

**SCOUTS CANADA  
CENTRAL DIVISION**

To: Board of Directors  
Incorporated Body, Provincial Council for Ontario

REPORT: Youth and Scouters Survey on Scouting Property Use

Date: June 4, 2004

Submitted: Brian Anderson

## CAMP SURVEY -YOUTH & SCOUTERS

June 4, 2004

As part of our property assessment program, we requested feedback on the expectations of youth and scouters regarding camp properties.

The survey was comprised of 5 sections dealing with

- program activities at camp
- camp facilities and features
- distance to camp
- programming
- general comments

Two survey forms were developed; one for youth, and one for scouters. The feedback direction and content were basically the same but language tailored to the participant.

A memorandum was sent out by email February 5, 2004 to Council Commissioners and Deputy Youth Council Commissioners, requesting that they distribute the survey through their appropriate networks. A reply date was set at March 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Response Numbers**

Total received:	402	( 286 youth, 116 scouters)
Youth - cubs	164	
- scouts	110	
- venturers/Rovers	12	
Scouters - pack	42	
- troop	48	
- company	3	
- other	23	

### **Comment:**

- in some cases, leaders had made it a pack or troop activity as responses were received from an entire section.
- the 'other' in the scouter survey section includes service team members as well as several group committee chairs.

## **Summary Results: Attachment 1**

In attachment #1, the data shows the top 5 priorities for program activities and facilities. Any duplication of numbers indicates a tie in number of responses.

The priorities were developed by ranking the item placement after combining the number of responses that ranked 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>.

A number of youth responses were voided due to illegibility and/or non-clarity, as well as 'nonsense' responses.

### **Interpretation/comments:**

#### **1. Program activities: List in order of importance, 5 program activities you would like to be able to do when at camp.**

##### **Youth survey**

Clearly all youth, want to be able to hike while at camp. Some responses indicated designated trails for hiking although not necessarily marked.

Having space available or designated for sports and/or team games scored high at all section levels.

Swimming and water activities (canoeing, fishing,, etc) also rank in top five although different priority within each section.

##### **Scouter survey**

All scouters, with the exception of company advisors (3), also agree with the youth on hiking as number 1 priority activity many would like to be able to do.

Other top five priorities differ in priority but seem to reflect program emphasis.

#### **2. Camp facilities & features: List in order of importance, 5 features you would like to see at a camp.**

##### **Youth survey**

The top 3 priorities were picnic tables, washrooms and tuck shop. However, it must be noted that picnic tables and tuck shop were cited as examples in the survey which have contributed to the large number of 1<sup>st</sup> place responses. It may also be a realization that many campsites do not have availability of tables and even cabin facilities may not have picnic tables outside for activities or seating.

Descriptive terms associated with washrooms included: more, closer, cleaner, flush type,

Tuck shop and the ability to buy 'junk'; candy, ice cream, etc was important to cub age youth.

Having cabins or buildings were ranked 4<sup>th</sup> by cubs and scouts. This may indicate that they are so used to camping in a building that it did not 'pop' or they only camp in weather suitable for tenting.

### **Scouter survey**

Variety of priorities based on section, although picnic tables and washrooms were in the top 3.

Washrom comments were very common. Many scouters more concerned with the condition and sanitary nature than with the abundance or closeness of the units. Many expressed the lack of cleaning or cleaning supplies available.(expectation that camp should provide or look after)

Potable water, while it ranked in the top 5, did not seem to be a major concern. It may be that scouters already take potable water to camp for drinking and use camp water for cooking and 'bathing'.

Fire pits ranked #1 by pack scouters. Again, is it the lack of a designated location within the campsite or the need for a 'barrel, drum or concrete base with grate. May be some safety concerns since youth, particularly at that age, are fascinated with fire and hence scouters want more of a controlled environment for a fire.

### **3. Distance to camp: what is the longest time you want to travel to be to camp?**

Youth and scouters seem to be consistent and in agreement on the time - less than 2 hours. In fact the #1 response for all but pack scouters is less than 1 hour. It is understandable that youth would score this high. They want to get to camp as soon as possible. Scouters, however, must realize that in many urban communities it takes 30-60 minutes just to clear the city boundaries. Reality check !!

### **4. Youth: Do you want a camp program that gives you the chance to earn a star or badge?**

Younger sections very clearly answered yes.

**Scouters: Would you like the opportunity of accepting a 'canned program' presented by camp program staff?**

Scouters, other than Venturer section, were in favour of having programs available. Having said that, it was desired that it would be optional at the discretion of the section leadership. Troop scouts qualified their yes answer by commenting that the youth should have a voice in program activities.

The question did not address the issue of a cost for such programs. This would no doubt have changed the response unless scouts realized that any offered program would have a cost involved (though some scouts, I am sure, would believe it should be free).

## **5. General Comments**

### **a) What would make you want to have at a camp to get you to go back to a Scouting camp once you have been there?**

#### **Youth**

Given that this question was confusingly written, the youth still responded. However, the responses seem to relate to their own experience at camps with their own program and experience rather than the facility. So many said 'more fun', 'more free time', 'better food', 'more food', etc. A number of responses did mention program and facilities:

- ' Plenty of wood'
- ' clean toilets'
- ' more games'
- ' archery and rock climbing'

#### **Scouters**

Whether a pack scouter or troop scouter, facilities are more important than available programming. Typical comments:

- ' clean facilities'
- ' proper washrooms'
- ' well maintained grounds and buildings'
- ' accessibility'
- ' pool/creek/ ponds'
- 'camp staff'
- ' hiking trails'
- ' clean washrooms'
- ' lost cost'
- ' firewood'
- ' wooded areas'

**b) What do you like about our Scouting camps?**

**Youth**

Again, I think the youth relating to the experience of camping with their pack or troop as compared to what they liked about the property.

Typical comments:

- ' mattresses on bunks'
- ' lots of open space'
- ' activities'
- ' free time'
- ' the food'
- ' meeting other scouts'
- ' no parents'

**Scouters**

Comments obviously related their own personal experiences at the camp or camps they have used. They generally like the fact that it is not too far to go to a camp. Not so far fetched since Scouting has 'many camps' everywhere. Several comments to history of the camp in Scouting. Ability to meet and interact with other 'scouts'. Those that attend camps with full time warden or ranger were very supportive of the need for such staff.

**c) What should we do to improve our Scouting camps?**

**Youth**

Again, more about their camping experience:

- ' cleaner and bigger washrooms'
- ' make it more fun'
- ' clean water and indoor plumbing'
- ' make more interesting'
- ' more choice of activities'
- ' more sports and games'
- ' swimming'

**Scouters**

Two major themes through-out the comments: 'make more affordable to camp' and 'upgrade the facilities'.

Several comments in regard to better promotion of all camps; access to all camps by all groups. Better advertising; placing information on the web. More use by other organizations during the week. Many comments on the cost to camp is too high. In some cases, the cost is restricting the number of times sections camp during the year.

Many comments on facilities: although particulars not stated. In 'most' cases, scouters are dissatisfied with washrooms - condition, maintenance and upkeep. Roads and campsites not well maintained.

A number of comments relate to the need to have program equipment available at camp such as snoeshoes/skis; bikes; crafts supplies; sports equipment.

Other comments:

- ' full time camp staff
- ' upgrade camps'
- ' everything just fine'
- ' don't sell off camps'
- ' more support by camp staff'
- ' make cheaper to use'
- ' do not need staff'

#### **d) Should Scouting camps be based on themes?**

##### **Youth**

Cubs were split on this question. Those that said yes offered themes such as Medieval Times, Space, Pirates and Knights

Scouts were overwhelmingly no.

##### **Scouters**

As with the cubs, pack scouters were also split. Those in favour suggested themes such as Olympics; aboriginal; space; medieval.  
Troop scouters were not.(about 62%)

#### **Closing comments:**

Through the comments, it was apparent that some scouters were aware of the initiative to review and assess our camp properties. They made a point to mention the camp they frequent and offered comments on that camp and properties in general. I will provide some excerpts from some of these particular surveys.

In a couple of surveys, the scouter mentioned that this was the first time that Scouts Canada had asked for his opinion. Obviously we do not very often go to the grass roots for feedback.

A number of responses indicated their group/area: Brant, Elgin, Burlington, Sarnia, Barrie, Etobicoke, Whitby, St Catherines, Agincourt, Lindsay, St George, Oshawa.

## Attachment 1

### Camp Survey - Youth and Scouters

	Youth			Scouter			
	cubs	scouts	Venturer	pack	troop	compan	other
<b>Program Activities</b>							
hiking	1	1	1	1	1	4	1
wide games	2	3	3	3			
swimming	3	4	2	5	5		2
campfire	5			2			
water activities	4			4	3	1	
archery		2			4		
survival/campcraft		5			2	3	3
crafts	5						
orientteering			2			2	
pioneering						4	
rifle range							
obstacle course							
biking							
<b>Facilities</b>							
picnic tables	1	2	1	3	2		2
washrooms	3	1	3	2	1		3
tuck shop	2	3	4				
cabins/lodges	4	4	2	1	5	5	1
fire pits	5	5			4	3	
potable water				4	3	2	
marked trails				5			
showers			4				
marked campsites						1	4
pioneering equipment						4	
open fields							
<b>Distance</b>							
less than 1 hr	1	1		2	1	1	1
1-2 hr	2	2	1	1	2	1	2
2-3 hr			2				
3-4 hr						1	
<b>Program offered to earn star/badge</b>	y	y	n				
<b>Availability of offered program</b>				y	y	n	y