Council
- **Jo Bogdan** (Plymouth, MN), former girl member, current board treasurer, and serves on the audit committee, executive committee, finance committee, investment sub-committee and pension task group
- **Karen Carlson** (Bloomington, MN), former girl member, current adult volunteer, former board member of legacy Greater Minneapolis council, and former service unit manager
- **Nancy Randall Dana** (St. Paul, MN), former girl member (Lifetime Girl Scout member), former legacy St. Croix Valley staff, current board and executive committee member
- **Cindy Redmon** (Roberts, WI), former girl member (Lifetime Girl Scout member), executive staff member in five Girl Scout councils, current troop leader, adult volunteer, and volunteer recruiter, former board and camp staff member
- **Robin Stegner** (Redwood Falls, MN), Lifetime Girl Scout member, current volunteer, former staff member for legacy Peacepipe and Housatonic Councils, former camp counselor
- **Georgia Toogood** (Rochester, MN), current board member, executive committee, Lifetime Girl Scout member, current adult volunteer, former camp counselor and troop leader
- **Gerry Voermans** (Roseville, MN), adult leader for Boy Scouts of America, Committee Chairman, Quartermaster, Eagle coach, Merit badge counselor, and achieved Brotherhood in the Order of the Arrow
- **Sara Rothholz-Weiner** (Minneapolis, MN), former girl member, assists with strategic and vision planning for Girl Scouts and other non-profits
- **Phyllis Willerscheidt** (Lilydale, MN), board of directors chair, audit committee, board development committee, executive committee, finance committee, fund development committee, investment sub-committee, pension task group, Lifetime Girl Scout member

How did the property task group come to make its recommendation to the board of directors?

The property task group used various research data and criteria to evaluate each property, including: cost to operate, proximity to membership, current use vs. capacity, alternative Girl Scout camps, extent to which facility meets girls expectations, potential for strategic partnership, ease of travel to site, Girl Scouts of the USA property consultant review, and personal site visits.

In addition, the property task group sought input from girl and adult delegates and volunteers by hosting five town hall delegate meetings in October, as well as posting property task group documents and research on a council Wiki and service unit intranet.

What happens to the volunteer long range property task group now?

The property task group has fulfilled its charge from River Valleys' board of directors to develop long range property recommendations. The board of directors has accepted the recommendations and the task group will be disbanded. Further direction and development of any future property task groups, if any, will be determined by the board of directors.

Who should I contact if I have any additional questions or concerns?

Any additional questions or comments for the board and council leadership should be e-mailed to girlscouts@girlscoutsv.org with PROPERTY in the subject line.

What if the media contacts me?

All media inquiries should be directed to River Valleys' marketing and communications director Lisa Hiebert at 651-251-1275, 800-845-0787, or communications@girlscoutsv.org

Current facts and stats for River Valleys camp properties:

River Valleys has a large property portfolio to serve its 63,000 girl and adult members. Eight of the 12 camp properties are within a 60-mile radius of the Twin Cities metro area. Two camp properties are located outside the council's geographic jurisdiction. River Valleys owns 3,500 acres and the camp properties have a total of 1,801 total beds (1,039 year round and 762 summer only) at any one time. The most recent data shows that 23.8 percent of overall girl membership attends outdoor activities at River Valleys' camp properties. In 2009, 58 percent of girl and adult members participated in activities at camp. Overall, River Valleys has a current utilization rate of its properties at 37 percent.