

## **Program Co-Habitation in Outdoor Education Centers**

Participants present: Tim Neu (Ashokan, NY), Beth Krisco (Glen Helen, OH), Josephine Jacobsmeyer & Jessica Brown (Dana Overnight Center, MO), Matt Kauffman (Centers for Nature Education, NY).

**Introduction** of participants and the centers they work with.

Tim – Supplements school group business w/ summer retreats

Beth – Weekend rentals of residential facilities & lodge w/ kitchen

Matt – Looking at possibilities for future opportunities

Josephine & Jessica – Weekend facility rentals (volunteer “Camp Hosts” supervise weekend use)

### **Scheduling**

Groups:

Religious Groups

College Groups

Scouting Groups?? (Are they worth the business?)

Minimums:

Dana Overnight Center – 15 visitors (fills one lodge)

Ashokan – 25 visitors (determined by cost of food service)

Glen Helen – No minimum

*Discussed value of food service...*

*\*Asking if small groups who don't need food service could be allowed? What about messes left in kitchen? Is the cost of a food service worth the benefits?*

*\*Consensus reached that cost to users can be kept reasonable when they provide their own food.*

Exclusive Site Use vs. Shared Site Use:

Directors present are currently allowing shared use.

### **Compatibility**

Consider groups' age, mission, culture, educational goals, gender.

Have an official group policy that gives directors freedom to be selective in which groups use the center at which times.

### **Community**

Create comfortable, warm, intimate, responsible, and vulnerable but safe communities that have shared space, values, and activities. Take care to create distinct communities when multiple groups are using the site.

## **The Guide**

Welcome & Orientation

Rules & Guidelines for use – focus on positive responsible use, not don'ts  
Answer their questions about use.

Program offerings to groups – offered but rarely used at Glen Helen and Dana, used regularly at Ashokan. *Short discussion on staffing weekend programs (volunteers & contract naturalists)*

## **The “Bubble”**

Keep groups in distinct communities by delineating space, with clear boundaries, time for exclusive use, and respectful mutual use.

There needs to be an “ENFORCER”. Don't leave groups policing other groups; your organization needs to be monitoring the rules and use.

## **Transitions**

Check-in/Check-out:

Build in accountability that keeps groups on time.  
Consider timing of meals (and how many people will actually show up, compared to how many are signed up) to coordinate w/ food services. Leave buffers so food service can accurately prepare the timing and amounts of food.

Cleaning – Housekeeping vs. “Hands-to-Help”

Help yourself out by having clear signage that directs visitors on guidelines, cleaning procedures, facility usages.

## **Chow Time**

Staggered Times

Serving Styles

Disposable service ware?

## **Sleepy Time**

Never mix children / adult groups in dorms. Could have older groups decide on co-ed option.

Have clear guidelines for quiet time.