

## **EAGLE ISLAND CAMP Q'S and A'S**

### **What does suspending camp mean?**

We are suspending the camp season so we can strengthen its programming and its physical condition. Because of the harsh winters the camp has endured, there were both safety and infrastructure concerns identified. Given the shortness of the available season in which to do repairs, we chose address those concerns during this summer season.

### **Why did the former property manager leave?**

The former property manager was offered a position in the new Council as the Eagle Island Property Manager, but chose to take the Voluntary Enhanced Retirement Incentive Program (VERIP) offered by Girl Scouts USA.

### **Why didn't you try to hire the former property manager temporarily?**

There are restrictions around the rehire by councils of former employees who took the VERIP. We began conversations with the former Property Manager in September 2008 and continued through February 2009. During this time, additional conversations were held with Girl Scouts USA to ensure that if the former Property Manager was hired back by Council in any capacity, his VERIP package would not be jeopardized.

In February, an alumnae with assistance from others, was able to identify a potential part-time person who lived in the area of Eagle Island. We contacted him and hired him as a temporary employee to check on the island until ice-out. Also in February, the conversations with the former Property Manager came to fruition and we were able to hire him to visit the island until ice-out. From February to ice-out in mid-April, both the former Property Manager and our temporary caretaker visited the island. Our temporary caretaker stayed with us until late May.

### **If you could hire the former Property Manager temporarily, why couldn't he be the Property Manager for the entire camp season?**

We offered this possibility to the former property manager in mid-April. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, the former property manager informed us that he would be glad to provide us with any information we needed, but that he would not be interested in the summer position.

### **So, why did you depend so heavily on trying to hire the former Property Manager?**

He was a known and respected employee with a deep knowledge of Eagle Island. It was natural for us to reach out and try to find an arrangement that would work for everyone. At the same time we also wanted to be sure if this arrangement did not work out due to the potential VERIP restrictions, we had a back-up plan.

Given the unique requirements of the position we knew that it would take some time to hire a replacement. We had discussions with the National Park Service in November which continued into January at which time the job posting was sent to them. We began our position advertising in February as we believed any employee we hired would want to see the island after ice-out. We advertised the position on Girl Scouts USA's website, the GSHNJ website, on Idealist.org, in local publications (thanks to our alumnae), ACA, and other sites populated by spider technology.

### **When will you hire a Property Manager?**

A Property Manager has been hired and is currently on the island making repairs and assessing each part of the property's needs. As we continue to determine the full extent of what needs to be repaired or updated, he will manage that implementation process. He and his family will be residing on the island during the summer season just as the former Property Manager did in prior years.

### **Why was there no camp director hired?**

In September, preliminary discussions were held with the former Camp Director. She was formally offered the position of Camp Director in February which is about the normal time of year to begin the hiring preparations for camp. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, she informed us that her current job situation would preclude her from taking the Camp Director position, however, she was more than willing to work in any other capacity on weekends over the course of the summer.

### **What about the hiring of the rest of the staff?**

As a new Council, we have examined all of our camp properties and have evaluated our staffing needs. Given the direction of the Council, we wanted to ensure the staff hired met or exceeded our expectations of what we felt was needed at the camp.

Candidates reaching out to us were responded to by a member of the Council's camp staff and evaluated according to the criteria we had established. If you have questions on your particular situation, we will be glad to address those with you individually as we keep a written history of our candidate contacts.

### **Why was there no Work Weekend?**

As is often the case over the winter, a tree fell on one of the camp's power lines. In the past the Property Manager would have had the tree removed, repaired the power line, and restrung it. As the new Council, we did not feel comfortable with this method. We decided to call in two electrical contractors to bid on the job. Both of them refused to provide a bid or do the work until a licensed electrical inspector conducted an inspection.

We brought the inspector on the island who found many items that needed repair. The extent of the repairs needed, when coupled with the fact that not all areas of camp were able to be inspected, caused us to be concerned about the safety of the work weekend attendees and the camp itself. We then cancelled the work weekend.

**If there were this many problems, why was the camp opened up last year and every prior year?**

The legacy council made its decisions about the opening of Eagle Island Camp based upon its criteria. The newly merged Council has its own set of criteria against which camps are evaluated on the areas of physical infrastructure and safety.

**The alumnae have offered both financial and staffing assistance. Why hasn't Council taken us up on our offers?**

The situation at Eagle Island is a complex one as there is not just one thing that can be solved to make the camp the success it can and should be in the summer. Staffing is an operational decision that is made on the basis of the skills needed to match the program's needs. These skills may be different than those needed in the past due to a variety of factors (the type of program offered, the length of the camp season, the desired ratio of domestic to international staff, etc.).

In terms of financial support, the alumnae have always been generous with their time and donations. While these gifts of time and treasure are very much appreciated, at this moment, we don't know exactly what is most needed to support program on the Island.

The Council will be reaching out to the alumnae once formal maintenance and program plans are in place with ways in which you can assist. We want to ensure we are utilizing the alumnae's and membership's time, talent and treasure in the most efficient and productive way.

**Does this mean that Eagle Island is going to be sold?**

This means Eagle Island's program season will be suspended during the summer of 2009. The Council has made no long-term property decisions. In our newly merged Council, we have two resident camps and three day camps. Each plays an important role in providing girls with outdoor fun and leadership experiences, therefore, all of our properties have to be taken into consideration when making decisions that affect the Council as a whole. Any decision to sell property affects the entire Council. Such a decision would not be made without further study of all Council property assets.

The decision to sell any Council property is a responsibility of the Board of Directors. Were such a decision to be made, it would be done with careful thought and due diligence that would involve input and discussion with a number of constituent groups. At this time, the Board of Directors of GSHNJ has had no conversations regarding the sale of any Council properties.