

## THE BOARD OF CAMP AND RETREAT MINISTRIES

The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries lives out its purpose of, "Supporting the local church by providing an open door into the Christian life and United Methodist tradition using year-round outdoor settings for extended experiences of spiritual growth and discipleship." It has the privilege of witnessing spiritual growth and discipleship through its ministry offerings in unique outdoor settings. The yearly surveys the Board has done tell it that these settings and experiences strongly influence the lives of the children, youth, and adults who participate. Camping and retreat ministry provides one of the most effective ways of making disciples that the Annual Conference has established. Many of the members of the Annual Conference, and especially the clergy members, began their commitments as followers of Jesus Christ at a camping and retreat experience. The persons who participate in camp and retreat ministries return to their local churches to live out their Christian faith.

2006 was a strong year for Camp and Retreat Ministries in several ways. The year saw an increased number of persons using the Sites, as are measured in "camper days." Circuits are starting to explore ways to meet at the Sites, as well as ways to help be in ministry at the Sites. The year also saw continued improvements in the physical structures at the Sites. These improvements came as the result of the use of Fund for Discipleship funds as well as from monies given by individuals. The Bishop Rader Retreat Center, for example, will have another wing of guest rooms completed in 2007. The Board has a part-time development fund-raiser who will be telling individuals and churches about the ministry that happens at the Sites, as well as raising money for critical needs at the Sites. Also, for the first time in several years, the Sites were able to balance their budgets and finish the year financially sound.

The Board especially wants to thank the large number of volunteers, including Volunteers in Mission (VIM), who helped at the Sites during the past year. Their help was greatly appreciated!

An increasing number of Conference churches, boards, and groups are using the Sites for meetings and retreats. Circuits will continue to be encouraged to hold meetings and retreats at the Sites. Local churches, charges, circuits, and pastors will be encouraged to promote the ministry at the Sites, as well as to send persons to the Sites. The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries encourages the usage of these Wisconsin Conference facilities for retreats and meetings. That usage helps the entire ministry and outreach of the Annual Conference. Remember to "Call Camp First!" to schedule your meetings and events.

Our Site personnel during 2006 was: Byron Pegram at Byron Center, Greg Loudon at Whispering Pines, Chip Hutler at Lake Lucerne and Pine Lake, Laura Hutler at Pine Lake and Lake Lucerne, and Nick Coenen at Pine Lake. Visit the Camp and Retreat Ministries website at [www.WisconsinUMC.org/camps](http://www.WisconsinUMC.org/camps) Pages for each Site as well as the camping booklet can be viewed.

The Board will continue to offer quality camp and retreat experiences at its unique outdoor Sites and will look for ways to be more effective in its ministry by deep listening to the guests who come. The Board also scheduled listening sessions for the clergy of the Annual Conference in spring of 2007. The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries wants to move into the future by continuing to offer pathways to Christian growth and discipleship through camping and retreats.

***Rev. Bruce Bartel, Chairperson***

***Nancy M. Deaner, Camping and Retreat Ministries Coordinator***