



## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Camp Freeland Leslie Transition

### **DECISION:**

#### ***What was involved in the process to make the decision?***

There were a number of determining factors that lead to this difficult decision. The main being an examination of the Council's current and future financial situation given the ongoing bankruptcy filing of the national BSA organization. The Three Fires Council Executive Board then examined potential avenues for adequate contribution to this settlement. These options were diverse, creative and far-reaching. Every effort was made to explore all options and then evaluate each's impact on the future of our Scouting program as well as on our Scouting families, volunteers, donors and stakeholders. This decision was determined by all to have the least amount of impact on our mission and our future.

#### ***Why was the decision made to close and sell Camp Freeland Leslie after the 2021 season?***

In order to adequately compensate victims of past abuse and to adequately provide to the national bankruptcy settlement, the contribution our council is being asked to make is substantial. To properly provide for this settlement, we must make a number of sacrifices, while ensuring that our mission and critical operations continue. After examining all of the options, it was decided that the best avenue for doing this would be to sell Camp Freeland Leslie and focus operations on our Chicagoland properties.

Camp Freeland Leslie has largely been open for camping only from May until September (some limited availability after those dates). This is limited almost entirely to summer camp operations and a small number of special groups. Of those units in our council that participate in summer camping, less than 20% were doing their summer camping at CFL.

Camp Big Timber in Elgin is open year-round and is used for mission-critical district operations (klondikes, camporees, trainings, council events, fundraisers etc.). These events have been increasingly dependent on Camp Big Timber, especially during the pandemic when other large outdoor spaces in our area were unavailable. Camp Big Timber is also within the Council borders and is within an hour of every unit in our Council. This camp provides opportunity to continue to strengthen Scouting in our local community.

***Will there be summer camp at Camp Freeland Leslie in 2021?***

Yes! Camp Freeland Leslie will have Scouts BSA Summer Camp and Webelos Resident Camp this year just as it has since 1972. Spaces are still available, if you're interested attending CFL in 2021, make your reservations now.

We are also in the process of planning a number of memorial events throughout the summer for all campers, staff and alumni. Look out for more information coming soon.

***What other contributions will be made as part of the ongoing bankruptcy settlement?***

The Executive Board hopes that the sale of Camp Freeland Leslie will provide a large majority of our necessary financial contribution. The final amount has not yet been set, but that will dictate what other avenues, if any, are necessary.

The Council is prepared to make some additions to this contribution, if necessary, through unrestricted investments. We do not intend to make any other major changes to our Scouting Program and plan to continue hosting many of the same events and resources our membership has grown to love. **At this time, the Council does not intend any further reduction to staff, services or programming that are essential to our Scouts.**

**CAMPING:**

***Why does it seem like there is no longer an emphasis on Troop camping?***

Camping and Scouting go hand-in-hand. **That will never change.**

This in no way means an end to Scouts BSA Summer Resident Camp experiences in the Three Fires Council. We are working diligently to establish cooperative programs with other Scout councils that have summer camps in our region, particularly those that have capacity, opportunities and amenities our Scouts and Scouters desire. These include open program, dining hall and patrol cooking options, robust advancement programs, enhanced leadership training and camp staff opportunities. We understand that the bankruptcy will cause a shift in many operations for Scouting nationwide; however, **we are committed to ensuring Three Fires Council Scouts always have access to high quality summer camping close to home.**

Throughout the coming months, our program team will be diligently researching, coordinating and planning to guide our Scout units toward excellent summer camping opportunities for 2022 and beyond. We do not intend for Camp Big Timber to replace

Camp Freeland Leslie as a location for Scouts BSA Summer Camp. We plan to work with neighboring councils to provide opportunities and partnerships that will benefit all involved and help provide quality camping for our Scouts.

Many of you are already familiar with those camps, as our records show that more than 80% of our troops that attend summer camp already use out-of-council camps. There are a number of Scouts BSA Summer Camps in Wisconsin that are similar in distance to Camp Freeland Leslie as well as many others across the region. A number of those camps have excess capacity, and we are working with them on partnerships that will make it even easier for Three Fires Council Scouts to attend.

***Why aren't there other councils' Scout camps closing?***

Unfortunately, Scouts BSA camps throughout the country are closing or being sold due to declining use as well as the bankruptcy filing. There are councils that do not own summer camping properties, but still have a vibrant camping program. We are lucky to have Camp Big Timber in Elgin where we can continue to provide a number of similar programs for our Scouts much closer to their homes.

***If we are not camping at CFL this summer, will we have a chance to visit?***

We are scheduling several alumni celebration events for people to reminisce and celebrate Camp Freeland Leslie.

**GENERAL:**

***What will happen to the property?***

Three Fires Council will sell the property to cover the Council's financial obligation related to the ongoing bankruptcy proceedings. The Council will retain whatever resources possible for use in future programming.

The Council has just begun the process of preparing the property for sale. At this time, there is no indication of a potential buyer for the property or what they will do with the property after they take possession.

***When can the membership ask questions and provide feedback?***

We know that you have many questions and concerns regarding this decision, and we want to make sure your voice is heard. We have scheduled two virtual town hall meetings for this coming week so that all concerned can ask questions and provide feedback. These town halls will be Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> and Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at

6:30pm. To RSVP for these events, go to [ThreeFiresCouncil.org/CFI-Transition](https://ThreeFiresCouncil.org/CFI-Transition). The Town Halls will be recorded and a link will be posted after the events.

***Into The Future:***

This decision was extremely difficult for all involved. Like many of you, our Executive Board and Council staff have a deep emotional attachment to Camp Freeland Leslie. Many were Scouts or camp staff, and many more have spent many nights there under the stars. CFL has made an impact on all of us, and it has been crucial to the history and success of our council.

The Council and Executive Board are now charged with enhancing the utilization of Camp Big Timber in Elgin as well as affiliated properties in our communities. To do this, they will be conducting future planning sessions, looking at alternative programming and examining what our Scouting families and customers are asking for. The Council is looking at ways to blend together old traditions from CFL as well as building on the future of Camp Big Timber, including fully utilizing its new features such as the lodge and expanded camp sites. We look forward to providing updates on that process as it continues.