

February 18, 2010

Greetings Sisters and Brothers of the Council:

Today as we prayerfully prepare to meet tomorrow via phone conference to review the proposed 2010 camping season at Westminster Spires, I ask that you carefully consider the two reports you will be receiving by email. This report is regarding the program portion of the camp, and the second, from Rev. Brent Long, will be regarding grounds and maintenance, specifically water quality.

- Introduction to the camp: Westminster Spires (formerly Camp Miles) has been providing great Christian camping experiences for Montana youth for over 75 years. Nestled in the lap of the Beartooth mountains, positioned along the Rock Creek, the camp is approximately seven miles out of Red Lodge and it is less than five miles from the beginning of the Cooke City Highway. The camp is close to fishing access and hiking trailheads. It sits among beautiful forest evergreens, with log buildings aesthetically situated among the wooded areas, as well as maintained open areas for recreation. There is a lovely meadow area in the shadow of the “Spires”. Altogether, the camp is simple and quite lovely. The 6.3 acre camp is owned by the Forest Service, and we are currently finishing the fourth year of a ten year contract. The camp has been leased for 77 years, and there is no indication that our lease would not be renewed in 2016.
- Permanent structures: Prouty hall is the largest and oldest of the log cabin buildings. It includes a large kitchen which is outfitted with a professional gas range and grill, professional stainless exhaust hood (put in last year, approximately 3000.00, paid for with gifts to Revamp the Camp), large multi-compartment refrigerator, two free standing freezers and a three spigot milk

machine (Bessy). A Hobart sterilizer, and two separate sink areas keep everything squeaky clean. Sturdy table and bench units fold and move aside easily, and seat approximately sixty adults. The hall provides not only room for eating, but also for learning and recreation. There is electricity to all buildings, which include Prouty Hall, three bunkhouses (one double sized), divided bathhouse for males and females, which includes showers, sinks, dressing areas and toilets, and two permanent “porta-loos”, two smaller cabins (Dean and cook cabins), and the newest cabin used for art and recreation.

- Staff: There is a part-time year round maintenance person (Dan Lawlor) who lives approximately ten miles away. He keeps things running smoothly during camping season, checks on the camp during the off season, and is only a phone call away in case of emergency. Ten counselors are sought for camp, and each camp has at least one Dean (unpaid). A paid cook is present for the three weeks of camp, the staff cooks for themselves on the weekends and during training. The moderator of the committee serves as an unpaid administrator, and we now have a sub-committee for grounds maintenance. In June each year we have a four day period devoted to Revamp the Camp, which is well attended by a combination of folks who come year after year, and new groups who come to help every year, including other churches youth groups, etc. This tireless group cleans, paints, refurbishes, and in general provides wonderful yearly upkeep. They have also furnished the camp with needed items over the years (cookware, toasters, containers, curtains, towels, washer for towels, freezer, exhaust fan for kitchen, etc.). They do grounds cleaning and repair as well.

- Attendance—2008 70 campers, 2009 72 campers, divided into three camps
- Financial snap-shot: We attempt to keep our fees as low as possible, and have a policy of no child turned away for inability to pay. In 2009 our fees were Primary camp: 175.00 (Sun-Thurs), Middle school 200.00 (Sun-Fri), and Sr High Camp 225.00 (Sun-Fri). The camp is also available for rental for certain events. For summer of 2010, we already have a wedding scheduled for June (two former counselors!) and family gatherings for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Labor Day. In our 2009 budget, we had projected earning 15,000 of our 25,000 operating budget, with the Presbytery contributing 10,000. We actually took in 15,888.00. Our expenditures were 26,920.00 (which included two ski retreats and a fall retreat). Primarily our (-1,920.00) was due to an increased need for scholarships, and a low response to the Fall retreat. The Presbytery contribution to the Camping and Youth mission has far-reaching effects. Children from many different income ranges attend our camp every year, and some for the very first time away from home. The vast majority of our counselors are former campers at Westminster, and they too continue to grow in their faith walk as they minister to the campers. The contribution amount is in line with the contribution to the Higher Education Fund (8,940.00), which is also outreach to our children. The Presbytery general fund gratefully was not terribly impacted this year by our overage, as the fund was actually in surplus at the end of the year. We will attempt to correct our imbalance with raising fees by 25.00, and using increased advertising to raise our camper attendance. We have plans in the works for a campaign encouraging the churches in the Presbytery, as well as individuals

to provide “camperships”, so that perhaps we can eliminate the need to use budgeted monies for scholarships.

- **Improvement monies:** Four years ago FPC Bozeman made a very generous one time gift to Westminster Spires that now totals approximately 35,000 dollars. Seeking to be good stewards of such a wonderful outpouring, a sub-committee, led by Rev. Brent Long, undertook an 18 month study of the camp and its long term needs. The first thing done was to have a professional long term feasibility study of the camp. This study was very positive, and with it the committee was able to prepare a report, which included long and short term goals and needs of the camp (the water issue was deemed number one priority). This report was presented and accepted by the Presbytery in May 2009. Even though the money is available as needed, we would endeavor to replace any monies used, so that the camp would have an ongoing availability of improvement capital. We are currently in search of a knowledgeable grant writer, hopefully someone who would have knowledge of federal monies available as well. In the future, we would also like to have a person(s) who could help make a fund-raising plan.
- **Current plans for increasing attendance:** Exciting DVD to be presented at February Presbytery meeting---will be posted on-line, and copies will be available at meeting---updated flyers and camp forms available on line and mailed to each church by middle of March. Posters sent out by April for church bulletin boards. Update camp information on Synod site (done).
- **Streamlining operations 2010**  
Registrar position—person who would receive all camp applications, make sure they were complete, prepare a spread sheet, sending copy weekly to Presbytery office, and money

collected. This person also could hopefully keep track of all scholarship monies and their disbursal.

Person needed to receive counselor applications, making sure they are complete, also making sure all employee forms are filled out and returned to office

Hopefully these positions can be filled in time for this season—

This report is obviously not all inclusive, but hopefully will provide information that will be helpful as we proceed. In the future I would love to have you visit Westminster Spires, and if you feel so inclined, we would love to have your help during Revamp the camp June 15-18<sup>th</sup> ! Westminster Spires is a wonderful missional outreach that the Yellowstone Presbytery can be proud to support. Hopefully, we can continue to be God's hands and feet and heart to the children that come to the mountain---peace to you, Cathy McLean Moderator Camping and Youth