

# PROPOSAL

## Overview

In this proposal we outline the potential evolution of a community-based space for the Cabin Camp property focused on outdoor education and the arts. The goal is to establish a sustainable, year-round model of use that could support a full-fledged camp during a few weeks each summer.

Though there are many possible uses of the property, we propose a series of core principles to guide our efforts that should, in our view, be upheld by any proposal for Cabin Camp:

**Education:** Cabin Camp should, at its core, remain an education-oriented space dedicated to the enrichment of youth and adults. It should honor the philosophy of experiential learning that Anne championed.

**Equal Access:** We are committed to a vision of a space that serves as a creative haven for youth and adults of all backgrounds. The Cabin Camp community is not a closed group and is not limited to the individuals who participated in the past. On the contrary, the community's success depends on deliberate, systematic outreach efforts to engage greater Denver's least-advantaged citizens.

**Green:** As a wilderness space, the ecological integrity of Cabin Camp must be preserved and its maintenance valued as a core educational activity. Sustainable practices will be addressed with every proposed use of the property.

**Do-It-Yourself (DIY):** As much as possible, we are interested in a Cabin Camp that is built and maintained by its own community. Sweat equity and emotional investment is as important as financial resources.

**Transparency:** The organization that manages Cabin Camp must be transparent and must uphold the community's values.

**Non-Profit:** Cabin Camp should endeavor to be free from corporate interests, practice standard non-profit accounting, and maintain a bottom-line of values, not monetary gain.

**Legacy:** The original cabin and other landmarks, such as the double decker bus, should be preserved.

## **1. Fundraising and Community Outreach**

### *Goal*

Activate the community to supply expertise, manpower, and supplies.

### *Method*

- begin researching and building a non-profit organization; identify and secure commitment from board members; define roles for coordinators (fundraising, on-site efforts, business administration, program planning, etc.)
- complete legal assessment of the property and proposed uses; incorporate zoning, health code, child services, and other legal information into this proposal
- finalize and publish a detailed version of this proposal
- produce and launch CabinCamp.org, which will centralize coordination and organizational efforts
- communicate via email, facebook, letter-writing, and other community outreach to all potential participants
- launch online fundraising campaign with tax-deductible donations through CabinCamp.org. The campaign will target small community donors, including both individuals and organizations (tax-deductible donations made possible through a proxy 501(c)(3) organization)
- pursue grants and other substantial sources of funding and support

## **2. Restoration and Community Effort**

### *Goal*

Restore the property to a usable community space, including restoration of the main cabin.

### *Method*

- formally establish the organization and file for 501(c)(3) status
- complete detailed review of the property, assessment of restoration needs, development of restoration budget, and design for sustainable use; formal plans created with pro-bono participation of professional planners in the community
- complete repair of the main cabin's structural issues (foundation, roof, etc.) with generated funds and volunteer labor
- hold series of volunteer days for cleaning, site preparation, and unskilled labor
- solicit pro-bono skilled construction work and in-kind donations

### **3. Sustainable Use**

#### *Goal*

Establish a community presence at the space. This phase will begin as soon as maintenance conditions allow, and will continue indefinitely, evolving as necessary.

#### *Method*

- define a rotating cast of individuals responsible for overseeing the property on-site
- launch an internet-based tool on CabinCamp.org for administering the space, coordinating initiatives, and scheduling the use of the property
- initiate a mixed-use model that will be financially self-sustaining and will provide manpower for the continual development of the property

### **Outline of Mixed-Use**

#### **i. Retreat Space**

Specific areas of the property will be made available for rental by non-profit organizations for outdoor retreats. The cubby barn will likely be the primary center of these activities, with the nearby open area designated for camping spaces and the pond and wilderness available for use. Ideal candidates are groups who respect the sustainable initiatives of the camp but provide their own programs and oversight for its use.

These may include:

- collaboration with youth initiative organizations in Denver such as Flobots.org, EARTHcamp, United Artist Coalition for Kids, Denver Children's Home, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, StandUp for Kids, Bridge Project
- youth leadership programs such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCA camps, Metro Denver Partners, Girls, Inc., Colorado Center for Progressive Leadership
- outdoor education and/or training such as Evergreen Nature Center, Outward Bound, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Trips for Kids Denver, EarthLinks, local Sierra Club chapters, Colorado Mountain Club, the Wilderness Society
- spiritual groups
- other small organizations or groups seeking a space for team-building exercises

Additional facilities and equipment may be necessary to accommodate such groups and activities (for example, toilets, handicap-accessible ramps, etc.).

## **ii. Studio Space**

The various smaller buildings scattered around the cabin are ideal spaces for artists' studios. A residency program will allow free use of designated studio spaces, likely housed in the Play Barn, Science Barn, Art Barn, Toad's Trailer, and Piccadilly, for sculpture, painting, audio recording and performance, writing, new-media work, or other creative endeavors. Residencies will take place within an established time period. In return, artists will undertake maintenance and renovation projects around the property, enrich communal resources, and contribute to the identity and community of the space. In addition, artists will be expected to open their studios to visitors or otherwise display their work as suited.

## **iii. Community Youth**

Free use will be available for youth-oriented initiatives by other non-profits and community members. Dwayne Wilson-led Mountain Ball tournaments will prefigure summer camp activities and introduce a new generation to the space.

## **iv. Rental Space**

The newer wing of the main cabin is ideal for short-term rental to families, groups, and individuals seeking lodging for meetings and for personal recreation (skiing, hiking, etc.). Until other initiatives are sustainable, rental is intended primarily as a source of income, but these groups must also respect the sustainable initiatives of the camp and preferably be interested in the broader activity of the camp.

## **v. Collective Activities**

The original section of the main cabin will be the center of activity at the camp through its primary use as a kitchen, dining, and meeting area for all visitors. Green practices will be emphasized, including the use of locally produced foods, composting, and the restoration and expansion of the vegetable garden next to the cabin. All visitors will be expected to participate in the collective activities of food preparation, gardening, and maintaining the cabin.

## **vi. Tenants**

A house occupies the former site of Victoria, and its rental will continue to generate revenue that can be applied toward the maintenance costs of the property and to the development of the non-profit organization. Ideally, this tenant would also be involved in a hands-on way with this development.

## **4. Summer Camp**

### Long Term

Beyond the intermediate goals, the foremost vision of this proposal is a self-sustaining summer camp modeled on the original and adhering to the same philosophical ideals. We envision the camp to begin small, as a program that supersedes other activities for a few weeks in the summer, and to grow as community participation demands. With a viable year-round organization, a community that is active in the space, and the core principles and educational philosophy of Cabin Camp in place, we can ensure that the growth of the camp is as organic as possible and designed fully in the service of its kids.

Though it is too early to propose a precise blueprint for the camp, we anticipate that it will follow Anne's basic model of a commuter camp for elementary age children, with older kids, teenagers, and adults staying overnight and playing the roles of CITs, counselors, and administrators, respectively. All participants will help design the activities and character of the new Cabin Camp. This structure is intended to allow younger generations to assume responsibility for the camp, giving them an opportunity to have a real voice on issues related to a place—Cabin Camp—that matters to them.