

## **A Plan for Redeveloping the Ministry of Camp MoVal**

Submitted for consideration by the Missouri Mid-South Conference

November 6, 2021

The Vision: Camp MoVal can become a spiritually reinvigorated, financially sustainable camp and retreat center that serves the mission and ministry needs of the Missouri Mid-South Conference and its partners. *Camp program, staff, and culture will be rooted in the Christian values of community-building, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ allyship, inclusion and access, environmental sustainability, and kindness, with an eye toward leadership development and UCC identity.*

The Model: The summer focus is a weekly camping program for children and youth; spring and fall seasons would focus on retreat hospitality (providing limited program capacity) for church groups, ecumenical partners, weekend Conference-sponsored events (for youth, adult, etc.), and other community/corporate groups.

The Plan: A five-year phased redevelopment of MoVal's ministry, with strategic attention to needs of site, program/business, and leadership (both staff and governance). Benchmarks for each phase are designed to establish realistic expectations for growth, while also assessing Conference-wide engagement and capacity for campership and site use, program development, recruitment of both paid staff and volunteers, and financial commitment.

After an initial two-year period (2022-2023), each year that all benchmarks are met will automatically prompt continuation to next phase. Missing any benchmark will prompt evaluation by Conference Council, in conversation with MoVal Subsidiary Board, which may result in changes to the plan, including considerations of site priorities, program adjustments, and paid staff and volunteer roles. Council has the authority to make any changes it deems appropriate in response to the missed benchmarks, including sale of property or changes in leadership, without a vote of the Conference delegates. Council will not make significant changes without informing the Conference members before taking action.

Fundamental Assumptions:

- 501(c)(3) status: The Missouri Mid-South Conference is a registered non-profit corporation with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, and has been operating Camp MoVal under this corporate status since MoVal's founding. This arrangement will NOT change – consideration of other corporate relationships, including forming a MoVal corporation entirely separate from MMS, has been undertaken: the 2021 Listening and Discernment process determination was that it's best for Camp MoVal and for MMS for Camp MoVal to remain a full ministry of the Conference.
- Camp MoVal is the property of the Missouri Mid-South Conference: Ownership, authority, and oversight of all aspects of the site and any ministry/programming, including staff and budget, ultimately rests with the Conference Council. Over time, Council will transfer aspects of responsibility to a "subsidiary board," with the goal of establishing them as an independent governing body in 5-10 years. There are a variety of approaches possible to authorize and strengthen this group, and this transfer of responsibility will take place with careful attention to the needs of MoVal and the welfare of the Conference as a whole.
- Financial sustainability: Current "best practice" wisdom for church camps indicates that camp operations is funded at 85% by camp revenue (i.e. camper fees, retreat use); the remaining 15% is funded by Conference gift (OCWM, individual donations, investment income, etc.). The initial-year budget estimates for 2022 do not reflect this 85-15 split, but the goal is to move in that direction over time.
- For the purposes of planning and developing business focus, the intention is that MoVal's camping and retreat usage will come 80% from within the UCC family, and 20% from non-UCC church orgs, non-church partner orgs, and others outside the UCC. Marketing, fundraising, and business promotion will reflect this 80/20 split.
- For immediate capital purposes, funds will come out of the MoVal Reserve Fund (approx. \$180K at end of September 2021) and MoVal donations. The Capital Campaign will include replenishment of and addition to that fund for continued capital needs in the future.

Live Questions, still to be determined by Council:

- Capital Campaign: The need for a capital campaign is urgent and evident. Missouri Mid-South will work with a professional capital campaign consultant to determine an appropriate goal and schedule, and to manage the campaign. It is typical to expect that the cost of this consulting will be paid by proceeds of the campaign itself.
- TAMBO: It is realistic to assume that some or all of the TAMBO property will need to be put up for sale in order to fund needed site improvements at MoVal. Council also recognizes that there is much weight and history attached to this conversation. Council will give careful thought to prior commitments and current values regarding use of this land, the use of funds from any sale, recognition of TAMBO's many meanings and stories, and also provide for an opportunity for some kind of final celebration and thanksgiving for the ministry that has happened there. Unleashing Potential has had an opportunity to say "goodbye" to TAMBO, but there are other groups who would also like a chance for closure as well.
  - Council is aware of at least two neighbors who are interested in purchasing portions of the TAMBO property and have expressed a desire to do so in order to preserve the natural landscape and prevent the disruption of development.
  - Part of the redevelopment plan for MoVal assumes retaining an area of the TAMBO property directly across from the Camp MoVal entrance, including the existing maintenance shed, in order to build appropriate year-round staff housing.
- Management: Council may consider engaging a management company such as UCCR rather than maintaining local control during initial turnaround years. This is an item that needs further conversation, but no management arrangement would be engaged that would stray from the redevelopment plan or the values of MMSUCC or Camp MoVal. Pending such an engagement, Council would work to clarify and uphold the roles of Council, the MoVal Subsidiary Board, and the management company.
- Subsidiary Board: Council will establish the MoVal Subsidiary Board and nominate its members in consideration of and in service to the redevelopment plan. Subsidiary Board responsibilities progress according to the needs of Camp MoVal, as determined by Council, guided by the redevelopment plan.

	SITE	PROGRAM/BUSINESS	LEADERSHIP (STAFF + VOLUNTEER)	BENCHMARKS
2021 (Phase 0: Regroup)	<p>Lagoon investigation; basic grounds maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urgent security needs addressed: cameras, gate/fencing</li> </ul>	<p>MoVal property closed for operation</p> <p>Listening and Discernment process through September</p> <p>No in-person Conference-sponsored events</p>	<p>Gathering input from many sources</p> <p>Conference Council creates plan</p> <p>Conference delegates vote (Nov 6)</p>	
2022 (Phase 1: Recommit)	<p>Current site needs (priorities are safety, expediency):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lagoon remediation: Part 1 chlorine tank</li> <li>Trees removed</li> <li>Demolish caretaker's house</li> <li>Lakeside cabins, Red Cedar – fresh paint</li> <li>Lakeside kitchen upgrades (walk-in cooler)</li> <li>Pinewood completed</li> <li>Basic grounds maintenance</li> <li>Need: RV/mobile homes to house two on-site staff persons</li> </ul>	<p>Four weeks of traditional summer camp model; focus on HS and MS youth.</p> <p>Training for all paid staff and volunteers: racial justice training, anti-bullying bystander training</p> <p>Focus on fall (possibly some spring—April/May) retreat business: target UCC churches, ecumenical partners</p> <p>Marketing focus is on existing relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire key staff: Interim Program Director, Interim Site Manager; overseen by CM</li> <li>Identify administrative needs (Registrar?) that could be shared with another camp, and/or performed in StL office; supervised as appropriate</li> <li>Nominate and begin convening, training, Subsidiary Board; responsible to Conference Council</li> </ul>	<p>250 campers attend</p> <p>8 retreat groups provide \$12,000 in off-season income.</p> <p>Fundraising goal [excl. OCWM]: \$20,000</p> <p>OCWM benchmark: \$600,000+</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Sale of portion of TAMBO likely. Keep reasonable area for staff housing.</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Groundwork/launch for capital campaign</p> </div>

	SITE	PROGRAM/BUSINESS	LEADERSHIP (STAFF + VOLUNTEER)	BENCHMARKS
2023 (Phase 2: Rebuild)	<p>(priorities are accessibility, environment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lagoon, continued: scooping</li> <li>• Build “grown-up” staff housing onsite</li> <li>• New/improved signage around property</li> <li>• ADA compliance in key buildings (minimum!)</li> <li>• Sidewalk/stairs throughout property</li> <li>• Dark Sky lighting?</li> <li>• Build “welcome pavilion” (maybe move/reuse old pavilion from TAMBO?)</li> <li>• Hilltop renovation?</li> <li>• Solar panels?</li> </ul>	<p>Six weeks of traditional summer camp model; Retain focus on HS and MS youth</p> <p>Training for all paid staff and volunteers: racial justice training, anti-bullying bystander training, LGBTQ+ needs, neurodivergent needs</p> <p>Focus on increasing retreat business, existing local orgs whose values match ours; also add grandparents/family camp weekend programs.</p> <p>Marketing focus expands to more groups/orgs, includes justice emphasis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify further staff needs: Hospitality, Kitchen, Grounds, Admin, etc.</li> <li>• Create leadership program for potential camp staff and volunteers (variety of possible models)</li> <li>• Subsidiary Board begins to assume fundraising leadership</li> </ul>	<p>300 campers attend</p> <p>15 retreat/weekend groups provide \$18K+ in income</p> <p>Fundraising goal \$20,000</p> <p>OCWM benchmark: \$600,000+</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p>Capital Campaign underway</p> </div>
2024 (Phase 3: Reground)	<p>(priorities are program expansion, retreat space and hospitality)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lagoon, continued: design Part 2</li> <li>• Hilltop renovation</li> <li>• Chapel renovation</li> </ul>	<p>Seven/eight weeks of traditional camp, expand age groups to include children (i.e. return to same age groups as pre-Covid program)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discernment about future needs re: Site Manager, Program Director positions</li> <li>• Is this the time to hire Exec Director?</li> </ul>	<p>350 campers attend</p> <p>20 retreat/weekend groups provide \$30K in income</p> <p>Fundraising goal \$40K</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden and composting</li> <li>• Wifi expansion</li> <li>• Lakeside renovation?</li> <li>• Air conditioning in which buildings?</li> </ul>	<p>Staff/volunteer training continues</p> <p>Retreat business stable, possibly increasing group sizes; able to provide more consistent program support such as lifeguards, ropes course facilitator, etc.</p> <p>Transport from KC/STL?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs assessment for additional positions: Registrar/Development Director/Retreat business manager?</li> <li>• Subsidiary Board assumes more leadership</li> </ul>	<p>OCWM benchmark: \$600,000+</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p>Capital Campaign underway</p> </div>
<p>2025 (Phase 4: Reach out)</p>	<p>(priorities are quality of experience, continued expansion)–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lagoon, continued: sand filter (this is BIG)</li> <li>• Red Cedar renovation?</li> </ul>	<p>Seven/eight weeks of traditional camp, all age groups</p> <p>Retreat business stable; Increase Conference-sponsored weekend programming?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff positions determined for next 3-5 years, searches if needed</li> <li>• Subsidiary board assumes more leadership</li> </ul>	<p>400 Campers</p> <p>20+ retreat groups provide \$40K in income</p> <p>Fundraising goal \$45K</p> <p>OCWM benchmark: \$600,000+</p>
<p>2026 (Phase 5: Reevaluate)</p>	<p>This is the year we can start dreaming of new buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dining Hall addition</li> </ul>	<p>Seven/eight weeks of traditional camp, all age groups</p> <p>Retreat business stable; Increase Conference-sponsored weekend programming?</p> <p>VBS/Day camp program?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff in place for future development</li> <li>• Subsidiary board and Conference Council reevaluation year: is Subsidiary Board ready for more conversation about responsibility and oversight?</li> </ul>	<p>400+ campers</p> <p>20+ retreat groups provide \$50K in income.</p> <p>Fundraising goal \$50K</p> <p>OCWM benchmark: \$600,000+</p>