

What Now What Next – SUMMARY OF SESSIONS
(Bowman, Dickinson, Bismarck, Beach, Killdeer and Camp Summer Staff)

1. Why is Badlands Ministries Important to you, your congregation, and your community?
 - Brings young people closer to God. Place for them to experience fellowship, faith, and have an outdoor experience.
 - A safe place for people to grow in faith and take what they learn back to their churches and communities
 - Place for youth and adults to experience the Holy Spirit in a special way and to experience God's creation, and it is close by them
 - Important to the future of our larger church. Staff and campers are being raised up to be part of the larger church. Camp plants seeds of faith.
 - Shows kids that faith is part of everything we do and builds ties with children coming home to their congregations. It better prepares kids for other church programs and provides them with a stronger understanding of faith and experiences.
 - Camp changes lives. It often catches and transforms people who may be left out and overlooked. The camp culture is radically welcoming
 - Allows kids to "unplug" and have fun outdoors
 - It has been a special place for generations. Great memories and lessons camp provides last a lifetime.
 - Community day camps often get different leaders from area churches to work together for a common good
 - Important to have a place to send the youth we work with. A place that is away from their existing comfort zone that we don't have to be a part of, but know it is a safe place for them to grow in their faith.
 - Day camp is a big part of our supporting churches children's ministry program
 - It is a home away from home.
2. What are the biggest challenges now and in the future?
 - Financial Challenges: Getting future generations to support camp like the past generations. Possibility of less support coming from our churches as they continue to shrink. Rising costs including insurance costs

- Staffing/Volunteer Challenges: Continuing to find young adults to work on staff each summer who are qualified and the right age. Finding and utilizing volunteers.
- Camper Attendance Challenges: Competing against the busyness of life and against sports and other activities. Schools encroaching on camp and church time. Less youth attending church. It is also easier for kids today to become inactive with all the technology out there. Kids have a sedentary lifestyle. Hard to get kids involved. Many of them get early jobs. Families seem to be getting smaller. Some Badlands Ministries Day camps are held at the same time as area county fairs. Scheduling can be a challenge.
- Facility/Planning Challenges: Making sure we build what we need and not to over build just because we can. Upkeep and maintenance of our site and facilities. Winter programming is difficult.
- Other Challenges: Theological divisions. Continuing to serve people with different denominational beliefs without taking stances that alienate.

3. What are the biggest opportunities?

- Great location that is beautiful near a growing tourism town near by us with lots of activities for youth and families.
- Can reach a lot of people through day camps
- Can attract people from outside of our state (perhaps partner with the ND Board of Tourism).
- Use our year-round site and facilities to host winter activities. More year-round facilities allow for more year-round opportunities.
- Can encourage young adult staff to become clergy
- Lots of opportunities to serve and partner with other Christian groups of other denominations
- Expand family camp
- Offer more opportunities for folks with disabilities
- Use Sunday school leaders to promote camp

4. What challenges or opportunities might be present with the Presidential Library

- Opportunities: More traffic and exposure could lead to more camp usage or perhaps new donors. More people could mean a bigger opportunity to try Medora Day Camp again and more opportunity to host groups using our ropes courses. More attractions in Medora could also increase the number

of groups who want to use or rent our site. We could partner with bus tours coming to see Medora and Library.

- Challenges: More people coming to Medora means more curious people wanting to check out the camp which is a safety concern for our staff and campers. Another challenge is to stay true to our mission and avoid commercialization of camp – remember that while we could do things that would be successful and bring in more dollars, we are a ministry first.

5. What are some needs of our constituents, congregations, and communities that we could address?

- Need for area clergy. Shortage of clergy and youth programs in our region
- Need to increase youth involvement in the church and to get the youth involved year-round
- Possible need for new retreats such as a grief retreat, a retreat focusing on silence, retreat for seminarians, or retreat for older people. Possible need for new programs like a confirmation gathering or confirmation camp. Need for more family camp opportunities. Possible need for an event like a faith-based Easter egg hunt.
- Need to connect area congregations and get them together as a group
- Possible need to offer transportation options for other senior citizens (not in assisted living facilities) to take part of Generations Connecting at Camp programs. Also look at ways to bring this program to them in our communities, perhaps during day camps using those campers and staff but still doing the activities we do with them at camp.

6. What are your thoughts regarding facilities? What improvements, additions, or changes might you suggest?

- Our current facilities are excellent. Keep doing a good job of updating them and caring for them.
- Make sure things are accessible for folks with disabilities
- Consider hosting equestrian programs and facilities on-site as exposure to horses is good for kids, and equestrian programs have a national appeal.
- Continue to add more hiking trails
- Idea of pavilion next to dining hall was supported
- Idea of additional camper cabins and another bath house
- Need more shower stalls and toilets, especially on the girl's side

- Love the idea of a water play area (this came up several times) also was talk about whether it was worth it to add a pool
- Interested in a second retreat house – Also consider tiny houses or other accommodations for families and adults who appreciate their own space.
- Improve access to river for fishing, kayaks, boats, and tubes.
- Perhaps add some camping domes or yurts
- Consider adding a gym/multi-purpose building to compete with sports camps.
- Work with county for them to claim entrance road to camp and improve it
- Have more chairs up front to worship during Fall Event and use TV in dining hall so folks setting up can see service
- Add seating in staff house and counter space in girls' side of bathhouse
- Add new ropes course elements and new playground equipment
- Consider a second dishwasher or way to make dish clean up go faster in dining hall facility.
- Consider hot tub, ninja course, and adding a coffee cart
- Consider solar panels, windmills, and other options for energy independence

7. How might we ensure financial sustainability in the future?

- Important to have funds in place to keep up with needs and upkeep. A reserve fund is important.
- A strong trust fund/endowment fund. Promote and grow endowment fund.
- Educate our supporters regarding on Qualified Transfers and directing Required Money Distributions to Badlands Ministries.
- Maintain good relationships with our member churches. Perhaps be more intentional about inviting other churches that use our facilities to consider being members of our constituency.
- Find ways to keep summer staff connected to camp once they are done working at camp (more opportunities than serving on committee or board). Start alumni giving program.
- Perhaps consider sending camper families home with an invitation to be a regular contributor
- Encourage folks to donate mineral rights
- Consider options to make the camp more energy efficient and energy independent

8. Who else should we be talking to about future planning?

- Summer Staff, Campers, Past Campers, and Camper Parents
- Youth groups kids and Youth Directors
- Other area churches
- Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

9. What ideas do you have for our 100-year anniversary celebration in 2028?

- Host an All-Staff Reunion in conjunction with the celebration
- Have it “on-line” and in-person
- Have commemorative items to sell.
- New camp video with a drone
- Christian band festival
- Open House
- Fireworks
- Activities for folks to do like hiking and ropes
- Share a story from each decade.
- Perhaps get a local celebrity to help promote and attend. (Perhaps talk to Amber S from Studio 701 who hosts that show and is a past campers)
- Start gathering address for invites for past staff/alumni
- Folks who mentioned wanting to serve on the planning committee include: Laney Herauf and Christina Jorgensen.
- Consider making a documentary from the early years to now. Wagon Trail ride – Horse and buggy ride
- Have the campers make “100” with their bodies lying on the ground and take a picture with the drone
- Headshots of past staff (or campers) that create the logo from a distance
- Display old camp logo’s
- Bring together a bunch of area church choirs to sing as big group
- Perhaps introduce a camp mascot
- Sell 100th anniversary merchandise

10. Anything Else?

- Make sure churches have memorial cards from camp at all times.
- Keep inviting other congregations to be part of our constituency.
- It is always good to have visionaries on the board and folks to challenge current ways of thinkings and explore new ideas

- It was appreciated that the camp summer staff make an appearance at the WND Synod Assembly. It is a highlight for attendees.
- Keep up with grant writing
- Consider reserving one weekend a quarter for churches to use the camp
- Provide a summary of this outreach to newsletter participants.
- Send each congregation a summer recap/promotional video they can play during a service or post on social media