

## Camp and Retreat Ministry Planning FAQ

- 1) The report specifically mentions the creation of a CRM reserve fund and requests for funding through a matching grant, what guidelines exist for this reserve fund including how funds will be used?**

Maintaining a reserve fund equal to 25 percent of the operating budgets is a best practice that will allow some flexibility for CRM to continue operations and make necessary facility repairs and improvements in a strategic way as well as support unexpected revenue shortfalls or unanticipated expenses. These expenses take away from program budgets and the conference has covered deficits through mission shares and reserves. The CRM designated reserve fund will allow the CRM program to become more sustainable.

Specific guidelines for the reserve fund will need to be developed in the near future as soon as a CRM governing body is formed. The annual expected contributions from individual CRM sites and how the reserve fund will be administered will need to be decided. While site boards will generate additional ideas for raising these funds, one suggested source of funding is a small (\$3-5) guest/camper day fee.

- 2) Some camps have their own reserve funds; will these funds no longer be the individual camps'?**

We recognize the financial support that individuals have given to their favorite CRM sites and these funds are expected to stay with the specific site for their intended purposes. It is important the individual sites continue this funding to meet their needs. The CRM fund will be a conference-wide fund that will support the ministry at multiple sites and provide new avenues for cooperation and growth.

- 3) How might CRM reserve fund be used?**

Again, exact guidelines for the fund will need to be developed but some possibilities may be to fund facility upgrades or repairs that are necessary but at the present time the most pressing challenge is to meet current operating budgets, and the fund may provide some financial means to allow a CRM site to meet financial operating obligations. It is the hope that some portion of the reserve fund be used to establish an Emerging Ministry Fund to help fund the development of new ministries that may not yield revenue until subsequent years.

- 4) The report mentions vitality targets and benchmarks, what are these?**

The vitality targets were supplied through the GBOD and define expected camper and guest day (three meals and an overnight) and camper weeks for sites with a full-time staffing. Industry-wide these are 6-7,500 guest days and/or 800-1,000 camper weeks. Additionally, camps should operate in the \$360-450,000 range for revenue and adult retreat centers in the \$520-600,000 revenue in order to be viable, vital, full-time ministries.

- 5) With the end of conference-sponsored camping at Covenant Hills Christian Camp (Vermont) after the 2015 summer, what ways will the conference support youth ministry in Vermont?**

Youth Ministry will continue in Vermont after CHCC closes. We expect to develop a variety of options for camping, outdoor and retreat ministry in and around Vermont that will reach more children, youth, and young adults with the gospel. We plan to continue working with our partners at the VT Conference UCC, as well as other ecumenical partners on shared programming. The CRM team will include representation from Vermont in its work to ensure that we are reaching young people throughout Vermont in ways that will nurture spiritual life

and leadership development as well as build strong connections with our churches. We are already in conversation with the UCC and others on building a wide variety of options, beginning as early as 2016 that would include, but not be limited to: offering a UCC/UMC camp program at another campground in the state; providing scholarship support and/or transportation to our UMC and UCC camps in New Hampshire and New York; partnering with colleges in outdoor ministry and retreats; offering ACA-accredited leadership for Vacation Bible Schools/daycamps in rural and urban settings throughout the state with staffing from NEUMC camps (year-round); resourcing local churches with retreat leadership for intergenerational ministry opportunities; hosting destination/adventure camps. Conference funding to support these new avenues of youth ministry will be available.

#### **6) Who made the recommendations?**

The evaluation and strategic planning of camp and retreat ministry in New England, and its predecessor conferences has been ongoing for decades, as church and camping/retreat ministry evolves and changes with the culture. The most recent study, commissioned by the Bishop's Financial Summit in 2011, led to the work of Run River Consultants bringing back vitality targets and operating suggestions for our CRM program. That work included consultation with site boards, committees, staff, and volunteers through site visits and a series of retreats. The work continued with a small committee convened by the Director of Connectional Ministries (responsible for the oversight of CRM staff and program), a District Superintendent, the Executive Directors of each site, conference treasurer, and a lay member of CFA. This team was endorsed by a joint meeting of conference leaders (trustees, finance, cabinet) at a fall gathering led by the General Council of Finance and Administration. At that meeting, the GCFA recommended the team work with the camping staff of Discipleship Ministries (general church) and Kevin Witt was assigned to the team for further work. After several months of discernment, the preliminary recommendations were brought to each site board and conference leadership for feedback. The recommendations presented today are a culmination of all the above.

#### **7) What is the future of CRM in the New England Conference?**

Just like our local churches, the CRM in New England will need to continue to evolve and develop ways to be on the leading edge of our collective ministry. As ministries that specifically reach beyond a local community, CRM has a role in developing a broad sense of connectivity through shared faith experiences. For some participants, these experiences are bound to a specific site, but for many, the faith experience that one finds walking the labyrinth at the Ridge is also found at the lake shore of Mechuwana and in the songs of Covenant Hills and in communion at Aldersgate and in the campfires at Wanakee. It is important that CRM staff and conference leaders continue meeting and developing and growing CRM practices that will shine the light of Jesus into new hearts and make Disciples.