

AUCTUS 2019

Camp Scottie Creek Bridge & Nature Trail

Opening the
Outdoors in
Howard City, MI





I was eight years old the first time I held a box turtle.

One of the counselors had found it crawling among some bushes and was carefully showing it to me and the other campers in our group. I remember being amazed by its intricate yellow and black markings. I was in awe of its little claws and the various textures adorning his shell. Most of all, I was proud to hold it and feel his little arms pushing against my hands. It was magical to interact so closely with a

part of nature. While I was only technically 35 minutes away from home, summer camp felt a world away. It was a place where we spent our days outdoors embarking on adventures and conquering challenges. Here at camp, it wasn't uncommon to see bands of children tromping through the woods singing call-and-response songs and balancing ferns on their heads to keep the mosquitoes away. Camp - away from the social pressures of school and life, where you could get dirty and experiment, where you could take the time to explore the intricacies of nature - is where I developed my self-confidence, appreciation for nature, and love of being outdoors.

The following proposal, **to design a creek bridge and natural trail for my childhood camp, thereby opening up a currently inaccessible portion of the camp's property to be explored by future generations of kids from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds**, fulfills the following Auctus Principles:

THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

THE PRESERVATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

THE PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE RELATED TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Project Summary

CAMP ROGER - MOLDING & SHAPING YOUNG LIVES OUTDOORS FOR OVER A CENTURY

Camp Roger is a summer camp located in the woods near Grand Rapids, Michigan. The camp was founded in 1913 and has been in continuous operation ever since. Today, it not only hosts a thriving summer camp program with 1,500 summer campers per year, it also hosts over 11,000 annual guests through its year round programs. Unlike many religiously affiliated camps, the Camp Roger serves a wide range of children from a variety of backgrounds. Groups that use the camp's facilities include public and private schools, athletic teams, churches, home school groups, universities, corporations and family gatherings. These groups come for services including outdoor education, team building, summer camp, and facility rentals.

CAMP SCOTTIE - THE RECENTLY ACQUIRED CAMPUS IN HOWARD CITY, MICHIGAN

In 2014, Camp Roger was gifted a second campus, Camp Scottie, an 85-acre property located 45-minutes north near Howard City, Michigan. The property includes a beautiful creek, a swimming pond, a retreat center, and several hiking trails which accent the camp's natural beauty. Camp Scottie is located in a largely lower-income region. This provides opportunities for the Camp to offer outdoor experiences to a traditionally under-served population. Campers come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, but when they are at camp everyone is covered in dirt and smiles and campers can just be themselves. Since 2014, the camp's directors have worked to build relationships with local schools and families in accordance with the camp's tag line "Find Life Outdoors".

THE PROBLEM - LACK OF ACCESS TO CAMP SCOTTIE'S FULL ACREAGE

Camp Scottie is blessed to have Tamarack Creek running through the property, giving it a beautiful backdrop for hiking, nature walks, and learning about the forest, but the path of the creek through the site renders 12 acres of Camp Scottie's property inaccessible and therefore unusable for outdoor programming. This prevents Camp Scottie from utilizing its acreage to its full potential and restricts the number of kids the camp can serve at a given time.

THE SOLUTION - A CREEK BRIDGE AND NATURE TRAIL OPENING THE AREA TO SERVE MORE KIDS

This proposal is to design a creek bridge and natural trail at Camp Scottie, opening up this currently inaccessible portion of the camp's property. Providing a bridge over Tamarack Creek will give campers and outside groups access to Camp Scottie's full 85 acres of forest. The other side of the creek has beautiful rolling hills, a high bluff, swampy areas, and a beautiful little stream. This proposal is to design and permit a bridge over Tamarack Creek so users of the camp can safely access the 12 acres of pristine forest on the other side. As this area of the forest has been previously inaccessible, no trails currently exist across the creek. In conjunction with the bridge, this proposal includes designing and constructing a trail system with various "destination nodes" in this area of the camp. This creek bridge and nature trail will enable Camp Scottie to expand its existing Day Camp and Outdoor Education programming. It will reduce wear on other areas of the forest and will literally "Open the Outdoors" by giving the camp access to this previously closed off forest.

The Creek Bridge

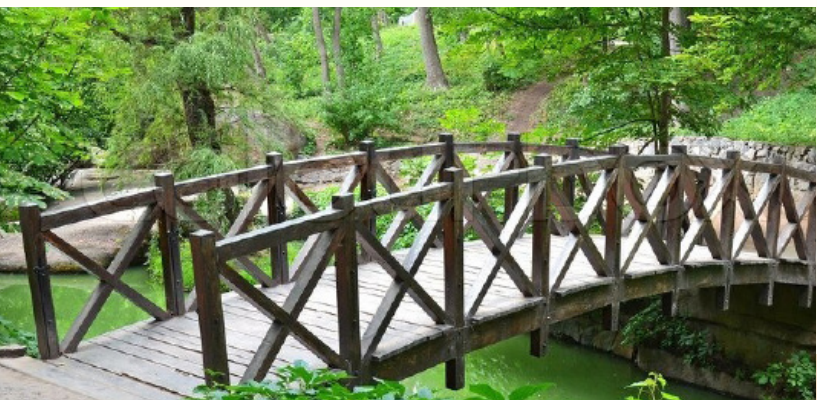
Constructing a bridge across Tamarack Creek will open 12 acres of currently inaccessible forest for outdoor exploration and programming. Access to this part of the camp will have the tangible benefit of allowing Camp Scottie to serve multiple groups at once enabling more kids to experience the joy of life outdoors each year.

All bridges need to be thoroughly researched and thoughtfully designed to ensure ongoing safety for future users and to be in compliance with various governing agency regulations. In August, Camp Scottie received preliminary approval from the Department of Environmental Quality to construct a bridge over Tamarack Creek. Camp Scottie has also received assurances that the County Township will view this project in the same way they'd view a resident constructing a deck. This was good news as it indicates a smooth permitting process.

The cost of constructing a bridge exceeds the funds available through this grant process. This proposal is for design services and to bring the bridge plans successfully through the approvals process with the various governing agencies. Construction of the bridge will require additional donors and volunteers. Camp Scottie has initiated informal conversations with Wolverine Construction, a local company with deep connections to the camp, regarding this project.

BRIDGE SPECIFICATIONS/GOALS

- Provide safe crossing for campers and outdoor education groups to access the forest and destinations on the other side.
- Provide safe crossing for a gator-type vehicle to provide maintenance and emergency access to users in this area.
- Design the bridge to serve as an architectural landmark that adds beauty to this section of woods.



GAUGING SUCCESS

A successful bridge will allow users to safely and efficiently cross Tamarack Creek and will serve as a launch point for further exploration of the forest. The bridge must require little ongoing maintenance, be beautiful, and be cost effective to build.

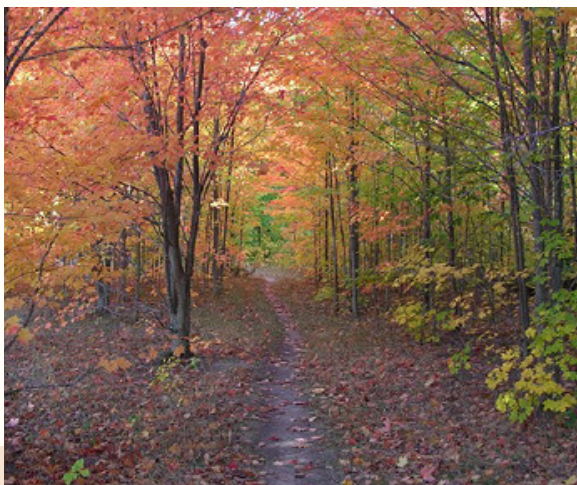
The Nature Trail

Currently there are no trails on the 12 acres across Tamarack Creek. This proposal includes designing a trail in this newly accessible area to be constructed once the creek bridge is in place. The trail will include several "destination nodes" such as fire pits, stump circles, interpretive areas, or stationary team challenge equipment to be used for outdoor education, team building, and summer camp groups. These "destination nodes" will draw users into the forest and provide defined spaces to stop and explore.

The goal of trail building is to create a long-term relationship between humans and nature. The trail design must incorporate sustainable trail building best practices to support the health and wellbeing of the camp's fragile biological systems. Good trail design will preserve the heritage of the natural environment and will preserve Camp Scottie's environmental assets to be enjoyed by kids for future generations.

SUSTAINABLE TRAIL GUIDELINES

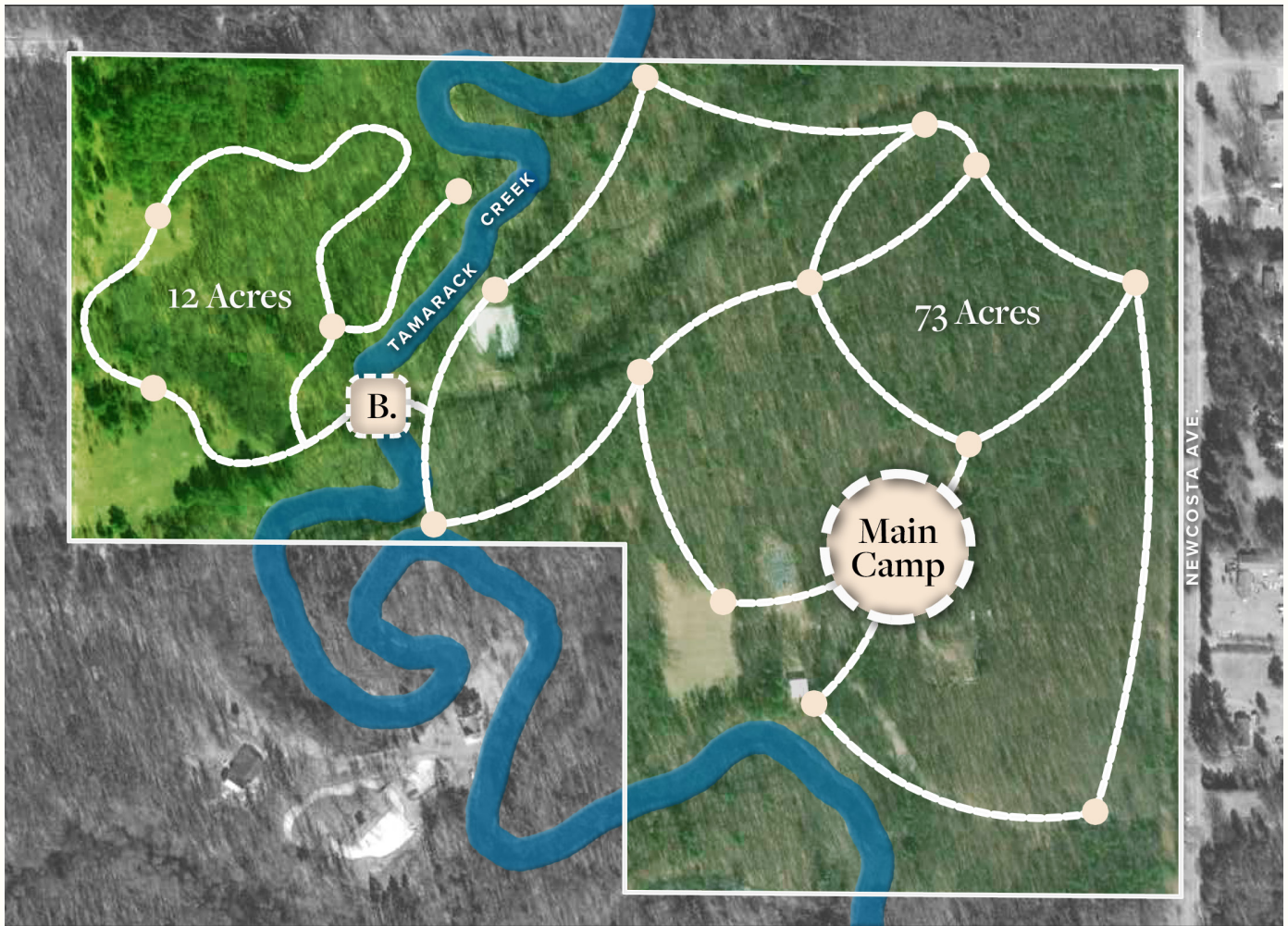
- Supports current and future uses with minimal impact to the area's natural systems.
- Produces negligible soil loss or movement while allowing vegetation to inhabit the area.
- Recognizes that pruning or removal of certain plants may be necessary for proper trail construction and maintenance.
- Does not adversely affect the area's wildlife.
- Accommodates existing uses while allowing only appropriate future uses.
- Requires little rerouting and minimal trail maintenance.
- Routes the trail near interesting or unusually large trees, patches of wildflowers, rock formations and water sources such as springs and small creeks.



GAUGING SUCCESS

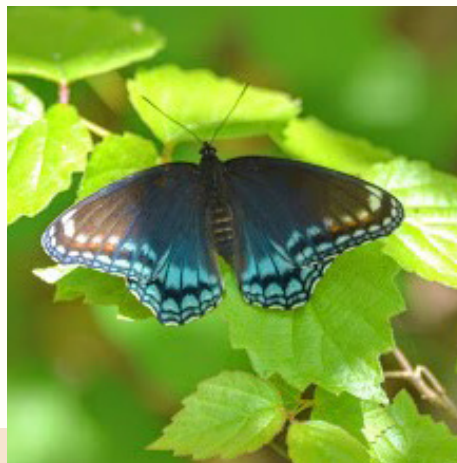
A successful trail will not only safely bring camp users from point A to point B, but will also provide a means for delightful exploration of the outdoor environment. "Destination Nodes" such as gathering spaces & activity areas will draw users into the forest and keep them engaged on their journey. A successful trail minimizes it's impact on the environment and requires little ongoing maintenance.

Camp Scottie Map



THE CREEK BRIDGE WILL OPEN UP 12 ADDITIONAL ACRES FOR KIDS TO EXPLORE

As shown on the above map, Tamarack Creek winds its way across Camp Scotty's property. Constructing a bridge across Tamarack creek (B.) will open 12 additional acres to explore. These acres include forest, meadow, and wetland areas that will greatly enrich Camp Scottie's outdoor programming offerings allowing it to serve more kids.



Project Impact



"Camp Scottie is located on 85 beautiful acres. It is our goal to get children out into the woods to explore. About 12 acres of Camp Scottie's property is cut off by a river with no easement or access from the other side. We would love to get access to this pristine land so campers can have access to all Camp Scottie has to offer."

MATT ZIEWP

Camp Scottie Director



"Tamarack Creek is my favorite feature at Camp Scottie and I love taking outdoor education groups to experience it, though I feel it is currently underutilized. A bridge would allow access to the creek in a unique way. Having access to the land across the creek allows us to open up more spaces for outdoor education groups to explore and the separation from other spaces creates a better feeling of being deep in the outdoors."

RUEBEN SPORTEL

Assistant Director of Outdoor Education



"I always tell my kids to go outside and play and try to show them how much they can learn and have fun outside. My daughter came home off the bus from Camp Scottie and said, "Mom, you're right, being outside is fun!"

PARENT

Camp Scottie Day Camp

Project Scope & Budget

TASK 1

Site Visit

Conduct a comprehensive site visit. Meet with Camp Staff & stakeholders to determine project goals. Scout out bridge placement & trail alignment. Take photos for use in permitting & design processes.

\$250, 15 hours

TASK 2

Design Phase

Work with RVi landscape architects to create bridge design using the camp's parameters. Create base maps & design trail alignment using trail sustainability best practices. Design trail "destination nodes" for use in future camp programming.

\$250, 35 hours

TASK 3

Bridge Permitting & Approvals

Work with governing agencies to secure permits and approvals for the bridge design. Camp Scottie staff to assist with in person meetings and submittals.

\$1,500, 15 hours

TASK 4

Fundraising Coordination

Work with the Camp's development director to solicit additional funds and gift in kind construction services to cover 100% of bridge construction. In initial discussions, Wolverine Construction has expressed interest in partnering on this project.

5 hours

TASK 5

Construction

Visit site to assist Camp Apprentices in trail & "destination node" siting & construction. Bridge construction to be carried out by licensed contractor.

\$1,700, 10 hours

Budget
AUCTUS PRIZE
(\$3,000) + WINNERS
PRIZE (\$700)
= \$3,700