

Frequently Asked Questions

Camp Cofitachiqui (Camp C)

Where is Camp Cofitachiqui located?

It is a 116-acre property that borders Aiken and Edgefield Counties.

How is it pronounced?

cofa (rhymes with *sofa*)—**tach** (rhymes with *watch*)—**uh**—**key**

What is special about its history?

The property was purchased with funds from the Phelps Foundation in 1956. Claudia Phelps had founded Aiken's first Girl Scout troop in Aiken in 1920.

Why was it decided to sell Camp C?

Many factors were analyzed when reviewing the camps, including the physical condition, resources available to provide programming with a focus on leadership development, and whether it's a destination-of-choice (one girls choose to go to, want to return to, and not just attend because it's convenient). Camp C is under-utilized, has deferred maintenance and safety issues and doesn't meet the percentage of membership usage/travel distances and criteria for sustainability and best use of council resources. The entire plan and rationale was shared with the delegates in April, 2009. Background on two of the key criteria areas where it fell short are as follows:

- Destination: There are no key attractions at the site. In 2006, two years before the camp was transferred to the newly realigned Mountains to Midlands council, approximately 85% of the land was timbered. Because reforestation takes nearly 20 years, it will be quite a period of time before the property once again has more than minimal camp value.
- Program Match: Major improvements of infrastructure and main buildings would be necessary to match program needs. Other than providing a site for hiking and overnight camping, no natural property features cater programmatically to girls' needs and interests as identified in the research. Also, although there is a view of a lake, there is no access for water activities.

Was Camp C sold primarily to raise money?

The #1 benefit of the strategic property plan that initiated the sale of targeted properties is aligning property to meet girls' programmatic needs and interests. Programming needs determine which properties are retained by a Girl Scout council, not the other way around. While program drove this . . . linking girls' feedback to decisions . . . cost is always a consideration. With 32% of our budget in property-related expenditures, we needed to trim and reflect numbers more in line with lower national trends.

Will the proceeds from the sale be split with Girl Scouts of Central Savannah River Association?

Yes. According to GSUSA established merger standards, utilized by GSSC-MM and GSCSRA (now Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia), if this property were to be divested within 10 years of the merger, net proceeds would be divided 50/50. We will honor this agreement.

When the troops from the tri-county area of Aiken, Edgefield and McCormick, voluntarily left the Girl Scouts of Central Savannah River Council on May 1, 2008, to become part of the Girl Scouts of South Carolina-Mountains to Midlands, were they aware of the potential sale of the camp?

Yes, it was explained that a Long Range Program & Property Plan committee had been formed in 2008, just prior to their joining the council. They were told that all 17 consolidated properties from the four former councils would be evaluated objectively by third-party and GSUSA consultants according to specific criteria established by the Board of Directors, to determine how to best deploy council resources in a way to improve programming for girls, adults and their communities.

Are we still committed to serving this tri-county area?

Yes, very much so!

- The Aiken Hut has the highest usage of all facilities in GSSC-MM. We are committed to maintaining the partnership with the city and they have affirmed the same position with this special lease.
- Pre-merger, the Service Unit had historically absorbed all maintenance costs of the Hut, aside from structural repairs. We are continuing to allocate funds for costs and improvements in the council budget.
- Also, since the merger, we have maintained the increased staff support and resources in the budget from half-time to full time.

Are we abandoning camping?

No, not at all. The sale of Camp Cofitachiqui doesn't mean that we have walked away from camping. But, through research, girls tell us the number one activity they look forward to has to do with the arts. Outdoor activities are high on their list, but they request adventures such as swimming and rock climbing. For overnight camps, rather than rustic camping, they want features such as heat, air conditioning, updated bathrooms and dining halls.

What about programs and Service Unit events that have been scheduled there through the end of the year?

There are no Service Unit events and only one council-sponsored event which can be moved to another council or partner site.

Will there be an *End of the Trail* closing ceremony?

Yes. It will be planned with volunteers and held sometime this fall.