

Telling the Story . . .

District Board/Woodland Altars/Outdoor Ministries Timeline

Minutes and reports prior to 2000 consistently note concerns regarding finances and usage of facilities. Camp Board was functioning during these years as a somewhat independent body from the District Board.

2002

The District Structure Committee is working at redefining committees and commissions of the District Board. Under the current District By-laws, Woodland Altars is a committee of the District Board. Board members affirmed that the camp is a mission of the district and should remain part of the District Board.

Roger Crusier retires as Camp Director; Bruce Rosenberger appointed as Interim Director of Woodland Altars.

Recommendation was made that during the interim period as Bruce serves as interim director, major decisions will be made by a transition team comprised of the Woodland Altars and Southern Ohio District Executive Committees. Passed.

Program at this time included summer camp, band camps and other such usage, School of Discovery (outdoor education for schools) with staff appropriate for these activities and events.

Camp registrations reported to be down about 20% from previous year.

A camp chaplain for the summer was on site in cooperation with Bethany Seminary, paid for by the District Board using Extended Ministries Funds.

Interim Director reports *“The financial status continues to be a significant concern as the year-to-date expenses exceed the income. The camp continues to look for ways to become cost effective. There is a growing concern with the decline in the number of volunteers- both volunteer counselors and other volunteers who help with work projects around the camp.”*

Outdoor Ministries Commission established as new District Code of Regulations accepted at District Conference.

2003

Continuing concerns over financial situation and usage of facilities is noted in early 2003.

Emergency loan of \$30,000 granted by special board meeting to cover payroll. Interim Director reports we have reached a crisis situation. In consultation with Board, the options are to close the

facility or to enter a lease agreement with Robin Waddell. After discussion and discernment, Board agrees to enter the lease agreement but also holds hearings across the district to explain this decision. An additional loan of up to \$40,000 is approved during transition to lease arrangement, some of which is used to pay off one back loan of \$12,000. Lease payments are scheduled as \$20,000/year in four equal payments the first two years, \$40,000/year in four equal payments the next four years, and \$60,000/year in four equal payments the next four years. Lease payments will first pay off bank debt of \$70,000, then be used to pay off loans from district's Extended Ministry Fund, with future lease payments to be invested to give district options when lease is ended (renovations, new construction, hiring of staff, etc.). Lessee will care for maintenance and improvements during the term of the lease (10 year with a 5 year renewal option).

****EDITORS NOTE** - The loan repayment to the bank was completed on schedule. Some of the debt to Extended Ministries was repaid, but a significant portion (\$55,000) still remains as lease payments began to be used for Outdoor Ministries operating expenses in 2006. No lease payments were invested contrary to the original understanding.

Board decided that District Board budget and Outdoor Ministries budget would be combined beginning in 2004 as camping ministry is part of the overall district ministry.

****EDITORS NOTE** - The combined budget was never implemented.

2004

Lease agreement being implemented, a few issues are worked at and resolved.

Camp registration holds basically steady.

Cave camp sponsored by Outdoor Ministries is discontinued.

After a net loss of \$138,000 in 2003, a small net income of \$8,800 is realized, but debt also increased.

****EDITORS NOTE** - From this time forward, financial statements are only for Outdoor Ministries program and debt reduction, they do not include operations at Woodland Altars as these expenses are taken over by lessee.

2005

Robin adds some modular units to increase number of beds available, hoping to draw larger groups.

****EDITORS NOTE** - Usage increases short term, but falls off in future years.

Interim Director reports that outdoor education (now run by Robin) and other school usage of Woodland Altars is dropping due to school funding cutbacks.

****EDITORS NOTE** - This trend has continued from this time to the present.

Gene Karn becomes Director of Outdoor Ministries

Net income of \$4000 reported with lease payment of \$20000 reported as income, most, but not all, of which went to pay down bank loan.

2006

Proposal is made that lease payments be used to start endowment fund and is accepted, delaying payment of district debt until late 2006.

****EDITORS NOTE** - although approved and in keeping with original directive of the lease payments, the debt to Extended Ministries was not paid off and the endowment fund appears to never have been established as it does not appear on Outdoor Ministries financial statements.

Bank loan paid off.

Outdoor Ministries income and expense statement shows net income of \$24,000, but includes lease payment of \$40,000 as income and not all of lease payment was applied to the debt to the District Extended Ministries fund.

2007

Board minutes record that \$10,000 was given to Robin Waddell to continue outdoor education program.

Board forgave \$10,000 of lease payments due to financial difficulties of the lessee in relation to operation of the camp.

Outdoor Ministries income and expense statement shows net loss of \$16,000, lease payment of \$20,000 received, \$11,000 of which was applied to the debt to the District Extended Ministries fund.

2008

A self study committee for Woodland Altars/Outdoor Ministries was appointed by the Board to prepare for the end of the lease.

Deferral of lease payments approved, more decisions will be forthcoming.

Outdoor Ministries reports a steep decline in campers.

First discussions on a timber harvest were held.

Outdoor Ministries brought resolution to the Board to approve a lease adjustment of \$24,000 due in 2009 with the balance of \$16,000 deferred. Consensus reached.

Outdoor Ministries recommended logging of selective timber to protect the character and health of the forest at Woodland Altars. Replanting is part of the long term approach and is being considered as part of the camping experience. Consensus reached to sell the timber. This decision did not determine the disposition of the revenue from the sale of the timber.

A proposal was made to create a committee (Timber Fund Allocation Committee) to study the disposition of the assets yielded from the sale of the timber and consensus was reached. It was recommended that the Chair of Outdoor Ministries and the Chair of the District Board serve at a minimum ex officio for that group. Two financial, two from the Board and two from outdoor ministries. Consensus was reached.

Outdoor Ministries income and expense statement shows net loss of \$9,000, lease payment of \$20,000 received, \$11,000 of which was applied to the debt to the District Extended Ministries fund.

2009

Much controversy arose in the District as a result of the decision to harvest timber.

The District received an offer from an organization who wished to purchase the wooded areas of Woodland Altars. Because of timing complications, the sale did not proceed.

The District Board arrived at a consensus to segregate the timber income in a separate fund and invest it in a socially responsible bond fund through the Brethren Foundation.

The Lease was rephrased to suggest that the Lessee is not responsible for timber harvest clean up.

Outdoor Ministries income and expense statement shows a net loss of \$30,016.53, lease payment of \$18,000.00, \$7000.00 was applied to the debt to the District Extended Ministries fund.

2010

Concern over the timber harvest continue to be voiced via letters and emails to the District board. In response the Discipleship and Reconciliation Committee was contacted to help resolve the concerns.

The Timber Fund Allocation Committee made a recommendation to repair the Pool Bathhouse

and the Roof on Heritage Lodge due to safety concerns. The actual formal proposal was *“The Timber Fund requests that the District Board release (loan) up to \$80,000 for current repairs at Woodland Altars. The expectation of the Board is that this money will be repaid into the timber fund at a later date.”*

The Discipleship and Reconciliation Committee has begun holding listening sessions and working with congregations regarding concerns about the timber harvest.

Due to financial pressures facing our lessee, a lease addendum was created and agreed to reducing amount of yearly payments and extending the lease to the end of 2016.

Due to the lease addendum, the self study committee appointed in 2008 was suspended.

Outdoor Ministries Income and Expense Statement shows a small net loss of \$200.00, lease payment of \$24,000.00. The debt to the District increased due to the repairs made. The total debt is now \$132,515.68.

2011

Two ongoing concerns prompted the District Board to bring a recommendation to District Conference:

1. Consensus over how to use the money God has provided as a result of the tree harvest has never been reached. Over time this money has used for various projects and needs. The Board believes good stewardship requires that we seek God’s plan for using this resource.
2. Challenges surrounding the facility of Woodland Altars including, but not limited to, needed costly repairs to the infrastructure, shrinking enrollment, and distance from the numeric center.

District Conference approved the recommendation to appoint an ad hoc committee to conduct listening and discernment sessions to best determine God’s desires regarding Outdoor Ministries in the Southern Ohio District. They were asked to report their findings at District Conference 2012.

Outdoor Ministries Income and Expense Statement shows a net loss of \$8254.18, lease payment of \$24,000.00 received, and debt reduction of \$3643.46.

2012

The 2012 District Conference instructed the District Board to appoint a neutral committee to conduct a feasibility study and to consider ways to expand Outdoor Ministries into a year round program.

“We recommend that the decisions concerning Outdoor Ministries programming and the use of Woodland Altars be carried out by the District Board and that the District Board appoint and

provide funding for a neutral committee to collaborate with key current and former Outdoor Ministries leaders to investigate the parameters of developing and implementing the District Conference-approved Outdoor Ministry Program structure and use of Woodland Altars facilities. We recommend that a report and recommendations for further action be presented to the 2013 District Conference.” --Recommendations by the Outdoor Ministries Ad Hoc Committee to Southern Ohio District Conference -- October 20, 2012.

Gene Karn resigned as Director of Outdoor Ministries.

Outdoor Ministries Income and Expense Statement shows a net profit of \$17,043.31 (received a \$25,000.00 bequest), lease payment received of \$6000.00, and no debt reduction.

2013

Tom and Karen Dillon Called as Interim Co-Directors of Outdoor Ministries

Ad Hoc committee begins working with Kaleidoscope to perform feasibility study as directed by District Conference

Due to financial hardship created by various business transactions, including Woodland Altars, Robin Wadell, Woodland Altar's lessee, asked to be released from the lease agreement on September 1, 2013 (completed agreement in 2016).

Outdoor Ministries online information moved to District Website

Work to update Outdoor Ministries Data base begins

District Board approved request from Outdoor Ministries Commission to use up to \$30,000.00 of District Reserves to run new water lines to chalets, camping circle, and lodges.

District Board receives report on Feasibility Study performed by Kaleidoscope and calls a special district Conference to present the following recommendations concerning Outdoor Ministries in Southern Ohio and the facility of Woodland Altars.

Recommendations concerning Outdoor Ministries

1. To reorganize and rename our current Outdoor Ministries to encompass a larger scale by changing the name to Camping Ministries (which can include both outdoor and indoor ministries).
2. To combine the newly named Camping Ministries, Shared Ministries, and Disaster Ministries under a new ministry title called Connection Ministries.

3. To hire an Associate District Executive of Connection Ministries.

Recommendations concerning property

1) To cease all operations at Woodland Altars as of September 1, 2013

2) To sell the property and facilities at Woodland Altars.