Camp Somers
2016-2020 Continuous Camp Improvement Program Commentary

Camp Somers, our flagship Boy Scout resident camp, is part of the 1,000 acre Mount Allamuchy Scout Reservation (MASR) located approximately 30 miles northwest of the Council Service Center in Stanhope, N.J. Camp Wheeler, one of our two Cub Scout day camps, is also located at MASR.

Keith Dlugosz has three important roles in the Council: resident Reservation Manager at MASR, Camp Somers Program Director and Council Properties Director. Keith is an innovative and dynamic manager who has achieved--and is dedicated to maintaining--a high level of operational excellence at MASR.

Keith focuses on three things: year-round program, customer service and community relations.

The unique location the facility, easily accessible from major highways and in close proximity to major population hubs, makes it ideal for year-round program. The fact that the property is surrounded by thousands of acres of state park land is also a huge benefit.
The year-round program involves supporting district Cub family weekends, district camporees, COPE, climbing, ATV, backwoods engineering, shooting sports, the co-ed Camp Coley, Cub Scout Saturday and after school programs. Year round non-Scouting activities include a Live Action Role Playing (LARP) group, regular mountain bike races, K-9 nose work competitions, NJ Hunter Safety courses, 5 & 10 k trail runs, and endurance races.

All major capital improvements since 2007 have focused on year-round program. The Kent Center at Camp Wheeler was renovated to accommodate Cub Scout programs like BB gun shooting, archery and cooking as well as an indoor climbing area. The kitchen at the Camp Somers dining hall was expanded to accommodate the feeding of larger groups like those we host during Cub Scout family weekends. The Shower-Bathroom building, built in 2010, is a year round heated facility. With its individual shower rooms, it makes a perfect location to shower after a 40-mile mountain bike race no matter what season. The cabins have been updated to provide attractive safe housing for all types of customers.

Keith realized long ago that customer service is the key to a successful operation; our staff is trained in the Disney philosophy. This training goes far beyond our summer camp staff and has helped to create a family culture between the volunteer camp masters, event staff and the paid staff. Although it is called the Disney philosophy, it really has its roots in the Scout Oath and Law: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind and Cheerful are the bedrock foundation of our customer service plan.

MASR's biggest and most valuable asset is the countless volunteers who fell in love with the property and the program and will do whatever it takes to make every event successful. These volunteers sometimes work on the summer camp staff, where several have served for 35 years. Because of this family culture, the staff retention is in the 80% range with many applicants stating "the reason for returning on summer staff is to be with family". Another benefit to the family culture is the depth of resources available throughout our family. When we have a need for a specific skill, somebody in the family has it or knows where to get it.

Citizenship is a prime focus of the Boy Scout program and citizenship in the community is a major focus for Mount Allamuchy Scout Reservation. Our facilities are used by the New

Jersey State Search and Rescue High angle rescue team for drills and training. Local fire departments have done their area wide ice rescue drill and training on Frenches pond. The Byram Township Police and NJ State park police frequently request our assistance in locating lost hikers and mountain bikers in the surrounding state park. We have developed relationships with the local communities to share resources and provide any assistance necessary for the good of the community.

Keith is constantly developing new relationships and new programs. A week long Backwoods Engineering camp was introduced several years ago. Limited to 25 Scouts, the camp was an instant success and sells out every year. Based on the popularity of Backwoods Engineering, we are adding three additional specialty camps in 2016: Aquatics, Shooting Sports and Lumberjack Forestry.

Camp Somers was recently selected to host the LDS Regional Summer Encampment for 2016. This will bring 750 people from throughout the northeast onto the Reservation for one week of Boy Scout camp. The objective is to develop a long-term relationship with the LDS leadership by expanding the program and providing outstanding customer service.

We are exceedingly proud of our program at Camp Somers and MASR. We feel it is an excellent example of best practices for a Boy Scout camp in 2016: an outstanding summer camp program complimented by a strong revenue-driven year round program.