

CAMP MERRIE-WOODE

# Strategic Plan



2025-2029

# CMW Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan looks ahead to 2025 - 2029, acknowledging the numerous and notable achievements of Camp Merrie-Woode as a nationally recognized, premier girls' camp.

Meaningful planning involves a formative process, linking past, present, and future. This plan builds upon the previous Strategic Plans with valuable insights gathered from meetings with and surveys of alumnae, parents, staff, previous board members, and other important Camp constituents. Reflecting over a century of highly successful camping experience, this Plan balances respect for the rich history and timeless traditions of Merrie-Woode with requisite attention to current opportunities and challenges.

The following Goals and Strategies are presented in concert with Camp's existing statements of Mission, Vision, and Values. Merrie-Woode's abiding purpose remains to nurture the physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of girls and young women toward exemplary leadership, lifelong skills, steadfast resilience, selfless service, enduring friendships, and deep community.

-The Strategic Plan Committee





# Mission

Merrie-Woode is a sanctuary of Rarest Beauty which inspires a lasting awareness of God's presence. The Mission of Camp Merrie-Woode is to use that setting to nurture the physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of girls and young women through traditional camp activities and outdoor adventures. In this friendly, non-competitive community of simplified living, each individual is valued for who she is and who she will become.

# Vision

To be the premier camp in America for girls and young women by providing the nurturing setting for each girl to discover and achieve her own excellence.

# Values

**Wilderness and the outdoors.** Spending time in undisturbed natural settings helps girls develop a sense of awe for God's creation, of discovery, and of their own potential.

**Simplified Living.** We believe in making do with less in a rustic and low-tech environment.

**Challenge.** Camp is a place where girls have opportunities to reach outside of their comfort zone, building responsibility, confidence, resilience, and skills.

**Play.** Joy, laughter, and fun are each valuable in their own right and as a basis of positive learning and development.

**Spirituality.** Camp Merrie-Woode is a place of reverence and is based in the Christian faith.

**Integrity.** We believe in honesty and fair play.

**Community.** Living in a friendly, inclusive, and mutually supportive community makes it possible for girls and young women to grow into their best selves.

**The Individual.** We respect and value each member of the community for who she is and who she will become.

**Friendship.** We believe in the power of lifelong relationships formed at Camp.

**Our history.** We believe in creating a future based on the best of the past, including honoring those who have loved it and given it their best.

**Service.** We believe in service in the camp community and service to the world beyond.

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Strategic Plan





# I. CAMP LIFE

*Goal: Build upon Camp Merrie-Woode Values within a community of simplicity, spirituality, security, exuberance, and excellence.*

## Strategy I

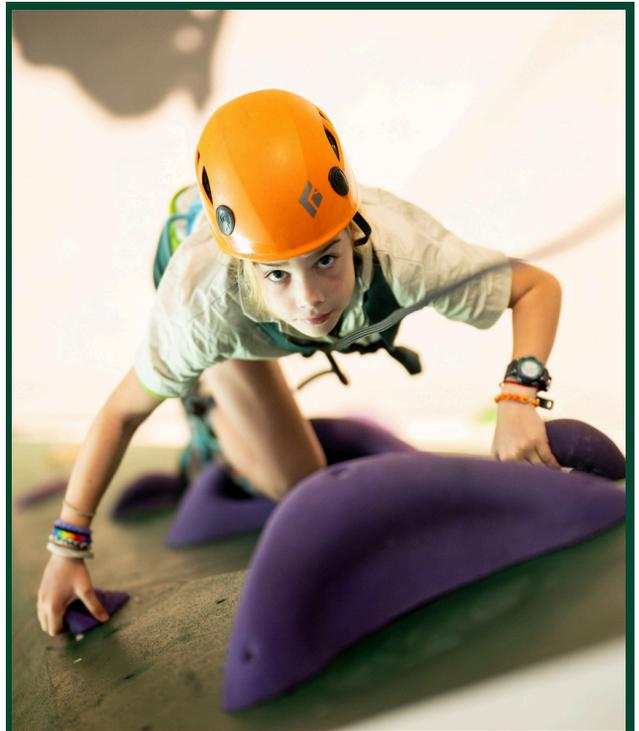
**Uphold Camp's rich history of timeless traditions.**

- A. Cultivate an appreciation of our traditions for new campers and counselors.
- B. Share traditions in communications with parents, alumnae, and the broader Camp community.

## Strategy II

**Promote character development.**

- A. Build confidence and resilience through experiential challenges and personal growth.
- B. Nurture meaningful friendships that offer encouragement and affirm self-worth.





## Strategy III

**Cultivate an atmosphere of simplified living and play to foster a timeless experience.**

- A. Further our commitment to being “unplugged,” allowing campers to experience time without the distractions of electronics, social media, and other external influences.
- B. Thoughtfully consider how to document the campers’ experiences without detracting from their ability to be present.

## Strategy IV

**Nurture the spiritual growth of each girl.**

- A. Welcome campers and counselors of all faiths.
- B. Affirm the Christian principles upon which Camp was established and how this sanctuary of Rarest Beauty enhances our awareness of God’s presence.



## II. PEOPLE

**Goal:** *Promote and enhance the Merrie-Woode experience for campers, staff, and the entire Merrie-Woode community in a manner consistent with our Mission Statement.*

### Strategy I: Campers

**Deepen our efforts to attract and retain campers from varied regions, backgrounds, and experiences who will benefit from and contribute to Camp Merrie-Woode.**

- A. Continue our efforts to increase and balance various enrollment factors.
- B. Inform and educate our prospective and enrolled families on the admissions process, and promote campership opportunities.

### Strategy II: Camper Families

**Partner with camper families to nurture the health and wellbeing of each camper, in order to provide a Mission-aligned experience for each girl.**

- A. Further enhance our communication with camper families before, during, and after camp.
- B. Expand our healthcare preparation and processes to provide excellent camper care and mitigate risk.
- C. Further refine how we build relationships with new campers and their families, welcoming them to Merrie-Woode before, during, and after camp.





## Strategy III: Staff

**Recruit and retain exceptional year-round and seasonal staff members who subscribe to our Mission, serve as role models, teach with passion, and demonstrate sincere care for each camper.**

- A. Refine the development of our seasonal staff and ensure continuity of leadership within our core programs.
- B. Maintain processes for effective performance assessments and encourage year-round staff to develop and achieve goals that inspire professional growth.
- C. Continue to shape the administrative structure and compensation philosophy to hire and retain the highest quality, professional seasonal and year-round staff.
- D. Attract former campers and new staff of varied regions, backgrounds, experiences, and talents who will benefit from and contribute to Merrie-Woode for multiple years.
- E. Offer effective training and support to promote health and wellness.

## Strategy IV: Alumnae

**Connect Merrie-Woode alumnae across the generations.**

- A. Facilitate on- and off-site events that bring alumnae together and foster relationships.
- B. Develop an alumnae network to promote connections between current and previous campers, counselors, and alumnae.

## Strategy V: Board

**Maintain an effective and dynamic Board of Trustees that embraces the Mission, Traditions, and Philosophy of Camp Merrie-Woode.**

- A. Identify board members with varied experiences and Mission-aligned skill sets.



# III. PROGRAMMING

*Goal: Offer Mission-consistent programming that promotes the unique Merrie-Woode experience.*

## Strategy I

**Offer a thoughtful and balanced combination of traditional and adventure programming that promotes skills progression and character development in a challenging and nurturing environment.**

- A. Encourage each camper's participation in both traditional camp activities and adventure-based programs.
- B. Review current programs to ensure that each program is age appropriate, relatable, Mission-driven, and in keeping with Merrie-Woode's traditions.
- C. Promote each camper's confidence and personal growth through development of her proficiency in a broad variety of activities.





## Strategy II

**Ensure programming builds lifelong skills and interest in the outdoors, making full use of Camp's exceptional resources.**

- A. Utilize Camp's 400-acre property to promote adventure-based activities.
- B. Provide outdoor opportunities that build confidence and expand knowledge of the outdoors.
- C. Refine off-season programming offerings for alumnae and the greater Merrie-Woode community.

## Strategy III

**Advance our adventure programming to distinguish Merrie-Woode among peer institutions.**

- A. Enhance proficiency through challenging adventure experiences.
- B. Identify and hire adventure staff with high levels of expertise.
- C. Offer top-tier training and development to campers and staff.

## Strategy IV

**Ensure programming and operational excellence, and maintain our accreditation with the American Camp Association.**

- A. Prioritize development and refinement of emergency and crisis management protocols, in accordance with ACA guidelines and the critical need to manage the security of camp property and the inherent risk of adventure programming.
- B. Prepare for and complete the ACA review and reaccreditation process.



# IV. ENVIRONMENTAL & FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

*Goal A: Preserve and enhance this Place of Rarest Beauty and ensure that its use is consistent with our Mission and traditions.*

## Strategy I

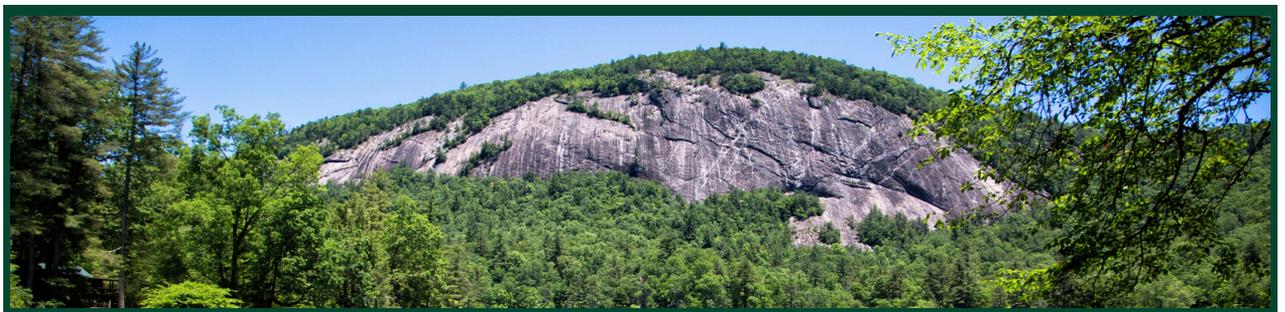
**Advance our long-range conservation and sustainability plan.**

- A. Restore the property's woodland character using best available forest management practices to preserve the wilderness of Camp.
- B. Recognize Merrie-Woode's place in the natural ecosystem, and improve biodiversity and water quality through restoration and management.
- C. Maintain Camp's built structures and infrastructure in form and function, in keeping with the historical significance and character of the property.
- D. Explore opportunities to conserve property strategically within and around Merrie-Woode's existing boundaries.
- E. Develop funding channels to support these initiatives.

## Strategy II

**Inform and engage campers, their families, alumnae, and the greater community regarding Merrie-Woode's ongoing conservation efforts and impact.**

- A. Implement camper programming related to our conservation efforts and impact.
- B. Use our website, newsletter, annual report, and events to share our conservation efforts and impact.





**Goal B:** *Maintain long-term financial sustainability.*

## Strategy I

**Grow the Annual Fund, Planned Giving, and Endowment resources through participation and gifts.**

- A. Educate constituents and families about these sources of funding and opportunities to give.
- B. Refine and improve stewardship practices to recognize donors and share the impact of their gifts.

## Strategy II

**Maintain tuition rates at an appropriate level to ensure Merrie-Woode's Mission and excellence.**

- A. Set tuition while considering projected expenses, market demand, and tuition of peer institutions.
- B. Utilize annual giving and endowment proceeds to provide meaningful budget support.

## Strategy III

**Utilize camperships to make tuition more accessible for prospective and enrolled families.**

- A. Grow campership funding through a variety of fundraising sources.
- B. Increase access to camperships through enhanced communication and an improved need-based analysis.



# Board of Trustees

Tweed Cline Eckhard, Chair

Clair Freeman Marshall, Past Chair\*

Donyal Andrews

Thomas Bates

Jimmy Broughton

Mary Coleman Rogers Clark

Jane Curtis\*

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Susan O'Neal Thompson

Kim Tuthill White

Dan Wilbanks

\*Retired Fall 2024



A photograph of a wooden archway entrance to a forest. The archway is made of dark wood and features a central panel with silhouettes of people sitting on a bench and the text 'MERRIE WOUDE' below. To the right of the archway is a stone pillar topped with a lantern. The background is a dense forest of tall trees.

# Strategic Plan Committee

Clair Freeman Marshall

Tweed Cline Eckhard

Thomas Bates

Mary Coleman Rogers Clark

Mallory Dimmitt

J.R. Hanks

Frost Walker

Robin McKinney Walker



To make a gift to Camp Merrie-Woode please use the QR code above or email [development@merriewoode.com](mailto:development@merriewoode.com)



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