

Initial Focus Group Results

Written by Mike Swofford

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Several meetings were held during the 2010 summer camp season with leaders attending with their Scouts. The number of attendees ranged from 5 to 18. The mix of leaders included representatives from Ohio, Kentucky, and out of Council. It is worth noting that several of the leaders were also involved in Venturing and had thoughts on how Venturing might benefit from Camp Michaels development. The discussions used a roundtable format, with guiding questions. The feedback and ideas gathered from these focus groups became the source of questions and ideas for the [online survey](#). The following is a brief summary of the ideas collected at these meetings.

Almost all agree:

- Camp Michaels should remain rustic and primitive.
- There is no need to duplicate the facilities at the Dan Beard Scout Reservation.
- Access to the north side of Gunpowder Creek via a pedestrian bridge would be beneficial.

- Backpacking and Philmont training programs would be well received.
- An outdoor education center on the new property side of the camp would be desired for new Scout advancement and patrol-style activities.

Ideas for programs and activities:

- Backpacking trails and campsites
- Leave-no-trace training treks
- Patrol camping sites
- Winter camping facilities (cabins)
- High-level orienteering courses
- Mountain biking
- Tree canopy zip line course
- Pioneering village
- Wilderness survival
- Horseback riding

Ideas for facilities and infrastructure:

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- Upgrade and perform maintenance on current facilities and build new facilities on new property.
- Emergency shelters that fall within national standards
- Water available at main areas of camp, but not needed in backcountry
- Easy access to north side of Gunpowder Creek
- Full shower house at current Camp Michaels developed area and at new property vehicle entrance
- Electric available at main areas of camp
- Communication system, cell phone tower
- Facilities should be green and sustainable.

Possible vision from feedback so far:

The entire property could be restructured to be inclusive of multiple camps. The current developed area could remain "Camp Michaels," and a new camp could be developed with a new camp name. The camp could become the "Powder Horn Reservation" with two camps that make up the property. The "Camp Michaels" facilities could be upgraded including a paved road into and through the camp, a rebuilt lodge with full kitchen facilities, and a full shower house similar to the buildings at the Dan Beard Scout Reservation.

A camp on the new property could be built centered around an Outdoor Education Center. This building could have multiple purpose meeting and training rooms, shower facilities, and serve as a base camp for High Adventure programs.

Patrol-style campsites could be built as part of the base camp area, with a pioneering village, orienteering course, and other Scoutcraft-type of activities for troops to use. Leading from the base camp could be multiple backpacking trails that wander through the backcountry area. Built along these trails could be Adirondack style primitive campsites and teaching areas for programs such as Leave No Trace, Kodiak, and Philmont training.