

american **CAMP** association®

2020 Vision Update

Date: May 5, 2009

"Slow down, this is moving too fast."

"Get moving, this is taking too long."

"Don't tell us what the details should look like, let us help design the details."

"Tell us the details and we'll tell you what we think."

These are just a few of the diametrically-opposed comments the 2020 Task Force has received over the past eight weeks as we have visited with Sections and members. Since our offer to Section Leaders to come and visit in-person with Section Boards and members, the 2020 Task Force has visited with 14 Sections. Talking directly with Section Boards and members has been an incredibly valuable part of this entire process. Visits to the field continue in May!

This update is **lengthy by design because it contains a full-account of the progress to date**. We encourage you to spend some time reviewing the details, and then communicate your thoughts to us (2020@acamaillist.org). It has been challenging to balance the opposing perspectives of "just give us the overview" with "give us all the details." **With this update we have chosen the full-detail approach.**

2020 Concept

"Where's the plan?"

"Can't you just give us the details?"

"Don't give us a plan – let us participate in developing the details."

"What have you people been doing?"

In the Fall of 2007, Section Presidents-elect challenged the national leadership to "get moving" on the basic concepts of a vision – loosely developed at that time – identified as a vision for the year 2020. (For a reminder on the details of the vision, link to <http://www.acacamps.org/2020/> and click on "2020 Context".) In the Fall of 2008, **the ACA National Board approved the 2020 Vision concepts. They did not, and were not asked to approve a "plan of action."** In February 2009 at the Council of Delegates meeting, the 2020 Task Force presented their research and thoughts to that date – again – concepts, not a plan of action. The Delegates participated in a "straw vote" and the vast majority stood up in support of moving the concepts forward – knowing that much work was to be done to investigate options, consider implications and then, and only then, to create a plan of action for the association that will result in more children and youth benefiting from the camp experience. Since February, the 2020 Task Force has been out in the field meeting with Section Boards and members, and other Task Forces have been mobilized to continue discussion in a number of very specific areas (more on that later in this memo.)

Foundational Principles

The question that the Task Force has been asked to help answer is:

What must ACA look like and how must ACA act to meet the overall goal of 20 million campers and 20,000 participants in ACA by the year 2020?

There are so many components to this “puzzle” that we continue to share the 2020 Vision visual with you to demonstrate that “this” is much more than just looking at the “structure” of the organization (<http://www.acacamps.org/2020/>, click on “2020 Puzzle Graphic”). As can be expected however, as we have visited with the Sections and members, the overwhelming topic on everyone’s mind and in their language is ... **“What is going to happen to my section, my section’s money, my section’s relationships with other entities, and my section staff?”** The answers are: **help us decide on all of those things.** Hence comes the rub – some of you are wondering why we have not “done” something and simply drafted the “answers” so you can react to them, and others of you don’t want us to draft anything at all. We continue to try to balance all perspectives; however...

The bottom-line for us at this time seems to be – in order to get the ball rolling, we – together – need to get to the point of putting more concrete ideas on paper – based on what we have heard thus far. We risk the perception that somehow there was a “secret plan” all along. The best we can hope for is that you will find a way to trust that there is no secret plan – **and will participate in the creation of the plans for the future.** With that in mind, we will attempt to share as much detail as we can and **invite continued dialogue, debate, and generative thinking** that will result in more children and youth being able to have a camp experience.

Principles of Design

Earlier in this process, we shared “non-negotiables” with you. After talking with so many of you, we have tested those assumptions and find:

- **ACA’s tax status as a 501(c)3 “public good” organization:** While a small number of people have argued that ACA should be a “trade association” that “protects” the camp industry, the overwhelming input is support for the 501(c)3 mission. This **does not** mean that members are ignored. In fact, the public is best served by serving the members and the members are best served by serving the public. What it **does mean** is that ACA will find ways to reach the public more – to share our message about the value of the camp experience – and to create programs that result in more children being given the gift of a camp experience. This certainly is not a new concept, but one we intend to make actionable.
- **ACA must maximize the use of association-wide resources thereby eliminating redundancy and inefficiency:** While virtually everyone supports these concepts, many are searching for examples to illustrate what would be better/different. So, here are just a few examples:
 - Currently, across the 25 entities, we collectively spend almost \$100,000 per year just to complete the annual audits and tax forms required by the government.
 - We collectively spend *thousands* of hours per year talking about By-laws issues.
 - For 25 entities to process invoices, manage accounting processes, and generally perform the “business” of handling and processing money, we spend thousands of hours per year and tens of thousands of dollars.

- By treating every conference and event separately, we miss-out on economies of scale and negotiating strength. For example, if we could create package deals for speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees, we could eliminate waste and heighten our bargaining power.
- **ACA must continue to have engaged volunteers and opportunities for relevant, rewarding engagement:** We have listened very carefully to your input on this issue. We hear that you want more structure to the volunteer system than we originally proposed. **You are telling us that you really like the words “local advisory boards”.** So, let’s create those groups, but eliminate “governance” (the authority to administer centralized systems) from the equation, and instead give these local advisory boards the important job of customizing local delivery for such things as educational programs, public services and entrepreneurial programs that can serve as pilots that may expand when found successful. For others of you, you wonder what other forms of volunteering will be available besides serving on local advisory boards. We envision expanded opportunities for participation in affinity groups, on committees and task forces, as standards volunteers, etc. We intend to work together to design as many opportunities for relevant engagement as possible.
- **ACA will have accountability and clarity. All will understand where the “buck stops”:** Most of the input we have received in this area concerns the issues of staff. So, let’s just lay this on the table again – we have tried for years to coordinate the work of the 25 staffs. The bottom line is that they each report to 25 boards, thus the “buck” stops in 25 places and has led to frustration, competition, and mistrust. We’ve consulted with experts and people with experience in both business development and non-profit management. The only path that makes sense in a strong business model is that **all staff are accountable to one system** – a nationwide staff that is ultimately responsible to one CEO who is responsible to one Board of Directors, with field staff who are assigned responsibility for the delivery of local services managed by local advisory boards. Regardless of where you personally are on this issue, we think we can all agree that **form must follow function** – so we need to work on the function first. This conversation will continue.

So, those are the items that we are using as our “principles of design” as discussion continues and expands. Many, many groups are taking small parts of the puzzle and working toward recommendations (remember the puzzle graphic). We’ve found that the issues and questions fall into the following categories:

Fiscal Issues

As we search for the elimination of redundancy, the development of organizational influence based on the strength of a nation-wide association, and greater efficacy, at the top of the list of questions is, “what will happen to my Section’s reserves?” The answer is: **your money is your money.** Under a consolidated balance sheet, Section reserves can be “restricted” for future use only as your current Section sees fit. For anyone who is familiar with restricted funds, this is a very rigid and powerful designation that would not allow for misuse of funds. So, what could this look like? Well, you might think about:

- Designating your reserves to only be used for projects in your geographic area.
- Designating your reserves to only be used for future public relations programs.
- Designating your reserves to be put into an endowment – the interest of which to be used only as you specify.
- Sharing your reserves for the betterment of the entire association – in whatever way you determine.
- Etc.

Legal Issues

The bottom-line is that seven Sections are separately incorporated from the American Camp Association. Those seven Sections have the legal right to determine their future relationship with the organization. At the most extreme, one or more of those Sections can decide that they do not want to join with everyone else under the American Camp Association. If they made that decision, they could go off on their own, leaving ACA's intellectual property (IP). IP includes things like ACA's standards and accreditation program, logos, name and other educational and intellectual materials.

Of course, we don't want that to happen and **hope that we all can continue to work on ways that will bring us together as one organization.** A few examples of assets that we know of which will take special negotiation:

- The state of Illinois requires the recipient of their Title XX funds to be an Illinois corporation. (Title XX is a powerful, incredible program that gives thousands of children camp experiences.) Our attorneys tell us that there are easy ways to have an Illinois corporation linked with ACA, and staffed by ACA staff that is in Illinois. **We all want the Title XX program to remain and will do nothing to jeopardize it.**
- ACA, New England holds a mortgage on the building that houses their office. This is a real asset. There are so many ways to negotiate this issue. ACA, NE is at the table and we will begin discussions soon to figure out what makes sense. For those of you who are not directly involved in these discussions and are wondering about the legal issues – **ACA cannot simply "take" this asset – nor would want to.**
- There are a number of regional conferences that have been designed to support identified regions. **We want to support and protect the strengths and assets found throughout ACA.** We are confident that questions around this issue can be resolved.

Of course there are other legal issues, such as the agreements that Sections may have with other entities. Discussions with lawyers tell us that the law will support most anything we all decide to negotiate.

Obviously we have lots to talk about yet.

Staffing Issues

As stated earlier, we do believe that **we need to have one staff, lead by one CEO.** You have interpreted this to mean many different things. Some believe that this means that all Section staff are "out of a job", others have expressed mistrust that one coordinated staff could even work, others have said they are worried that the current National staff cannot handle the work of designing a plan. Our consultants tell us that in order to design a new staff structure, **you must first know the "function" of the desired organization... thus form will follow function.** Our CEO will begin work with volunteers, staff, and outside experts to identify staffing models that would support the structure that is evolving. Fortunately, there are excellent resources and models available. The American Society of Association Executives especially has great research and resources. Here's what we do know:

- Currently we have 24 Section Executives **who must be "generalists"**. Because the charter requires all Sections to do at least the same baseline things – but just in their geographic territory – they've had to be "jacks of all trade." Just a few of these Sections have been able to hire support staff to assist them. Most don't have this luxury.
- **Teleworking** is the staffing of the future. Companies far and wide have had great success with their staff being located anywhere and everywhere. This will continue. While we place great

value on our commitment to the creation of authentic human connections, we understand that technology can be used to develop some of those connections as well. With technology today, fewer and fewer companies will have one large corporate headquarters where all workers are located.

- Whatever the local structure is, we will have staff physically located there. We don't know what that means yet – except to say that we know that **field staff need to be all over the country**.
- We expect more “specialists” and less “generalists.” To be effective, we need to have people with specific competencies doing what they do best. We also need those specialists who have the ability to see and add value to the big picture.

Programs and Services: We wish we had a great way to create a hologram to use as a visual to explain that there will be **multiple delivery systems**. Perhaps it is easier to explain what will not be in the plan. We will **not** have the 5-7 geographic regions we've been talking about set up as just bigger Sections from days of old. This makes no sense. Instead, **some** programs will be delivered within a region, some by state, and some across affinity groups who network as a result of geography and/or association. Others however, will be delivered with no regard to regions at all. For example:

- **Public Policy:** Because the laws and regulations that affect camps are generally at the state and local level (not regionally or Federally), we can image a national “network” that includes an overarching volunteer committee to set general public policy direction and provide support to *state-based* groups. When something comes up in a state that traditionally has not had much activity, **volunteers in that area can be mobilized, and national can “deploy” expert-area volunteers and staff to support the work in that particular state.**
- **Media Relations:** Working with the media is best done by “media-market” – which of course extend across regions and even states. Again, we'd see a national “network” that includes an overarching volunteer committee to set media relations direction and messages and provide support to *media-market-based* groups. When something comes up in a media-market that traditionally has not had much activity, volunteers in that area can be mobilized, and national can “deploy” expert-area volunteers and staff to support the work in that particular media-market.
- **Standards and Accreditation:** Currently, 25 entities administer the program with some specific components delivered from the National Office. The Education and Accreditation Task envisions a future that harnesses technology for flexible deployment of human resources, including a one-office model for documentation review and self assessment, and local volunteers providing personalized education and site-visits.

We all have much work to do to design these things, but the general ideas have received resounding support thus far.

Volunteers and Governance

Our goal is one organization with one National “Governing Board.” Our discussion with Section Leaders in Orlando talked about one “National Advisory Council (NAC)” which would be the evolution of the current Council of Delegates. Work still needs to continue (led by the Council of Delegates Task Force, with input from the Sections) to help design how people would be chosen to serve on the National Advisory Council, how many there would be, etc. However, the foundational design is that the **NAC would serve as the advisors to the National Board of Directors of the association – bringing information from the grass-roots to the Board, and vice versa.**

What's going on Now?

While we continue to talk with Sections, a number of small groups have been appointed to begin the work of trying to get to the proverbial "devil in the details." While this information is available on the web, it is so important that you see the information, we are including it here:

Committees/Task Forces:	Issues	Members:
2020 Task Force	Overarching group, coordinating all efforts, structure	Scott Body, Diane Tyrrell, Rich Garbinsky, Posie Taylor, Peter Surgenor, Ann Sheets, Susan Yoder, Peg Smith
Re-tooling Task Force Work Completed	Initial 2020 inspiration	Robert Lebby, Scott Ralls, Jean McMullan, Suz Welch, Art Wannlund, Fred Miller, Dave Hiliard, Peter Surgenor, Ann Sheets, Chuck Gerden, Sue Haber, Peg Smith
Accreditation & Education Task Force	Standards, accreditation, education	Art Wannlund, Chris Strevel, Kathy Trotter, Jean McMullan, Dawn Ewing, Dave Hiliard, Jude Bevan, Tom Horner, Rhonda Mickelson, Amy Katzenberger
American Camping Foundation Task Force	Funds development, future of the ACF	Don Cheley, Mike Horner, Rodger Popkin, Jean McMullan, Peter Surgenor
Board Development Committee (TBD)	Recruitment of board members, board orientation and training.	TBD
Interim Board Development Committee	Recruitment of board members, board orientation and training.	Scott Brody, Kevin Gordon, Rodger Popkin, Art Wannlund, Charles Butler, Ann Sheets, Peg Smith
Council of Delegates Task Force	Interim COD, and future National Advisory Council	Sarah Seaward, Tom Riddleberger, Peter Surgenor, Marah Lyvers, Michael Castulik
Field Service Committee	Communications vehicle. Looking at association leadership plans.	Chris Strevel, Rich Garbinsky, Mary Rogers, DD Gass, Judy Reilly, Nancy Frankel
Fiscal Task Force	What would camp fees and member dues look like? How would restricted funds (from section assets) be managed?	Tom Rosenberg, Art Wannlund, Rhonda Begley
Membership Task Force I	Individual membership	Amy White, Dani Shaw, Donna Johns-Thomas, Tom Rosenberg, Rachel Williams, Peg Smith
Membership Task Force II	Camp affiliation, coordinating with the fiscal task force	Tom Rosenberg, Steve Ingram, Grechen Throop
Policies & Organizational Systems Committee	National Board policies to ensure accountability.	Sharon Kosch, Mary Helen Franko, Maggie Braun, Tom Horner, Peter Surgenor, Gail Tumidijavech,
Public Policy Committee	legislation and regulation issues – delivery and design	Steve Sudduth, Scott Brody, Teresa Younger, Jane Sanborn, Tim Fox, Phillip Lovell, Steve Shively
Technology Task Force	Association database, future Find-A-Camp tool.	Rick Benfield, Bette Bussel, Sue Haber, Susan Yoder, Rhonda Begley, Tom Schenk

Additional groups:

24 Section Presidents and Section Boards ~240
Council of Delegates – 140 (including National Board)
National Board of Directors – 20
TBD – Staffing task group(s)

Next Steps in the Process

1. Continued visits to Sections
2. Quarterly calls with Section Presidents and Executives (see below)
3. Continuing work by the various task groups (which may be expanded to include even more perspectives), ongoing research, dialogue, debate
4. Early fall – more information to the Sections and members – including reports from the various groups
5. Summit of Leaders (see below)
6. Information back out to the Sections and members
7. Decisions on “plans of action”
8. Implementation stage

Quarterly Phone Calls

Section Presidents and Executives will participate in their quarterly phone calls with the National President and CEO in May.

Then What’s Next? – Leadership Summit

In discussing continued coordinated work, we looked to this Fall’s schedule. There was a tentative time for a traditional “Fall Leadership Training”, and we usually have a “Fall Field Service Meeting” as well. **We believe it is in everyone’s best interest to instead host a “Leadership Summit”.** We see the Summit as a **working meeting where the actual “devil in the details” will be worked out** to the extent that you can then go home to your Boards and finalize what the future will be for the organization. More details:

- **Who?** – Members of the key task groups working on these issues, National Board, up to 3 people from each Section (your Section will decide who attends).
- **Where?** – Centrally located, with easy airport connections – we are thinking perhaps Chicago
- **Financial arrangement?** Since we will not conduct the Fall Leadership Training nor the Fall Field Service meeting, it is our suggestion that Sections only cover the cost of their participants travel, housing, and meals – National would cover everything else (travel for all National Board members and other national volunteers, national staff, meeting materials, meeting room, etc).
- **When?** - We have examined the Fall calendar, and have a couple of dates in mind. Section Presidents have been asked to weigh in with their choices on behalf of your Section. (They have a web tool they will use to give us their input. We’ve asked for response by May 15th).

Reminder – What This is All About

More children having camp experiences, and

- More people using ACA products and services
- Efficacy and efficiency for the organization; with
 - some centralized national functions, and

- o customized local delivery

We want to become:

- One association with one mission, one vision, one governing board, and one staff.
- An association that optimally uses both technology and relationship-building to provide knowledge, where staff are deployed where needed throughout the association.
- An association where staff and volunteers will organize around need and demand, not simply around imagined geographic boundaries – and where volunteers customize local delivery and can create entrepreneurial programs that might serve as pilots that can be expanded if successful.
- A viable, sustainable organization with consistent, high quality services and education for the public and members.
- An organization that is accountable for all of its actions – as one association.

Thank you for spending the significant time it took to absorb this update. We look forward to future discussion. Our email is 2020@acacamps.org.

20/20 Task Force

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