

Report of the Burnamwood Vision Task Force March 16, 2021

History and How We Got Here

Since 1958, Burnamwood has served the congregations of the Presbytery of Transylvania as a sacred place to gather and grow. Over the years, the camp has offered programming, primarily in the form of children's and youth camps and retreats. It has been available as rental facilities and historically utilized by congregations, Presbytery groups, and occasional outside programming. In 2010, the Burnamwood Appalachian Ministries program was added, increasing the connections between the camp, the surrounding communities, and work groups from around the United States.

In 2019 amid growing concern about the viability and financial sustainability of the Camp, Transylvania Presbytery placed Burnamwood on sabbatical to allow for a time of discernment about the future of the camp. This report by the Burnamwood Vision Team is a result of that discernment.

Work of the Burnamwood Vision Team

Who we are:

Rev. Hannah McIntyre - *Pastor, Pisgah, Versailles*

Grits Skinner - *Longtime Burnamwood Participant*

Rev. Matt Falco - *Pastor, Maxwell Street; Coordinating Commission*

Rev. Roger Dermody - *At Large Member; CEO Pathlight Ministries*

Sara Pennington-Busick - *Founder of Locally Grown Youth Group in Midway*

Rev. Julie Olt - *Pastor, Cynthia; Coordinating Commission*

Rev. Andrew Bowman - *Pastor, First Somerset; Coordinating Commission*

Allie Gregory - *Elder, Maxwell Street*

Mark Haertzen - *Owner of Rocketman and former camper at Burnamwood*

Philip Lotspeich - *Staff*

Robyn Justus - *Staff*

Kevin Turpin - *Staff*

What we did:

The Vision Team for Burnamwood first met on the Camp's grounds in February of 2020, with the goal of discerning the camp's future. The onset of the COVID pandemic changed some plans, slowed our intended progress, and necessitated a lot of virtual meetings, but we carried on. After

much discussion, thought, and Zooming, we determined that the essence of Burnamwood - the Core Values outlined below - could (and perhaps should) be best expressed and fulfilled separately from direct Presbytery involvement.

We outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the camp, seeking to uncover the best future for the facilities and the ideal ways to reach said future. We evaluated various options and sought creative, outside-the-box solutions. We identified the places that Burnamwood's mission needs to grow and be nourished, and other areas where it could be cut back. Ultimately, we came up with a number of recommendations, outlined below, that we believe will benefit both Camp Burnamwood and the Presbytery of Transylvania.

While many of the recommended changes are still in the future, one important step has already been taken. Our Team has facilitated the establishment of a Burnamwood Alumni Circle, as an entity to reminisce as well as to help to spread the love of Burnamwood. We sent out a participation survey which collected responses from more than 275 current and former Camp attendees across all decades of Burnamwood's existence. Their insight has been, and will continue to be, invaluable to future planning. Here's a sampling of their responses:

"I would not be active in church nor have as deep a faith today without my Burnamwood experiences"

"Burnamwood is one of the "thin places" and spaces in my faith journey - a place where I felt God's presence in miraculous ways."

"Burnamwood was the only place I was free. It allowed me to feel safe, seen, heard, and loved. It also allowed me to connect with nature, which is how/where I experience spirituality as an adult."

"It was my first camp experience. I'd never had one before and being from a small town, it offered excitement that I had never had like that -- overnight camp! I went with a friend and made new ones -- people and connections that continued in college and professionally. It was the closest that I'd ever been to God and the music was powerful to me."

Core Values of Burnamwood

-Formation

-Hospitality

-Inclusion

These three values form the core of what Burnamwood offers to the church, its community and beyond.

We expect to participate in the *formation* of each individual that steps on the campground, whether they are Presbyterian or not. Even for those who rent the property for their own use, we will seek to provide an environment, resources, and an experience that will shape who they are and what they can become.

We will practice *radical hospitality* from the moment someone encounters Burnamwood whether on the internet or in person. We will strive to treat each individual and group as if they are a part of our family, treating them with love, grace, dignity, and compassion.

We will unequivocally state that Burnamwood is a place of *inclusion*. We will work to ensure that all people regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, physical capabilities will be able to participate and enjoy Burnamwood.

Future of Burnamwood

It became undeniable to us early on that Burnamwood continues to hold a special place in the hearts of many current and former campers. Responses from the Alumni Survey confirmed this, and further revealed that the Camp has significant interest for hundreds of people. However, it also remains clear that Burnamwood's operation has been financially unsustainable for some time. The revenue of a six-week camping season cannot support the year-round maintenance of the property, nor provide growth potential or creative answers to modern questions.

We're raising the idea of a Burnamwood with a new direction, and a renewed purpose. While it will continue to serve the needs and ends of the Presbytery's churches, we suggest allowing the Camp to seek other initiatives and sources of use and revenue. We envision a hybrid camping model in which programming is primarily planned and implemented by churches and groups within the Presbytery, rather than the Camp itself. This will free Burnamwood to serve the needs of a larger, more diverse population, while also improving offerings to our own Presbytery.

The Camp Burnamwood of the future could host denominational groups from beyond the Presbytery, in addition to groups from individual churches, schools, or community organizations. We believe that the Camp and its property offer vast untapped resources to attract recreational visitors to the Red River Gorge area, in addition to regional groups. With minor changes to the Camp's infrastructure, such as added/upgraded campsites, considerable new ministry opportunities can arise.

In addition to hosting campers from our Presbytery and beyond, Burnamwood has the potential to meet the needs of groups and individuals from within the local community as well. The locals of Irvine/Ravenna and Estill County could greatly benefit from the recreational and meeting space opportunities provided by the Camp. Making these available to locals would increase income and usage, with little additional input required of the Presbytery.

One element of Burnamwood's historic management model, Burnamwood Appalachian Ministries or BAM, has the potential to increase its impact significantly. We believe that BAM's missional influence on the region and its welcome of diverse populations is a hallmark of Burnamwood and a clear fulfillment of the Camp's Core Values, and so we are recommending that it be continued and expanded if at all possible.

The suggested upgrades and revised programming structure will require financing, but one of the cornerstones of our vision is running the camp in a more businesslike fashion, pursuing revenue and financing from outside the Presbytery and its individual churches. While the Presbytery will still be a primary patron and utilizer of the Camp, the relationship between Burnamwood and the Presbytery will change in small but significant ways.

Ultimately, we sought to answer questions, raised in 2019 and before, about the sustainability of Burnamwood. Our proposed solution is to seek other sources of funding and revenue, along with implementing transformed programming and a revised oversight structure, that can help Burnamwood remain viable while also minimizing the Camp's reliance on the Presbytery.

Governance and Oversight

We are suggesting the creation of a "Steering Team" to act as the Interim Governing Structure to prepare for the Camp's re-launch later this year. This team will select its own chair and vice-chair.

The Steering Team will be tasked with doing all of the preliminary work to be ready for the camp's launch. This will include writing bylaws, creating a Camp Development Plan, setting goals, and working with the Presbytery to define the missional relationship between the Camp and the Presbytery. The permanent structure of the Camp will have a Board of Directors.

The goal of creating a Board of Directors is to have a leadership entity charged with maintaining a sustainable camping ministry at Burnamwood rather than a Presbytery Commission charged with serving the interests and goals of the presbytery. Forming a Board of Directors rather than a Commission allows us to draw from a larger and more diverse pool of individuals willing to share gifts and talents necessary to accomplish sustainability. The skills we foresee needing to do this, include but are not limited to business planning, marketing, funds development and special

public relations. While these skills exist within the Presbytery, they aren't always easily identifiable through our normal processes. The process of creating a Board of Directors would allow us to seek the leaders needed to fully support the new direction of Burnamwood.

The Steering Team will work to delineate roles and establish what powers the newly formed Board will have and what powers the camp staff will have. They will draw distinct lines between the governance responsibilities of the Board and the operational responsibilities of the staff. The Steering Team will work with the Administration Commission to create a separate system of financial oversight, distinct from the Presbytery and establish a preliminary budget. This budget will be given to the new Board to work with and redevelop as needed. The Presbytery, through its Administrative Commission, will maintain fiduciary oversight.

The Steering Team will begin working on documents such as a Manual of Operations, Employee manuals, and Job Descriptions for staff. As part of this, they will consider what positions of leadership will be needed, and what qualities they are looking for in these leaders. They can also make initial personnel recommendations.

The Steering Team will also be tasked with selecting the members of the future Board which will take its place. Its members should be 50%+1 Presbyterian, and board member nominations will be presented to the Presbytery for approval. The Team will slowly bring on Board members to create a more effective transition, and the final Board should be in place at launch. The Board should also function with a Presbytery Representative as an Ex Officio member.

The Steering Team and the future Board will be tasked with identifying donors and organizing fundraising.

This Steering Team and Board will be created with the possibility that we might form a 501C3, non-profit corporation for Burnamwood in the future.

Marketing, Rental and Digital Plan

Critical to the success of the future of Burnamwood is broadening the awareness of the camp and its offerings, both programmatic and available rental facilities. Before increasing that awareness through marketing, however, the specific offerings (both facilities and programs) available need to be distilled and clarified.

The Steering Team will begin with the immediate concern of developing clear and concise messaging around who Burnamwood is and what Burnamwood does. From there, a strategy will be developed to update the camp website and to update the camp's online presence via social media, etc. The Steering Team will hone in on the best digital toolkit for the camp.

Once digital assets are updated, communicating and marketing the camp programs and facilities will become the focus. In addition, a strategy for constantly refreshing and updating the assets and information will be developed and implemented.

Preliminary Renovation Plan

The following renovation budget includes items both of immediate urgency as well as long-term hopes. The itemization can encourage groups or individuals to adopt one or more projects to sponsor. Please note that this is a preliminary plan, and tasks have not been prioritized. The Steering Team will decide the prioritization of the needs to re-launch the camp in the Fall.

Camp-wide

Upgrade lock/entry system	\$5,000
Contingency	\$5,000
Upgrade WIFI & Cellular Service	\$2,500
	<i>\$12,500</i>

Pavillion / Office

Add Mini Store	\$400
	<i>\$400</i>

Dining Hall

Add air conditioning	\$20,000
Replace tile in restrooms	\$1,000
Paint kitchen and storage room	\$400
Replace kitchen lights	\$500
Exterior Improvements	\$2,600
Plumbing	\$300
Replace outside entrance door	\$200
	<i>\$25,000</i>

Woods Lodge/ BAM House

Interior Painting	\$1,000
Replace carpeting with laminate flooring	\$1,500
Exterior Improvements	\$500
Concrete or paving 100 ft. access road	\$12,000
Replace bedding	\$1,000
	<i>\$16,000</i>

Burnam Lodge

New flooring in 4 bunk rooms	\$2,500
Paint four bunk rooms	\$400
Exterior Improvements	\$1,600

New lighting in bunk rooms	\$400
Pressure wash and stain deck and ramp	\$100
Replace bedding	\$1,000
	<i>\$6,000</i>
Mount Lodge	
Replace 17 windows	\$6,000
Replace two exterior doors	\$400
Replace two doors leading to Craft room	\$500
Exterior Improvements	\$1,200
Repair water issue going into Craft room	\$1,500
Pressure wash and stain deck and ramp	\$400
Replace bedding	\$1,000
	<i>\$11,000</i>
Unit Lodge	
Replace commodes	\$100
Exterior Improvements	\$1,700
Upgrade lighting	\$200
Add HVAC on second level	\$1,000
	<i>\$3,000</i>
Pool Building	
Minor plumbing work	\$200
Misc.	\$200
	<i>\$400</i>
New Bath House	
Replace commodes and sink	\$1,000
Replace lighting	\$200
Painting	\$200
Exterior Roof Repair	\$1,000
Exterior Improvements	\$1,500
New exterior doors	\$800
	<i>\$4,700</i>
Hillside Cabins (7)	
Misc. exterior work on trim, roofing	
Interior painting	
Exterior Improvements	
Upgrade lighting	
Add HVAC	
New bedding	
	<i>\$15,000</i>

Other Needs

Purchase truck	\$12,000
Purchase tractor with bucket and blade	\$12,000
Repair water leak	\$2,000
	<i>\$26,000</i>

Future Expansion

RV CampSites	\$30,000
	<i>\$30,000</i>

Total Renovation Cost**\$150,000****Funds Development Plan*****Current Funding Sources***

Camp Burnamwood is currently funded by subsidies from the Presbytery of Transylvania, private donations to the Presbytery designated to the camp, rental income, and fees paid by participants.

Proposed Funding Sources

The purpose of the Funds Development Plan is to reduce the Camp's dependence on subsidies from the Presbytery to support its mission, goals, and budget objectives.

The plan will also fund the facility restoration plan/budget being created to identify maintenance and repair issues and needed upgrades. The plan aims to renovate and restore the Camp to its former glory, and ensure that it will continue to serve for years to come. An itemized list budget of small, medium and large renovation projects with level of priority and costs is being created.

Fundraising activities will be managed by the new Camp Burnamwood entity to be created. Additionally, several new sources of revenue are proposed:

1. Non-Profit Charitable Organization

The cornerstone of our fundraising strategy will be the creation of a corpus of funds that would exist to support the mission of the camp. The vehicle and oversight for this is still being discussed and will be determined by the Burnamwood Steering Team with final approval by the Administration Commission.

2. Endowment Fund

An endowment fund will be established enabling our supporters to make gifts of cash, securities, real estate, life insurance proceeds, annuities, etc. at death. The contributions will be held and invested by the Camp Burnamwood Charitable Organization with the assistance of professional

managers. \$25,000 shall be raised to start the fund. If properly structured and managed, this strategy could reach a significant size and provide a perpetual source of income to support the Camp's mission in the future. To be effective, a very targeted campaign will be implemented to recruit contributors motivated to create a lasting legacy through the Camp.

3. Grants

Potential grant makers (government, foundations, etc.) will be identified. The organization will apply for applicable grants to support activities and projects. There are numerous online resources to guide our efforts, such as Camp Associations (Presbyterian Camps and Conference Association, National Association of Camps and Conferences, etc.). We may want to consider enlisting the help of a professional grant writer to apply on our behalf.

4. Donor Prospect Plan

Once the non-profit charity has been established, a comprehensive Donor Prospect Plan will be developed to cultivate donations from our donor database (under construction). A marketing plan (social media, direct mail, telemarketing, in-person meetings, etc.) will be developed to promote a variety of themed fundraising efforts, such as a) monthly recurring gift, engraved bricks, memorial benches, building naming rights, and renovation projects.

5. Merchandise Sales

Unique souvenirs, such as t-shirts, hats, photographs, artwork, and other items at the Camp and through an online store (managed by a third party drop-ship company).

6. Alumni Circle

Some portion of annual membership dues of the newly formed alumni circle may be transferred to the charitable organization.

7. Fundraising Projects

We are exploring opportunities to partner with other local organizations (high school booster clubs, Rotary, etc.) to produce a charity fundraising project such as a "Haunted Forest"

8. Other Sources

Other sources of revenue tied to operations may include (but aren't included in the fundraising plan):

a. Optimize Occupancy Rates of Rental Properties

A comprehensive plan for optimizing occupancy rates of rental properties, such as utilizing online tools (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.), upgrading reports for tracking occupancy % and other metrics, partnering with wedding planners, and overhauling the website and online rental process.

b. Logging Rights and/or Nature Preserve

Explore the possibility of selling logging rights and create usable land for new initiatives or continue to pursue selling a portion of the land to the State of Kentucky for a nature preserve where the public would have access to it but we would still have full use for camping needs.

c. RV Park/Campground

Create a business plan for developing an RV Park/Campground targeting visitors to nearby tourist destinations. The land adjacent to the pool may be ideal. Keep in mind, there are numerous issues and challenges that must be considered, such as trash removal and sewers.

d. Snack Bar/Mini Store

Operate a Snack Bar at limited times during Camp Sessions offering healthy snacks, drinks, shirts/souvenirs, and other everyday items.

Finalization of Plan

The Funds Development Plan will be finalized upon completion of the development budget under construction. The plan is designed to re-engage camp alumni to help support the mission and financial objectives.

Final Recommendations

The Burnamwood Vision team recommends the following:

1. Retain the camp.
2. Authorize the Steering Team to Define Phase 1 offerings (facility rentals, campsite rentals, programming, etc.).
3. Authorize the Steering Team develop a marketing plan that emphasizes:
 - a. **Local Engagement-** Intentional outreach to the Estill County/Irvine/Ravenna area to provide a place for recreation, family gatherings, weddings, church services, etc.
 - b. **Red River Gorge/Recreational opportunities-** Connect with the expanding recreational activities around the Red River gorge. This includes the possibilities of adding RV spots and a primitive camping area. By slightly upgrading our facilities, our proximity to the Gorge makes us an attractive place to stay for a night or two and maybe longer. We would also explore creating more adventure opportunities on our property (e.g. more trails and a rock climbing area)

- c. **Burnamwood Appalachian Ministries (BAM)**- Continue and expand BAM, year-round, if feasible.
 - d. **Diversified Camp Programming**- Explore other camping and retreat programs with groups outside Transylvania Presbytery but may include individual churches within the Presbytery. This could include other denominations, churches, school districts, non-profit organizations, corporations, etc.
4. **Renovations**- Authorize the Steering Team, based on the initial list of needed renovations, to begin raising funds to complete the updates and renovations needed to achieve our targets for rentals and camp usage
5. **Develop a Financial Plan** (see above) Authorize the Steering Team to develop a financial plan that targets sustainability in 2-4 years with minimal dependence on Presbytery funding. For example, in 2019 the Presbytery subsidized the 45% of the camp's budget. We would work to get that to 15% by 2025. This would increase the possibility that the Camp could continue regardless of the financial health of the Presbytery
6. **Future 501(c)3**- At this time, we are not recommending pursuit of a separate non-profit corporation for the camp. However, if we are able to achieve stability in programming and rental income and some financial independence through the plan presented, we expect that this would be pursued within 1-2 years.
7. **Missional Partnership with Transylvania Presbytery**- Authorize the Coordinating Commission to work with the Steering Team to develop a Missional Partnership with Camp Burnamwood. The Presbytery would commit to support the camp financially through a yearly commitment and reserve space for its camping program far enough in advance for the Camp to be able to fill those other weeks with other activities (rentals or other Missional Partner camps). The Presbytery would be responsible for developing and executing any camps or retreats it needs to further its mission and ministry. As an example, our newly forming Youth Council might be responsible for planning youth camps and retreats.
8. **Elect the following people to the Burnamwood Steering Team** with others to be recruited as needed.
 - Brittain "Grits" Skinner
 - Sara Busick
 - Mark Haertzen
 - Matt Falco
 - Allie Gregory
 - Roger Dermody