

Proposed Council Merger - Questions & Answers for our Indian Waters Council Scouting Family

1. Who is proposing this merger, and why?

Answer: *The volunteer leaders of the Indian Waters Council (IWC) and Pee Dee Area Council (PDAC) are proposing the merger because of the expanded services and resources that would be available to our Scouting family.* They see a unique opportunity for streamlined administrative functions, combined and deeper volunteer support, increased professional staffing levels, and better programming and facilities for our Scouting constituents.

2. Here in the Indian Waters Council, how would our Scouting family benefit most from a merger?

Answer: *The biggest merger benefit to our IWC family will be expanded programming and facilities.*

- A.** By combining our resources, we will have a larger group of experienced volunteers supporting *every area of our operations*, including coordinated programming, camping, OA, membership recruitment and retention, fiscal management, fundraising, and in commissioner service.
- B.** In both the short and long term, we will see the BSA professional program staffing level increase and administrative functions streamlined. The Scout executive will hire new professional BSA staff support squarely focused on better support to our field operations, including increased support in the current Pee Dee Area Council territory.

3. What would happen to Camp Barstow on Lake Murray and the George Fant Scout Service Center in Columbia?

Answer: *Both facilities will stay open and provide support to an expanded constituency.* Camp Barstow will see an increase in attention, investment, and participation. Some activities currently conducted at Camp Barstow may move to Camp Coker, freeing up space and focus for its participants. Attendance at Camp Barstow summer camp will grow as it will become the council camp for Scouts of the current Pee Dee Area Council, offering them a nationally recognized Scout camp. Click on these links to see [Camp Barstow in Bryan's Blog, November 11, 2021](#) and in [Scout Life Magazine, March, 2022](#).

4. What would happen to Camp Coker in Society Hill and the Henry Johnson Service Center in Florence?

Answer: *Both facilities will stay open and provide support to an expanded constituency.* Camp Coker will see an increase in attention, investment and participation. Its focus will remain on weekend activities, OA activities, and training, while Scouts BSA summer camp will continue to strictly take place at Camp Barstow. Some administrative functions of the Florence service center will move to Columbia and vice-versa, allowing for more focused customer support. The Florence Scout Shop will stay open and we will also benefit from a fully-stocked National BSA Scout Shop and service center in Columbia.

5. What would happen to the combined Order of the Arrow lodges?

Answer: *The name of the lodge be the Muscogee Lodge and the Santee Lodge will stay intact as a chapter of Muscogee Lodge.* Since the BSA regulations only allow for one Order of the Arrow lodge, per council, merging Santee into the Muscogee Lodge will help align resources yet still retain Santee traditions and heritage.

6. What would the merged council be named and what about the districts?

Answer: *The name of the merged council will be the Indian Waters Council (#553).* There are no plans to change the current geographic and administrative “districts” although an important review of their structure and territory would be conducted to determine if a change is needed to best support our Scouting family.

7. What is the financial condition of each council?

Answer: *The financial condition of both councils is strong.* The PDAC has no debt and a nearly \$4 million endowment fund. Its camp and service center are owned by the Camp Coker Trust. The Indian Waters Council has a \$2.9 million endowment fund, 4 months of cash reserves and its only debt is a thirty-year \$150,000 federal loan with very favorable terms. It owns Camp Barstow and the Scout Service Center in Columbia with no mortgages. There are no financial concerns in either council that are driving the proposed merger.

8. What would this merger mean to our Scouts, volunteers, and parents?

Answer: *This merger presents a unique opportunity for better customer support for our Scouting constituents at all levels.* New professional staff members will be hired, administrative functions streamlined, and programming expanded and will include more facilities.

9. What is the timeline of the proposed council merger?

Answer: In recent days, the executive boards of both the PDAC and IWC concluded extensive research on the potential merger and then separately voted to approve the merger. **The proposed effective date of the council merger is Monday, August 1, 2022.** **Prior to that, a Special Meeting of the voting membership of each council will take place separately via Zoom on Monday, July 11, 2022.** The voting membership in each council includes chartered organization representatives and council members-at-large, so each chartered organization will have a vote and all voting members will be invited to the Special (Zoom) Meeting on July 11, 2022.

10. Whom can I speak with or write to if I have questions or concerns about the merger?

Answer: *Please contact the following people if you have questions or concerns about the merger:*

Merger Questions for PDAC	Phil Bethune	(843) 655-4562	philbethune@gmail.com
Merger Questions for IWC	Mike Harris	(803) 446-3160	Mike.e.harris@bcbssc.com
Columbia Office	Doug Stone	(803) 750-9868	Douglas.Stone@scouting.org
Florence Office	Diane Wheeler	(843) 954-3122	Diane.Wheeler@scouting.org
Camp Barstow	Bill Eisele	(803) 609-3774	bilehuwh@aol.com
Camp Coker	David Warner	(858) 740-8600	dswarner@dswarner.net
BSA Territory 15	Rodney Carpenter	(919) 802-3886	Rodney.Carpenter@scouting.org