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GIRL SCOUTS: Latonka Summer 'Suspended'

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A SMT News Report

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. - Girl Scouts in Southeast Missouri will have look to another spot for summer camping experiences this summer, as the regional Girl Scout Council has suspended activities at Camp Latonka until flood damage at Lake Wappapello can be cleared.

The Girl Scouts of Missouri Heartland announced Wednesday that all activities at Latonka will be suspended.

Camp Latonka was opened in 1951 by the former Cotton Boll Girl Scout Council and has been the summer home for thousands of girls and young women in Southeast Missouri. However, flooding at Lake Wappapello this spring has forced the new Girl Scout council to suspend activities.

In a news release sent late Wednesday afternoon, the council said that with water levels at Wappapello 35 feet above normal earlier this month, the decision to suspend activities was made this summer.

“It is unfortunate that the historic flood has created this tough decision,” states Jennifer M. Orban, CEO for GSMH, “but parents depend on us as an organization to provide a safe environment for their girls.”

All activities hosted at Latonka are now suspended until the water recedes and clean-up and restoration at the property can be completed. Latonka is located in Wayne County and home to summer, troop and family activities, as well as council-sponsored activities, such as summer resident camp.

Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland is offering summer camp at three additional locations, including Cherokee Ridge Program Center, near Sam A. Baker State Park and also located in Wayne County.

Valarie Moseley, Chief Membership/Leadership Program Officer for GSMH understands the disappointment for the girls.

“I know that many girls were looking forward to an outdoor camp experience this summer,” Moseley said. “Therefore, we will be adding additional weeks of resident camp at the Cherokee Ridge facility for those who would like to participate in activities such as horseback riding, aqua sports, and the science behind the solar system.”

Girls Scouts and their families may visit the Council’s website at www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org for more information on the additional sessions added at Cherokee Ridge.

Orban also said that individuals, companies and organizations that would like to offer donations to help with the clean-up and restoration of Latonka Program Center, may contact Angie Sullivan at 877-312-4764 ext. 1343.

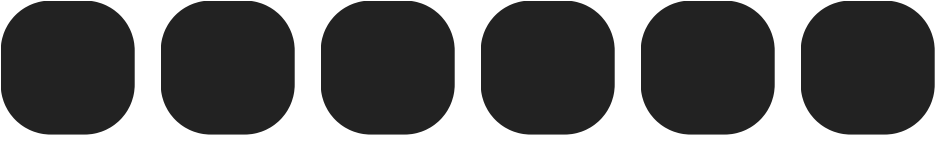
Cotton Boll and four other councils in Missouri merged three years ago. Girl Scouts of Missouri Heartland is based in Springfield; regional service centers are based in Dexter and Cape Girardeau.

Photo Above: The Dining Hall at Camp Latonka (Latonka Program Center). The Girl Scouts of Missouri Heartland has suspended activities at the traditional Girl Scout camp due to flooding at Lake Wappapello. (SMT file photo by Annabeth Miller)

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