

Board of Trustees Report—February 2014

Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council

The Board of Trustees met February 4 in Lansing. The meeting began with devotions by President Deb Johnson and then proceeded to discuss the following issues pertinent to cottagers.

***Finances** As mentioned in my last report, financial reporting has been reorganized to get a firmer grasp and better picture of LLCC finances. 2013 was a year of some unusual expenses, and we are looking forward to expected forestry income to brighten our financial picture. Again, donations are an important part of our income stream as LLCC cannot be financially healthy just depending on camp income alone. Anticipated income from the Forest Legacy grant will help us increase our reserves and fund a few badly needed projects. We also are considering getting marketing advice so we can increase our income by making maximum usage of our facilities.

***Camps, Retreats, and Conferences** Fall usage of our facilities for retreats has increased, and we have several returning groups for winter retreats. Our new website will make it easier for registrations and online payments as well as enhance marketing for increased camp, retreat, and conference participation. To help defray camp expenses, Lake Louise is now recognized on the UMC Market shopping site. When using this service, a portion of purchases will be contributed to Lake Louise. Visit this link to sign up: <http://www.umcmarket.org/organisation/HpyEUHoWMeOnNu5wr6Hr2Q/Lake-Louise-Christian-Community-Camp-and-Retreat-Center/invite>

***Facilities** We are in a race to get all nine cabins replaced so we won't have to build a new bathhouse, a very expensive proposition. The health department is currently cooperating with us as we have promised to get these cabins built that have interior bath facilities. As mentioned earlier, the Vogel cabin is completed and will be ready for summer usage, and LLCC broke ground for another new cabin, the Carr cabin. This cabin is also projected to be ready for summer usage. Additionally, the Hammond Foundation, cottagers John and Barbara Marshall, and another cottager family have made financial commitments to replace cabins. The Board of Trustees will also build a cabin using money from the Redmond Trust. That leaves three more cabins needing funding. Remember, donors receive naming rights when they contribute a minimum of \$31,000 for the cabin. This \$31,000 can be paid over time. Funding and naming a cabin is a great way to express your love for this lake and/or commemorate someone special.

***Camp Kinawind** We are in the process of finalizing a lease, use, and management agreement with the Board of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries of the Detroit Annual Conference regarding Camp Kinawind. Camp Kinawind expects to be operational this summer.

***Forest Legacy Project** LLCC expects to receive the funding this coming summer from the Forest Legacy grant. The board began initial discussions about usage of the grant money. Of primary importance to the board is to use the majority of the grant to help ensure the financial future of LLCC through investments. This grant, however, will not replace the need for donations to keep us financially healthy. We have submitted our proposal for phase II (Tract 2 of the Gitche-niinj Nebish Forest) which includes the lands near Standard Lake as well as land north and south of the main basin of Lake Louise. We have heard no news to report of this submission at this time.

The Board of Trustees will next meet April 25 at Lake Louise.

Board of Trustees Report—June 2014

Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council

The Board of Trustees met June 6 at Lake Louise. The meeting began with devotions by President Deb Johnson. The board then proceeded to orally thank Deb Johnson and thank in writing Amy Mayo-Moyle, retiring board members, for their six years of service to Lake Louise. The board also recognized in writing resigning board member Mark Johnson for his years of service. At our next board meeting in August, a new president and vice-president will be presented along with four new board members.

***Finances** Our financial picture is currently stable. The board, however, will be setting goals for enabling operating expenses to be almost totally financed by income from camps, conferences, retreats, and assessments. We will be taking an in-depth look at our marketing to be sure we are reaching all appropriate income streams and making maximum usage of our facilities. A business plan with related recommendations developed for LLCC by Run River Enterprises after spending days examining LLCC on site will be a guiding light for this work. This firm specializes in serving faith-based camp, retreat and conference centers. We were pleased to see that several of their recommendations were already in progress.

Again, donations are an important part of our income stream and enables LLCC to keep moving forward building new facilities, repairing older ones, and providing exciting programs. We expect to receive money from the Forest Legacy Grant by the end of the summer. The board currently anticipates that the majority of this money will be held in reserve to help guarantee a sound financial future for LLCC.

***Camps, Retreats, and Conferences** As of the board meeting, camp registrations are at a 3.4% income increase from this time a year ago. LLCC has done marketing aside from just working through conferences to help increase camp registrations. The new website has had some glitches for online registration but should be fixed by the time this report is sent out to you. Several new retreat groups came during the fall and winter this year, and retreat income as of the board meeting is up 46% over the previous year.

***Facilities** As mentioned in my January report, we are in a race to get all nine cabins replaced so we won't have to build a new bathhouse, a very expensive proposition. The health department is currently cooperating with us as we have promised to get these cabins built that have interior bath facilities. Of the nine cabins that we need to build, one is completed, one is nearly done, and donors have been identified for five of the remaining seven. (Construction begins on one of those this summer.) That leaves two more cabins needing funding. Remember, donors receive naming rights when they contribute of the cost of construction. This 50% can be paid over time. Funding and naming a cabin is a great way to express your love for this lake and/or commemorate someone special.

***Camp Kinawind** The new Kinawind lease has been completed and signed. The directors of both camps are working together to increase communication so that misunderstandings can be avoided in the future.

***Forest Legacy Project** The scheduling of bids for the final appraisal of the Forest Legacy tract is being managed by the DNR. Once the appraisal is finished, the DNR will generate an offer based on the appraisal, and we will move into the final stage of the process to receive our grant monies. Remember, this grant, however, will not replace the need for donations to keep us financially healthy. We have modified and resubmitted our proposal for phase II (Tract 2 of the Gitcha-niinj Nebish Forest) which includes the lands near Standard Lake as well as land north and south of the main basin of Lake Louise.

Later in this year we should hear whether these modifications will now enable us to make the list of approved projects.

***Milfoil** The board discussed in-depth the need for getting some paid help to work alongside cottager volunteers battling milfoil. Cottagers' Council will take the lead for exploring ways to get this help and report back to the board. An assessment of where we stand regarding this year's presence of milfoil will occur later in June.

***Staff** Charles Holborn, longtime member of the LLCC maintenance staff, has retired and been replaced by Forest Williams. Forest is currently completing a certification in property management. Hillary Thurston-Cox, program development specialist, leaves staff the end of June to co-pastor four area churches with her husband. The board thanked her for the wonderful job she has done. As of this report, we have hired Sarah Hescheles, new Boyne City resident, for this position. She comes to us with a background including an architectural degree from Michigan, a Master of Divinity from Duke, a Master of Sacred Theology from Yale, and being a director of Christian education and development. Sarah is also a senior Alpine patroller for the Boyne Mountain National Ski Patrol.

The Board of Trustees will next meet August 15 at Lake Louise.

Board of Trustees Report—August 2014

Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council

The Board of Trustees met August 15 at Lake Louise. The meeting began with the election of Phil Fredrick, board president, and new trustees Dan Brubaker, Liz Carr, Scott Harmon, and June Smith. Doug Vogel, treasurer, and Sandy Smith, secretary, were reelected in their positions. A new vice-president will be elected at the board November meeting. The following are highlights of the meeting that are pertinent to cottagers:

***Finances** Our operational expenses outpace our operational income. That is why the board is setting goals so that these expenses in the future can be totally financed by income from camps, conferences, retreats, and assessments. Increasing our marketing will be an important part of growing our operational income. As mentioned in my last report, a business plan with related recommendations developed for LLCC by Run River Enterprises after spending days examining LLCC on site will be a guiding light for this work. Again, it is important to realize that donations are a crucial part of our income stream and enable LLCC to keep moving forward building new facilities, repairing older ones, and providing exciting programs.

***Camps, Retreats, and Conferences** Camp numbers grew this year by 4.9% over last year with 37% new campers attending. We are once again repairing our website to make registration and information about our camp more accessible to users. Of particular concern to the board was our exclusion from the United Methodist Camp booklet for the Michigan area. Rationale for this is that we are an affiliated camp rather than a camp run through the conferences. We have been told that for 2015 we will be restricted to a one-page mention along with other affiliated camps. We are trying to increase our exposure in this booklet as feedback has told us we are a difficult camp to find. However, it is clear to us that we must rely solely on our own marketing and use a variety of ways to reach prospective campers. Retreat numbers stayed constant from a year ago.

***Facilities** Great news--donor funding has now been committed to construct the seven remaining cabins that need to be replaced! Gentile cabin has been razed and construction has begun on the Marshall cabin. Myke Sherman, operations director, hopes to have this cabin and another constructed by the time camp begins next summer. Construction will also begin this fall for repairing the entrance way to the retreat center along with a patio for outdoor eating. Ted Halsted presented an in-depth proposal for building a Lake Louise Community Center in the future. The board's first priority is building the cabins, but the board will continue to research the proposal for the Community Center, which will need to be funded by donations.

***Forest Legacy Project** We are coming to the end of this long road toward receiving funding from the Forest Legacy Project. Bids are due by August 26 with the appraisal tentatively scheduled for September 3. We hope to receive money from the grant sometime this fall. Again, the board currently anticipates that the majority of this money will be held in reserve to help guarantee a sound financial future for LLCC.

Our proposal for phase II (Tract 2 of the Gitcha-niinj Nebish Forest which includes the lands near Standard Lake as well as land north and south of the main basin of Lake Louise) has been approved for funding consideration by the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee. The next step will be a review by a subcommittee of the FSAC. If they agree, then a formal recommendation will be made to the State Forester who then makes the final decision whether the project will be submitted for funding consideration at the national level. We should hear later this month whether we have cleared this next step.

***Milfoil** Trustee Kirk Halsted gave an overview of the milfoil situation. Upon his recommendation, the board approved the use of targeted chemical applications to help control the presence of this invasive species.

The Board of Trustees will next meet November 9-10 for a board retreat at Lake Louise.

Board of Trustees Report—November 2014

Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council

The Board of Trustees met November 9-10 at Lake Louise for its annual retreat. Following a Sunday evening dinner and devotions by Phil Fredrick, board president, the board reviewed the progress LLCC has made over the past approximately ten years according to its strategic plan and discussed where LLCC is headed during the months and years ahead. Since Dave Gladstone, executive director, is retiring next summer, the board also discussed how it would go about searching for a new executive director. We hope to have one hired before his retirement. The following day consisted of a business meeting. At that meeting Kirk Halsted was elected as the new Board of Trustees vice-president. The following are highlights of that meeting that are pertinent to cottagers:

***Finances** We continue to refine reporting our finances so we have a better handle on what our true operating expenses are. Our operational expenses outpace our operational income, but we are making progress toward our goal of totally financing these expenses through income from camps, conferences, retreats, and assessments. We hope to achieve this goal within the next few years. However, as I continue to mention, donations are a crucial part of our income stream and enable LLCC to keep moving forward building new facilities, repairing older ones, and providing exciting programs.

***Marketing** Sarah Hescheles presented a thorough, in-depth multidimensional program and development plan with a vision toward increasing LLCC exposure to bring in new camps, retreats, and conferences. This is part of our strategy to finance our operational expenses through these ventures. The plan discussed our constituents, a vision of how we would serve them, and how we would transfer that vision to reality through implementation and digital and print marketing.

LLCC has a new logo as part of this marketing plan. Look for it on LLCC communications. Also, the website is being redesigned to be more functional for all constituents, particularly stressing ease of camp registrations. We have heard that rather than be restricted to a one-page mention along with other affiliated camps for 2015, as we had been told, we will now be totally excluded from the United Methodist Camp booklet for the Michigan area. Therefore, we are on our own for marketing, but the board strongly feels that we are up to the task.

***Camps, Retreats, and Conferences** Final camp numbers for 2014 showed a 4.5% increase over last year. Retreats had a 2.0% increase. Several new camps and retreats for 2015 have been scheduled and others are in development. The board approved expenses for Sarah to be trained as a facilitator for the Courage to Lead program through the Center for Courage and Renewal with the hope that offering this popular national training program through future retreats at LLCC would give us a unique program to market.

***Facilities** The project to renovate the entranceway to the Retreat Center is now in progress. This project has consumed a lot of staff time and time spent by a work group from the Alden UMC. This group moved 20,000 pounds of stone by hand. Construction on new cabins continues.

***Forest Legacy Project** The onsite appraisal evaluation for phase 1 happened in early September. We understand that the appraiser has now submitted the appraisal to the U.S. Forest Service which in turn submitted it to the State of Michigan. We are now waiting to receive an offer from the State of Michigan to purchase the rights to phase 1, based on the appraisal. Once we receive that offer we will move into the final stage of this long, drawn-out process. We hope to finally resolve all of this and receive the monies in early 2015.

***Milfoil** All mats were removed by September 22 thanks to many Lake Louise volunteers. An application has been submitted to the DEQ to gain approval for targeted chemical applications next year.

The Board of Trustees will next meet February 21 in Lansing.