

Camp's possible sale draws concern

Camp Timber Hill popular with area Girl Scout troops

BY JEN WEAVER
COX NEWS SERVICE

FAIRFIELD TOWNSHIP — Some parents and leaders are upset that a local Girl Scout camp might soon be sold.

Great Rivers Girl Scout Council received a "serious offer" for Camp Timber Hill in Fairfield Township.

"It will be devastating," said Karen Drake, Girl Scout leader. "It's the only camp located on this side of town."

The council cited a number of reasons why it is considering the offer on the camp, located just west of Ohio 4 and south of Liberty-Fairfield Road.

Chief among them is the increased residential and commercial growth in the area. Dixon Builders is building a landmini-um development called Fairfield Falls that would abut the camp. Girl Scout officials said there is concern that more development



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Dixon Builders' Fairfield Falls residential development off Liberty-Fairfield Road neighbors Camp Timber Hill. Increased commercial development is one reason the Great Rivers Girl Scout Council cited for considering an offer to sell the Fairfield Township camp.

— beyond the Dixon development — would lead to the increased potential for trespassing, vandalism and other security concerns.

The council also cited a 45 percent decrease in overnight use of the camp from 2002 to 2004.

The Camp Timber Hill property

was donated to the Girl Scouts more than 55 years ago. Dixon Builders made an offer to purchase the property in 2003, but the deal fell through. Most close to the situation said recently they think Dixon has extended another offer. Representatives from Dixon

Builders did not return calls seeking comment.

Whoever might be interested in buying the camp, parents of Scouts don't want it to happen.

"The thought of a bulldozer going through there is disheartening," Drake said.

Brenda Vanhouten, a Girl Scout parent, agreed.

"It's totally opposite with what they are preaching. They are telling us to conserve nature and leave no trace where you've been," Vanhouten said.

Patti McDonald, a day camp director at Camp Timber Hill, said she is concerned about day campers. While overnight campers have declined in the past few years, there has been a 28 percent increase in day camp use during the same time period.

"I have concerns over where we are going to take all these girls," McDonald said.

McDonald also said teenagers would no longer be able to assist at a local camp.

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"I think it would affect retention of older girls," McDonald said. "They look forward to being program aides at the camp. There are other programs with leadership for teenagers, but this is one in Fairfield that

draws teenagers to camp."

McDonald's 17-year-old daughter, Allison, spent time at Camp Timber Hill for the past 13 years and currently is a program aide.

"I spent some of the best weeks of my life there," Allison said.

The Great Rivers Council Board of Directors has not decided whether to sell the camp, said Melissa Cabrera, communications director with the Great Rivers Council.

"The board is still accepting conversations from members of the council," Cabrera said.