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December 14, 2011

Dr. Daisy L. Alford-Smith
Girl Scouts of North East Ohio
One Girl Scout Way
Macedonia, OH 44056-2156

Dear Dr. Alford-Smith,

It is disappointing to learn that the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio have decided to move ahead with plans to close Great Trail Camp in Carroll County. The decision to sell the camp is counter to the intent of the gifts made by my family over three generations. Such blatant disregard for long-time supporters should serve as a warning to other would-be donors to think twice before giving to GSNEO.

While I personally regret the decision, I am more troubled by the impact this change will have on the South region. While GSNEO has retained camps in the North/Central, East and West regions, your decision to close Great Trail leaves the South without a camp – therefore increasing the time, money and effort required to experience the outdoors. This change is all but certain to have an adverse effect on membership in the South and other regions impacted by closures.

We all are keenly aware of the challenges facing both profit and non-profit organizations during this trying time. However, the closing and sale of four camps to build premier leadership centers on the remaining properties is not an economic necessity. Additionally, selling more than half of GSNEO's camps in the midst of the worst economic period since the Great Depression would be a gross financial mistake and counter to your fiduciary responsibilities.

The GSNEO has contributed much to the girls in our area over the years, but I am concerned that GSNEO's current vision has strayed from its founding focus and principles. Instead of outdoor experiential learning, the new focus is based on premier leadership centers and more programming such as, "Baby Think it Over" and "Positive Futures – Probation and Beyond". GSNEO should maintain its focus on outdoor learning and not expand into social programs better performed by other non-profits. A blurring of GSNEO's core mission will lead to the duplication of services and the dilution of charitable donations to worthy causes.

I urge you and the board to reconsider the decision to close and sell Great Trail Camp. You can create a win-win by retaining four or more camps and still build a premier leadership center at a central location. Use this as an opportunity to unite GSNEO and to enter the next 100 years on a unified, positive note.

Sincerely,



Guy F. Renkert
President & CEO

cc: GSNEO Board, Staff and Delegate Members

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