

River Valleys' 2010 Long-Range Property Decision

Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys has a rich and unmatched tradition of outdoor programming. We offer girls the most contemporary, relevant, and compelling indoor and outdoor camp program activities in a manner that serves both Girl Scout traditions and the bold vision of our future.

A revitalized Girl Scout program today, the economic realities of operating properties that are not fully utilized, and—most importantly—girls' changing interests are leading River Valleys and Girl Scout councils nationwide to proactively change their property portfolios in order to most effectively serve girls.

River Valleys is the 10th largest council for Girl Scouts of the USA, serving 45,000 girl members with critical support of nearly 18,000 volunteers across 49 counties in southern Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

River Valleys owns an extensive property portfolio of 17 properties that comprise 3,500 acres.

- For at least the last five years, River Valleys and its five legacy councils have noted a declining number of overall girls utilizing Girl Scout properties.
- While outdoor program remains a core of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, just a quarter of our members participate in outdoor programs at camp.
- In fiscal year 2009, 8.7 percent of Girl Scouts attended resident camps and the overall utilization rate at River Valleys' camp properties was 37 percent.
- 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 for girls. In fiscal 2009, that funding gap exceeded \$2 million. We anticipate a \$1.3 million gap in fiscal year 2010.

In June 2009, River Valleys' board of directors established a volunteer-led property task group. This group was charged with creating a long-range outdoor property recommendation and plan for both camp/program properties and service centers that will provide opportunities for girls to discover, connect, and take action in ways that build courage, confidence, and character.

On December 11, 2009, after reviewing current surveys, data, demographic trends, site visits, and obtaining input from River Valleys' members and a national (Girl Scouts of the USA) property consultant, the property task group presented its findings to the board of directors, which held a discussion and approved the following recommendations:

1. To consider Camps Lakamaga, Elk River, and Singing Hills core outdoor program sites for the future of River Valleys. Camps Whispering Hills, Northwoods, Edith Mayo, Sagata, and Lockeslea possess unique and interesting geographic and geological features; however, these properties will continue to be evaluated to ensure they meet budget and utilization expectations.
2. To decommission with the intent to sell Camps Rolling Ridges, Greenwood, Piper Hill, and the Munsell property (located one mile from Camp Sanderson).
3. To pursue transfer of Camp Sanderson to our northern neighbor, Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines.
4. To develop a plan and timeline for consolidating the River Valleys headquarters functions into one metro location to be determined.
5. To develop a master plan for supporting membership needs and volunteer services across a broader range of communities, incorporating a variety and diversity of facilities types (not exclusively owned properties).

For more information about this decision, please [download and review the Frequently Asked Questions document](#). Thank you.