The following is the original Camp Michaels Visioning Process Plan, the guiding document first published in June, 2010. It is presented here to give an understanding of how the process came about to describe how the process was intended to go:

Feedback from the council's membership has indicated there may be an interest in new program opportunities at Camp Michaels. In addition, the lack of regular maintenance and the need for several critical facility improvement projects has placed the council in a position where a decision is necessary as to the future of the camp, its place within the council's camping programs, and the scope and depth of work to be done to bring the camp to an acceptable standard for the Dan Beard Council.

Visioning Process Purpose

The primary objective of the visioning process is to give direction to strategic decisions to be made regarding improvements to Camp Michaels. Any maintenance work, construction projects, program development, or other elements of planning should be guided by the feedback obtained from those that use the property most, namely, the Scouts and Scouters of the Dan Beard Council. The participants in the process should mainly include unit and council-level members, but external input should also be incorporated in order to best accommodate usage by outside groups such as chartered organizations and community businesses.

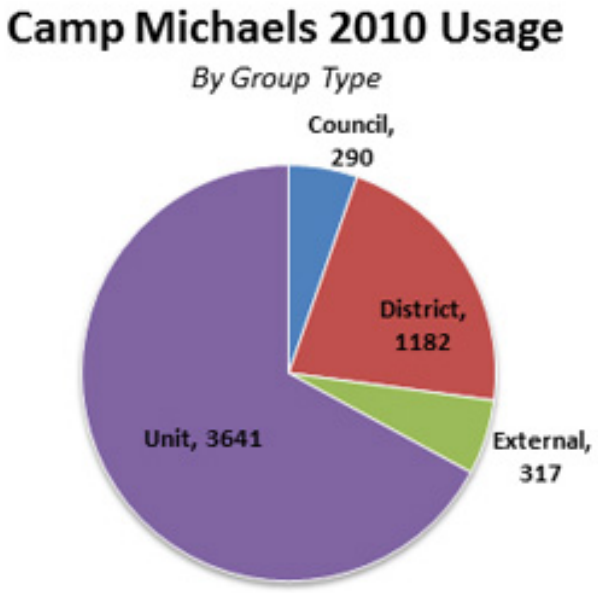
With the feedback gathered, a formal visioning committee will be formed to review, analyze, and form conclusions based on data. These conclusions will determine the scope of physical work to be done, programs to be developed, and the funds necessary to achieve this.

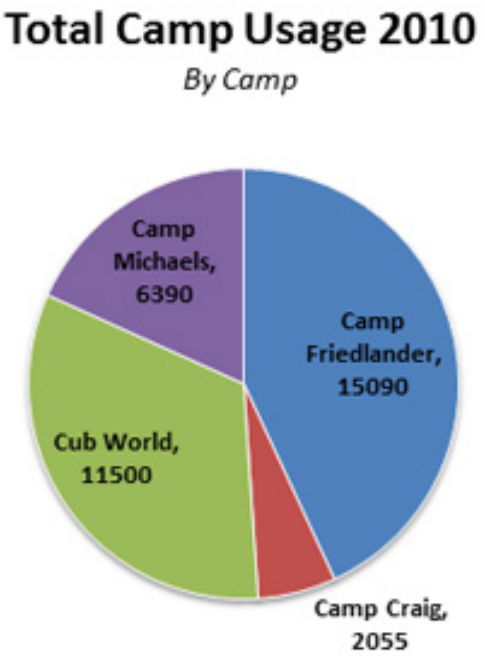
Current Camp Usage

Not including council summer camp programs, Camp Michaels is the second most used camp of the four council properties. The majority of usage is by small groups, including Scouting units, however, several large programs are offered on the property. Usage from 2009 can be grouped into four categories that should be considered during the visioning process:

- Council events – includes National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), Order of the Arrow (OA) ordeals, Venturing Extreme-o-ree, and several adult leader trainings.
- District events – includes two Cub Scout Day Camps, Archery and BB Gun Academy, and two District Camporees.
- Unit events – Cub Scout Pack and Boy Scout Troop campouts or overnighters (no Venturing Crew usage in 2009), and unit meetings.
- External group usage – non-BSA groups including Army National Guard, Girl Scouts, and the Cincinnati Stake of the LDS Church.

Any plans for development at Camp Michaels should match the expected types of usage. The current usage of the property should be a starting place for discussions on its future. The following charts give an overview of usage statistics of Camp Michaels in 2009, a good representative year for usage data.





Current Camp Facilities

The current camp facilities and programs at Camp Michaels are relatively modest. The 700 acres of the camp are bifurcated by Gunpowder Creek with the majority of the property on the north side of the creek and the developed portion on the south banks. This is no reliable passage across the creek on the property; however, there is now vehicle access to the north property via Dale Williamson Road.

The following structures currently exist on the property:

- Caretaker home
- Maintenance barn
- Four program shelters (approximately 100 seating each)
- Lodge building with meeting area for approximately 30
- Primitive shower house with two shower heads
- Multiple latrine facilities throughout developed portion of camp
- Storage building (inaccessible due to safety issues)
- Chapel structure with bench seating for approximately 100
- Campfire ring with bench seating for approximately 200

Critical Maintenance Issues

Whatever the outcome of the visioning process, there are several maintenance issues that must be addressed in order to continue the current operations of the camp. These are due to safety, access, health department mandates, or quality of program delivery. Because these projects can be considered mandatory, it is imperative that they be included as factors in any development plans for the property.

- **Water infrastructure** – The camp currently operates on two cisterns that provide limited drinkable water on the north and south ends of the camp proper. The Northern Kentucky General Health District, while accepting of this system, has recommended upgrading to a mechanically-managed treatment process. In 2007, the cisterns were temporarily condemned due to E. Coli infection, causing logistical problems for summer programs. Any substantial development of the camp will require connection to a city water line.

- **Sewage and septic system upgrades** -- Pit latrines throughout the camp are permissible under health code due to a grandfathered ordinance; however, any new construction of waste facilities will require more modern facilities. Shower facilities are to code due to an $11,000 expense in 2010 to replace a leach-field with a full septic system.

- **Main road access** – The main road leading into the camp proper from Hathaway Rd. is in general disrepair. The road suffers from drainage problems, potholes, and areas of rough passing. Temporarily relief of these issues has kept the road passable in recent years; however, this has been a $5000 a year operating expense to the camp. Full repair of the road would include excavation and replacement of multiple culverts passing beneath the road and laying of new gravel along the mile-long length. The minimum cost for this repair is estimated at $80,000, while a full re-grading and paving of the road may cost near $250,000.

- **Bridge issue** – A bridge leading from the parking area to the chapel, campfire, lodge, and main camping areas of the property may be at risk of collapse. Erosion around the bridge area is slowly uncovering the culverts designed to divert water. In flash-flood situations, water rises over the bridge, making the road impassible, making for safety and access issues. In addition, the bridge has no guardrails and is a hazard for larger vehicles. The bridge and culverts should be rebuilt and installed to specifications to enhance safety and accept increased access. The estimated cost to rebuild the bridge to an acceptable standard is $15,000.
- **Kitchen upgrades** – The current kitchen facility located in the lodge cannot operate to health code and is not prepared to handle the volume of campers for the current programs. The facility is essentially a residential kitchen, but must be licensed as a non-commercial food service operation. The equipment and design of the kitchen prevent it from being licensed. In 2010, the Northern Kentucky General Health District prohibited any food preparation in the kitchen for the NYLT program. If this program is to continue at Camp Michaels, the kitchen must be brought to code.
- **New property designation and parking** – The 70 acres added in 2007 allow for vehicle access to the far side of Gunpowder Creek. There is currently a rustic gravel road at the end of Dale Williamson Rd. leading to a flat area that has been used for parking. This area should be designated as a camp entrance and marked as Dan Beard Council property through signage. In addition, the parking area should be formally recognized through re-grading and spreading of gravel.

Visioning Process Outcomes

Through the feedback of Dan Beard Council membership and the engaging of experts, a full vision of the future of Camp Michaels will be developed. The majority of participants in this process should be those that use the camp or have a desire to use the camp to enhance their Scouting programs, but do not because of the current condition of the facility. Representatives of each Scouting program should be involved, including Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturing, and Exploring. It is expected that adult leaders and parents will provide the most feedback, however, youth should have just as strong of a voice. While consideration should be given to the needs and wishes of the Trailblazer district due its proximity and history with the camp, the vision should reflect the overall desires of the council as a whole.

This visioning process hopes to reveal several important factors that will determine the future of the camp. These vital questions should be answered:

- How can Camp Michaels better enhance Scouting unit programs? Currently the majority of usage is unit-based. The vision may be to continue the focus of the camp on unit outings, or it may show a desire to move towards greater council programs such as high adventure treks, training facilities, or a Venturing camp.
- What kinds of facilities should be built? The primitive nature of the camp is one of the favored qualities. Should the camp continue the rustic nature of the camp and limit the building of new structures and only bring the current ones to a higher standard, or should substantial development be planned including full facility infrastructure and modern multi-use facilities?

- What are the next steps and scope of a campaign? Simply upgrading current facilities and land will have a much lower price tag than an extensive development plan. If the voice of the council is to offer new programs and modern facilities at the camp, a full capital campaign may be required.

Visioning Process Steps

Phase 1: Focus Groups

The first step for collecting feedback and data towards the development of the Camp Michaels vision will be in the form of focus groups. Through guided discussion, the current thoughts and feelings on the camp should come to light. These general discussions will focus on what people would like to see Camp Michaels become, how it is currently used and how it might be used if the resources were available. With this information, the scope of the possibilities of development will begin to form. It will also provide suggestions for the questions to be asked in the survey phase of the process.

Phase 2: Online Survey

Based on the initial ideas from the focus group, an online survey will be implemented during the month of September. The survey will be open to Scouts, leaders, parents, and the general public. The primary questions will collect demographic information including age, tenure in Scouting, location, position, and history of usage of Camp Michaels. The second part of the survey will address the participant's Scouting unit and what programs it offers or would like to offer. The third part of the survey will ask fixed questions about possibilities for the camp, followed by open questions for "in your own words" ideas.

As this survey will be the meat of the visioning process, the survey data will need to be analyzed

thoroughly. The most vital feedback is the desires of the average Scout and Scouter. While the responses from veteran Scouters and those that already frequent Camp Michaels are important, the feedback from those that have the most to gain from the development of the camp should be focused perspective from which the data is reviewed.

Phase 3: Camp Michaels Vision Committee

After the survey has been completed and ideas gathered, a committee of volunteers from diverse areas of the council will be convened. This group of 10-15 should represent all the Scouting programs, be diverse in age, location, position in Scouting, and familiarity with the camp. The committee will be tasked with transforming the ideas taken from the focus groups and the survey into a realistic vision for the camp. The outcome of the committee's work should lead towards the following objectives:

- Focus and scope of development: If there is a specific focus needed for the camp, e.g. high adventure or youth training, the scope of any development to be done will be determined.
- Structures and facilities: To be able to offer new programs or in order to better serve as a resource to units, any facilities that need to be designed and built will be listed.
- Necessity of a campaign: Based on the determinations of the committee, the need and size of a capital campaign to implement the vision will be decided.
- Next steps: After the visioning process, the roadmap for beginning to implement and communicate the vision will be outlined.

Conclusion

Camp Michaels is a worthwhile future resource for Dan Beard Council units – the visioning process will reveal the feelings of the council's membership on how Camp Michaels should fit into the council's programs and what development, if any, should be done. With the incorporation of the voices of those that will use the property, the vision will be a complete representation of the function of the camp for the future of Scouting in the Dan Beard Council.