

## **Long Range Property Planning (LRPP) Task Force Status Update for April 2, 2013 Board Meeting**

**Charge:** To research and develop strategies and recommendations for presentation to the Board that outline a property vision promoting the mission of the organization that may involve property acquisition, development, alternative uses or sale in order to meet the needs and interests of existing and future girls and volunteers.

**Membership:** Representation from the Board, external community and GSEM staff for a total of 29 members. Joanne Johnson and Roc O'Connell serve as co-chairs.

**Process/Timeline:** The LRPP team was split into 3 sub-teams: market, program and property with a focus on the current and future state of properties and integrating their findings resulting in a recommendation to the Board. The LRPP Task Force conducted their work from October 2011 – December 2012.

### **Key Findings:**

#### ***Integration of individual team findings:***

- minimal use by external users especially at smaller camps
- GSEM camps are ACA accredited while competitor camps are not
- upgrades to equipment, entrance roads, parking lots are needed
- improvements needed for buildings and lodges for year round access
- recommended properties with unique and varied use as well as geographic accessibility
- focus on sites that are or could be ADA compliant with the least capital outlay
- focus on properties most suited to provide positive net revenue

**Property Usage Analysis:** using GSEM data collected from 2011 and 2012, usage statistics were analyzed with the following findings:

- 1 in 4 (25%) GSEM girls uses a property in any given year vs. 64% reported in a 2012 GSRI (Girl Scout Research Institute) study that GSEM participated in along with 17 other GS Councils
- 7 of 17 properties had negative net revenue for 2011
- greater variety of property usage correlates with greater revenue

**Survey Data:** a number of surveys targeted at girls, volunteers, staff, facilitators and parents were conducted with following significant findings:

- adults choose properties by proximity (short events = closer drive; longer events= okay with longer drive) and familiarity (if I have been before, I am likely to go again)
- adults' belief that properties support membership (recruitment & retention) varies inversely by experience on property (first time visitor believes more strongly that the property supports membership than the more frequent visitor)
- girls across all age levels want to feel safe on property (emotional safety– no boys, no phones, being with friends)
- girls preferred lakes over pools as there are more activities with a lake
- girls want clean (fresh smelling, no spiders) bathrooms (latrine or flush) close to sleeping areas
- adults and girls consistently ranked nature, hiking, outdoor cooking, swimming and canoe/kayaking as the top activities they want on a property
- adults also selected Service Projects as desirable

**Property Vision:** At the Board Retreat held on 1-12-13, members of the Board crafted a property vision that became the basis for rating the existing properties.

*Our properties are self sustaining places that provide fun, new, varied and memorable experiences for girls and that have capacity to be maximized for our current and future use.*

**Property Analysis:** properties were evaluated and ranked against the vision statement in the following categories:

- Growth Potential – robust, year-round facilities with increased capacity with minor/moderate investment (Cedar Hill, Runels, WIP, Maude Eaton)
- Capable of Meeting Vision – size, physical capacity limited but can support increased variety, program/summer camp (Rice Moody, Virginia, Wabasso, Favorite, Greenbrier)
- Capable of Meeting Vision: Destination – small footprint with proximity to other places of interest (Friendship House)
- Falls Short of Vision – may not have capacity, may need significant capital investment, serves only local population (Edith Read, Menotomy, Winnetaska, Paradise, The Center)
- Falls Short of Vision: Destination – small footprint, negative net revenue, used primarily by external parties as access to points of interest (Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket)

**Current Activities/Next Steps:**

- LRPP findings were presented at the January 12, 2013 Board Retreat and resulted in approval to spend \$20,000 on property appraisals of Paradise in Beverly and The Center in Rowley (the two lowest ranked properties) to determine current value and best use options.
- An RFP was sent to 3 appraisal firms, GSEM received responses from 2 and conducted an evaluation and made the award on 3/15/13. Appraisal work will begin the week of 3/18/13 and should conclude by the end of May barring any unforeseen issues.
- GSEM is working with the Essex County Greenbelt Association to determine strategies for identifying parcels that could be considered for conservation use.
- Karyn Martin, Miriam Somero and Barb Fortier conducted LRPP Informational sessions for GSEM staff via Brown Bag Lunch meetings and volunteers via 3 Delegate Meetings which concluded on 3/16/13.
- A Call to Action was presented to staff and delegates in the form of a challenge to increase usage of properties by encouraging staff and volunteers to consider conducting meetings, programs, trainings and other activities on properties to allow volunteers and girls to gain more property specific experiences which will potentially increase utilization and efficiencies.
- An email address [LRPP@girlscoutseasternmass.org](mailto:LRPP@girlscoutseasternmass.org) was established so that volunteers could forward questions or concerns to GSEM.