



June 2, 2020

Re: Closure of Physical Summer Camp & Virtual Camp

Dear Scouting Family,

Ever since I was a Scout, my week at camp was something I looked forward to with great anticipation – a chance to get away, swim in the lake, shoot on the range, hike from activity area to activity area, and creating memories around the campfire with my fellow Scouts.

Over the last several months, a team of incredible volunteers and staff have spent countless hours trying to find a solution so that we could deliver a safe and fun summer camp program for our Scouts. It is with a great deal of sadness that I share that we are unable to offer a physical summer camp program this summer. Ultimately, our decision came down to two key issues:

1. **Could we guarantee a safe environment for our campers?** The daily changing of facts related to COVID-19 has made it impossible to develop a Health and Safety Plan that we felt confident addressed all the issues. Multiple inside sources including our Camp Physicians and Risk Management committee along with outside experts have advised that cancelling would probably be best in light of the constantly changing facts and lack of direction. Ultimately, we just couldn't guarantee we have enough facts to develop a plan to keep kids safe nor could we be sure we could accommodate a plan when the Health Department comes out with one around July 1st.
2. **Could we guarantee a quality experience?** Given the limited information we saw from the CDC and the National Camp Association, it was an almost forgone conclusion that several program areas (such as aquatics and shooting sports) would not be allowed. Additionally, the lack of volunteer weekends to get on site and get camp ready was becoming another huge barrier that would impact quality.

If unto themselves those barriers were not enough, we still have the issue of families potentially traveling between zones in different phases of reopening – *could any of our Scouts attend Massawepie for example, since it's in a different zone.* There has been no ruling on that issue by our counties, but other counties in New York have said that would not be permitted.

With all of the unknowns ahead of us both the Risk Management Committee and the Council Camping Committee recommended to our Executive Board the incredibly hard decision not to open resident camp programs. This includes all programs at Cutler, Hovey and Massawepie including resident camp, NYLT, Eagle Flight, Cub Scout Resident Camp and First Responder Camp. Over the weekend we polled our Executive Board and they are also in agreement. Weekend Camping, Family Camping and Cub Scout Twilight Camp are still possibilities once cleared.

With the bad news out of the way now for some exciting stuff...

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Virtual Summer Camp 2020

I am pleased to share that our Council Camping Team has been hard at work developing two virtual summer camp programs for our Scouts. The Scouts BSA and the Cub Scout Virtual Summer Camps are both stocked full of so much stuff no Scout can do it all.

- Information on Scouts BSA Camp can be found at www.senecawaterways.org/racdeever
- Information of Cub Scout Summer Camp can be found www.senecawaterways.org/2020virtualcubcamp

When units sign up for either program, registration will include free weekend camping in August for your unit to use at one of our three properties. Costs for both of these programs are free to adults and have been greatly reduced for participants. As such there are no campership funds available.

Both camps will deliver age appropriate challenges for youth that revolve around three key areas 1) advancement needs, 2) individual learning and competition and 3) Unit Competition and team building. Camps will have evening programs as well including campfires, and Scouts' Own service just like at camp. The camps will run on multiple platforms most probably Zoom for group sessions and Slack or other app-based platform for Scouts to upload personal program and competitive items. These camps will all run with staff and volunteers. Groups that have already paid deposits to summer camp can use part or all of those funds to register for Virtual Camps. Links to register for Scouts BSA are live and Cub Scouts link will be live by the end of the week. Camps will be limited to 300 Scouts per week. June 19th will be merit badge sign up for Scouts BSA virtual camp and Scouts will need to be registered prior to merit badge selection.

Thank you for your understanding and support of our Scouts and we hope that you will be able to join us around our virtual campfire this summer.

Sincerely,



Stephen T. Hoitt
Scout Executive