



Preliminary Report

Program Recommendations

Girl Scouts of South Carolina –
Mountains to Midlands



November 8, 2008



Planning Scope and Schedule



- **Purpose:** to develop, based on research within the stakeholders, a program plan that represents their needs and hopes; recommend property and facility needs that will support the program recommendations
- **September** – gather written material.
- **October** – conduct online survey, personal interviews and town halls; see all of the properties.
- **November 8** – Report preliminary program recommendations to delegates and members at Annual Meeting for feedback.
- **November 19** – Make recommendations to Property Committee regarding programs and property needs.
- **December 5** – Discuss recommendations with the Board.
- **February** – Board reports decisions to the Annual Meeting.



What we've learned about GSSC-MM

- You have wonderful legacies, passionate and committed leaders, many assets, great opportunities and some challenging decisions to make.



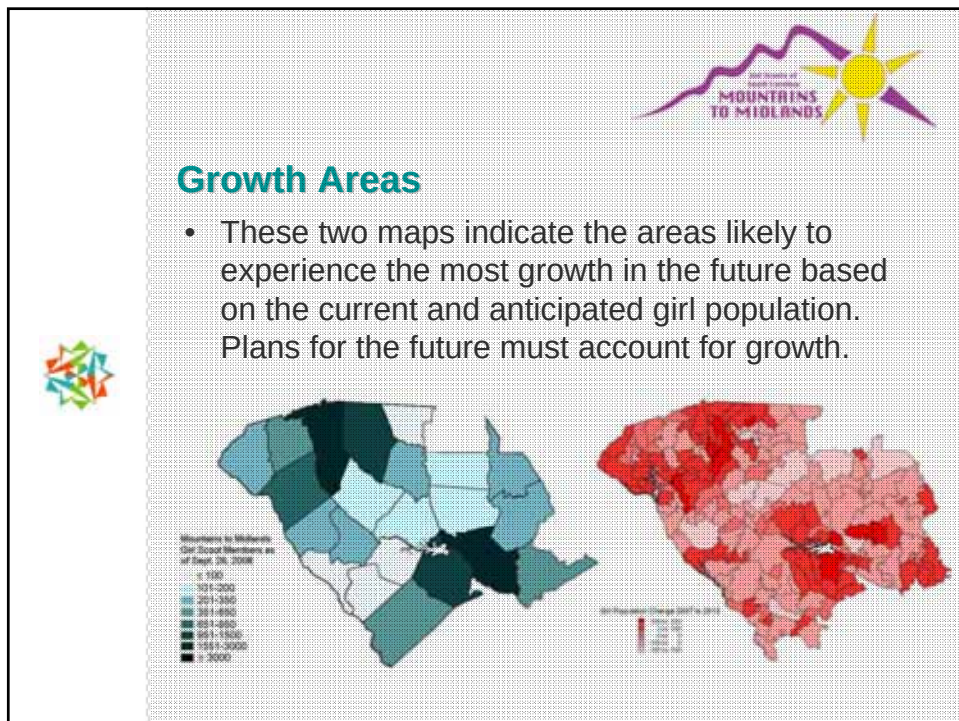
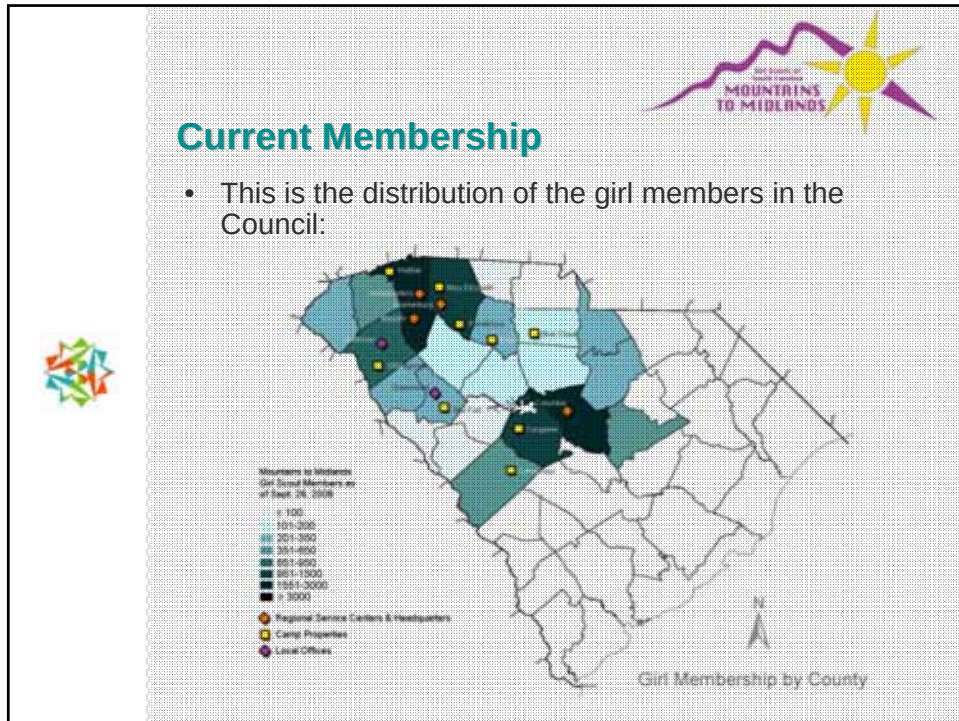
Current Membership

- As of the end of September, 2008, this was the membership recorded by the Council:

REGION	# Service Units	# Girl Members	% Girls Served
Spartanburg	11	2,182	5.72%
Mauldin	11	5,102	6.86%
Columbia	16	4,786	5.35%
Total	38	12,070	5.98%

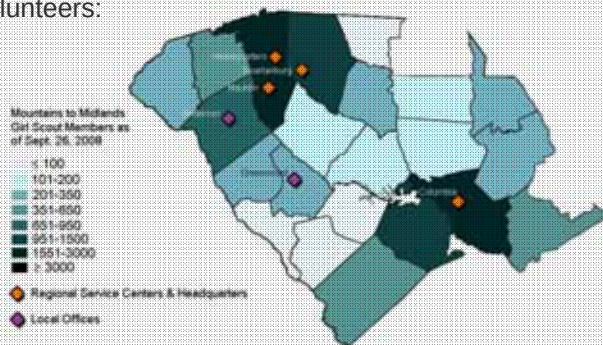
- On behalf of GSSC-MM, if you accept the GSUSA goal of 10% of your available girls, you need to grow to more than 20,000 girls – just for TODAY'S population.**
- Projected increase of 2,350 girls by 2012, primarily in ethnic populations.**





Staff Support

- Staff are located across the Council to serve girls and volunteers:



- Does not include the out-based CDM's.
- Based on GSUSA norms, GSSC-MM has double the staff to member ratio of other Councils. Still many report not having access to staff -- must be a logistical issue.

How will you attract and serve more girls?

- through fun, interesting, active PROGRAMS!
- with committed, trained, enthusiastic volunteer and staff leaders!
- Following are the results of the surveys, focus groups and Town Hall meetings.





Girl Survey – Profile of Respondents

- 317 girls responded; 227 finished
- At least one from each county, proportionate to member population
- Distribution of members by age --
 - Daisy, Brownie – 26%
 - Junior – 23%
 - Cadette – 38%
 - Senior, Ambassador – 13%
- 85% are current members; most related to a troop



Girl Survey – Reasons for membership

- Want to BE A GIRL SCOUT....
 - To HAVE FUN
 - To learn new skills, have experiences you can't have other ways
 - To make friends
- DON'T want to be a Girl Scout....
 - Similar responses by younger (Daisies through Juniors) and older girls (Cadettes through Ambassadors)
 - Too busy with other things
 - Parents won't take them to activities
 - Not interested
 - Don't have the money
 - Opposite responses – “not cool” and uniforms were reasons for older girls, not for younger girls





Girl Survey – Benefits

- Most important benefits....
 - *All girls* -- Make the world a better place
 - *Older girls* -- develop leadership skills
 - *Younger girls* -- gain confidence
 - *Both* – have the courage to do the right things
 - *Least benefit for both*..... stay healthy and fit
- Girls do want to learn to make decisions and take leadership, but 31% indicate they only have the opportunity “sometimes”.
- The “other” common affiliation (70%) is church.
- Girls say that Girl Scouts is special because **it's ALL GIRLS** and girls get to **choose activities they want to do**.
- Frustrated that they don't get respect like BS's.



Girl Survey – Program Interests

- Ranking of the six major categories (3 point scale)

Younger girls: (152)		Older girls: (157)	
The Arts	2.83	The Arts	2.74
Outdoor/Envir. Educ.	2.81	Outdoor/Envir. Educ.	2.69
Healthy Living	2.70	Leadership	2.69
STEM	2.55	Healthy Living	2.49
Leadership	2.36	Business Enterprise	2.39
Business Enterprise	2.31	STEM	2.35





Girl Survey – Program Interests

- Ranking of CAMPING Activities (3 point scale)

Younger girls: (133)	3.00	Older girls: (136)	3.00
Cooking over fire	2.81	Overnight in lodge	2.77
Campfire	2.80	Cooking over fire	2.69
Overnight in lodge	2.79	Campfire	2.58
Exploring environment	2.79	Exploring environment	2.56
Hiking in the woods	2.64	Using a GPS**	2.53
Using a GPS**	2.61	Practicing survival skills	2.51
Practicing survival skills**	2.58	Hiking in the woods	2.46
Using a compass**	2.56	Overnight in a tent	2.42
Overnight in a tent	2.50	Using a compass**	2.16

**20% to 45% responded "Don't Know"



Girl Survey – Program Interests

- Ranking of OUTDOOR/ADVENTURE Activities

Younger girls: (133)	3.00	Older girls: (133)	3.00
Riding horseback	2.75	Go kart racing	2.72
Farm animals	2.68	Riding horseback	2.71
Go kart racing	2.65	Archery**	2.68
Exploring caves**	2.58	Zip line**	2.64
Gardening	2.54	Exploring caves**	2.50
Rock climbing/rappelling**	2.49	Rock climbing/rappelling	2.42
Archery**	2.47	High ropes course**	2.39
Backpacking**	2.45	Shooting a rifle**	2.38
Zip line**	2.42	Farm animals	2.37
High ropes course**	2.33	Backpacking**	2.34
Bicycle road trip**	2.30	Gardening	2.19
Mountain biking**	2.23	Bicycle road trip**	2.17
Shooting a rifle**	2.06	Mountain biking**	2.16

**20% to 45% responded "Don't Know"



Girl Survey – Program Interests

- Ranking of WATER BASED Activities

Younger girls: (130)	3.00	Older girls: (133)	3.00
Swimming in a pool	2.98	Swimming in a pool	2.92
Playing on water toys	2.94	Playing on water toys	2.91
Tubing**	2.76	Tubing**	2.76
Sailing**	2.70	Kayaking**	2.59
Fishing	2.69	Canoeing	2.58
Canoeing**	2.66	White water rafting**	2.56
Kayaking**	2.63	Sailing**	2.52
Swimming in a lake	2.62	Water skiing**	2.51
White water rafting**	2.51	Fishing	2.38
Water skiing**	2.48	Swimming in a lake	2.32

**20% to 45% responded "Don't Know"



Girl Survey – Program Interests

- Ranking of SPORTS Activities

Younger girls: (130)	3.00	Older girls: (132)	3.00
Volleyball	2.54	Volleyball	2.45
Cheerleading	2.53	Soccer	2.21
Soccer	2.53	Softball	2.21
Softball	2.34	Basketball	2.19
Basketball	2.27	Cheerleading	2.12
Track/running	2.24	Track/running	2.05





Girl Survey – Program Interests

• Ranking of ARTS Activities

Younger girls: (129)	3.00	Older girls: (131)	3.00
Arts and crafts projects	2.91	Photography	2.79
Painting	2.91	Dance	2.69
Photography	2.84	Painting	2.67
Dance	2.82	Graphic design	2.67
Pottery	2.81	Arts and crafts projects	2.66
Playing musical instruments	2.76	Drama	2.64
Singing camp songs	2.75	Playing musical instruments	2.61
Drama	2.73	Pottery	2.60
Going to art museums	2.62	Singing camp songs	2.46
Graphic design**	2.61	Singing in a chorus	2.43
Singing in a chorus	2.54	Writing poems, stories	2.40
Writing poems, stories	2.50	Going to art museums	2.30
Going to the symphony**	2.42	Going to the symphony	2.12

**20% to 45% responded "Don't Know"



Girl Survey – Program Interests

• Ranking of PERSONAL and LEADERSHIP Activities

Younger girls: (127)	3.00	Older girls: (127)	3.00
Learning to cook	2.89	Learning to cook	2.80
Taking care of pets	2.81	Personal hygiene, makeup	2.69
Team building w/ friends	2.77	Team building w/ friends	2.64
Making a web site**	2.74	Babysitting skills	2.64
Planning with Troop	2.73	Leadership skills	2.63
Personal hygiene, makeup	2.70	Making a web site**	2.62
Leadership skills	2.68	Taking care of pets	2.58
Doing service projects	2.63	Planning with my Troop	2.57
Babysitting skills**	2.57	Making a Facebook page**	2.56
Making a Facebook page**	2.57	Doing service projects	2.54
Exploring careers**	2.53	Exploring careers	2.48

**20% to 45% responded "Don't Know"



Girl Survey – Program evaluation

- Motivated to participate in programs by....
 - *Being interested in the topic/activity*
 - *Incentives (badge or patch)*
 - *Adult encouragement (leader, parent)*
- Think highly of their leaders and being a GS; not as positive about current programs, marketing approaches.
- Rely on Troop leader to know about programs, get materials; key to continued participation.
- *Consistent response – cost is not a deterrent to participation for great majority of girls.*



Girl Survey – Camp preferences

- Clearly, not “one size fits all” in terms of accommodations
 - Large majority want cabins or lodges with heat, AC, lights, flush toilets and showers
 - BUT a few want tents and rustic sites
 - AND at least half want to cook outside on a fire/grill with their Troop
 - Not a lot of difference between Troop and resident camp preferences (lodges vs. cabins)





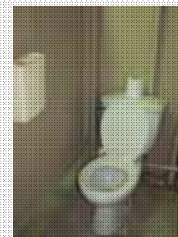
Girl Survey – Camp preferences

- Program amenities desired by 70% or more...
 - Swimming pool with slides
 - Arts and crafts center
 - Horseback riding
 - Campfire circles
 - Lounge just for girls to talk
 - Lake for canoeing, kayaking, etc.
 - Go kart track
 - Climbing wall
 - Hiking trails



Girl Survey – Camp evaluations

- Acquaintance with camps varied – smaller camps had only 5 – 7 respondents
- All toilet and shower facilities had a significant number of “Yuck!” answers
- Facilities ranking above 4.00 with regard to “facilities in good repair” included Wistagoman, WaBak, Mary Elizabeth and Ponderosa.
 - However, individual facilities in each camp were scored low
- Girls indicated that they would “likely” attend more programs at “ideal” camp.





Girl responses in Focus Groups

- Similar to the survey..... with these additional understandings –
 - Girl Scouts represent very different ages, interests and preferences. Need to program for ALL.
 - Girls want active, participatory programs. Interested in almost anything if it is fun and engaging.
 - Older girls want more programs FOR THEM – not always with younger girls. Want to help choose and plan the activities.
 - Girls love to go places, stay overnight.
 - Highly motivated by incentives, especially related to EARNING credits toward purchases, programs and scholarships.
 - Want more respect!



ADULT survey – How does it compare?

- 715 started the survey, 553 finished
- Council areas represented proportionately
- 69% have college or post graduate degrees
- 45% have household incomes over \$75,000
- 96% are female, 16% non-white
- 53% were a volunteer or friend of Girl Scouting
- Another 37% were parents; 11% were staff
- 64% were Girl Scouts as a girl.....
 - Greatest benefit was gaining confidence and learning responsibility
 - Only 25% felt being a GS contributed “a lot” to achievement as an adult



ADULT survey – How does it compare?



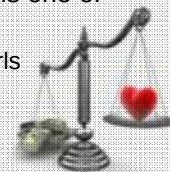
- Ranking of six major categories –
 - Generally ranked in the same order as the younger girls but ranked LOWER (indicating less interest).
 - Arts, Outdoor and EE, Healthy Living, Leadership, STEM, Business Enterprise
- Ranking of reasons to attend a program/activity
 - Adults rank the role of friends higher than the girls.
 - Girls seem most influenced by the activity itself.
 - Neither place cost as a significant factor.
- Adults rank the current program, materials and leaders in the same order as the girls but less favorably.



ADULT survey – How does it compare?



- Noted similar benefits – Make the world a better place through confidence, courage and character (leadership).
- About 80% see “strong” to “some” evidence that the benefits translate to girls’ actions.
- Cost issue...
 - Both girls and adults indicate that cost is reasonable in relation to value
 - Saying that “it’s too expensive” likely means one of three things –
 - A family with low income and/or multiple girls in scouts (not the majority in this survey)
 - Program isn’t of value to the member
 - Feel that cookie money should be applied





ADULT survey – Troop Leaders

- Job would be easier if....
 - Reporting requirements were reduced and simplified
 - More online training were available
 - There was more funding for troop activities
 - SU meetings were effective places to communicate

Note –also heard these issues in focus groups and Town Halls

- Best ways to communicate...
 - Regular e-mail memos
 - Up to date and interactive web site
 - Program guide and mailings
 - Service Unit meetings



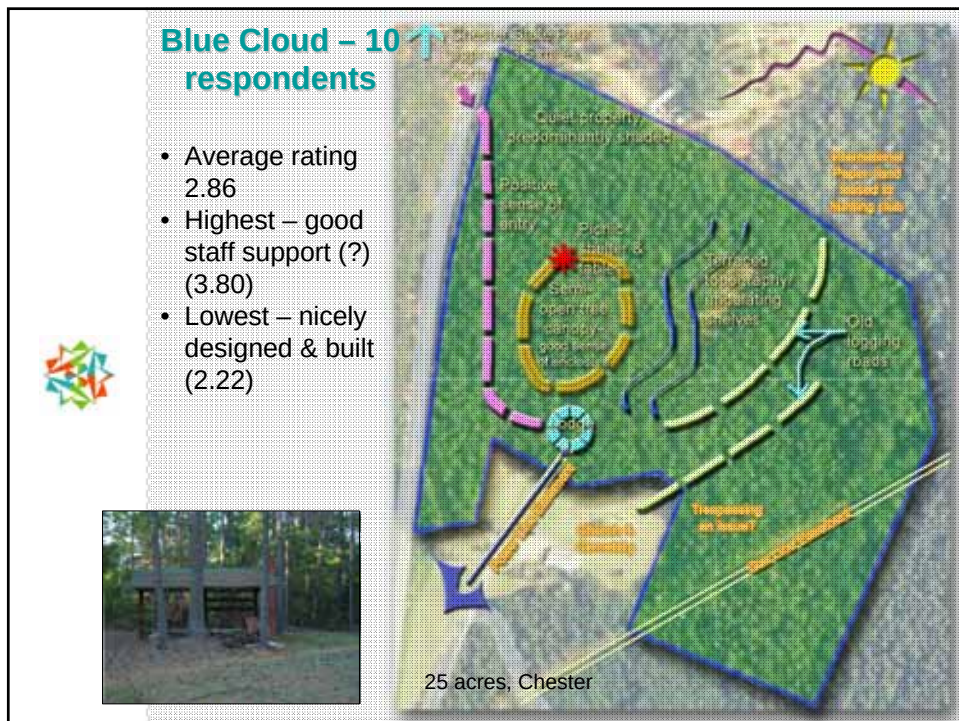
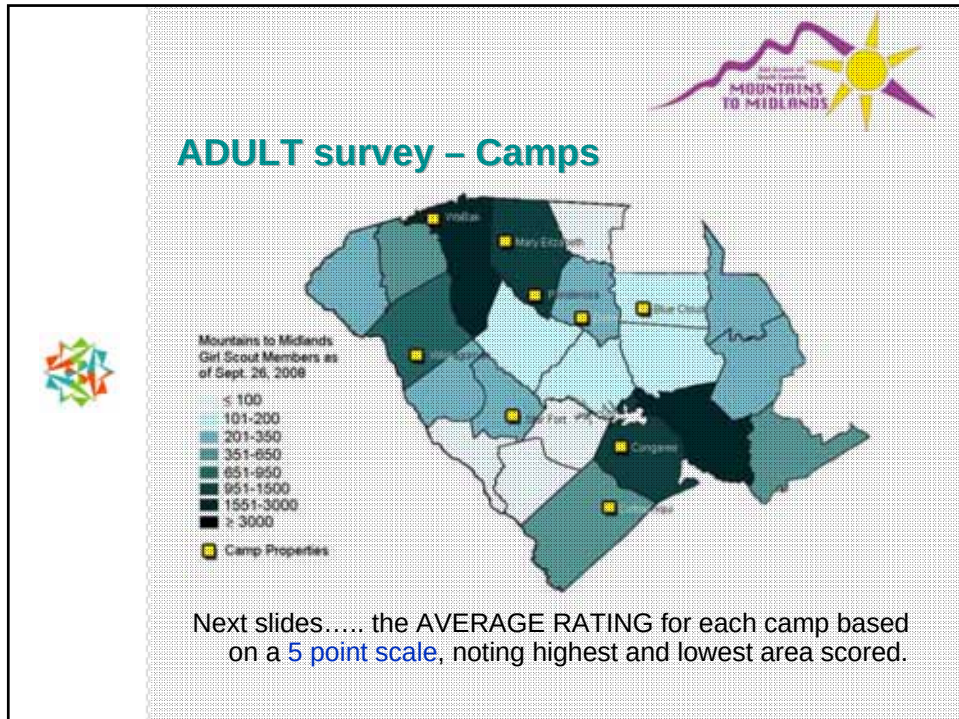
In all settings, poor communication about programs, policies and resources was the biggest criticism of the Council.



ADULT survey – All stakeholders

- Persons invest in Girl Scouts to work with an organization that supports **girls**.
 - Stakeholders believe that GSSC-MM carries out important values and benefits, **but is less convinced that it has the organizational capacity to meet the changing needs of today's girls.**
- The organization is judged primarily by its **leadership**.
 - Some also noted the importance of news coverage, the opinion of influential leaders in the community.
- 219 “other” comments with these themes...
 - **Improve the QUALITY of programs and properties and make available LOCALLY**
 - **Train and resource leaders to deliver LOCAL programs**
 - **More leaders for more TROOPS**





- Average rating 3.65
- Highest – easy to get to (4.22)
- Lowest – well maintained (2.78)

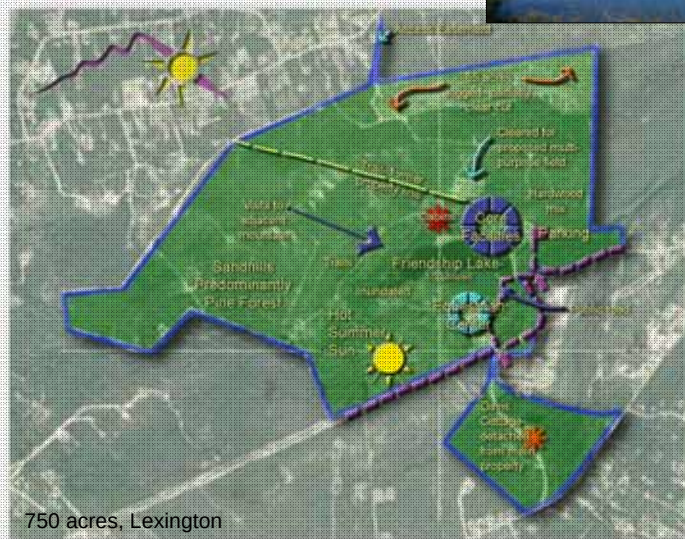
- Average rating 3.65
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91 acres, Aiken

- Average rating 3.88
- Highest – good natural features (4.27)
- Lowest – well maintained (3.32)

- Average rating 3.88
- Highest – good natural features (4.27)
- Lowest – well maintained (3.32)



750 acres, Lexington

-
- A photograph showing the interior of a rustic cabin. The walls are made of vertical wood planks. A large brick fireplace is the central feature, with a dark metal fire grate in front of it. To the left of the fireplace, a person is partially visible standing near an open doorway. To the right, there is a wooden door and some furniture, including a chair. The ceiling has a gabled structure with exposed wooden beams.



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- A photograph of a forest stream with fallen trees and dense foliage. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The banks are covered with fallen leaves and branches, creating a natural, undisturbed environment.

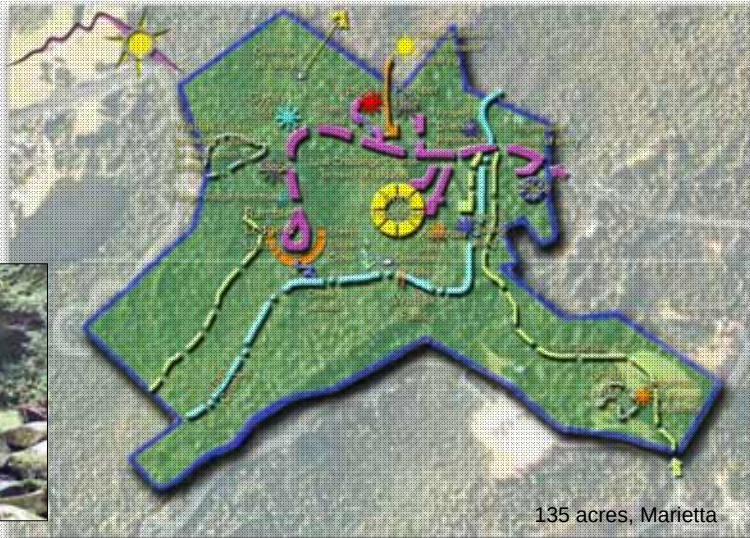


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WaBak – 247 respondents

- Average rating 4.54
- Highest – good natural features (4.71)
- Lowest – easy to get to (4.27)



135 acres, Marietta

Wistagoman – 71 respondents

- Average rating 4.31
- Highest – easy to get to (4.51)
- Lowest – staff support (4.02)



30 acres, Anderson

Feedback on offices



- Too many of them, wrongly configured, in the wrong places
- Somewhat conflicting needs

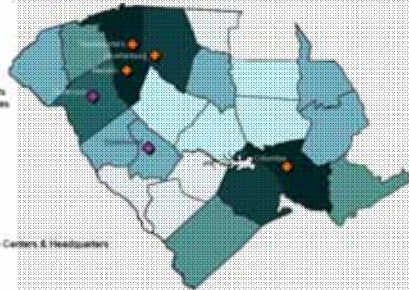
- Quality work space for staff – separate from program space, good storage, up to date technology, safe at night
- Program friendly – easy access, parking, stores, meeting/training space, opportunities for Troop overnights
- Connected to the business communities around the state



Mountains to Midlands
Girl Scout Members as
of Sept. 26, 2008



Regional Service Centers & Headquarters
Local Offices



Feedback on huts, gathering spaces



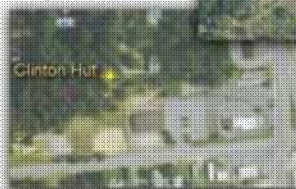
- Aiken
- City owned
- Just signed 25 year lease with city
- Small, but used often



- Newberry
- Park nearby
- A hut space is in demand
- The current space is in poor repair and in a potentially unsafe area



- Newberry Hut



- Clinton
- Near city park
- Good neighbors help watch over property
- Good agreement with city

- Appreciated and used a lot when in a safe place, kept in good repair
- Increasing need for meeting places in some communities
- Could be a base for CDM's especially for storage of materials, meeting place
- Good opportunity to partner with local community





TOWN HALLS – major themes

- Girls join/stay in Girl Scouts because of **PROGRAMS**.
- Quality programs are....
 - Active, participatory, new opportunities, trips, overnight
 - Led by willing, creative, enthusiastic adults
 - Designed for each age group
 - Delivered to and with the Troops, the Service Units, the Council, and partners/places beyond.
- Members and volunteers are hopeful but anxious – the past is over, the present is confusing, the future is vague.
- **COMMUNICATION is the top priority at the present – consistent, clear messages delivered with quality in every format**
- **Must have MORE committed, trained adult leaders to grow.**
 - **Volunteers need MORE staff assistance and resources.**
- Decision-makers need to communicate rationale for property decisions directly to those implicated.



TOWN HALLS – good ideas, insights

- Variety is good but the TROOP experience is still the grounding point for most girls
- Motivation changes as girls grow older.....
 - Daisies, Brownies – want FUN and new experiences
 - Juniors – like to earn badges, etc.
 - Cadettes and older – leadership roles, scholarships, opportunities that help them develop their unique selves
- Programs need to focus on girls' contemporary interests – e.g. Jonas Brothers, sleepover at a movie theater, Dance party --- as well as introduce them to new interests.
- Repeat the popular programs in areas around the Council.
- Girls like the outdoors but have different levels of interest in how to encounter it.
 - **Definitely do not like run-down, uncomfortable, shabby facilities.**
- Develop a mobile store that travel around the Council.
- Reinstate better incentives for selling cookies.
- Honor commitments from legacy councils (e.g. sale of land at Congaree)



A Vision for the Future

- First and foremost – *Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.*
- This happens as girls DISCOVER, CONNECT and TAKE ACTION through **quality programs** sponsored by the Troop, the Service Unit, the Council and beyond.
- EVERY LEADER – Volunteers, staff, Board members – plays a role in achieving the outcomes related to the mission.
- **Girl Scouts of South Carolina – Mountains to Midlands CAN BE a premiere Council with YOUR help.**



A Vision for the Future - Programming

- Deliver the values and benefits of the Journey through program experiences and themes that are interesting to today's girls, things they can't do in school and church.
- Communicate opportunities via contemporary media – colored brochures with pictures, interactive web site, concise e-mail messages.
- Maintain variety with two specialty areas –
 - Outdoor adventure (designed for challenge and progression in real skills)
 - Arts (especially visual and creative arts)
- Offer the range of programs in a variety of time formats (half or full day, overnight, camp)
 - Repeat popular short-term programs around the Council





A Vision for the Future - Leadership

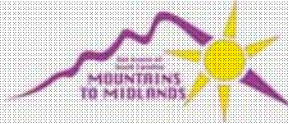
- Improve communication and training of volunteers
 - Effectiveness of the CDM is KEY
- Provide MORE staffed resources, more “ready to use” experiences
- Emphasize staff roles to SUPPORT, FACILITATE and RESOURCE programs as well as deliver them
- Assist volunteers in finding resources for quality programs, rather than cutting costs
- Provide safe, functional, accessible SPACES for program delivery



A Vision for the Future – Places & Spaces

- GSUSA norms for camping space required:
 - **Troop overnights:** 25% of membership annually = 5000 girls = approx. 500 troops over 36 weekends = 14 troop locations per weekend.
 - **Resident camps:** 10% of membership annually = 2000 girls over 7 weeks = approx. 150 girls in 2 camp sites.
 - **Day camps:** No statistical goal. Consultants' perspective
 - a VERY IMPORTANT program style; needs to be offered in populated areas.
- Additional recommendations (consultants)
 - Some kind of meeting, program resource and overnight facility within 1 hour of every troop for local programming and support.
 - May be a camp site, hut, program center, office with program space, space shared with another organization.
 - Reduce administrative office costs.





A Vision for the Future – Places & Spaces

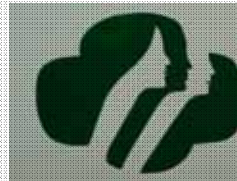
Criteria for evaluating properties

1. Program demand

- For girls, current and future members
- For adults
- Variety of ways to meet diverse population needs

2. Connect people to GSSC-MM

- Girls
- Leaders
- Community supporters
- Resources



3. Sustainable Plan for growth

- Provides access to program spaces through partnerships and ownership
- Requires proportionate cost to develop and maintain quality facilities



A Vision for the Future – HOW?

- ALL OF YOU have the power to make it happen.

- Believe in and live the mission.
- Take initiative to improve those things that are not up to par.
- Advocate for Girl Scouts in your community.
- Assist in securing resources.

