

FAQ Concerning Bambi Lake

How many of our BSCM churches and other groups are using Bambi?

We did find that 67 churches have used Bambi by at least 1 person in 2022. A total of 1260 people attended SBC sponsored events at Bambi in 2022. In 2022 we had 11 events sponsored by BSCM.

In contrast, in 80's & 90's we had over 2500 people attend retreats in just Jan thru Mar (youth, men's and women's retreats) In the 80's & 90's we had 13 events in just Jan. - Mar.

We did have 10 other organizations (such as schools, other denominations etc...) use Bambi in 2022. Their total attendance was around 1050.

Did we research how other church camps are navigating these challenging times?

We found that most camps that are doing well were heavily endowed and offer a less rustic environment. Many had amenities that are more attractive to those still pursuing camps. Lake Ann is an example, they are hugely endowed with millions of dollars.

Were other operational ideas considered?

We did look at dual ownership with Hiawatha but it seemed to be really complicated administratively as well as duplicitous in roles, and Hiawatha as well as BSCM leaders were not interested in this option.

Did we inquire about other marketing strategies to promote the camp?

We talked quite a bit about promotions and determined we had been promoting but our churches as a whole were not coming. This was not a reflection on Mick nor Bambi's efforts to promote our camps.

Will the BSCM have priority in booking events if Hiawatha purchases Bambi?

We do not have any expectation of priority over Hiawatha's schedule. They would work to get our retreats scheduled but we would not have priority over their camps which right now have been in the summer. They have committed to working hard to get our camps in for us. Hiawatha needs and desires to fill up camps just how we have always needed to in order to have more sales. There is no incentive for them to not let us have retreats.

Will the retreats be burdened with the responsibility of providing for their own kitchen staff, food prep, housekeeping, and managing the registration?

Hiawatha plans to run all aspects of the camps they host. With regard to registration we generally run registration for our own events when having them at other venues and that would probably be the plan for Bambi retreats. That is not to say that Hiawatha would be willing to handle registration too. This has not been discussed at length because the Executive Committee felt we should only move so far in negotiations without the affirmative vote of the convention.

What about campers who use the campground area?

Hiawatha has assured us they plan to continue to have that area available for people to enjoy with their families. They are praying those who have been camping will keep coming and support them in their camp ministry.

The money seems confusing, can you help us understand the purchase information?

We believe we could sell Bambi outright to someone for \$1.8 - \$2 million but we felt like making it affordable to another camp ministry, like minded with us, who will carry on the ministry into the future would be the preference of our convention over selling for a big dollar. If the convention would prioritize selling Bambi for the greatest financial gain, and it not be used as a camp, we could do that. Our team felt like this was a win for the kingdom, where the camp will still be used to share the gospel and help people grow in their faith.

We are proposing selling Bambi to Hiawatha for \$1,450,000.00. We are asking them to pay \$750,000.00 at time of purchase, then pay us the additional \$700,000.00 if they decide to sell the property. This allows them to acquire the property at a price they can actually afford. The whole price of 1.45 million dollars would knock them out of the possibility to acquire Bambi. We wanted to see the kingdom ministry of Bambi go on and felt it was worth sacrificing the money for the sake of the Kingdom. If Hiawatha was going to sell the property, that we had generously discounted for them to acquire, we felt them paying the rest was important.

Has the Convention suffered in any significant way by providing a spiritual retreat center for our churches?

We have suffered much financially in this. We are currently spending approx. 20% of our state convention's budget on Bambi. We have budgeted around 7% of our budget and it is costing more than double that. Although we only shared the last 6 years financial info, this trend of losing money way greater than what we have budgeted has went back close to 20 years and maybe more.

Where will the money from the sale go?

We have not put an official plan together but the discussions have all been to take any funds saved in our budget or received from the sale and use them to start new churches and strengthen all of our churches.

This is not about thinking Bambi Lake has not been a blessing to many, many people over the decades. This is about our Convention of churches as we move forward together for God's Kingdom and trusting Him to do great things through our obedience to be good stewards of His money.

If this proposal is voted down, does the Convention have a plan in place to move forward with camp operations and management?

As of now we can only survive 1 or 2 more years at this pace and we will be out of money other than our endowments and invested funds.

While we have no other contingencies in place we can only surmise, based on the findings of the Bambi Feasibility Team and the Executive Committee, this will have adverse and negative affects within our cooperative partnership and the furtherance of our mission in church planting and church strengthening, and in BSCM staffing.

We will also have to reinstitute a completely new personnel structure there at Bambi, due to the departure of our current director.

We hope this helps with any questions. I am praying for God to move mightily among Michigan Southern Baptists as we follow Him in chasing His plan for us.