



Proposed Council Merger

Questions & Answers for our Scouting Family

Quapaw Area Council & Westark Area Council

updated 8/22/2023

1. Who is proposing this merger, and why?

Answer: *The volunteer leaders of the Westark Area Council (WAC) and Quapaw Area Council (QAC) 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, efficient business management and better programming and facilities for our Scouting constituents. By merging the two councils, we will form one new unified council under the leadership of a single Scout Executive, which will maintain the critical mass of active Scouting families and enable us to provide the best possible program for the youth we serve. Our councils have complimentary camping facilities, similar program goals, and diverse donor bases.*

2. What does this mean for local Scouting?

Answer: *It means Scouting will be in the best position to grow and be sustained for years to come! Thank you for volunteering and participating in the BSA! The purpose of this merger is to help Scouting become BetterTogether. At the local unit level your unit should continue to function as normal and there is no current need for any action. All administrative details with the Chartered Organizations will be ironed out during the upcoming Recharter process. District and Council Volunteers can expect a consistent level of continued support from the Council Service Centers. While there may be some changes to processes and procedures, this transition should not include significant changes to current operations, and if anything, we hope to improve services to all our communities.*

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

Answer: *The name of the merged council will be decided by the merger team and subject to final approval by both councils. There are no plans to change the current geographic and administrative "districts" although an important review of their structure and territory will be conducted to determine if a change is needed to best support our Scouting family in the future. The current Westark Area Council will operate as the Westark Field Service Territory, serving Northwest Arkansas, while the current Quapaw Area Council will become the Quapaw Field Service Territory, under the new council.*



4. **What would happen to the Quapaw Area Council Service Center in Little Rock and the Gus Blass Scout Reservation in Damascus?**

Answer: Both facilities will stay open and provide support to an expanded constituency. The current Quapaw Area Council Service Center will continue to operate as the primary headquarters for the new council. There are no anticipated changes to the operation of the Little Rock Scout Shop. The Gus Blass Scout Reservation can expect an increase in attendance, investment, and participation. The property will continue to operate as normal. Attendance at Camp Rockefeller Summer Camp will continue to grow, especially with the addition of 5 new bathhouses and nearly \$1 million dollars committed in new program enhancements.

5. **What would happen to the properties owned and operated by Westark Area Council? (camps and service centers)**

Answer: All facilities will presently stay open and continue to operate as normal and/or to an expanded constituency. There are no plans to consolidate any properties owned by the Westark Area Council. Any changes to existing capital or infrastructure may be decided by the merger team (outlined in the Plan of Merger), the interim Scout Executive, or by the Council Executive Board after the new council is formed and an adequate strategic analysis has been carried out.

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

Answer: The name of the new lodge would be determined by the youth leadership of the Lodge, during the merger planning and transition process. Since the BSA regulations only allow for one Order of the Arrow lodge, per council, merging Quapaw and Wachtschu Mawachpo Lodge's will help align resources, strengthen the bonds of our Brotherhood, as well as respect and value the history, traditions, and heritages of both legacy lodges.

7. **What is the financial condition of each council?**

Answer: The financial condition of both Councils is manageable, together. The Quapaw Area Council consistently operates cash flow positive, with a low level of liabilities, and a strong endowment. Westark Area Council has a current cash-flow dilemma but is fundamentally a strong council with little long-term debt.

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 families at all levels. New professional staff members will be hired and welcomed into our scouting community, administrative functions will be streamlined, and programming expanded and will include direct access to more facilities. This merger will allow us to shape the legacy of Scouting in Arkansas for the next century.



9. What changes will there be to Scouting Programs offered?

Answer: The current range of Scouting experiences for boys and girls from ages 5 to 20 will remain unchanged. There may be expansion of current opportunities as the new Council optimizes the best features of both Gus Blass Scout Reservation, Camp Orr High Adventure Base, Rogers Scout Reservation, and Camp Spencer to complement each other and better meet Scouting needs. Both Gus Blass Scout Reservation and Camp Orr High Adventure Base will operate and serve as our premier camping destinations to appropriately complement our scouts' adventures!

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

Answer: The goal is to complete the merger swiftly, hopefully by the end of the year. Shanna Richardson has been named the Interim Scout Executive/CEO. She will manage both Councils during the merger process. The final merger plan must be approved by both Councils before it can take effect.

11. What happens if the Council Executive Boards decline to merge?

Answer: If either Board declines to merge, both councils would continue normal business operations and addressing their own needs. It is important to remember that the merger is still in the planning phase. Both Councils will need to vote on the final plan of merger, which is anticipated in December 2023.

12. 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 QAC	Tim Cullen	tim@cullenandcompany.com
Merger Questions for WAC	Jack Butt	jbutt@dbtcfirm.com
Order of the Arrow	Mike McLoughlin	Mike.McLoughlin@scouting.org
Scout Executive/CEO	Shanna Richardson	Shanna.Richardson@scouting.org
BSA Territory 8	Carol Whitebook	Carol.Whitebook@scouting.org