CHICAGO AREA COUNCIL,
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

OWASIPPE MASTER PLAN

APPROVED AUGUST 15, 2012

BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
REINHARD PLAUT

THE VISION FOR OWASIPPE

The vision for the Owasippe Scout Reservation (OSR) Master Plan is that Chicago Area Council (CAC) operates OSR so that Scouts have a strong desire to return to our beloved camp for new adventures every year from the time they are Webelos to age 17. A great program drives attendance, advancement and Scout retention. Quality program requires dedicated and motivated staffing. The CAC must market the mystique and experience that is OSR.

We recognize the CAC is blessed to own this 4,800 acre ecological wonderland in the middle of America. We therefore seek to preserve the pristine nature of the land while providing an exciting, challenging, and engaging program for our campers.

Inherently, we are proud of the land we own and the program we run. However, we are generally disappointed by the state of a large portion of the facilities at the camp. Our vision is to develop and rehab structures so that CAC is as proud of the facilities as it is of the land and program at OSR.

DEDICATION

During the months of our meetings, one of our dedicated committee members passed away. We were all deeply saddened by this experience. It is in his memory that we dedicate this plan to Reinhard Plaut, a man of exemplary vision.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

The master plan is consistent with the guidance from the Owasippe Task Force in that:

1. All primary camp operations will be confined to Ad Center, Camp Wolverine, Camp Blackhawk, Gray Staff Village, and Reneker Family Camp. The COPE outpost will continue in its present site at Camp Carlen. These areas plus all of Camp Carlen and Camp Crown are considered integral portions of the core area of OSR, and as such, are not to be considered as for sale.
2. The non core areas of camp may be sold provided these two basic tenets are maintained:
    a. Any land sold will be required to be maintained in a conservation easement style that keeps the property in at least as good of condition as presently exists; and
    b. Campers at Owasippe will continue to be permitted to use the land for hiking and nature studies
3. Initial facility development efforts will be concentrated at Camp Wolverine in large part to house Webelos Camp and to relieve the crowding at Blackhawk's dining facility.

Underlying our plan are the following operating principles which have been developed in cooperation with the leadership of the Camping Committee.

1. We will operate camp for 6 or 7 weeks each summer, with the first session beginning in the last week of June.
2 While we may operate both Webelos Camp and Boy Scout Camp during the same week, the operations of each will be segregated by camp for each week of operation.
3. Webelos camp will ultimately be held at Wolverine, and there should be a single transition per camp season between Webelos and Boy Scout operations.
4. Our camps should not be defined by their meal service plan. Blackhawk and Wolverine shall ultimately offer both hot pack and dining facility dining plans. All meals will continue to be prepared at Ad Center.
5. Camp site discipline will focus on the patrol method. There will be only one troop utilizing each kybo during the one week session.
6. In today's camping world, troops often prefer to utilize their own tents. For the CAC supplying and maintaining tents is an arduous and regulatory challenging task. Providing a financial incentive to troops to bring their own tents would be beneficial to both the troops and to the overall OSR operation. Notwithstanding the foregoing, we will continue to provide tents for the Webelos camp periods.

LAND USE MATTERS

Preservation of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (See Exhibit 1)

Owasippe, due to the low impact use it has received over its 100+ year life exhibits an abundance of biodiversity. In 2002, The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with the Chicago Area Council and the Owasippe Staff Association, conducted a Bioblitz of Owasippe and determined that at least 1078 species – 373 animal species and 705 plant species exist on OSR. Nineteen of these species are classified as special concern, threatened, or endangered in Michigan. These include the bald eagle, the Karner blue butterfly, Blanding's, eastern box and spotted turtles and the eastern massasauga rattlesnake.

Bald eagle habitat has been identified throughout the Wolverine Lake and southeastern shore of Big Blue Lake. The Karner blue butterfly habitat has been identified in the bowl between Central Water and the Wolverine chapel as well as south and east of Lake Wolverine, in the oak forests east of the Reneker "B" side on the far eastern edge of the quaking bog, and west of Russell Road on the north side of Holton-Whitehall Road. Blanding's turtles have routinely been seen at the Russell Road crossing of Cleveland Creek, down-stream from Guss Kopp Dam. Eastern box turtle and spotted turtle habitat is seen in the same oak forests east of the quaking bog. Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes also inhabit the same prairie area.

It is fortunate that the same area is home to several rare species and is in a less used area of the camp. In fact, it is probably because the area is less used that they reside there. Cleveland Creek watershed exists entirely on Owasippe property. It is exceptionally clean and provides quality habitat for a variety of fish and fresh water invertebrates. The flood plain along the creek also hosts some unusually diverse forests. In addition, the eastern

arm of southern Wolverine Lake is considered a shrub swamp emergent marsh that is considered very unusual.

We believe that the 6 areas described here are conservation critical and should be protected in our use of the camp. Therefore, we recommend avoiding all development activities in the following areas:

- Cleveland Creek crossing under Russell Road
- The bowl between Central Water and Wolverine Chapel
- The eastern portion of the southern shore of Big Blue lake
- The eastern arm of southern Wolverine Lake
- The oak forest area east of Reneker "B" side and the quaking bog
- The section just north of Holton-Whitehall Road and west of Russell Road.

Family Camp

The Master Plan Committee has determined that given the tepid interest on the part of the US Forest Service in acquiring this area to connect existing portions of Manistee National Forest and given the extremely low appraised values for the land, Family Camp should remain at Reneker. We have determined that maintaining a family camp is instrumental to attracting motivated leaders for the scouts at camp. Costs to replace anywhere near the facilities existing today at Reneker would far outweigh the proceeds from any land sale. The costs to rehab family camp are likely to be a mere fraction of the replacement costs.

Camps Crown and Carlen

Other than the COPE Course at Carlen, these camps will not be utilized for summer camp operating facilities. While they are available for year round outpost use, there are no plans to allocate funds for development of these areas. Carlen will remain available for ancillary uses, such as NYLT and Woodbadge. These programs are not "facilities heavy" endeavors.

Diamond O Ranch

The horseback riding program should remain a portion of the High Adventure activities at OSR. It provides an activity in which many urban youth might not otherwise be able to participate. It should remain at its existing site until a land sale or conservation easement requires its relocation.

Lake Wolverine Watershed

By maintaining Camps Crown and Carlen in this conservatory fashion, the CAC is protecting the watershed of Lake Wolverine. Additionally, the Master Plan Committee recommends moving the southern boundary of the core area of camp down to the Holton Whitehall Road.

INITIAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Overall Priorities

Generally speaking, the order in which matters are presented below within each major section reflect the relative prioritization for development and remodeling efforts. These priorities have been set taking into consideration the facts as we know them today. Future changes in the status of existing physical structures or in the demographics of Scouting in CAC might require re- prioritization.

Wolverine Central Area (See Exhibit 2)

Relieving the over-crowding that exists at Blackhawk and providing a permanent site for Webelos Camp will be achieved by the development of a new central area at Camp Wolverine in the general vicinity of the abandoned swimming pool in the former Wolverine South area. The area will include a new swimming pool, an open air dining pavilion, shower and sanitary facilities, and a camp office which shall also incorporate a trading post, first aid station, and leaders' lounge, and necessary shower and sanitary facilities. The swimming pool and dining pavilion are of the upmost importance, and should be the first new developments at OSR. Ideally, the Wolverine camp office and accessory uses mentioned above should be completed concurrently with the pool, pavilion and sanitary facility.

The swimming pool is to be designed to include both copious shallow end areas to meet the needs of Webelos Camp operations and sufficient deep water to accommodate all Boy Scout aquatic requirements. Its location should be near the shell of the former Wolverine South pool, which must be excavated. The resulting debris must be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate fashion.

The shower and sanitary facility should contain a series of single purpose (shower or toilet), single user, unisex rooms, each of which is accessible individually from the outside. The precise number of such rooms would be determined by the code requirements. Mass hand washing stations should be situated on the ends to accommodate hand washing before meal times.

As presently envisioned the dining pavilion would accommodate 400 campers and would include plumbing and electrical stub outs to accommodate seasonal installation of a food serving line.

It may be cost efficient to remodel the existing Handicrafts Lodge into the camp office facility. While more professional siting is ultimately required, the presently contemplated locations of these facilities are reflected at Exhibit A.

The current Wolverine camp office would be converted into the Handicrafts area.

Reopened Wolverine Camp Sites

With the anticipated increased usage of Wolverine from the overflow of former Blackhawk campers who desire dining facility meal plans, it will be necessary to reopen 5 or 6 sites in the area south of the main entry road and 150 yards west of planned new pool. This effort should be relatively inexpensive as there are KYBOs at each site now. Each KYBO is to be rehabbed so that there are approximately 3 toilets, 1 shower, and 1 open hand washing station. Each of the three toilet toilets and the shower would be unisex and in single purpose rooms created within the existing kybo structure; all would have private entrances from the exterior.

Webelos Camp

With the development of the new, enlarged swimming pool and the dining pavilion, Wolverine would then host the Webelos Camp for the requisite number of sessions through out the summer. Presently two weeks would be sufficient to accommodate 400 Webelos campers and their accompanying parents/leaders, thus providing ample room for growth in this extremely important program. It is anticipated that additional temporary archery and BB gun ranges would be established for Webelos Camp, likely in close proximity to the swimming pool and dining pavilion. Webelos Camp typically requires 6 program areas, so they would also utilize the existing Ecology and Scout Craft areas. One or two additional program areas would be provided as necessary using temporary tents/canopies. These additional areas could easily be located between the eastern portion of the ring road and Wolverine Lake. That area is within roughly 150 yards of the proposed new central area.

It is critical that the announcement of the actual movement of Webelos Camp to Wolverine be made at least 14 months (and preferably 24 months) in advance. Such timing will permit unit leaders to alter their vacation schedules if they are affected by holding Webelos Camp at Wolverine. (BSA Policy, as stated above, is that Webelos Camp and Boy Scout Summer Camp should be at separate facilities.)

Wolverine Camp Director's Cabin

To provide appropriate supervision and to avoid confusion of where to report emergencies during the night, we recommend construction of a camp director's cabin in the general vicinity of the new Wolverine central area. A facility similar to a Gray Staff village cabin, but with a single bedroom, very basic cooking facility (perhaps merely a microwave), private bathroom, and a living room/dining room which could also serve as a small meeting room, would be appropriate. The location of the lodge should be separate from the staff area, yet close enough to exercise the necessary adult supervision. This step would also emphasize to all staff members the genuine respect the CAC has for all of them.

Infrastructure

The large "torpedo" gas tank at Ad Center was abandoned in 2010. In its place smaller, 250 gallon tanks were installed throughout the camp. Those acts substantially reduced the gas bill for the camp as a whole due to the elimination the major gas line leaks.

The water system in the camp continues to perform well. No major efforts are foreseen in the near future.

The electrical distribution system, however, needs relatively urgent attention. Several years ago a generous benefactor donated the reels of copper cable needed to re-run the distribution system. With the expected donated skilled labor that is available, the cost to relocate the electrical distribution system is approximately $30,000, a large portion of which is for equipment rental.

SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT PLANS

After the new Wolverine central area is completed, we must address the issues of sanitary facilities at the program areas, basic storm shelters, and other facilities to enhance the overall improvement of OSR.

Sanitation at Remote Program Areas

More specifically, the shooting sport ranges at both Blackhawk and Wolverine are somewhat removed from the camps' central areas. Generally, water lines are near each of these today. We should install at least two toilets (private usage, unisex) at locations convenient to these facilities.

Storm Shelters

The goal is protect scouts and leaders from lightning, high wind occurrences and the potential falling tree and limb debris. We should install inverted septic tanks at locations determined to bring us in compliance with BSA and state requirements. Gravel floors will suffice.

Blackhawk Camp Director's Cabin

A camp director's lodge, similar to that advocated for Wolverine should be constructed at Blackhawk.

Blackhawk Leaders' Lounge

Presently leaders of troops at Blackhawk have a dining fly as their lounge. A small building should be constructed to include ceiling fans, wi-fi access, and typical lighting and wall outlets.

Pole Barn at Ad Center Maintenance

Presently there is no winter storage for our camp vehicles. A simple pole barn, with a sandy floor, would increase the useful lives of the camp vehicles by avoiding exposure to the harsh winter conditions. A location south of the existing maintenance center, nestled among the trees, avoids the eye sore such a facility might otherwise be.

Family Camp Tent and Trailer Camping

There is interest in providing tent and trailer camping at Reneker. These could be relatively easily incorporated within the existing perimeter of the camp. As a starter we should provide water and electricity to each of an estimated 6 sites. Initially tent and small trailer campers would utilize the existing sanitary buildings at family camp. Larger trailer and Recreational Vehicle campers typically have shower and toilet facilities within their mobile unit; they would have to empty their tanks at a public or commercial facility. Creating RV pads should be considered in later stages of the overall redevelopment of Family Camp

REMODELING PLANS

KYBOs

All existing campsite sanitary facilities ("KYBOs') would be remodeled over time to conform to the single user, single purpose, unisex configuration contemplated for the new central facility at Wolverine. There appears to be sufficient space for 3 toilets, 1 shower, and 1 hand washing station at each campsite. The plumbing and septic facilities are in place already. The remodeling effort would consist merely of properly demising the rooms, and adding exterior doors for each. We should consider opening the walls around the hand washing station. The remodeling at each KYBO should include the build out of a gas hot water heater closet with mobile LP gas tanks. Units which desire hot water showers at their site could pay a surcharge to have a tank installed at their site for the week.

During the renovation of the KYBOs, we should ensure that each section camp has at least one camp site with handicapped accessible sanitary facilities.

Family Camp

Both the individual cabins and the central shower/sanitary buildings require substantial attention. We have determined the cabins remain structurally sound, but there is significant rotten wood in the first several feet of the roof lines at many cabins. We have determined that we can effectively replace those portions of the roof at minor costs. For aesthetic purposes we should have milled dimensional lumber to match the existing timbers.

In 2011 the bottoms of the sanitary unit buildings were replaced with cementious material to prevent rodents (primarily porcupines) from gnawing at the walls. Each unit still requires central ventilation to reduce the humidity in the areas. The problem of standing water in most of the individual facilities indicates the need for more complete evaluation of the cause of the water leaks. In the longer run, a renovation of the plumbing and shower pans may be required.

The swimming pool at Family Camp is functional, but deteriorating. The fiberglass skimmer covers are delaminating from the sides of the concrete pool. We may be able to extend the life by cutting away the loose fiberglass shards and applying epoxy to those cut away areas.

CAC has not replaced the Family Camp lodge which was destroyed by arson several years ago. In the meantime, the leadership of the camp has managed to continue operations with an old "circus type" tent. A new pavilion would be a welcomed addition to the facilities there. At a minimum, CAC needs to invest in appropriately sized tents/canopies to provide reasonable program areas for the children at Family Camp.

Gray Staff Village

The cabins at staff village have fared better than family camp in terms of their structures, but the cabins need redecorating and attention to the individual plumbing systems. The staff village cabins each have a private bath. These need adjustment to correct for running water in the toilets and shower valves that are temperamental at best. Furthermore, while various families at Family Camp have "adopted" cabins over the years by painting the walls and some furnishing, the staff village cabins have not received such beneficial treatment. Within 5 years the floor tiles in all the cabins will also need replacing; many could use that upgrade now. There are two funding programs which the Master Plan Committee believes will assist in upgrading the cabins. First, we recommend a program of encouraging camp staff to paint the interiors of their cabin with CAC provided paint and materials if CAC staff and qualified volunteers fix the plumbing in the bathroom. The second proposal is to institute an "Adopt A Cabin" program in which a family or small group of families provide the funding to make the necessary and approved alterations and in return receive free use of that cabin during non-summer camp periods for a specific number of years(five, for instance).

Camp Staff Cabins

Staff at the section camps typically reside in wood sided, wood framed, site built cabins in areas known as "staff row". The cabins are built for two staff members each, with one screened window on each of the two flanking sides of the cabin. There is basic electricity in each. Relative to the other scout camps we have visited these facilities rank near the bottom in terms of comfort and aesthetics. With some fiberglass insulation and wood paneling, these cabins could be substantially upgraded. Perhaps the installation of a ceiling fan could be considered. These efforts would be another component of demonstrating our respect for the staff.

Food Prep

Some attention must be given to a renovation/equipment replacement schedule in the Food Prep facility. While all the equipment is currently working, it is all of the age when we need to begin to consider the current life expectancy of this critical equipment.

Food Prep Cabins

We provide lodging for the food service staff in a small cluster of cabins behind the Food Prep building at Ad Center. These are similar in nature to Gray Staff Village cabins. Each of these needs to be remodeled by fixing plumbing, repairing interior walls, and replacing floor tiles.

Owasippe Museum

The Owasippe Museum is housed in a building which was moved to its current site after it was donated to CAC by the local authorities. It is in desperate need of new siding and windows. Given the dear nature of the contents of the building, it should be relatively easy to have volunteers raise the funds and donate labor to complete these essential repairs. CAC should authorize the formation of "The Friends of Owasippe Museum" and commission the production of an appropriate patch to recognize all who assist in this endeavor.

MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Recognizing the need for a systematic and coordinated maintenance program during and after the implementation of the master plan, the properties committee, in consultation with the Director of Camping, Camping Committee Chairman, Camp Ranger and other interested and qualified parties, shall establish a maintenance subcommittee whose charge shall be:

1. Coordinate and identify priorities and bring positive resolution to ongoing issues, with the ultimate goal of putting the physical assets of Owasippe in order.
2. Identify qualified, volunteer trade resources that will be called upon to assist in construction, repair and maintenance. Build and maintain a resource list of qualified individuals that will make this happen.
3. Build a materials resource list from which to draw as needed.
4. Meet regularly to review ongoing projects and establish priorities for future projects. Plan and execute future projects as they arise.
5. Prepare a Forestry plan to protect our campers and our buildings from possible danger from falling trees. It should also address the need to thin large trees in heavily wooded camp sites to provide the opportunity for younger trees to grow. Failure to thin could create unpopular, extremely sunny camp sites when the old growth trees eventually die.

DEMOLITION PLANS

We need to complete a more detailed review of each building on the camp premises to determine which ones no longer have any likely useful purpose for the camp. Those should then be demolished and the debris hauled away for proper disposal.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN MEETINGS CONSIDERATION BY CAMPING COMMITTEE

Health & Safety Issues

We should improve the night notification procedures for emergencies. The present system seems to have too many "moving parts" to be effective in situations when emotions are already at a heightened state.

We must ensure all adult leaders have directions to the local hospitals.

We should develop a secondary communications system beyond the use of the expected cell tower in 2013.

Marketing

Especially for Webelos units we should begin marketing camp much earlier in the year. Because many of these leaders are relatively new, they are not aware of the opportunity to take member of their Webelos dens to OSR for a summer camping adventure.

Personal visits to Cub Scout units by Webelos camp staff and by leaders of units which have already attended Webelos camp should create even greater demand for this growing area of OSR usage.

Off Season Use

The OOEC should continue to be our coordinator for off season use. There are most likely additional programs which can be held at OSR in conjunction with the local municipalities**.**

Development of Additional Program Concepts

Consistent with the CAC Strategic Plan, we should continue to develop additional program ideas to ensure the offered program at OSR remains exciting and challenging, thus helping to assure scouts desire to return each year.

Schedule for Webelos Camp

Consideration should be given to moving Webelos Camp to the end of the summer camp schedule to avoid the conflict with spring/summer youth baseball schedule. It has been asserted that this conflict caused several potential attendees to miss the camping experience.

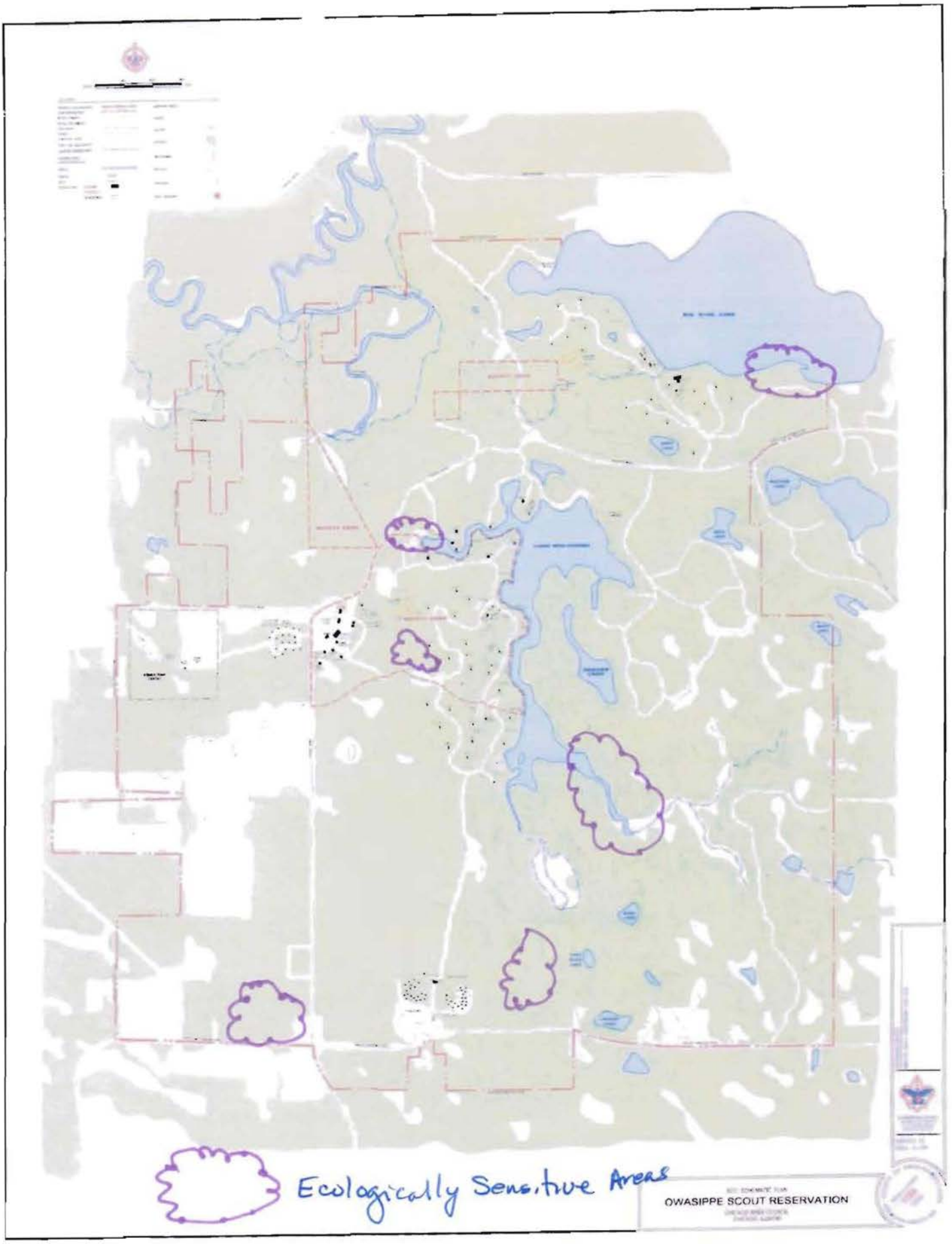
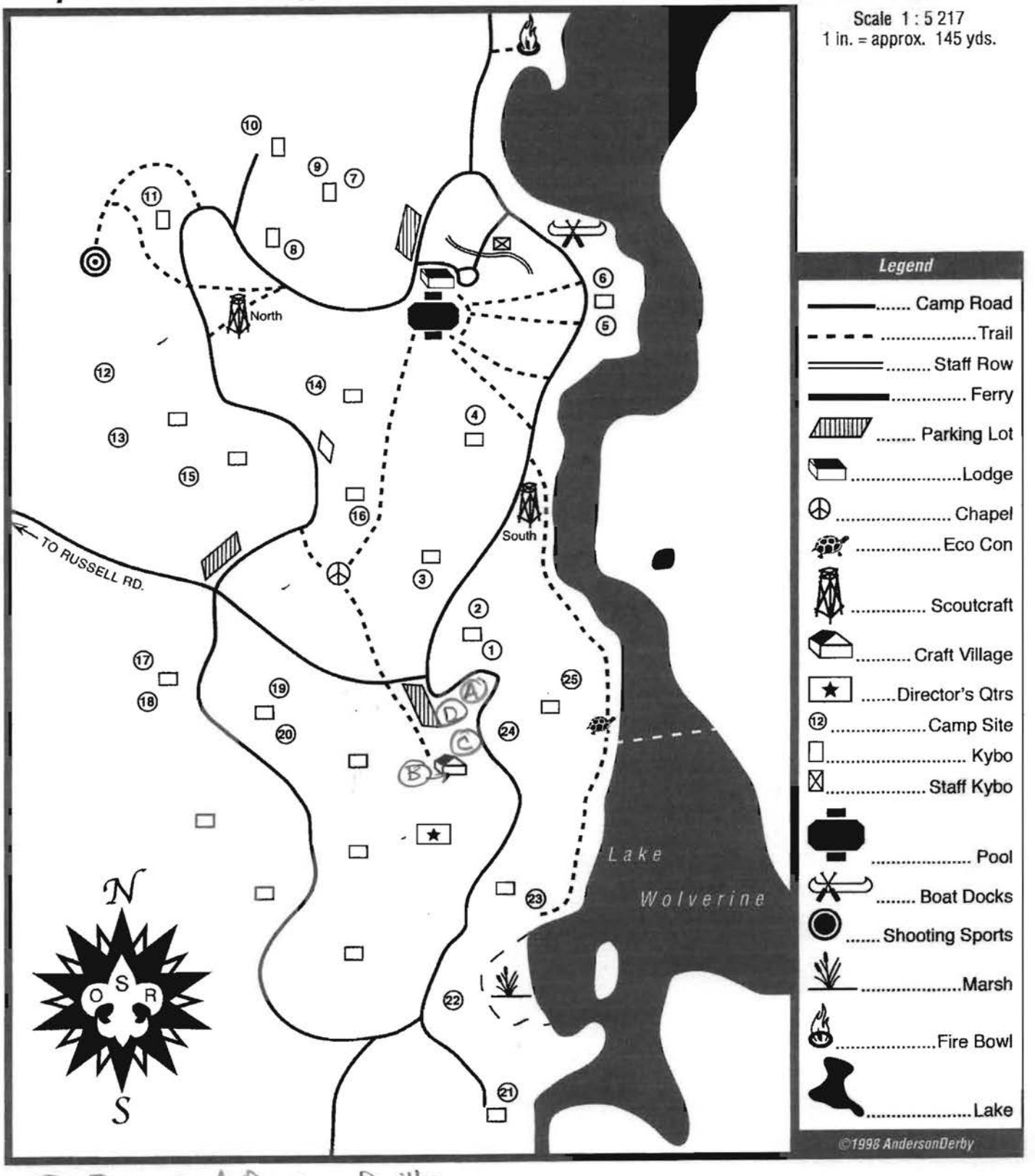

Ecologically Sensitive Areas
OWASIPPE SCOUT RESERVATION

EXHIBIT A

Camp Wolverine - Owasippe Scout Reservation



(A) Proposed Dining Pavilion
(B) Proposed Camp Office
(C) Proposed Pool
(D) Proposed Shower/Toilet Facility