

# Strategic Plan Backgrounder

## 2011-2016

**Introduction:** This document is being produced as a follow up to Camp Kawartha's Strategic Plan 2005-2010, completed in early 2005 and provides background information to our current Strategic Plan (2011-2016). Input for this document has been derived from three principal sources:

- **SSFC Organizational Review:** In the spring of 2007, consultants Debora Windover and Janet Honsberger were contracted to conduct an organizational review of Camp Kawartha. The purpose of the consultation was to assess the effectiveness of the Camp's services with a view to recommending continued enhancement of its business practices.
- **Camp Kawartha's Planning Day:** On February 9<sup>th</sup> 2008, Camp Kawartha's Board of Directors undertook a day of planning in order to respond to the SSFC Organization Review. Several staff from Camp Kawartha's summer camp and outdoor education program were invited to be present. Senior staff had also been given an opportunity to respond to the SSFC Organizational Review and their input has also been incorporated into this document.
- **Research:** A variety of strategic research documents were consulted when developing this plan. These are listed in the reference section at the end of this document.

### **Objective:**

The intent of this document is to formulate a medium range plan, building on the success of our previous strategic plan, which will be used as a guide for making decisions about our programs over the next five years.

By engaging in a process of strategic planning, Camp Kawartha can plan and shape its own future, instead of reacting to issues and/or problems as they arise. In order to best serve future generations, we need to re-examine what we do, why we do it and how we can do it even better. We need to take stock of the condition of our facilities, anticipate future needs, review the relevance and effectiveness of our programs and consider how we are perceived in the community. Most importantly we need to stop and reflect on how we, as an organization can best deliver our mandate in a changing world, under changing circumstances.

Both the mission statement and the vision statements were used as an overarching guide to help in the formulation of work plans and goals as articulated in this document.

### **Method:**

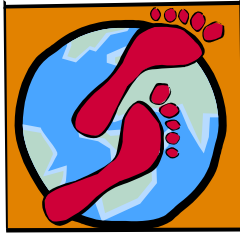
For each of the departments: Summer Camp, Outdoor Education, Main Site Facility Rentals and Environment Centre we provide:

- client profile (where feasible)
- an overview of benefits/key selling points
- a review of ongoing issues and expected changes
- An outline of goals for the department over the next 5 years
- An action plan with goals, measurables and time lines.

## **The Process:**

There are 3 simple steps we've undertaken to develop our Strategic Plan for 2011-2016. They involve reviewing the mission statement, reviewing the vision statement and indentifying clients and issues. These steps are described below:

### **First Step:**



**Refine Mission Statement:** Strategic Plan, phase two, provides an excellent opportunity to review our initial mission statement in order to see if this statement still resonates with our organization and adequately captures what our camp is about. Ideally, a mission statement should:

- ❑ Be one or two sentences that describe **how** we should act and **what** we are trying to accomplish
- ❑ Describe who our clients are
- ❑ Convey a sense of passion
- ❑ Be endorsed (by the Board of Directors, Staff, Clients and Stakeholders)

As Paulette Vinette from Charity Village (a large not-for-profit organization) writes: *“The mission expresses what the organization stands for - its purpose. A short mission statement gets the point across succinctly and is literally memorable. High performance organizations refer to their mission statement frequently. It is the banner that cloaks their meetings, their annual report, their website, their agendas; it is everywhere and everyone who comes in contact with the organization has access to it. An effective mission statement ensures that people who read it “get” what the organization is about in a way that distinguishes it from other similar organizations.”*

### **Camp Kawartha’s Mission Statement (2005-2010):**

*“Camp Kawartha is a not-for-profit, charitable organization dedicated to promoting quality outdoor, environmental and leadership opportunities for children and adults year round. Promoting the interrelationship between all living things, we develop positive stewards of our natural and human communities.”*

### **Revised Mission Statement (2011-2016):**

*“Camp Kawartha, a not-for-profit, charitable organization dedicated to quality year round outdoor, environmental and leadership opportunities for children and adults, develops positive stewards of our natural and human communities.”*

**Rationale:** This statement is a little more clearly worded and easier for stakeholders to retain. It imparts the idea of stewardship, which nicely encapsulates all we do as an organization from our summer camp programming to our new environment centre. Also implicit in the idea of

being a steward of our natural communities is “tending to the interrelationship of all living things.” This section, I believe, is not necessary and makes our mission statement more complex than it needs to be.

### **Operating Principles:**

Our organization stands for several broad principles, outlined on the following page. Whatever we do should promote the values which flow from these principles. These principles have been refined and extended since our last strategic plan. For example, the statement “Awareness and Appreciation of the Outdoors” has been changed to “Fostering Environmental Awareness.” This captures the feedback (to “beef up” environmental focus) provided by both the Organizational Review and the comments made by many Board members on our Planning Day.

We have also placed “*responsible and sound management*” under a separate section. We felt that the three principles described below should focus exclusively on what we do and not on how we run our operations.

### **Three Principles of Camp Kawartha:**

#### **Fostering Environmental Awareness**

##### **Helping participants to:**

- ❖ Build skills which will help participants to enjoy the outdoors
- ❖ Provide outdoor recreational opportunities for children and adults
- ❖ Promote knowledge about the natural world
- ❖ Describe human impacts on natural systems
- ❖ Provide children and adults with strategies for positive environmental change.
- ❖ Inspire in children and adults, a sense of caring, wonder and awe for the natural world
- ❖ Demonstrate and promote sustainable living practices and knowledge of alternative energy sources
- ❖ Deliver innovative and consistently excellent programming for participants of all ages

#### **Promoting Self Esteem**

##### **Helping participants to:**

- ❖ Gain confidence and solve problems
- ❖ Develop leadership and life skills
- ❖ Work effectively in teams
- ❖ Acquire initiative and motivation
- ❖ Foster independent thinking and problem solving skills

#### **Building Community**

##### **Helping participants to:**

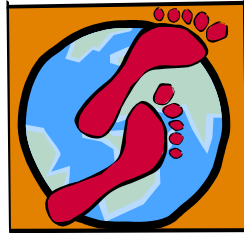
- ❖ Foster inclusion and respect for diversity
- ❖ Develop a sense of caring and empathy
- ❖ Feel part of a close-knit community by promoting: fellowship, care for one another and the natural environment.
- ❖ Live in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner

## Management:

Camp Kawartha is committed to sound and responsible management in all aspects of its operations by focusing on:

- *Excellence in safety and risk management*
- *Responsible financial management*
- *Leading environmental practices in the camping industry*

## Second Step



**Vision Statement:** We need to revisit the vision we articulated in our initial strategic plan. What would we like our facilities and programming to look like over the next five years? How does this vision fit in with what we know about our campers, parents and likely future trends in the camping and the education sectors?

**Review:** A vision is usually encapsulated in a “vision statement.” This statement is a declaration of where we would like to be as an organization in the next five years. As Paulette Vinette from Charity Village suggests: *“The vision statement is an expression of what the organization’s aspirations are - what it intends to achieve. It, too, is directional.”*

The vision statement should state a position (where we fit into the market) and outline key transformations (changes we need in order to get there). Typically this statement is one or two sentences in length. The statement should also be:

- ❑ Realistic
- ❑ Attainable
- ❑ Endorsed (by stakeholders such as: Camp Kawartha’s Board of Directors, Staff, Participants, Parents, Partners and Alumni).

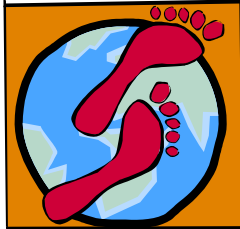
## Camp Kawartha’s 2011-2016 Vision Statement:

*“Camp Kawartha is recognized as a National leader in the delivery of high quality and inspirational outdoor and environmental programming. We teach and promote sustainable living practice to children and adults of all ages and abilities.”*

The small changes outlined below, provides a more succinct and realistic vision for our organization:

*That Camp Kawartha will be recognized as a leader in the delivery of high quality and inspirational outdoor and environmental programming, practicing, teaching and promoting sustainable living practices to children and adults of all ages and abilities.*

### Third Step



**Identifying Clients & Issues:** In order to deliver our vision we should have a clear understanding of who our clients are in our four departments: Summer Camp, Outdoor Education, Environment Centre and Facility Rentals. Also, we should review the issues, strengths of our organization, challenges and opportunities we face in each of our three departments. The final step is to develop a response based on: a) what we know about our operations, b) the trends, challenges and issues facing each department, c) where we would like our operations to be in 5 years and finally d) an action plan with specific goals and objectives, helping us to realize our vision. These steps are outlined in the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan.

### **Camp Kawartha Environment Centre backgrounder:**

During the summer of 2009, Camp Kawartha with the help of Sir Sandford Fleming's Sustainable Building Program and a large grant from the Gainey Family, constructed a sustainable environmental centre at Trent University. This centre teaches students from the greater Peterborough area about environmental issues such as climate change, habitat protection, species depletion and the importance of children connecting to the local environment. Using innovative green architecture, the centre showcases carbon neutral features such as passive solar design, green roof, wetland water treatment, geothermal, active and passive solar power and composting toilets.

The facility not only serves as model to promote sustainable technologies in our community and schools, but also offers emerging teachers what no other University in Ontario, and to our knowledge, in Canada, has been able to provide: innovative environmental programming and environmental teacher training. This initiative contributes to our stated vision of establishing Camp Kawartha as a leader in environmental education.

## **Strategic Plan Follow up.**

Below are a number of areas I believe that should also be reviewed as an extension of the strategic planning process:

1. Reviewing the committee structure and governance of the Board to insure that we govern our organization in accordance with best practices in the not-for-profit sector.
2. Reviewing the structure of staffing at Camp Kawartha. Are there adequate staffing levels to deliver the strategic plan as outlined?
3. Develop a comprehensive Site Development Plan. The plan should be consistent with the mission, vision and principles outlined in the strategic plan. The plan should also provide a comprehensive overview of site needs in the short and long term and outline strategies to fund facility improvements.
4. In keeping with best practices demonstrated by other camps, we should initiate:
  - An active Alumni Association
  - A Friends of Camp Kawartha Organization
  - A Fundraising Advisory Committee

## **References:**

Overview of basic strategic planning for not-for-profits:

[http://www.managementhelp.org/plan\\_dec/str\\_plan/models.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/plan_dec/str_plan/models.htm)

Tools for Not-for-Profit Leaders: The Strategic Plan

<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rom31.html>

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE: WHILE OUR STRATEGIC PLAN SHOULD BE BOTH COMPREHENSIVE AND SPECIFIC, IT SHOULD ALSO REMAIN FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE ENOUGH TO ADAPT TO CHANGING**