



# BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

## LOS PADRES COUNCIL

July 8, 2013

Dear Los Padres Council Scouters:

As the Executive Board of the Los Padres Council, we are charged with the responsibility to fulfill the mission of Scouting through an ever growing number of Scouts and families. We take this great responsibility very seriously and strive always to act in the best interests of the Scouts that we serve today and tomorrow. They are our priority and this country's future leadership.

Los Padres Council, like all Boy Scout councils, is a non-profit organization that funds programs through revenues generated primarily from camping/activity fees, Friends of Scouting contributions, popcorn sales and major fund-raising events. And, like most Boy Scout councils, the family Friends of Scouting campaign is the largest fund raising effort through the year. It is the revenue that subsidizes programs and allows camping fees to remain low.

Each year new informational material is prepared for both the Family and Community Friends of Scouting campaigns. This year's presentation materials is on our Web site and describe how the Los Padres Council operates and is funded. Through the seven minute presentation, the need for contributions to help support both Camp French and Rancho Alegre and Scout store operations were emphasized. Unfortunately, less than 12% of families donate to support programs.

With Friends of Scouting Campaigns falling short over the last several years, the Los Padres Council Executive Board has had to make many cuts in an attempt to balance the budget. This has included a reduction in staff and programs throughout the council. The Executive Board reviews each program cost center to ensure that they operate in a fiscally sound manner and do not incur a deficit.

Please know that no one on the Executive Board of the Los Padres Council willingly wants to change the operations of Camp French. Since the camp was created over 40 years ago, it has been a great asset for Scouters in this region. This property is owned by the County of San Luis Obispo and the council operates the camp under a management agreement. This agreement requires that Los Padres Council pay for an on-site camp ranger as well as all operational costs and maintenance for the facilities. As the camp has aged these costs have increased.

The operating expense budget for Camp French averages between \$60,000 and \$70,000 annually. This amount includes staffing, utilities, repairs and maintenance, insurance, and other costs necessary to operate the camp. This figure does not include major capital investments that are made each year to improve the camp. Unfortunately, the revenue from Camp French totals between \$12,000 and \$17,000 annually, creating a yearly deficit of between \$45,000 and \$50,000. This deficit has been on-going for at least seven years.

**Administrative Office**  
4000 Modoc Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
(805) 967-0105  
[www.lpcbsa.org](http://www.lpcbsa.org)

**Prepared. For Life.™**



Over the last five years, many capital projects at Camp French have been supported by donations and funds from the council budget. These improvements have included a new roof, new kitchen equipment, new sewer pipelines, and many other projects with average costs beyond the donations of between \$6,000 and \$15,000 a year. These necessary additional funds needed to complete the capital projects were taken from the council's operating budget and have contributed to the deficit position of Camp French. With any camp, capital improvements are needed every year.

The council has creatively tried many programs to raise awareness of the camp and generate additional funds to cover the expenses.

- Five years ago we sublet the camp for a summer to Seven-One, a Christian-based youth program, to generate rent from this organization. Although we did get some funds and other gift in-kind improvements to the camp to offset expenses, the relationship did not work with the Scouting families and the program was cancelled after the first summer.
- Service club weekends and work parties with local contractors have been well attended. As a result, several improvements were made to both Rancho Alegre and Camp French but have not generated additional use of Camp French.
- In 2009, the Executive Board passed a motion to begin charging a nominal fee of \$5 per night or \$8 per weekend per person to camp at Rancho Alegre and Camp French. The fee was based upon what other Boy Scout councils charge their units to use their camps. As a result, approximately \$12,000 from Camp French usage fees have been received annually over the last three years to help fund the operations at Camp French. Since this fee started, we have seen more revenue from outside groups and Scouting groups from other councils than we have received from units and districts within our own council.
- The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary Century Club was established to generate direct support for camps. It was designed to encourage multi-year support for direct operating support to either Rancho Alegre or Camp French. It was promoted through all 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary program materials, FOS materials and on the council Web site and newsletter blasts to adult leaders. Only seven gifts were made to Camp French – all from Executive Board members and staff.
- In the fall of 2010, members of the Executive Board mailed invitations to all adult leaders to participate in town hall meetings in each district to gather feedback on a five year strategic plan for the Los Padres Council to ensure that Scouting would grow in serving families and be financially strong for future generations. Although great input was received, volunteer participation was very low.
- Rental opportunities of the camp have been promoted on the council Web site and mailers to local organizations over the years to encourage use of the camp.

When a Boy Scout council incurs multiple years of operating deficits, it is put on a conditional charter by the National Office of the Boy Scouts of America and the Executive Board is charged with developing an action plan to make the council fiscally sound. If the Executive Board is unable to eliminate the operating debt, the council is merged with another council. This is why the Santa Lucia Area Council (San Luis Obispo County) was merged with the Mission Council (Santa Barbara County) in 1994 to create the Los Padres Council. The basis for the merger was the rolling debt of the Santa Lucia Area Council as a result of low donations and operating expenses of Camp French. Fortunately, last year after receiving

several last minute unexpected gifts, the Los Padres Council was able to balance its budget; only the second time in the last 12 years.

In the fall of 2012, members of the Executive Board held town hall meetings in the districts to discuss the operating budgetary challenges. The town hall meetings were well attended and district leadership committed to help turn the financial situation around. As a result, over 20 adult leaders from both Camino Real and Del Norte Districts attended the December 2012 Executive Board meeting where the 2013 operating budget was being finalized. Both districts agreed to step up and ensure that their district's 2013 FOS campaign goal would be met by April 30, 2013. Additionally, volunteers committed to raise \$75,000 by April 30, 2013 to ensure that Camp French would not run a deficit.

At the end of June 2013, although the members of the Camp French Sustaining Campaign Committee have worked hard to raise money from the community, only \$45,000 has been raised to date towards the goal of \$75,000. Additionally, the usage/rentals of Camp French are very low and the property sat unused for the first three months of the year. The Friends of Scouting campaign is currently at less than 50% of the goal forcing council operations to rely upon a line of credit to pay expenses.

Again, we wish that every Scouting family could support the FOS campaign and we were ensured that camp operations were funded for the year. However, this short fall has forced us to make some hard decisions and we have no choice but to start talks with the county about the future of Camp French.

Our talks to date with the County of San Luis Obispo about Camp French have been positive. They have indicated they would keep the name Camp Mabel French, and would try to develop a non-profit youth camping usage rate that would be lower than the general public usage fee. They have also indicated they would entertain giving us certain dates during the year for camporees, day camps, etc. They realize the importance of Camp French to our Scouting community.

Acting on behalf of the nearly 4,000 Scouting families that we serve in both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, we must ensure that the Los Padres Council acts in a fiscally sound manner and invest our limited resources directly into program delivery and support – placing the needs of the Scout ahead of anything else.

To hear more about the current Camp French operations and where we go from here, all Scouters are welcome to attend an informational meeting on Wednesday, July 24, 2013, at the San Luis Obispo Masonic Lodge, 859 March Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. The meeting will run from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rebecca Fields Scout Executive/Board Secretary at (805) 967-0105.

Yours in Scouting,

*Trent Benedetti*

*Reese Davies*

*J Johnson*

*Lynn Johnson*

*Steve Jordan*

*Dale Marquis*

*Randal Moos*

*Robert Newby*

*Tom Parsons*

*Joe Ririe*

*Laurie Tamura*

*Rick TerBorch*

*Paul Viborg*

**EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
LOS PADRES COUNCIL**