March 15, 2018

Dear New Hampshire Conference Friends:

The following report is an initial assessment from United Camps, Conferences and Retreats (UCCR) regarding Horton Center, the outdoor ministries site of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ.

The New Hampshire Conference Board of Directors contracted with two consultants, Kaleidoscope and UCCR, to provide assessments as part of a visioning and strategic planning process for Horton Center. Both reports are being shared widely in an effort to keep all interested persons fully informed. The report from Kaleidoscope was made available earlier, on February 1, and can be downloaded from the Conference website.

The Board will consider both reports at its next meeting on April 14 and determine next steps.

Please do not reproduce or disseminate any portion of this report without first receiving our permission.

If you have questions or comments, feel free to share them by contacting us at the email addresses noted below.

In faithful service to Christ,

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Initial Assessment and Evaluation Study for
Horton Center

New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

Prepared by

United Camps, Conferences and Retreats
February 27, 2018
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## Appendix

Background of United Camps, Conferences and Retreats
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Camps, Conferences and Retreats (UCCR) staff has appreciated the opportunity to assess and evaluate Horton Center and have truly enjoyed talking and working with representatives of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ (NHCUCC).

Assessing the information provided to us along with our own research, it appears there is opportunity for Horton Center to decrease the vacancy on the shoulder months in the spring and fall. The focus of target marketing to local non-profits including churches, schools (public and private), and colleges/universities in New Hampshire and eastern Vermont could increase revenue. Additionally, an improved method of cost recovery strategies would decrease the amount of operational expense. NHCUCC would continue to support the facility with major repairs and capital improvements as the owner of the facility.

Organizations that provide both program and operational oversight often account for use, revenue and expenses differently. In addition, facility features that are a strength or satisfactory to the owner may not be perceived as such by guests. It is strongly recommended that NHCUCC assess all current systems and procedures relating to camp operations, including customer care. This report and ongoing self-assessment by NHCUCC will require a change in thinking about the overall operation of their camp.

With regard to the mission of providing rewarding experiences and successful events at Horton Center, NHCUCC is devoted to providing a special experience in an outdoor environment. NHCUCC must understand that the cost for facility oversight and maintenance must be an annual and ongoing concern. To this end, NHCUCC is investigating ways to optimize use at Horton Center. Due to the current and future challenges of operating a financially sustaining facility, it is recommended that NHCUCC focus more comprehensively on the long-term financial cost of owning and fully maintaining Horton Center.

We thank you for the opportunity to partner on this Study and we appreciate your confidence in our experience in the camp, conference, and retreat industry for almost 50 years. Through our successful focus of providing cost effective site management as operator/manager and consultant, we feel confident in this study. UCCR operated sites have been self-supporting over the years, which has been important to the property owner’s financial health. However, in recent years it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the facilities solely through rates. Increased regulations in the camp, conference, and retreat industry as well as the increased standards of customer demand are impacting the structure of camp/conference/retreat budgets.
METHOD OF STUDY

In the evaluation, UCCR examined pertinent historical, operational and economic data provided by NHCUCC and developed by UCCR staff into a comprehensive picture.

The first step in the Study was several calls with Marcie Miller and Mike Carr, Pres/CEO of United Camps, Conferences and Retreats. During the conversations and emailed information we gathered information about Horton Center in the following areas: past revenue and expense, staff structure, buildings, natural resources, and spending.

Through the conversations it became apparent that Horton Center facilities are cared for with a great deal of inspiration and love.

We encourage that any scenarios developed for the future of Horton Center facilitate a partnership of respect and care for the site, in order to preserve its unique ambience.

We looked at the marketability of Horton Center by addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the site, projected staffing, competition and pricing.

The requested information, which included maintenance schedules and plans, operating procedures and past/present/projected future use by programs, was readily available and received at our office. Without this information we would be unable to identify annual camp operation, ascertain what, if any, cost controls are in place, determine if there is an annual process of rate and budget setting providing a balanced budget, and determine periods of vacancy that would not be typical to a facility such as Horton Center.

In the following part of our study, we have examined the equally important, non-economic implications, such as style of operation, site leadership, marketing, and hospitality. The entire operation of a facility contributes to the optimization of guest use. Without a safe, clean facility staffed with folks who truly understand great customer service, there is no ground floor for a quality customer experience. UCCR understands that care must be taken to reinforce NHCUCC’s responsibility of ownership and their possibility of future programming.
DESCRIPTION OF HORTON CENTER

In conversation and looking at the Horton Center website it is apparent that the design, building, and maintenance of the facilities have been performed with dedication to the mission of providing a facility fostering the residential retreat experience. The orientation of the buildings provides a relaxing and comfortable feeling to guests. The beauty of the property reflects that NHCUCC has a strong and conscientious focus on caring for the natural resources.

Due to the remoteness of Horton, the site would not be easily marketed for day use so the focus for use is on residential overnight groups. If there was a request for day use, the meeting spaces could be used for day use groups if they are not used by the groups sleeping in that building. The weather (Horton Center is in the White Mountains of New Hampshire where there is some of the coldest temperatures recorded in the U.S.), remoteness and accessibility to the site allows for seasonal use only.

Customer expectations have changed during the past 20 years. At most facilities, accommodations that were thought to be comfortable 20 years ago may now be considered rustic to guests even if the maintenance schedule has been followed. Initially the design and furnishings at Horton Center worked well for guests. NHCUCC would benefit from assessing Horton Center for upgrade suggestions that are noted in the Study.
FACILITY OVERVIEW

The overall impression is that for the most part there are volunteers ready to fill volunteer work weekend spots, donate materials and time, all while enjoying the fellowship of each other's company. Obviously there is a great economic advantage to this method of providing capital and annual maintenance.

The summer sleeping capacity is 132. A few buildings and yurts are available for staff lodging. Reading the descriptions of the facility it sounds like most of the beds are bunks. Some lodging areas have bathrooms; a large bathhouse services the majority of the lodging.

From conversations, history, and pictures it appears all buildings receive maintenance when needed.

Despite being remote, the facility has a modern camp kitchen and dining hall, well stocked shop, main office, ball fields, parking areas, overhead electric lines into camp, and vehicles to transport campers to trailheads and other activity areas. Other recreation opportunities include an arts and crafts lodge, campfire circle, labyrinth, and swimming holes along a river with rocks to jump off! A well provides water and there is a septic system with leach fields under the ball fields for the septic system.

The history is so impressive. From Mr. Horton's initial idea to build a retreat type setting, purchasing the land, setting the memorial bench for Mrs. Horton, the period with the Taize brothers, the Forest Service dropping the fire tower, to road and facility improvements. Quite a large amount of lore for generations to remember and pass along!
PROGRAM POTENTIAL

Horton Center has the potential to be a facility that could offer workshops and retreats in leadership, science, environmental and other curricular areas to its regular guests, as well as to hosted educational college or school groups.

Outdoor Education
Horton Center has potential for being a spring, summer, and fall facility for environmental and outdoor education/school camps that can host student, youth, and family groups for the purpose of introducing them to both basic and advanced concepts in science, teambuilding, ecology and environmental education. As evidenced by the presence of the varied summer camp offerings currently operating on this site, there is ample space and program areas for multiple youth groups to attend academic and teambuilding programs focused on different topics.

Market Survey Recommended
Environmental Education Camp is a competitive business with a limited number of possible customers who have many choices in camp, program, locale and curriculum. In order to populate a new residential environmental education program, substantial recruitment efforts are required. A new EE camp cannot assume that customers will just arrive, and once gaining customers, must continually improve itself to maintain and grow its customer base. A comprehensive plan identifying strategic areas in the surrounding counties, including school districts and private schools, would be necessary to identify participants for outdoor education programs, in addition to further program planning to identify the best way to utilize and market these camps to individuals, families, and groups. Spring and fall openings could offer direct relationships with schools looking to provide their students with a residential environmental program during mid-week periods of the school year.

Non-School Programs
All programs created for environmental education groups could be converted to use with family, community and other groups during the summer. Campfire programs in the evenings, as well as nature hikes and themed activities for children and adults can all be delivered by on site program staff and bring the message of environmental education to the general camping public, while helping build revenue and program options for Horton Center.

Partnerships with nearby non-K-12 institutions could also provide summer options for recreation departments to market as a recreation or education opportunity for their participants and families. The nearby towns are small and rural (Berlin and Gorham) and they could potentially be looking for summer opportunities.

Federal Grants for Environmental Education
Up to $3 million in funding for locally-focused environmental education grants is available. The EPA expects to award three to four grants in each of EPA's ten regions, for no less than $50,000 and no more than $100,000 each, for a total of 30-35 grants nationwide. Through this grant program, EPA intends to provide financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques, that will serve to increase
environmental and conservation literacy and encourage behavior that will benefit the environment.

In addition to other environmental topics, the 2018 EE Local Grant Program includes support for projects that reflect the intersection of environmental issues with agricultural best-practices, conservation of natural resources, food waste management, and natural disaster preparedness.

Examples of other local grant opportunities include New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and New England Environmental Education Alliance.

Further investigation is required to thoroughly assess the possibility of creating a sustainable environmental education program at Horton Center. Recommended steps include contacting local educators and surveying need for environmental education resources in schools one to two hours away from the camp. What do they need to help them teach the state standards? How best could a camp or outdoor education program help with hands-on teaching so they can reach their education goals? What are their limitations on field trips, and what do they want for their student population? Once the nearest programs (or absence of nearby programs) have been confirmed, then phone surveys of nearby schools will help to assess the level of schools needing resources. Utilizing the state website to network with other organizations and schools is encouraged as it will help provide opportunities for every child to get outside for diverse and repeated hands-on experiences during their K-12 school years.

Additional surveys would include creating a list of camp assets and opportunities that might be of use or interest for teaching about science, environment, history or leadership. Contacting governmental entities and making use of online resources would also be recommended since state and community support appears to be available and environmental education seems to be a priority to leaders and citizens of New Hampshire.

Current and Popular Program
Current popular programs that may be interested in renting Horton Center include yoga, tai chi, artist’s retreats, quiet meditation, qi gong, rock-climbing, and fly fishing.
PRESENT UTILIZATION AND POTENTIAL

Site Usage
Opportunity to increase use is easy to see on the 2017 calendar. The occupancy rate is never more than 35%, leaving many beds unoccupied. A glance at the calendar shows that if camp were open the third week of May and the last date was in mid-October, there is a total of 154 available camping days; however, in 2017 the camp was only reserved for 69 days. It is apparent an effort has been made to combine UCC groups in order to make more time available for non UCC groups to reserve camp time. A next possible step may require a shift in thinking to not limit use to only UCC groups on site at any one time.

The level of use by groups that can be expected at a particular camp depends on several interrelated factors. First, the facility is dealing with groups, not with individuals reserving rooms independently of one another. So the hotel model in which available beds are multiplied by available nights and factored by an industry standard percentage to project an expected level of utilization is not directly applicable to camps serving groups rather than individuals.

The following factors combine to make projecting the level of use that may be expected at Horton Center an inexact process:

- there are traditional users (groups that have returned for more than 2 years);
- the distribution of separate group areas;
- the reservations patterns of diverse program groups with their own individual scheduling limitations;
- the distribution of holidays in relation to week ending periods;
- other considerations related to the size, duration, composition and needs of individual groups.

To assist in determining use projections, here are some important assumptions that should be made:

- the site serves mainly groups from not-for-profit organizations and also hosts family reunions;
- the facility will be operational spring through fall extending into the shoulder months;
- use is projected to be primarily adult, family, and youth programs;
- a large portion of summer rental groups prefer weeklong reservations;
- with improved marketing and sales there most likely will be an increase of several groups on site at a time;
- a user day is generally defined as one person staying one overnight with three meals.
There is a potential for steadily increasing utilization as the availability of the camp becomes more widely known through marketing. Most effective promotion of sites is done in the year prior to the year in which programs are actually held (the majority of program groups make facility reservations 3-12 months in advance of their desired program dates). Consequently, the possible increase in the amount of use generated for Horton Center during the first year as a result of improved marketing and customer care would not be as high as the second year.

The remote location of the facility does not present opportunities to successfully increase use during the many weekday openings that might appeal to a day use market if a ‘retreat- meeting’ package was developed. Developing some kind of overnight retreat package that would appeal to local organizations to fill the mid-week openings could be successful.

The Marketing section has additional information pertaining to site use.

**Guidelines for Rate and Budget Best Practices**

A model of use at a facility can be developed looking at several comparable sites and a comparison with other similar camp facilities identified in the Marketing section. Additional considerations are the history of rates at the site and a close look at the costs of operating the facility over the past few years. Rates and budgets must be set annually based on information addressing operational costs, competition, and what you think your customers will pay. It is expected that the site’s rate will provide the site with revenue to break even or have a surplus at year-end. In some instances additional fundraising and/or donations may be required to supplement the rates supporting the operations budget.

It is difficult to develop a camp operations budget without the exercise of examining cost recovery through a rate setting process. Typically the rate process includes very detailed research, assessment, and strategy.

Knowing and tracking fixed vs variable cost is a key to success in this industry. A general rule of thumb is fixed cost should be 25%-35% of total expense and variable cost is 65%- 75% of total expense. This practice is based on two principles: 1) spending is based on occupancy, 2) developing an annual budget that shows the total expense never exceeds the revenue for normal every day camp operations. The materials received had identified variable vs. fixed expenses and followed the variable vs fixed rule. Assessing the 2016 budget I identified the variable and fixed expenses for 2016 very differently, 46.4% fixed and 53.6% variable.

Operations is the normal and regular every day cost of maintaining the site, housekeeping, food service, and the typical material and supplies and payroll/benefits to support the occupancy. Once this balance of revenue and expense is attained, every effort should be made to maintain the balance. Tracking and budgeting for normal and regular daily operations does not include a program budget. A program budget typically has program related items such as supplies, transportation, lease/rentals, fees to cover off site activities, and payroll/benefits. It is recommended that the program budget be kept separate from the operations. This allows you to understand the cost of operating the facility vs the cost of operating the program. A main benefit of this practice is that it allows you to understand the cost of
operations that needs to go into a camper registration fee and the cost of program that needs to go into a camper registration fee. This will provide transparency to see budget challenges often caused by the following:

- discounts given to certain groups and individuals;
- chaperone/counselor camp fees that are often free and the financial result/opportunity to identify a method of not charging or discounting chaperones and counselors;
- chaperone/counselor ratios that are prudent for budgeting and safety;
- where and how to budget program supplies;
- capital expenses that are not part of the normal and regular operations of the camp and need to be identified and funded as such.

Often times camps have a source of extraordinary income to provide for items at camp that are meaningful to the program. Examples of successful methods to support program supplies include:

- conference budget;
- golf tournament;
- annual giving request;
- a designated fund and/or interest from the principal of a fund;
- a camper population that can afford a camper fee that includes supporting a robust program budget.

A few benefits of tracking the 2 budgets:

- it will help with focused rate setting not only with your campers as already mentioned, and will provide valuable information for developing a rate for non-conference rental groups;
- provide information for setting dates of when the camp should be open and when it should be closed for the season;
- knowing dates of operation, marketing efforts can focus on target markets;
- cost control awareness such as paying staff only when there is occupancy, shutting off utilities between groups, and sharper focus on food inventory and purchasing only for the incoming groups who are paying staff to cook for them.

Suggested expenses to include and track in an annual operations budget include:

**Revenue**
Revenue broken out by Food revenue and Lodging revenue.

**Expense**
- User Days- This row would indicate the total user days for each month. A User Day in the industry is typically calculated as one (1) User Day per person per day at camp who has at least 2 meals and one overnight per day; Day Use (guest not staying overnight) is calculated at minimum of one (1) User Day per person staying for at least 2 meals; a half of a User Day would be a day use at one meal or less per day.
• Payroll.
• Benefits.
• Food. Note that the budgeted food percent is a calculation on food revenue, not the total revenue. This enables you to track food spending separately and know if you are spending too much on food. A target for food expense of food revenue is 22%. Thousands of pleased, nutritionally well fed camper meals are served daily on this food percent.
• Utility.
• Maintenance repair and supply. This is the materials- hardware, nails, basic tool replacement, lumber for minor repairs, light bulbs, paper products, etc. as well as purchases for normal and every day group use and maintenance.
• Capital maintenance. This can be a site expense if the site operations budget pays for this through prior year’s annual surplus or can be an expense of the UCC conference office if the Conference office is paying for it.
• Maintenance Services. These are expenses incurred by hiring outside contractors/vendors to perform work. Examples are emergency drain cleaning, linen rental/cleaning, equipment repair/maintenance performed by a vendor, and hazard tree removal.
• Staff Training.
• Fire/Liability Insurance.
• Health/Accident Insurance.
• Dues/Taxes/Assessments.

Assumptions of budget modeling:
1. model revenue is stated for food and lodging; as suggested, a separate program budget is developed and followed;
2. model expenses for each budget are stated utilizing historical operational/program expense areas and percentages;
3. any projected surplus is set up in the budget as a major maintenance reserve expense allocation to build a reserve fund for capital expenses whether facility or program, and provide a zero based budget.

Items to consider when developing an annual operations budget include:
• Benefit plan;
• Staffing plan (a well thought out excel worksheet will help determine payroll);
• Staffing structure;
• Maintenance plan;
• Major maintenance planned project listing;
• Routine maintenance by month;
• List of changes that could affect budget;
• Fire/Liability Insurance estimated costs;
• Estimated utility use;
• Estimated transportation use;
- Estimated dues, taxes, and assessments;
- CPI food & energy for upcoming year;
- List changes that could affect expenses such as hospitality changes, use patterns, special projects, etc.

Items to consider when developing an annual program budget include:

- Staff recruitment;
- Staff wages/benefits;
- Ratio of staff to campers that comply with the regulation/accreditation/budget;
- Supplies;
- Program off site fees;
- Transportation to off-site activity areas;
- Cost of certifying staff for specialized activities such as archery and lifeguarding;
- Camper registration tracking (you currently pay a software fee to track registrations- consider if that fee is justified with the few number of total campers- could a spreadsheet be developed to do the same?).

From above under #2 of “Assumptions of budget modeling” - model expenses are stated utilizing historical operational expense areas and percentages; pay particular attention to the annual percentages of each expense category when a balanced budget is reached and have as a goal that each year each expense is very close to that expense percent. The dollar amounts in revenue and expense always change however the percent of each expense as a percent of total expense (except food percent which is a percent of food revenue) should help maintain a balanced budget year after year. There may be some variation with a large increase or decrease in revenue/expense, however the percent change in budget should relate to the percent of increase or decrease in the variable expenses.

With most organizational camps the largest expenses are payroll, food, utility, and insurance (mostly for facilities that are open all year). Based on the 2016 Horton Center financial and use information that we received, expenses that could use further assessment are:

- Food is 33.6% or 10% higher than it could be with cost controls; camps serving mainly youth are typically 22% of food revenue; the limitation here could be access and ease to purchase individual food product (dairy, bread, produce, meat, etc.) due to the remoteness of camp being near small towns offering limited choices.
- Payroll total is 53% of total expense- a very high industry norm especially when looking at the total number of campers; there appears to be a very high ratio of staff to campers. This could be a result of feeding counselors during periods of vacancy.
- Vehicle expense is high due to renting a van to transport campers.
Finding the balance of operations and program budgeting and the key areas to focus on in each budget to develop an overall rate that supports a balanced budget takes quite a bit of analysis and a period of discernment with key stakeholders. Without enough revenue, camps over a period of time and if not actively supported by a budget at the conference level, are costly and do not provide a return on investment. This is strictly a financial statement. Lives are changed at camp; there is no substitute for the camp experience. Best practices include a financial understanding of what it cost to fulfill and carry out your organizational mission, and financial planning to continue to carry out that mission on the property that was purchased for a specific purpose many years ago and now has become a passion for many, many people.
BEST PRACTICES TO SUPPORT VIABILITY

Customer Care
Understanding and being truly empathetic for guests sleeping in a strange bed, using and sharing an unfamiliar bathroom, and concerned if they will be fed enough of the foods they like to eat while away from home, will make for a successful site director. When hosting groups, a director must consider the following physical and emotional factors affecting guests:

- sleeping in a strange bed;
- being uncomfortable in their lodgings;
- sharing space with others;
- having other people that are different from them too close, either judging them or making them uncomfortable;
- fear of your stuff being stolen, broken, seen by other people;
- not having a private bathroom;
- others hearing your bathroom noises;
- fear of getting your period away from home;
- not having food you can eat or that you like;
- not knowing when your next meal will be;
- not having snacks when you need them;
- shower/bathing concerns;
- worried that their door won’t lock and not feeling safe;
- fear of animals outside, or spiders, bugs, mice inside;
- fear of camp staff, people who look different, child molesters;
- fear of scary things happening at camp from the movies or stories;
- clear guidelines about behavior and culture;
- time schedules honored;
- professionalism;
- set procedure for incidents and emergencies.

Traits of a Successful Site Director
One of the most important factors in developing and retaining customers is the director of the site. The qualities of an ideal director include:

- strong customer service skills;
- ability to listen to the needs of guests and provide for those needs within reasonable means and accommodation;
- create a warm, friendly, welcoming and inviting facility;
- understand that not all groups are alike and each require special independent care;
- if camp staff were to prepare and serve meals- groups are invited to choose from a menu; meals are nutritious; guests with dietary needs and/or food allergies are fed a professional meal; food presentation is important at each
meal;
> able to work with and retain a variety of employees;
> seen as a leader to groups, staff, and the property owner;
> strong maintenance skills;
> be a certified lifeguard;
> be able to cook alone for up to 40 guests;
> strong financial and business acumen;
> provide for the health and safety of all;
> develop strong relationships with regulatory agencies.

Professional acumen traits of a successful director include:

Answer the phone, get call forwarding, or have an answering service. Hire staff if necessary, but make sure that someone is picking up the phone when guests call the site. (People who call want to talk to a live person, not a “fake” recorded robot).

Don’t make promises unless you plan to keep them. Reliability is one of the keys to any good relationship, and good customer service is no exception. If you say, “Your activity area will be set up by 2pm”, make sure it is set up by 2pm. Otherwise, don’t say it. The same rule applies to customer appointments, deadlines, etc. Think before you give any promise – because nothing annoys customers more than a broken promise.

Listen to your customers- is there anything more exasperating than telling someone what you want or what your problem is and then discovering that that person hasn’t been paying attention and needs to have it explained again? From a customer’s point of view, I doubt it. Let your customer talk and show him/her that you are listening by making the appropriate responses, such as suggesting how to solve the problem.

Deal with complaints- no one likes hearing complaints, and many of us have developed a reflex shrug, saying, “You can’t please all the people all the time”. Maybe not, but if you give the complaint your attention, you may be able to please this one person this one time - and position your site to reap the benefits of good customer service.

Train your staff to be always helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable- do it yourself or hire someone to train them. Talk to them about good customer service and what it is (and isn’t) regularly. Most importantly, give every member of your staff enough information and power to make those small customer-pleasing decisions, so he never has to say, “I don’t know, but so-and-so will be back at...”

Roles and responsibilities of a successful director include:

- understanding of and ability to work with site finance;
- revenue and expense reporting;
- proof of insurance coordination;
- certificates of insurance coordination;
• workers compensation administration/compliance;
• understand and possess the ability to work with insurance- property, general liability, auto;
• annual rate and budget preparation;
• review and track payroll;
• timecard verification, processing;
• ledger reconciliation;
• camper insurance claims;
• contractor insurance confirmation;
• invoices/coding;
• expense reimbursements, review and process;
• vehicle registration and renewal fees;
• last of month inventory report/consumption/replenish;
• future use deposits (booking and tracking);
• cash receipts review/coding and deposits;
• refunds/collections;
• facility agreement invoice preparation and generation;
• site checking and petty cash reconciliation – monthly;
• project/designated items – book/track funding and expenses, reconciliation, reporting.
Inherent with working at sites is the need for a strong safety program. Examples of areas that have the most potential for risk include the kitchen, shop, vehicles, swim area, and site specific activities such as boating. Components of a comprehensive risk management program include:

- System for identifying, evaluating, and preventing occupational safety and health hazards;
- The occupational safety and health hazards are identified and documented in the form of a risk readiness plan. This plan and a detailed hazard evaluation are kept readily available at the administrative office;
- Documentation and communication of safe working conditions, work practices and protective equipment requirements;
- Safety posters are posted in the work areas. These posters include information about proper lifting, what to do in case of choking, severe bleeding, rescue breathing, and the Ten Commandments of Safety;
- Inspections to verify compliance with codes of safe practices and other safety requirements;
- Executive staff should conduct routine inspections as a part of his/her supervisory duties on a quarterly basis;
- Quarterly inspections need to be documented and include methods of correction of hazards identified;
- Emergency Response supplies are checked quarterly. Supplies are replaced as needed;
- Documentation of Codes of Safe Practice Inspections;
- Scheduled inspection reports are kept with the written injury and illness prevention program (IIPP) in a binder kept in an office;
- Reporting of any accident and injury/illness investigation, accident, occupational injury or illness, or hazardous unusual occurrences;
- Inspections of any accident, occupational injury or illness, or hazardous unusual occurrences are conducted as soon as reported;
- Those occurrences are documented on an Accident, Injury, and Illness Investigation Form and kept with the IIPP office binder;
- Employee Safety Training;
- All new employees are thoroughly aware of all safety regulations and requirements in their area of responsibility;
- All employees are trained and practice together The Risk Readiness Plan;
- Documentation of this training is maintained and each employee signs a document to that effect which is filed in the IIPP Binder;
- Effective communications with employees;
- Communication of safe working conditions, work practices, and required personal protection equipment is included in initial and all subsequent training;
- Other forms of employer-to-employee communications on safety topics include posters and outside training;
• An Employee Safety Information Form should be developed and available for employees who wish to provide a safety suggestion or report an unsafe workplace condition or practice;

• Employees have been advised there will be no reprisals or other job discrimination for expressing any concern, comment, suggestion or complaint about a safety related matter;

• All records are maintained for three years and filed.
MARKETING DISCOURSE AND CAMP COMPARISONS

UCCR Marketing Strategies/Plan

UCCR Website
Your facility should be featured prominently on the Conference website and have its own (Horton Center) website. Constantly update content for increased Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Use analytics making sure the website receives significant traffic/hits and rates high in both Google and Yahoo searches.

Social Media
E-News: Featuring site news, staff updates and seasonal is sent to people who have signed up. In the case of Horton Center, youth and adult organizations in the area should be included in outreach campaigns.
Facebook: Create and manage FB pages for Horton Center. Post regularly, engage with customers and interested parties, and boost posts for greater outreach. Create ads, stories, and other content driven marketing strategies and run them for a 7 day period/month.
Camp Resource Facebook Group: Start a group on Facebook for camp program people to include resources and encourage best practices among user groups and beyond.
Online Blog: Featuring discussions about camp life, industry standards, and camp & retreat philosophy.
Yelp: Create listing

Mailings
Postcards, brochures, flyers, and posters should all be part of your print marketing mailers. Reach out to non-profit organizations, schools, guilds, and community audiences based on camp features. Follow up mailings with ads on social media targeting the same groups who received your mailing.

Press Releases
Write two press releases monthly regarding camp property management, site-features, happenings at the camp, and camp-industry related topics. Press releases drive people to your website.

Online Directories
List the camp on retreatsonline.com, retreatfinder.com, findthedivine.com, rentmycamp.com, retreatcentral.com and ACA.org. These website directories list facilities and programs located throughout North America and beyond.

Exhibitors
Exhibit at annual conferences when appropriate and consider leading workshops or interest groups at Conference/Regional gatherings on a variety of camp/retreat related topics.
Marketing Tactics

- Search Engine Optimization - Endeavoring to work consistently with internet searches for camp facilities can typically increase interaction with potential customers.
- Have a dedicated Marketing & Communications position to social media and customer outreach.
- Internal Marketing - Outreach to recent and current user groups; re-capture past user groups.
- Customer Care Program – Reach out to all group contact persons following their event for an enhanced customer relationship. This includes a continuous improvement process from customer feedback that passes directly to your site staff.
- Outreach to student groups at colleges and universities.
- Follow-Up with groups – Reservations staff should follow up within 4 weeks of a group’s event to re-book for the following year.
- Hospitality/Customer Service – *The Art of Welcome:* An intentional training program emphasizing the essential nature of building relationships with customers. *The Art of Welcome* includes greeting each group upon arrival, an in-person welcome talk, purposefully checking in with groups throughout their stay, and meeting with group contacts upon departure.
- Enhanced Food Service - Be known for outstanding, healthy, made-from-scratch food service which includes baked goods (breads, muffins, scones) and meals made with the freshest ingredients. Have a commitment to your guests to provide a variety of options for guests with dietary necessities such as vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free choices.
- Be sure all who attend UCC churches understand the camp is for rent to all non-profits, family reunions, etc. (not just for church use).
1. **Horton Center**

**Location:** Pine Mountain Road, Gorham, NH 03581  
**Phone:** (603) 545-9660  
**Website:** [www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org)  
**Recreation:** Surrounded by the White Mountains, hiking, swimming hole, grassy ball fields, low ropes, rock climbing, nearby lakes.

**Accommodations:** (132 beds)  
- **Old Lodge:** Alpha & Omega bunkrooms sleep 12 each. Meeting room and bathrooms.  
- **Lower Cabins:** 3 bunkhouse cabins sleep 10-12 beds each. Abba, a small cabin has 2 beds. Use Koinonia bathhouse.  
- **Upper Ridge Cabins:** 4 cabins sleep 12 each. Use Koinonia bathhouse.  
- **Tazie:** Small building sleeps 8 in 4 rooms.  
- **Met:** Health lodge sleeps 4 in small single rooms. Bathrooms & kitchen.

**Program Facilities:** Spirit Lodge, Lodges, Dining Hall.  
**Dining:** Central kitchen and Spirit Lodge/Dining Hall seats 100 at tables.  
**Groups:** All non-profits.  
**Rates:** $200/Night for Spirit Lodge; Lodging $25/Night/Adult, $20/Night/Youth.  
**Other:** Open 3 seasons: Spring-Fall.  
**Owner/Operator:** United Church of Christ, New Hampshire Conference.
2. **Camp Shiloh**

Location: 138 Gordon Drive, Jefferson, NH 03583
Phone: (603) 586-7973
Website: [www.campshilohnh.org](http://www.campshilohnh.org)

**Recreation:** 80 acres. Climbing tower, archery range, play field, volleyball, basketball, trails.

**Accommodations: (31 beds)**

- **Shiloh Lodge:** 2 bunk rooms. Kitchen, dining, bathrooms, meeting space. Sleeps 31 guests.

**Program Facilities:**
- Lodge is the only indoor meeting area.
- Fire Circle.

**Groups:** Any non-profit. Christian groups preferred.

**Rates:** 2 Nights + 5 meals $100/person. 1 Night + 3 meals $55/person. Lodging only $28/person. Breakfast $6, Lunch $6.50, Dinner $14.50.

**Other:** Year-round facility.

**Owner/Operator:** Christian non-profit organization.
3. **Camp Waukeela**

**Location:** Eaton Center, NH 03832-0265  
**Phone:** (603) 447-2260  
**Website:** [www.waukeela.com](http://www.waukeela.com)  
**Recreation:** Crystal Lake: boating, swimming. Tennis courts, sports fields, equestrian, rock climbing, campfires.  
**Accommodations:** (100+)  
  - **Cabins:** Sleep 6 each.  
**Program Facilities:**  
  - The Dining Hall: Dining & Meeting.  
**Groups:** Any.  
**Rates:** One week + meals + summer program $1850/person. Rental is unknown.  
**Other:** Camp for girls. Available for rental.  
**Owner/Operator:** Privately owned.
4. **Barry Conservation 4-H Camp**

**Location:** 3783 York Pond Rd., Berlin, NH 03570  
**Phone:** (603) 449-2591  
**Website:** www.girlscoutsiowa.org  
**Recreation:** Located at the Berlin Fish Hatchery. Swimming, hiking, canoeing, fishing, archery.  
**Accommodations:** (48 beds)  
  - **Cabins:** 6 cabins sleep 8 guests.

**Program Facilities:**  
- Campfire Circle.  
- New dining hall & kitchen.

**Groups:** Does not appear to rent to outside groups. 4-H camp only.  
**Rates:** Summer camp rates: $102/Night/Person includes 3 meals/day + program  
**Other:** Summer.  
**Owner/Operator:** New Hampshire 4-H/Department of Fish and Game.
5. **Wilderness Cabins**

**Location:** Bear Notch Road, Albany, NH  
**Phone:** (978) 360-7495  
**Website:** [www.wildernesscabins.com](http://www.wildernesscabins.com)  
**Recreation:** Hiking, biking, fishing, swimming, canoeing, tubing.  
**Accommodations: (30 beds)**  
- 5 Cabins fully equipped with kitchens, bathrooms, amenities & linens.  
- Each cabin sleeps 4-6 people.  
**Program Facilities:**  
**Rates:** One night is $90-$140/Cabin. Weekly rates are $500-$790/Cabin.  
**Other:** May-September.  
**Owner/Operator:** Family owned and operated.
6. **Berea NH**

- **Location:** 68 Berea Rd. Hebron, NH 03241
- **Phone:** (603) 744-6344
- **Website:** [www.berea.org](http://www.berea.org)

**Recreation:** Situated on Newfound Lake: kayaking, swimming, seasonally. Soccer and baseball fields, rock wall, tennis courts, gymnasium, hiking trails, high ropes course

**Accommodations: (150+ beds)**
- **Cabins:** 6 and 10 bed cabins with private bath rooms.
- **Beryl Bunk Room:** 4 rooms with 6 single beds; 4 rooms with 5 singles and a double bed. 2 bath rooms.
- **Jacinth Bunk Rooms:** 2 units sleep 7 in each of 8 rooms.
- **Hillside Bunk Rooms:** Dorm style with 4-10 beds per room.
- **Diamond Hotel Style:** Each room sleeps 2-4 people in a double bed and a bunk bed. Private bath in each room.

**Program Facilities:** Dining Hall accommodates 250. Chapel seats 175. Lodge holds up to 100. Amphitheater, large picnic area. Multiple meeting rooms.

**Groups:** Non Profit.

**Rates:** 2 Nights + 5 meals starting at $110/person. Can add activities for per person cost.

**Other:** Year-round facility.

**Owner/Operator:** Church of the Brethren
7. **Calumet**

**Location:** 1090 Ossipee Lake Rd, Freedom, NH 03836  
**Phone:** (603) 539-4773  
**Website:** [www.calumet.org](http://www.calumet.org)

**Recreation:**

**Accommodations:** (16-200 beds)
- **Conference Center:** 35 beds in 13 rooms with common bathrooms.  
- **Village Cabins:** kitchenettes, bathrooms, sitting rooms. Variety of configurations based on number of guests.  
- **Retreat Lodge:** Sleeps 22 guests in 2 large rooms. Large living room, full kitchen, full bathrooms.  
- **Staff House:** Year round sleeps 26 guests in 5 bunk rooms.  
- **Heated Cabins:** 8 cabins sleep 10 people each.  
- **Unheated Cabins:** Available late spring/early fall.

**Program Facilities:** Conference Center has 3 lounges, dining room, group meeting rooms, and game room.

**Groups:** Any.

**Rates:** $100/2 Nights + 5 meals for year round youth groups. Adult weekend rates are $153/2 Nights + 5 meals in Lodges. $46/night Lodging only. Village cabins rent for $120-$220 night/cabin not including meals.

**Other:** year-round.

**Owner/Operator:** New Hampshire Lutheran Conference.
Overall Comparisons

Facility
The White Mountains area of New Hampshire has a few camps and retreat facilities available for rent to non-profit organizations, churches and schools. It is important to note that there are not many offerings in this area. Some of the retreat centers and camps listed in this study are church-related facilities. Two of them are non-profit organizations (4-H/Fish & Game and Camp Shiloh). There are a number of campgrounds not listed in this comparison except for Wilderness Cabins which could be utilized by a small group. The sites offer facilities for groups of all sizes. Three of the camps are open year-round. Horton Center’s capacity of 132 beds puts it in the middle of this comparison to surrounding facilities.

Many of the nearby camps and conference centers have lodging, dining, and recreational facilities that are strong assets for the facility’s ability to serve a variety of larger groups, including youth events. Some of the camps are well appointed on small to medium sized lakes which provide a wide variety of recreational facilities and waterfront opportunities in traditional camp settings.

Lodging
There is a large variety of lodging options throughout these camps that include cabins, semi-private to dorm style lodging, and motel-style rooms. In the majority of the facilities in this comparison, groups provide their own bedding. The exception is some of the motel style/lodge accommodations where linens are provided or are available for rent. In general, the lodging options at Horton Center are in line with the other facilities in the area with the exception of some private rooms available at other sites.

Dining
The quality of food service is an unknown factor. We do know that fresh and healthy food service is one of the top three concerns adults have in looking for a retreat setting. Catering to special dietary needs and special requests for campers is an area where one facility can stand above their competition. Strive to be known for outstanding, healthy, made-from-scratch food service which includes baked goods (breads, muffins, scones) and meals made with the freshest ingredients. The commitment to guests should be to provide a variety of options for participants with dietary necessities such as vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free.

Recreation
All of the camps have a similar variety of recreation programs. Waterfronts on lakes and ponds offer boating and waterfront activity options. Some of these sites have high and low ropes courses, equestrian options and a few provide zip lines.

Program Space
Meeting rooms vary, from small living rooms in the retreat settings to recreation and dining halls at the camps.

Cost
The average rate for camps/retreats in this area vary from $40-$55/night for lodging/3-meal package. Horton Center falls into this range at $25 for an adult/night
lodging. Because Horton Center does not offer food service beyond the Summer Camp Program, we can assume a meal rate of approximately $25/day would be in line with the surrounding camps.

**Strengths & Challenges**

**Overall Strengths of Horton Center**
- Beautiful location in natural setting on Pine Mountain;
- Hiking options; ropes course; rock climbing; cave exploration;
- Proximity to lakes and White Mountain National Forest;
- Medium to large guest capacity in a variety of lodging choices;
- Spirit Lodge: capacity, porch;
- Own-cooking-groups;
- Possible accessibility to many buildings;
- Well-kept facility.

**Overall Challenges**
- Less specific recreational opportunities such as boating waterfront;
- Enhance food service to meet the needs and desires of a variety of adult groups.

**Growth & Target Markets**

**Areas of Potential Growth**
- Dining and food service: increase the shoulder season offering and quality of food service, catering to adult, and special needs diets;
- Bring in more young-adult age/adult meetings, conferences, and trainings for weekend use;
- Environmental Education School: An EE provider who can work with grades 6-12 would provide a unique learning experience in the area, though the limited season narrows the possibilities.

**Target Markets**
Based on current use, we can identify the following:
Vacancy rate is highest during the months of May, early June, late August through October since the camp is not open in the winter. Beyond that, the weekends would be most highly used with Monday through Thursday use extremely low. This is typical use pattern for a camp and retreat center of this kind.

Let us establish that the target markets for Mondays – Thursdays during the shoulder season are:

1. **Outdoor & Environmental Education Programs**
   Outdoor Education Schools typically utilize a camp facility Monday-Thursday in the fall and spring months. It is possible that a relationship with an Environmental Outdoor Education program provider in this area could be cultivated.
2. Educational Retreat Programs
There are adult programs that offer weekend programs. Some of these programs would involve groups that are willing to bring a sleeping bag and stay in dormitory style lodging. These types of groups might include:

- University organizations and clubs;
- Private schools and institutions;
- Youth/young adult organizations;
- Church/spiritual retreats;
- Yoga, tai chi type groups who are seeking natural settings;
- Artists groups such as quilters, scrap bookers, watercolor groups.

Adult and youth retreat style programs would continue, as the current common type of group in addition to youth summer camps, to be well-suited to Horton Center.

3. Other Markets to Pursue
Re-capture past users - send letters of introduction and offer a discount or incentive to groups who return.

Overview of Retreat & Camp Facilities Amenities
The following are general guidelines that have been identified as being influential in enhancing camp and retreat facilities and hospitality services.

Retreat Facilities
Adult and older youth retreat facilities can provide a great opportunity for groups to gather in a natural setting with the conveniences of specialized services. The following is a comprehensive list of what is needed to serve both non-profit professional style groups in a skilled manner.

Lodging
- Bedding such as linens, pillows, blankets, comforters and towels could be provided;
- Windows should be fully operational with screens and window coverings;
- Lighting such as bedside lamps provided in addition to single ceiling light;
- Luggage racks or shelves for guests’ belongings;
- Bathrooms in lodging buildings: well ventilated with fan and operable window, showers well-maintained with good water pressure, and plenty of hooks and towel racks provided.

Meeting Rooms
- Comfortable conference-style chairs and tables easily accessed;
- Good and reliable source of heat;
- Good lighting;
- Well maintained floor covering. Carpet (if any) clean and in good repair;
• Odorless and/or fresh air quality inside all buildings;
• Windows to the outdoors – a pleasant room to spend the day in;
• Flipcharts, easels, DVD player, monitor or screen, Wi-Fi access, plenty of electrical outlets;
• Coffee, tea, and beverage service available in meeting rooms;
• Outdoor benches or seating adjacent to meeting room.

Dining
• Superior quality food service and presentation;
• Buffet dining with plenty of options;
• Special diet menus available;
• Mid-day and late night snack service available at additional cost;
• Self-serve beverage area;

Camp Facilities
Camps for youth and their leaders have more room for flexibility in amenities while still providing excellent customer service and a quality facility. Cleanliness should remain consistent for both camps and retreats. Food service and extra lodging amenities can be simplified.

Lodging
• Campers provide their own bedding;
• Windows should be fully operational with screens and window coverings;
• Single ceiling light is sufficient;
• Bathrooms in cabins: well ventilated with fan and operable window; showers well-maintained with good water pressure; plenty of hooks and towel racks provided.

Meeting Rooms
• Folding or stacking chairs;
• Tables available with instructions on covering for messy activities;
• Good source of heat;
• Well maintained floor covering. Carpet (if any) clean and in good repair;
• Odorless air quality;
• Windows to the outdoors;
• Outdoor benches or seating adjacent to meeting room.

Dining
• Simpler menu options;
• Buffet or cafeteria style dining;
• Special diet menus available;
• Mid-day and late night snack service available at additional cost.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Replace some bunks with twin or queen beds to accommodate families; there are types of bunks that have a queen as lower bunk and single as top bunk;

- Always create an annual budget that is supported by the fees (support can be a conference subsidy that is agreed to in the budget process);

- Review monthly activity year-to-date and future activity relative to the approved annual budget; make adjustments to future expenses based on expected revenue;

- Understand in great detail how each dollar of revenue/subsidy is spent;

- Review the Guaranteed Minimum, deposit policy, and payment procedure then adhere to it;

- Review the policy of how and who receives discount rates;

- If discounts are to be given off of the approved fees for UCC groups and outside groups (outside group fee is typically more than UCC fee), determine an approval process for the discounts;

- Develop an Emergency Response Plan that staff members rehearse several times each year;

- Develop Interpretive Trail(s);

- Develop an Annual Maintenance Plan and Schedule for budgeting, assuring that tasks are completed, and for providing an overall analysis of monthly/seasonal tasks to ensure Horton Center Camp is maintained properly;

- Consider staying open longer on the shoulder months of spring and fall;

- Create a Marketing Plan.
APPENDIX

BACKGROUND OF UNITED CAMPS, CONFERENCES AND RETREATS
BACKGROUND OF UNITED CAMPS, CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

UCCR specializes in mission-based camp, conference and retreat operations. UCCR’s mission is “creating partnerships to provide positive life-changing experiences.”

The idea for UCCR was born in 1970 out of an ecumenical spirit moved by both the positive educational values of the residential camp/conference experience, and the challenge of economic survival. UCCR has remained a vital organization living out its mission of creating partnerships to provide positive life-changing experiences.

United Camps, Conferences and Retreats was incorporated in February of 1970. At that time, the organization was made up of five members whose organizational goals were:

1. to create a regional strategy for use, ownership, and development of camp, conference and retreats;
2. to provide a base for testing and experimentation with emerging new programs;
3. to create a centralized administrative unit capable of providing sensitive and efficient management and reporting.

These first few years of UCCR were spent experimenting, learning, organizing and changing. Many improvements were made in the area of reservations, staff selection and training, budget management and promotion.

Early in 1973, the Board of Directors determined the need for a system of management control that would:

1. presume each facility would be self-sustaining;
2. assess rates that would provide for self-support;
3. monitor firm revenue projections as the basis for operational decisions;
4. establish budgetary controls to monitor spending of variable income;
5. remain flexible to changing conditions.

The effort to achieve these goals was successful. Two years later it was no longer necessary in most cases to ask the members to regularly subsidize their facilities’ operational budgets.

In 1989, UCCR created the Web of Life Field (WOLF) School to provide environmental education in an out-of-doors residential classroom. In 2014 WOLF added additional programming in Ohio, Nature’s Classroom. The school has grown steadily and serves children and youth through three different curriculums. The school’s function in the business model is to use sites during the off season, mid-week, a time that normally many sites have availability. WOLF has expanded to offer summer and winter camps.
In 2002, the Board of Directors adopted a new strategic plan to guide the organization into the new millennium. This plan stated our vision for the future as well as our fundamental values. In 2014 the UCCR board began working on an updated Strategic Plan to further strengthen UCCR and support expansion.

Vision Statement: UCCR is committed to supporting the aspirations and goals of educational, community and religious organizations. We are an organization dedicated to the stewardship of the facilities and sites of our members, to providing quality educational programs, and to providing quality hospitality services to those groups who lease our facilities. An informed Board of Directors and a knowledgeable and supported staff will seek to fulfill the mission of UCCR.

UCCR’s Fundamental Values

- We honor cultural diversity;
- We practice dignity and respect;
- We believe the residential experience fosters community;
- We trust the relationship between and among UCCR and its members;
- We are committed to the preservation of natural and sustainable resources under our care;
- We encourage the talent, dedication, creativity and productivity of our staff;
- We are dedicated to strong financial management and accountability;
- We seek to remove economic barriers to our sites and programs.

Strategic goals were set in three areas: program, finance, and member relations.

Administrative Services of UCCR

The following are the administrative services provided by UCCR:

- **Planning** - All aspects of operational and program planning are done by UCCR, from rate and budget setting, human resources, maintenance to school curriculum. Staff works with designated owner facility committees on input for capital and maintenance funding needs. The Member group participates in organizational planning through the UCCR Owners Council and Board of Directors.

- **Reservations Department** - Our friendly staff works with groups and site staff to ensure that programs are well matched to the appropriate UCCR site. In addition, the staff processes over 900 contractual arrangements annually and collects statistical data for reporting and marketing assessment. Software developed specifically for our reservation system allows site directors to access information real time, is linked to the accounting department for a 2 way flow of information, and provides a strong base of marketing data.
• **Financial Services** - Strong accounting practices are carried out by a trained accounting staff for all of the UCCR operations. All financial information is processed at the administrative office and is audited annually.

• **Human Resources** - Strong human resource policies and procedures are developed for use by staff in recruiting, hiring, training, supervising and evaluating employees. Benefit administration is also provided.

• **Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance** - UCCR works to provide a safe environment for both program participants and employees. Strong relationships with and between staff, insurance brokers, regulatory agencies and legal advisors are diligently maintained. All employees are Live scanned (electronic fingerprinting linked to the Department of Justice for initial and subsequent arrest information) and driver’s license/ I.D. checked by the DMV.

• **Marketing** - UCCR sites and programs benefit from both individual and collective marketing efforts. As previously mentioned, a portion of marketing data is provided by the reservations software providing a scope of demographics and target markets. Marketing materials include a website, enewsletters/updates, annual reports, brochures, stationary, business cards, promotional items, articles in publications, etc. UCCR advertises in a variety of publications, at conferences, through email, and other electronic marketing strategies.

• **Program** - UCCR’s Environmental Education Program, the Web of Life Field School (WOLF School), provides residential science programs to school groups. Additionally, UCCR provides new program development and training, commitment to Green & Sustainable practices at all facilities, site specific interpretation and program development, lifeguard training, and ropes course facilitation.

• **Fund Development** – UCCR works independently and collaboratively on developing funding sources to benefit the facility, property, projects, and programs.

• **Member Relations** - UCCR provides an annual site report summarizing guest demographics, a year-end financial report, and completed projects. The member organization provides two representatives to sit on the UCCR Owners Council and participates with staff in annual planning for their respective sites.