
Wapiti Retreat

Request for Proposals

Diocese of Pennsylvania

Committee to Review Wapiti - January 30, 2019



Figure 1 - Main House, Wapiti

Introduction

Through its affiliate, the Wapiti Land Company, the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania is the owner and operator of a camp and retreat of 433 acres in Cecil County, Maryland. The Diocese now seeks a qualified partner or partners to propose uses for this property that are consistent with the Christian mission and ministry of the Diocese.

While the property was purchased with the goal of establishing a conference center and a camp for young people, the original vision has been achieved only in part. We now believe that the investment required to complete that vision could draw resources from other important ministries of the Diocese.

In considering the future of the site, the Diocese wishes to explore fully the potential for using the property in ministry. Both organizations of the Episcopal Church and organizations that are not Episcopalian but share a commitment to the vi-

sion and mission of the Diocese are encouraged to offer proposals for use of the property.

To be considered, the Office of the Diocese should receive proposals **not later than April 5, 2019.**

Background –

The [Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania](#) is an organization of more than 130 churches in Philadelphia and the four surrounding counties in southeastern Pennsylvania. The Diocese summarizes its mission as, “To Know Jesus and Change the World.” Its priorities are to support and empower the congregations of the Diocese and to serve those in need in the communities where the churches are located.

The Wapiti property was purchased to provide a camping experience for the youth of the Diocese as well as a retreat and conference center. Creators of the retreat/camp project believed that a summer camp could provide a life-changing experience especially for inner-city youth. They also believed

that Christian formation for young people is essential to the future health of the Church.

The Diocese made a considerable investment in purchasing the site, improving existing buildings, and renovating a large house overlooking the Elk River. New buildings were built including one that provides six motel-like rooms. A chapel and camping platforms were added. However, the cost of further improvements slowed the project.

In recent years, Wapiti has been used for camping, vestry retreats and for other small gatherings. Much of the property is farmed. A limited amount of deer hunting is also permitted.

Property Description —

Wapiti is located in a rural area on a peninsula called Turkey Point on Maryland's Elk River at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay. The address is 307 Wapiti Lane, North East, Maryland. The property is accessed by a driveway of more than one mile.



Figure 2 - Site map, Wapiti, Turkey Point, Maryland

A six-bedroom house overlooks the water and includes an enhanced kitchen to serve larger groups. The main house and

guesthouse provide lodging for up to 24 guests in bedrooms, most with en suite bathrooms. Tenting sites are also available. The property includes ample water frontage and a large dock. It has electricity, a private well and septic system.

Portions of the property are in the 500-year floodplain, however, the improvements lie outside that floodplain.



Figure 3 - Main house, facing the Elk River and the water view from the main house

The property is zoned Northern Residential Agricultural. That zoning encourages agricultural and forestry uses to preserve rural characteristics. Low density residential development is permitted. In 2007, under NRA, Cecil County permitted one dwelling unit per 10 acres for a proposed project, however, the project did not materialize, and the approvals for project expired in 2008. It is estimated that development today would

be limited to 43 total lots, with eight along the waterfront including one allocated to the existing retreat improvements.

Another camp and retreat has been operating since the 1950s just north of Wapiti. A nearby property of more than 180 acres has been purchased by a conservation group to preserve wetlands.

The annual expense of Wapiti operations is expected to be approximately \$125,000 in 2019. Principally, these costs are for utilities, taxes, insurance, a part-time caretaker and routine maintenance.

Goals of the Diocese of Pennsylvania –

The goal of this Request for Proposal is to find a sustainable project for the use of the Wapiti property that is consistent with the mission and vision of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania.

Projects should demonstrate a response to a specific need that is clearly articulated.

Proposed projects must be able to operate for at least three years. The sustainability of the project should be addressed concisely in the proposal.

The selected project will fund any capital expenses required.

Proposals will provide for financing all the ongoing costs of operating the property.

Purpose –

This Request for Proposal seeks thoughtful, creative and credible business plans for the ongoing use of the Wapiti property in keeping with the mission and vision of our Diocese, “To Know Jesus and Change the World.”

The Diocese wishes that the property be used by a group from within the Episcopal Church or other group that shares common values. While the Diocese may continue to own the property under submitted proposals, we seek a long-term partner who can create, develop and facilitate the proposed project.

Proposed projects must be managed by the proposing organization or related group and must be fully funded. The Diocese is not seeking a financial partnership or to manage the project itself.

Proposal Requirements —

While the Wapiti property was originally envisioned as a camp or conference center, we believe there are a variety of uses that could be appropriate. The principle criterion is that people in need benefit from any project envisioned for the site.

Educational, environmental or rehabilitations programs could be examples, however, responders to this RFP are encouraged to think imaginatively.

Proposals must include:

- ❖ A clear description of how the property is to be used over a multi-year plan, and how that use responds to a specific need. The objective of the project must be clearly defined.

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- ❖ A timeline for implementing the proposal and for operation of the project. Projects must be sustainable for at least three years.
 - ❖ An explanation of how the proposed project is consistent with the Diocesan mission.
 - ❖ A clear description of the proposing organization and the managing organization if different. If the organization operates similar programs to the one proposed, that experience and measures of success should be included.
 - ❖ A solid financial plan that demonstrates financial capability to operate the proposed program and to complete any improvements required.
 - ❖ All proposals must demonstrate the ability to pay the ongoing costs of operating the property. Resources from commercial operations, grants or philanthropy could all be appropriate funding sources.

Proposals must be sent not later than the close of business APRIL 5, 2019 to the attention of The Rev. Canon Kirk Berlenbach at kberlenbach@diopa.org.

Evaluation Criteria –

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria as a minimum:

- ❖ Support for the mission and vision of the Diocese.
- ❖ Impact on the population intended to be served. Clear criteria for success.
- ❖ Experience of the proposing/operating organization.
- ❖ Potential for sustainability over a minimum 3-to-5 year period.
- ❖ Financial viability.

For further information, contact –

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