

In 2012 The Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) made a commitment to bring back public camping as one of its many offerings. The FPCC developed a Camping Master Plan, which led to the design, engineering and construction of five new and revitalized campgrounds. The endeavor was a \$22 million investment funded by General Obligation bonds. The first campground opened Memorial Day weekend, 2015 with the others coming online throughout last summer. For the first time in nearly 50 years, camping is available to the general public; serving as a gateway to nature with various camping experiences and free programs.

#### Timeline

##### Camp Shabbona – open May 22, 2015

This Calumet City / South Holland campground was built in a decommissioned picnic grove to the east of Sand Ridge Nature Center. Shabbona is open April – October, offering four, small three-season cabins, 16 tent pads and one group tent camping area. Shabbona has a large pavilion, a nature play area and trails which link to Sand Ridge Nature Center.

##### Camp Sullivan –open June 20, 2015

Camp Sullivan in Oak Forest is a repurposed campground. Three bunkhouse cabins were rehabbed and 15 non-electric tent sites were added as well as 10 RV/Tent sites with electricity and eight small cabins. Additionally, the historic barn was renovated to include an indoor rock climbing wall for campers with a two-level outside seating area as well as the camp office and store, FPCC office space, and large meeting/programming space. Camp Sullivan is also the site of the Forest Preserve's new Camping Leadership Immersion Course which offers leaders of large groups a special training course which allows them access to use the campgrounds and gear with groups of up to 60 people.

##### Camp Reinberg – open June 25, 2015

Camp Reinberg is located in Palatine and is situated between the Forest Preserves' oldest properties, Deer Grove West and Deer Grove East. The old dining hall is all that remains of this historic campsite and that was renovated to compliment 13 new tent sites; 6 RV/Tent sites with electricity, four large cabins and four small cabins. Camp Alphonse in the Deer Grove West complex serves as the group campsite for Camp Reinberg.

##### Camp Bullfrog – open August 21, 2015

Camp Bullfrog was built on the west bank of Bullfrog Lake in the Palos area and is a new campground site. Bullfrog has three large cabins, eight small three season cabins, 15 tent/RV sites with electricity, 15 tent sites without electricity and one group site. Bullfrog is part of the Palos preserve system and is connected to the new Maple Lake Boathouse, Little Red School House and many miles of hiking, biking, running and horse trails. Campers can fish and kayak on Bullfrog Lake using rentals kayaks and fishing bait from the camp store.

##### Camp Dan Beard – open Sept. 4, 2015

Camp Dan Beard was a former campground that was exclusively used by a local Boy Scout Council. The new Camp Dan Beard is now open to the public, and has two large group areas, five small cabins and 1 large cabin. While primarily a three season campground it can be booked by groups for winter camping.

## Operations

Billy Casper Golf/Buffalo Recreation was awarded a three-year contract (with the option for a 1 year renewal) to operate the campgrounds starting in Dec. 2014. Their responsibilities include reservations, overnight staffing, cabin cleaning and light maintenance. A General Manager oversees the campgrounds and each campground has its own staff that includes an Assistant Manager or Team Leader, Shop/Store staff, janitorial staff and overnight staff. Campgrounds are typically open every day during the peak seasons and every day when there are campers in non-peak season (they are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day). Staff is on site all night when there are overnight campers. All of the campgrounds have a small store in which a variety of camping supplies and some food can be purchased. BCG also provides the opportunity for campers to buy and rent camping equipment. At Camp Bullfrog there are kayaks available for rent for use on the lake, at Camp Sullivan there is a 30 foot high indoor climbing wall, and at Camp Reinberg there are rental bikes. At the three locations with winter camping there are snowshoes and cross-country skis for rent. The pricing for all rentals is the same as the pricing at other FPCC locations for similar equipment.

BCG provides additional marketing support for the campgrounds. Marketing initiatives include new billboards, both print and social media ads, email blasts to previous customers, special incentives for multiple camping experiences and for returning campers.

New initiatives include partnership camping for large events including the CAMBr Meltdown; the Trails for Illinois GityUp fundraiser; packages that include exclusive use of the Sullivan Barn climbing wall and barn rental and a large event package opportunity for weddings or other large events. REI and North Face have used the campgrounds as sites for their programming. North Face recently hosted an event to introduce their new line of camping gear and brought in customers from as far away as Champaign.

On Public Lands Day, Sept. 24, 2016 the Forest Preserves used its five campgrounds as the host sites for Party for the Preserves, an event that celebrates public land and the Forest Preserves. We plan to make this an annual offering alternating campgrounds. In 2017 the event will be held on Sept. 23 at Camp Bullfrog and on Sept. 24 at Camp Dan Beard. Smaller events to introduce the public to camping at the Forest Preserves and the Forest Preserves in general will also be held throughout the year.

While the campgrounds were all opened in 2015, they are still a work in progress.

- Camp Shabbona and Camp Bullfrog are getting new water filtration buildings.
- Camp Shabbona is in need of a permanent solution for an office space/camp store.
- Camps Sullivan and Bullfrog have nature play spaces in progress.
- Paved paths were installed at Camp Bullfrog and Camp Reinberg
- Camp Reinberg's small cabins are currently being retro fit, so the sprinkler system is winterized; plan was approved by Palatine
- The landscaping is growing in, it will take some time for it to fill in in order to create a more private camp experience
- A wilderness camping experience is in the works in Pulaski Woods, at Camp Alphonse and at Camp Falcon, details are being worked out to make this an option booked through the campgrounds through an application process.
- Making a connection to the Des Plaines River Trail from Camp Dan Beard is being studied
- Additional parking was added at Camp Dan Beard, parking continues to be a challenge

- A tour of Camp Bull Frog and Camp Sullivan was held for private event planners to offer the space for special events and/or corporate events.
- The Board of Commissioners approved two new offerings: Camp and Climb for exclusive use of the climbing wall and barn as well as Special Event Exclusive Use of the Campgrounds for private events.
- Special use agreements have been made for use of the campgrounds by North Face and REI.

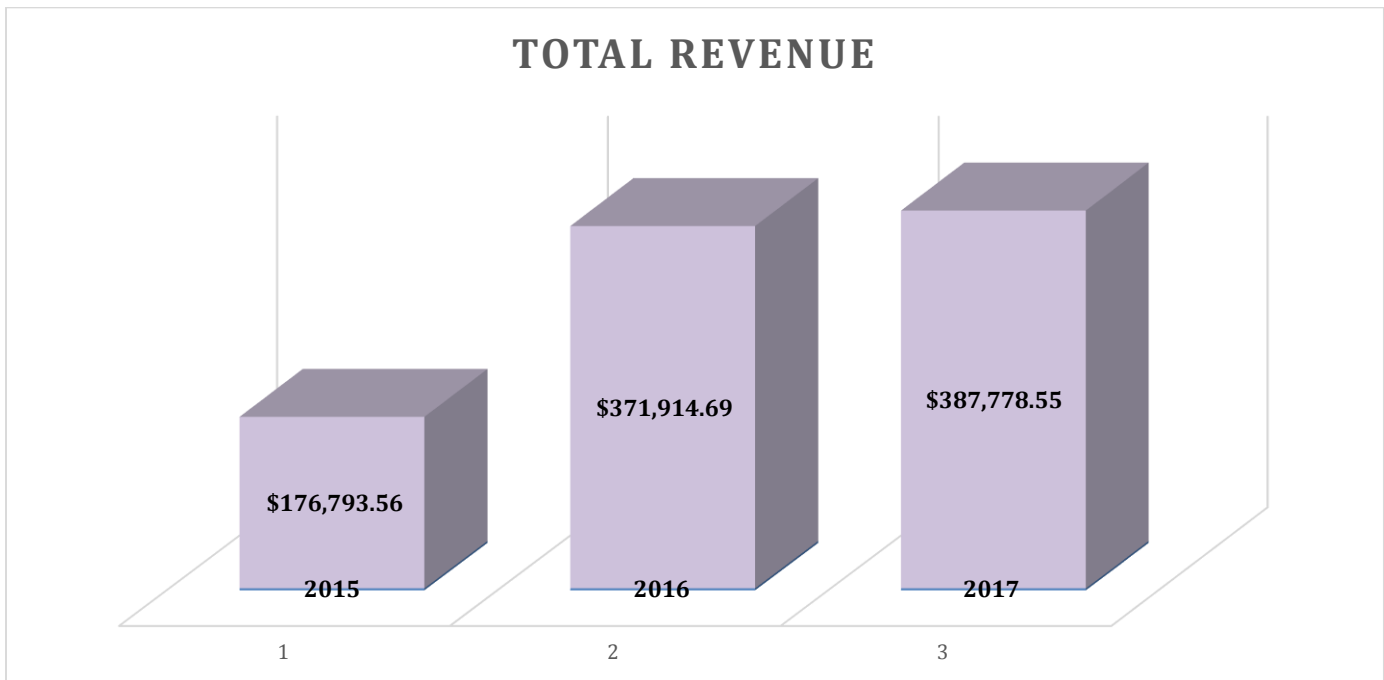
Statistics

The 2017 data is as of August 20, 2017; 2015 and 2016 data is for the entire year.

2015 Revenue	\$176,793.56
2016 Revenue	\$371,914.69
2017 Revenue (YTD)	\$387,778.55
Revenue	(YTD) 2017 up 33% compared to August 22, 2016

Camp Bullfrog = 47% of total revenue  
 46% of all reservation revenue  
 45% of all checked in sites

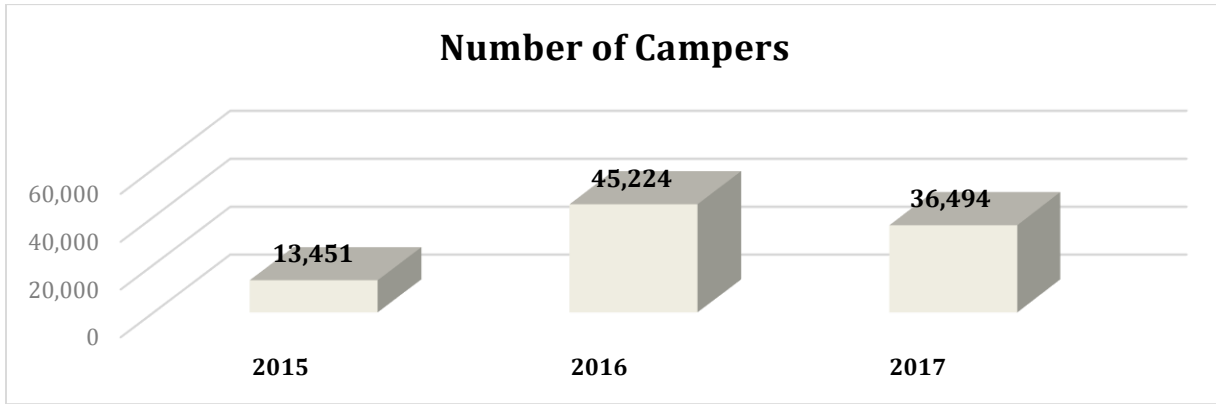
Camp Sullivan = 37.4% of total campers



Campground revenue is up 33% through the August 22, 2017. The increase is a result of an increased awareness of the campgrounds, improved marketing strategies, and increased customer loyalty. Partnerships with local municipalities to promote and offer activities at the sites are increasing awareness and interest.

# of Campers

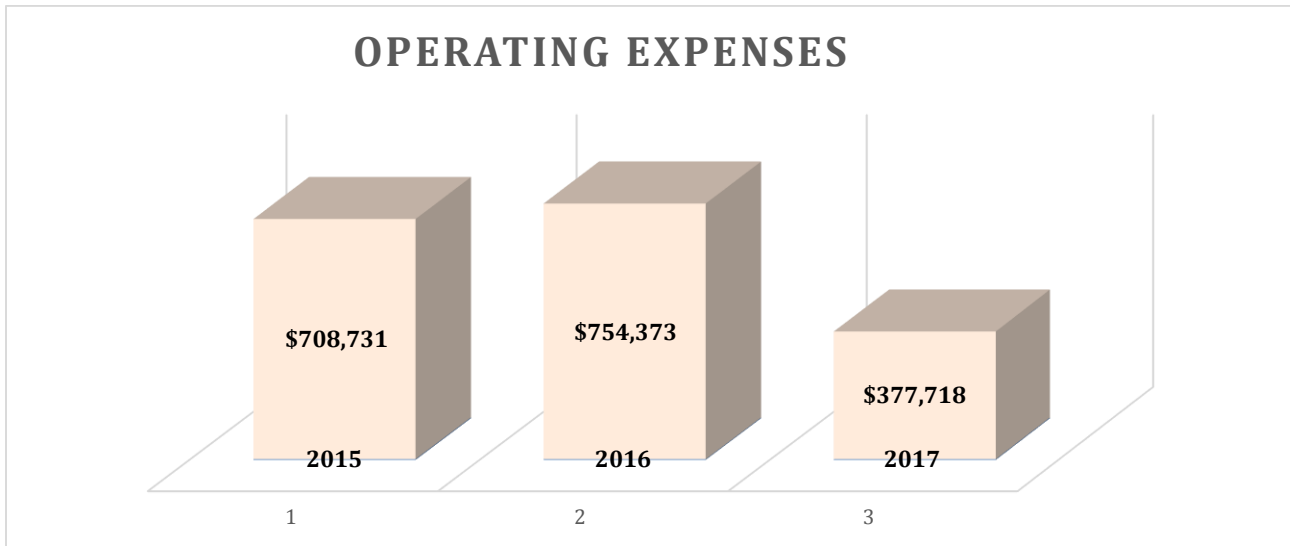
2015	13,451 Campers
2016	45,224 Campers
2017 (YTD)	36,494 Campers
Attendance	(YTD) 2017 up 27.6% compared to August 22, 2016



Operating Expenses

The 2017 data is as of July 31, 2017; 2015 and 2016 data is for the entire year.

2015	\$708,731 (includes operations of the Maple Lake Boathouse from August to October)
2016	\$754,373
2017 (YTD)	\$377,718 down 13.4% compared to July 31, 2016



2017 operating expenses have experienced an 13.4% decline through July 31, versus the same period in 2016 due a restructuring of staffing at Camp Dan Beard and Camp Shabbona. Cost savings are being realized as a result of the elimination of the assistant manager positions at those sites. The oversight of the two camps has been shifted to the General Manager (at Shabbona) and the manager at Camp Reinberg (Dan Beard), with team leaders assisting in the day-to-day operations of the camps. These initiatives are expected to keep the early year trend of reduced operating costs consistent throughout the year.

**FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY CAMPGROUND REPORT, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017**

At the end of 2016 a fee adjustment was approved by the board. Fees were adjusted as is indicated below. In addition, the fees were cut in half for veterans, except for cabins and bunkhouses on the weekends.

**2016 CAMPING FEES**



**Bullfrog, Sullivan, Reinberg**

TYPE	CAPACITY	2016		2017		\$ change
		RESIDENT	NON RESIDENT	RESIDENT	NON RESIDENT	
<b>April--October Thursday--Saturday</b>						
Tent or RV Electric	6	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	
Tent or RV Non-Electric	6	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$35.00	\$45.00	
Small Cabin	8	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$80.00	\$90.00	
Large Cabin	10	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$125.00	\$135.00	\$25.00
Small Bunkhouse	16	\$140.00	\$150.00	\$165.00	\$175.00	\$25.00
Large Bunkhouse	36	\$200.00	\$210.00	\$250.00	\$260.00	\$50.00
<b>April--October Sunday--Wednesday</b>						
Tent or RV Electric	6	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$35.00	\$45.00	
Tent or RV Non-Electric	6	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	
Small Cabin	8	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	
Large Cabin	10	\$85.00	\$95.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$15.00
Small Bunkhouse	16	\$90.00	\$100.00	\$115.00	\$125.00	\$20.00
Large Bunkhouse	36	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$150.00	\$160.00	\$50.00
<b>November--March All Nights</b>						
Tent or RV Electric	6	\$25.00	\$35.00	\$25.00	\$35.00	
Tent or RV Non-Electric	6	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	
Small Cabin	8	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	
Large Cabin	10	\$65.00	\$75.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$35.00
Small Bunkhouse	16	\$75.00	\$85.00	\$115.00	\$125.00	\$40.00
Large Bunkhouse	36	\$90.00	\$100.00	\$150.00	\$160.00	\$60.00
<b>Year round</b>						
Group Sites (per tent)	30-60	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	
Gear Library	32	\$100.00	N/A	\$100.00	N/A	

**2016 CAMPING FEES**



**Shabbona, Dan Beard**

TYPE	CAPACITY	2016		2017		\$ change
		RESIDENT	NON RESIDENT	RESIDENT	NON RESIDENT	
<b>April--October Thursday--Saturday</b>						
Tent or RV Electric	6	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$ -
Small Cabin	8	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$ -
Large Cabin	10	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$ -
Small Bunkhouse						
Large Bunkhouse						
<b>April--October Sunday--Wednesday</b>						
Tent or RV Electric	6	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$ -
Tent or RV Non-Electric	6	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$ -
Small Cabin	8	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$ -
Large Cabin	10	\$85.00	\$95.00	\$85.00	\$95.00	\$ -
Small Bunkhouse						
Large Bunkhouse						
<b>November--March All Nights</b>						
Tent or RV Electric	6	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$ -
Tent or RV Non-Electric	6	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$ -
Small Cabin	8	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$ -
Large Cabin	10	\$65.00	\$75.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$ 20.00
Small Bunkhouse						
Large Bunkhouse						
<b>Year round</b>						
Group Sites (per tent)	30-60	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	
Gear Library	32	\$100.00	N/A	\$100.00	N/A	

**Programs**

FPCC's Conservation and Experiential Programming Department has implemented a series of events at the campgrounds. The Forest Preserves Foundation and CSX, generously sponsor the Family Campout Campership programs and the Camping Leadership Immersion Course programs. In addition, we have had support from Columbia and Keen for in kind equipment and gear.

**Camping Programs** are offered at all the campgrounds throughout the year. CEP staff provides a variety of programs that include Camping 101, Hiking 101, Snow Shoeing and other winter activities for anyone and specifically for campers on weekends (Friday and Saturday night). The drop-in programming is an opportunity to introduce families to a variety of camping or camping related skills. During these hands on workshops staff introduce basic camping skills to families and novice campers to-prepare them for their future camping experiences. We demonstrate how to set up a tent, make a campfire, use a camp stove and how to properly take advantage of the natural environment though the guidelines of the Leave No Trace principles. Weekend programs for campers focus on the assets at each campground including trails, the climbing wall, nature play spaces, nearby nature centers and other amenities near or at the individual camp grounds and give us the opportunity to talk about the many different ways people can engage with the Forest Preserves when they are camping.

# of programs - 550  
 # of attendees -- 12,988

**Camping Leadership Immersion Course (CLIC)** is our group leader training and gear library-lending program. Once a leader of a group (boy scouts, park, school, church, police, NGO, etc.) goes through an overnight training course, they become certified in the CLIC Program. This certification allows them to borrow tents, sleeping bags and cooking equipment for use at an overnight for a group of up to 30 at a time. This program makes it possible for community groups to experience camping regardless of whether they have camping equipment or not. Currently all of these trainings and campouts are taking place at Camp Sullivan. This initiative is part of a partnership with Outdoor Empowered Network (OEN) and the Chicago Park District. OEN held their annual summit at Sullivan in November 2016.

# of CLIC trainings – 8; 9 trainings by end of 2017

# of CLIC trained group leaders – 98 trainees; one more trainings in 2017

# of groups & participants who have returned to camp and used gear library -- 40 groups and 809 campers have camped as of August 20, 2017.. To date we have 5 more CLIC campouts booked and we expect ~100 CLIC campers by the end of the 2017 season. On average a group that comes back to camp utilizing the CLIC gear brings 20 campers. The follow is a list of CLIC trained groups:

ABE Program	Cub Scouts 4791	Outdoor Afro Chicago
Academy for Global	Faith in Place	Polaris Charter
Citizenship	FOTFP	Project Exploration
American Herritage Girls	Freedom Home Academy	Rising Sun MBC
Audubon Chicago Region	Girl Scout Troop 21031	Roosevelt Uni.
Austin Career Education	Girl Scout Troop 60758	Sauganash Ele. School
Center	GirlTrek	Straford Memorial SDA
Beyond the Ball	Glenwood Academy	Church
Boy Scouts 3540	Harvey Community Church	Strive Tutoring
Boy Scouts 3559	Immanuel Lutheran	The Field Museum
Boy Scouts 3598	Iron Oaks	Union League Boys & Girls
Boy Scouts of America	Kenwood Academy	Club
Boy Scouts- Troop 606	KIPP Ascend Primary School	Union League Boys & Girls
Boy Scouts- Troop 607	Lemont Montessori	Club (Science)
Boy Scouts- Troop 608	Little Village Academy	Urban Ecology Center
Brickton Montessori	LVEJO	Urban Transformation
Calvin Christian Academy	Montessori Academy of	Network
Central States SER	Chicago	West Town Bikes
Chatham Enrichment Center	Mt. Vernon Baptist Church	Wild Indigo
Chicago Police Dept.	Mujeres Latinas en Accion	Worth Park District
Community Christian	New Life Centers of	WRD Environmental/
Alternative Academy	Chicagoland	Greencorps Chicago
Cub Scout Pack 358	Oak Lawn Park District	York Center Park District
Cub Scout Pack 3599	Ounce of Prevention	

**Family Campouts/Camperships:** A family campout program was developed to provide family groups with everything they need to campout – tents, sleeping bags, food and fun. For a nominal fee of \$75, a family of up to six, can tent camp overnight at FPCC campgrounds. Food is provided for both a dinner and breakfast meal. Night hikes, nature games and sometimes a Nature Center special event are featured as

part of the campout. Families with financial need can apply for a campership that supports up to \$65 of the fee.

# of Family Campouts as of August 20, 2017 - 16 Family Campouts

# of attendees -- 589 campers

# of Camperships -- 23 camperships to date

# of Family Campouts on the schedule -- 1 more campout scheduled for fall of 2017

#### Housing and Hosting FPCC Volunteers

As part of its commitment to supporting volunteers and other work program participants, we have been able to provide the campgrounds as housing for several groups like AmericCorp, Alternative Spring Break participants and other volunteer activities. By using the campgrounds instead of hotels or other housing we are able to save fund..

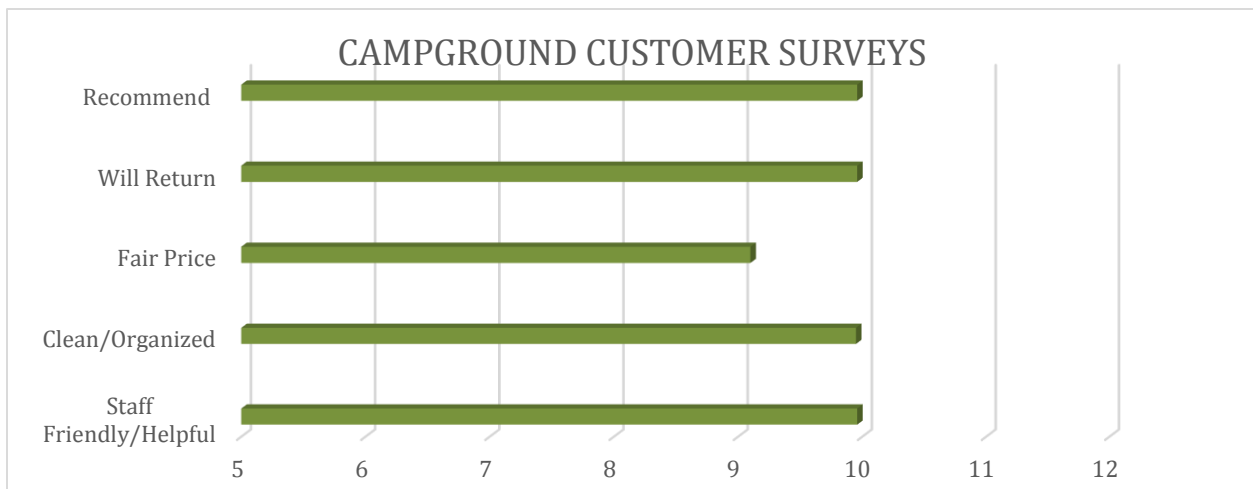
# of volunteers using campgrounds for FPCC housing – 150

AmeriCorps, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Ohio State, Purdue and University of Illinois

#### Campground Survey Results

Guests are offered the opportunity to provide us with feedback after their stay at an FPCC campground.

- Customers rate the campgrounds in a range from 1 to 10, with customers that would be classified as promoters (9 to 10), passives (7 to 8) and detractors (0 to 6).
- The campgrounds are rated from 9.1 (price) to 9.96 based on the averages of the categories. Based on this data, our customers are definitely promoters of the campgrounds.
- Most customers learned about the campgrounds from the website and friends.



#### FPCC Camping Stories

The Family Campout at Camp Shabbona on June 16-17, 2017, was the Dorsey family (Dad/Mom and 4 children) was the FIRST time their family of 6 had gone camping all together. The kids loved the Nature Play area calling it a “castle” and creating a whole world using their imagination as the campfire began to crackle. While Mr. Dorsey worked hard setting up the tent with campground staff, Mrs. Dorsey remained

reluctant about actually sleeping in a tent. But, her comfort level grew as she saw how much fun the kids were having, and how much Mr. Dorsey was enjoying setting up the tent.

The parents felt comfortable letting the kids 'run wild' knowing our staff was around and the campground was a safe place for them to explore. The whole family got a kick out of cooking dinner over the fire, there were a few hot dog casualties, and came back full of wonder from their night hike using the Sand Ridge Nature Center trails. After the final sugar rush from the s'mores wore down, some of the family crashed while others made a fire at their site and the dad told ghost stories.

The next morning the family all pitched in breaking down the campsite; delivering everything back and enjoying breakfast before heading to their grandmother's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. The kids left happy, and a little tired from staying up so late, excited to share their stories from the weekend with their grandmother when they got to her party.

#### Camping Leadership Immersion Course and Camp Out

Amy Boerman-Cornell, CLIC training for Calvin Christian School

Amy wrote this after going through the training and running XX campouts for her school groups.

"I took the CLIC training not really knowing what to expect. First of all, spending a couple days with a big variety of people (all of whom have kids' best interests at heart) was fun. Second of all, it got me inspired to take my urban/suburban fourth graders camping! For the past two years, I've had a boys/men campout and a girls/women campout. CLIC likes to say, "Bring food, propane, and kids." It's slightly more complex than that, but we have had nothing but GREAT experiences on all of our campouts. By removing the barriers of equipment and costliness CLIC has provided a way for many never-before-campers to have fun, enjoy the outdoors, learn some new skills, and maybe even consider camping again in the future!"