

# Camp Walter Scott

## Strategic Plan

### 2018-2028



Find: Friends, God, Peace

## **I: Executive Summary:**

Camp Walter Scott is an important ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin. Many lives have been affected by time spent on this “holy ground.” The Regional Church recognizes the importance of Camp Walter Scott and its camping ministry to all ages, and seeks to improve the facility and programming to provide the best experience possible for all who visit Camp Walter Scott. This plan includes structural improvements and additional features that will enhance the camp’s natural beauty and attract more people to visit the camp.

## **II: Background:**

The camping program in the Christian Church of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) began in 1925. Currently, the Region’s camping program takes place at Camp Walter Scott in Dieterich, Illinois. Camp Walter Scott was purchased in 1962 by CCIW.

Camps are vital components of the Region’s youth ministry program, and are a support and identity system; which links local church youth with other youth and other programs of areas and the Region. The Region has ultimate responsibility for the program including scheduling camps; promoting, recruiting, and training camp directors; determining content and basic format of camp curricula; and developing a program that has consistency, accountability, and continuity. *Regional Staff, and/or designate, and the Outdoor Ministries Committee are the primary organizers and policy makers of Camp Walter Scott and the Summer Camping Program.*

The foci of the CCIW camps are:

1. Content studies of a Biblical and church based nature.
2. Personal spiritual development and faith sharing.
3. Building community and interpersonal relationships.
4. Leadership development.
5. Discerning God in nature; seeing our place in nature, and promoting stewardship of God's creation as we see the positive and negative impacts we have.

These are developed through the total camp experience in a variety of settings, intentionally structured to provide consistency, security, continuity and community for the campers.

### **III: Mission Statement:**

Camp Walter Scott is a sanctuary for all people to experience God in a natural setting, grow their faith, and become equipped to share their faith with the world.

### **IV: Objectives and Priorities for 2018-2022:**

#### *Phase One:*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #10 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt.
  - Install a low ropes course on the North side of camp
  - Install a swing set on the South side of camp (field area)
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Addition of Senior (Adults 55+) Camp to Summer Camping Program
  - Revive CCIW Men's Retreat (Fall)
  - Revive CCIW Elder's Retreat (Fall)

#### *Phase Two:*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #9 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt
  - Install a splash pad on the South side of camp (field area near Retreat House)
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Continuation of Phase One

#### *Phase Three:*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #8 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt
  - Build and install a ferry and/or floating bridge to traverse lake
  - Renovate South side shower house
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Continuation of Phase One

#### *Phase Four:*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #7 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt

- Break ground on new multi-purpose building with additional indoor housing (hotel style) and wi-fi
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Continuation of Phase One
  - Revive Leadership Camp

*Phase Five:*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #6 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt
  - Rebuild labyrinth on North side of camp
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Continuation of Phase One
  - Continuation of Phase Four

**V: Objectives and Priorities for 2023-2017:**

- Improve all outdoor physical structures
  - Replace each remaining outdoor shelter with a yurt and electricity
  - Update north side pavilion so that it can be used year-round
  - Update Retreat House and Cabins (new mattresses, flooring, furniture)
- Construct a multi-purpose building to provide a new dining facility, meeting rooms, and hotel-style lodging
- Construct a Retreat House near yurts on the south side of camp that can be used for staff and volunteer housing in the summer
- Install an in-ground pool and shower house facility next to splash pad
- Renovate current Dining Hall
  - Replace roof
  - Turn main hall in to an indoor chapel
  - Update meeting rooms- possibly create a staff apartment
- Install solar panels at the camp
- Install a high ropes course with zipline
  - North side of camp
  - Need to have someone on staff certified
  - Update insurance

## **Appendixes:**

### **A. History of Camp Walter Scott**

\*Edited from information compiled by David B. Merrick

Camp Walter Scott is an example of dreams becoming reality in the midst of uncertainty. Early in the region's history, extensive camp and conference programs were held throughout the state at rented facilities. The programs offered at these facilities were quality programs with high attendance- it is a proud heritage.

In the mid-1950s, there began to be a strong and effective push for the state convention to develop a Disciples of Christ camping facility. Attendance figures indicated that approximately 1,500 campers were involved each year, not including 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade age levels. Plans were made to have at least four facilities located around the state.

In 1961, two properties were purchased: Camp Barton Stone near London Mills and Camp Walter Scott near Effingham. In the mid-1960s, a facility near Waukegan was purchased from the Presbyterians and named the Campbell Conference Center. Each of these facilities was used by and for summer camps and conferences.

The 1960s were a time of initial development at Camp Walter Scott. One of the shower houses and the basement of the dining hall were built. The lake was created and "hogans" were set up on both sides of the lake.

In 1969, the Campbell Conference Center was sold. Two years later, the decision was made to sell Camp Barton Stone. The proceeds from the sale of these two properties were used for upgrading the facility at Camp Walter Scott. In the mid-1970s, the manager's home made it possible to hire a full-time, year-round camp manager. Keith Summers was the first to hold this position, followed by Ray Bateman, and later, Dale Slifer. In 1996, Reverend Burley Herrin became the camp manager. He left the position in 2002, and Becky Lewis was hired.

In the late 1970s, the camp began providing meal for the senior citizen meal program. This allowed the campground to provide consistent employment for its kitchen staff, as well as revenue for the maintenance of the facility. This program continued until 2001, when the camp was underbid and loss the senior citizen meal program.

Over the years, the facility at Camp Walter Scott has been upgraded and renovated with the help of caring volunteers. In 1999, an addition to the dining hall was completed, consisting of a new conference room in the loft area and new bathrooms. In 2002, work began to renovate the maintenance shed into a small retreat house, and was completed in 2007. The old water treatment building was renovated to house all maintenance equipment and needs.

In September 2007, Camp Walter Scott hosted Miracle Day to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the camp. Volunteers came out in force to help install new roofing and new bathrooms for each cabin.

## **B. Action Plan:**

### *Phase One (2018):*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #10 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt.
    - Camp Host is responsible with managing this project
    - Funding will be sought from Litchfield/ Kloberdanz Foundation
    - To be completed Spring 2018
  - Install a low ropes course on the North side of camp
    - Jared Reno has provided models to Rekindle Foundation (who will provide funding)
    - To be completed Spring 2018
  - Install a swing set on the South side of camp (field area)
    - Camp Host will contact donors about funding (Illinois Valley Cluster)
    - To be completed Spring 2018
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Addition of Senior (Adults 55+) Camp to Summer Camping Program
    - Director to be determined
    - Scheduled for June 27-30, 2018
  - Revive CCIW Men's Retreat (Fall)
    - Camp Host has spoken with a potential speaker
    - Will need to identify "who" will host the event (Regional Office staff or church within the Region)

### *Phase Two (2019):*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #9 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt
    - Camp Host is responsible for managing project
    - To be completed Spring 2019
  - Install a splash pad on the South side of camp (field area near Retreat House)
    - Camp Host is responsible for managing project
      - Research different companies and options
      - Secure funding (partner with Rekindle Foundation)
      - To be completed Spring 2019
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Revive CCIW Elder's Retreat (Fall)
    - Rebekah Nevius is responsible for coordinating event
  - Continuation of Phase One

### *Phase Three (2020):*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #8 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt
    - Camp Host is responsible for managing project
    - To be completed Spring 2020
  - Build and install a ferry and/or floating bridge to traverse lake
    - Clayton Summers (Rekindle President) is researching options
    - To be completed 2020
  - Renovate South side shower house
    - Clayton Summer (Rekindle President) is contacting someone to provide recommendations
    - Camp Host will be responsible for managing project
    - Camp already has dividers to install
    - Need to re-seal walls
    - Replace exhaust fan system
    - To be completed 2020
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Continuation of Phase One

#### *Phase Four (2021):*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Replace Hogan #7 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt
    - Camp Host is responsible for managing project
    - To be completed Spring 2021
  - Break ground on new multi-purpose building with additional indoor housing (hotel style) and wi-fi
    - Camp Walter Scott Board will research building designs and contact possible donors
    - Camp Host will be responsible for managing project
    - Break ground 2021
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Continuation of Phase One
  - Revive Leadership Camp
    - Will work with Camp Programming Committee to identify Director and curriculum
    - To be held Summer 2021

#### *Phase Five (2022):*

- Physical Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:

- Replace Hogan #6 with a yurt; also run electricity to yurt
  - Camp Host is responsible for managing project
  - To be completed Spring 2022
- Rebuild labyrinth on North side of camp
  - Camp Host will work with Rekindle Foundation and Illinois Valley Cluster to create a design and recruit volunteers
  - To be completed 2022
- Programming Improvements to Camp Walter Scott:
  - Continuation of Phase One
  - Continuation of Phase Four

**C. Description of Strategic Planning Process Used:**

Current Camp Host, Laura Williams, started this process in 2016. Some visioning had been completed prior to this in 2014 and 2015. Laura spoke with Regional Ministers Teresa Dulyea-Parker and Scott Woolridge about her background in community development, and asked for their blessing to complete the strategic plan for CCIW's Outdoor Ministries. With their support, Laura contacted members of the Outdoor Ministries Committee and other camp supporters throughout the Region to ask for their input into this process. The idea of a strategic plan was well received.

Communication was sent out via e-mail to discuss the mission statement and focuses of the Outdoor Ministries as a whole. Upon return of those revisions, a SWOT analysis was sent out via e-mail.

To begin with, the process had included Outdoor Ministries as a whole, including camp programming and camps at Pilgrim Park. As time passed and changes being made within the Region, the strategic plan then switched focus to Camp Walter Scott. The results of the SWOT analysis favored a strategic plan for Camp Walter Scott as well.

In October of 2017, members of the Outdoor Ministries Committee met at Camp Walter Scott to formulate a strategic plan. Members discussed the Mission Statement of Camp Walter Scott so that the rest of the planning process would keep that mission in mind. Members then discussed everything that they would like to see happen at Camp Walter Scott. From there, ideas were grouped together and then prioritized. After prioritizing ideas, tasks were assigned to members of the Outdoor Ministries Committee.



**D. SWOT Analysis:**

Outdoor Ministries SWOT Analysis	
Strengths (Internal)	Opportunities (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great community. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Authentic, rustic camping experience. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Passion for the campgrounds from a wide variety of individuals. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Dedicated staff.</li> <li>• CWS – beautiful, peaceful setting, natural, rustic, great cell service if you have Verizon</li>   <li>• CWS – our best management and hospitality I’ve ever seen there – thank you, Laura – so many gifts!! That can be our greatest draw to people.</li> <li>• Dedicated camp host/staff</li> <li>• Adequate space/acreage and facilities for what we are doing now.</li> <li>• Good relationship with Pilgrim Park for our programs conducted there.</li> <li>• Good group of volunteers to direct and counsel camps.</li> <li>• Regional committee that does an adequate job of supporting outdoor ministry in our region.</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Program</li> <li>• Love for Camp</li> <li>• Devotion from staff/ volunteers</li> <li>• Dedication to youth</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Information distributed well before deadlines</li> <li>• Good directors and counselors</li> <li>• Good leadership staff in place</li> <li>• Strong history of camping programs in place</li> <li>• Curriculum selected has been very good</li> <li>• Beautiful Sacred place for camp – CWS</li> <li>• Underutilized wilderness facility - CWS</li> <li>• Committed leaders, helpers, supporters, participants</li> <li>• Sacred spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunting Season. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Forging a partnership with another denomination. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Wedding location. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Sports camps.</li> <li>• CWS – more groups would love to use it if they only knew about it</li>   <li>• CWS – maybe we could share ownership and upkeep of the facility with another nonprofit group</li> <li>• Space for trails and other “adventure” activities.</li> <li>• Space for development, both of buildings and outdoor venues.</li> <li>• Creating new types of camps.</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Partnering with other camps to expand program opportunities</li> <li>• Volunteering</li> <li>• Water activities</li> <li>• Land (adding new structures)</li> <li>• Promotion to each church rather than winter packets that are sent</li> <li>• Online registration with access to immediate camp updates, camp roster, and letter from director</li> <li>• Directors responsible for training staff</li> <li>• Credit card per camp (prepaid)</li> <li>• Youth who are looking for opportunities to fit in</li> <li>• Strong Christian Community in Effingham – CWS</li> <li>• Easy access to camp due to interstate highways nearby - CWS</li> <li>• Traditional bases</li> <li>• Evolving needs</li> <li>• Search out, give voice, live the question</li> </ul>

Weaknesses (Internal)	Threats (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to change. Narrow vision. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Lack of enthusiasm by adults. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Lack of participation in upkeep. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Not keeping up with the times. ~ CWS</li> <li>• CWS – very low “camper days” per year – it can’t support itself, must be subsidized, very little funding available for repairs and capital improvements.</li> <li>• CWS – located too far away from major metropolitan area of draw in many other groups</li> <li>• We can make huge improvements in marketing – facility and camping program</li> <li>• Volunteers who don’t want anything to change.</li> <li>• Few trained medical staff person for each camp.</li> <li>• Unnecessary age restrictions</li> <li>• Lack of flexibility</li> <li>• Too many committees, too much talk, and too little action</li> <li>• Promotion</li> <li>• Too many meetings</li> <li>• Too many people missing necessary meetings and not having needed information</li> <li>• Too many people speaking on behalf of ODM without proper information</li> <li>• Inability to effectively communicate with various churches in the region</li> <li>• Pastors that do not share Regional Camp materials with their respective congregations</li> <li>• Less variety of camp staff/Less churches willing to send counselors</li> <li>• Aging buildings – CWS</li> <li>• Too primitive sleeping arrangements for most youth today - CWS</li> <li>• Underutilized wilderness facility – CWS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing culture.</li> <li>• Decline of the Caucasian Disciples.</li> <li>• Lack of interest.</li> <li>• Decay and degradation of the camping facilities. ~ CWS</li> <li>• Declining demographics – fewer children and youth in our churches to attend camp</li> <li>• CWS - People want motel-style accommodations, we don’t have them</li> <li>• A lake that is often unfit for swimming.</li> <li>• Lack of variety</li> <li>• Attitudes towards camp (particular camps)</li> <li>• Uninterested youth</li> <li>• Lack of expansion outside of DOC churches</li> <li>• Other camps both Christian and/or Sports that take kids summer time</li> <li>• Less willingness from parents to allow kids to be away from home for a week of camp</li> <li>• Less large youth groups from which to draw a core group of kids</li> <li>• General decline</li> <li>• Dwindling numbers</li> <li>• Circle wagons/fear</li> </ul>

## **E. Review and Development of the use of Camp Walter Scott outside of the Summer Camping Program:**

\*excerpt from Standard Operating Procedure for CWS & CCIW 2014

Outside sources of income are vital to the development of Camp Walter Scott. On October 8, 2011, The Rekindle Foundation (than called “Rekindling the Spark”) proposed “a two-year, turnaround timeline in which to operate so that we can not only acquire the necessary funding, but will also begin to see increased camp enrollments and financial rewards for the CCIW region.” That proposal included the following *Educational Outreach* for the development of the use of Camp Walter Scott outside of the summer camping program.

### *Identifying Community Partners*

The educational outreach taskforce will be charged with identifying university, school, and community partners who have an active interest in providing educational programming to students at Camp Walter Scott.

### *Finding Grant Opportunities*

Through establishing partnerships, the task force will identify and apply for grant funding through governmental agencies as well as private foundations.

### *Exploring a Hispanic Outreach Program*

The task force will explore the possibility of programming designed for Hispanic youth.

### *Conservation Initiatives*

The task force will actively review current conservation programs, camps with a conservation focus, and conservation initiatives to see how Camp Walter Scott can capitalize on its natural beauty.

## **Use of Camp for Retreats**

During the off-camp season months, Camp Walter Scott is an ideal setting for youth group retreats, men’s or women’s retreats, cluster retreats, Father/Son or Mother/Daughter weekends, Pastors events/trainings, Regional Training events, quiet days for Pastors, Worship & Wonder training, and more. We can maximize the use of the facility by allowing this option for CCIW congregations at a minimal fee.

## **Work & Mission Weekends**

CCIW has done a fantastic job, specifically in the last 3-5 years, on capitalizing on work weekends for the campground. Developing these activities will help care for the campground. Please keep in mind there may also be work that needs specific professional laborers. Specifying particular weekends or week for youth groups, churches, colleges, etc., to work on the campground can be a positive experience.

With work and mission weekends, we can also “adopt” buildings for specific congregations or name buildings as part of the history of our region and denomination (i.e. Alexander Campbell Cabin or Barton Stone Retreat House).

### **Non-CCIW Events**

Many colleges and universities have Christian fellowships on campus that would be able to utilize the facility for weekend retreats. The local Catholic Diocese has also used the facility. Are there other programs that we would be able to accommodate?

#### **F. Goals for Camp Walter Scott Advisory Board:**

Restructuring within the Region has dissolved the Outdoor Ministries Committee and created a Camp Walter Scott Advisory Board. Camp Programming will now fall under Program and Promotion for Camps under a new committee focused on bringing together children, youth, and young adult ministries.

The Camp Walter Scott Advisory Board will act as a sounding board and support system for the camp host, as well as help promote Camp Walter Scott throughout the Region. There will be quarterly meetings, mostly via Zoom or Google Hangout. One meeting each year will be held at Camp Walter Scott.

Members of the Camp Walter Scott Advisory Board will be asked to help research projects and recruit volunteers to help at camp.

#### **G. Monitoring and Evaluation of Plan:**

Target completion dates for each project is listed in the Action Plan. Each quarterly meeting, the Camp Walter Scott Advisory Board will discuss progress and edit as needed.

#### **H. Communication of Plan:**

The Camp Walter Scott Strategic Plan in its entirety will be shared with members of the Camp Walter Scott Advisory Board, Regional Church Council, and other key stakeholders. The Camp Walter Scott Strategic Plan minus appendices will be made available to the public.