

CAMP CACHALOT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

FUTURE DIRECTIONS SURVEY RESULTS

2022-02-27



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SURVEY CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 8.

WHY A SURVEY?

With the planned sale of Camp Cachalot by the Narragansett Council, we find ourselves with a new challenge: how do we best continue to support the Camp Cachalot family if we no longer have Cachalot, the place?

Since our founding in 2004, we have grown our endowment through memberships, donations, and merchandise sales to a valuation of approximately \$150,000 as of the end of 2021. The annual yield of that endowment is approximately 4% of the principal. At the current valuation of the endowment, that means that **even if we never have another member join, never receive another donation, and never sell another piece of merchandise, we'd expect nearly \$6,000 annually.** As of today, the annual costs of operating the Alumni Association are roughly \$2,000, most of which goes to mailings like *The Cachalotter*, sending member renewals and membership cards, and Wall of Fame ballots, with the remainder going to pay for our web site and to help keep our events free to attend. The remainder we have always spent on Cachalot and its family: helping with programs at Cachalot and on projects at camp. Money not spent within a calendar year typically is rolled into our Project Fund to be spent on projects at Cachalot. This project fund is currently valued at \$16,900.

So, we need to begin the discussion about how best to leverage the project fund and the proceeds from the endowment, and we wanted input and ideas from the Cachalot family to start that discussion.

This survey, conducted in February of 2021 in the lead-up to our Winter Gathering, is that start of that discussion.

AN OPINION POLL, NOT AN ELECTION

There is still too much uncertainty to have concrete, complete ideas to put to a vote, but we have some broad ideas about possible future directions. It is important to remember that this was an opinion poll and not an election. We are taking the feedback very seriously, of course, but we're not committing to do anything specific based on the results here.

We do intend to be transparent with you, and to continue this discussion, as we do make more concrete plans. We will share those with you, and seek more input from you, as this conversation continues.

WHAT WON'T CHANGE

Our commitment is, as it has been, to serve the Cachalot family. We fully intend to continue on as an Association. In truth, we **must** continue to exist as an operation to continue to have control of our endowment and project funds. If we fail to continue, those funds would go to "Cachalot's successor", without our having any ability to control what that means.

We will continue to do all of the things we do today, in some form:

- The *Cachaletter* will still be published
- Member mailings will still happen as needed
- Our web site and social media activities will continue
- We will still elect worthy honorees to our Wall of Fame
- We will continue to have a Gathering in Winter and something like Homecoming in summer, and we would like for those events to continue to be free to attend as they are today

Continuing our Family Camping weekends is an open question. This event today costs the Association nothing, except for a bit of time checking people in and cleaning up after ourselves. If Cachalot is lost to us, even if we have access through the new owners, it is likely to no longer be free to us to run those events

YOUR PRIVACY

Those of you who responded to the survey, and your responses, will be kept anonymous. We did request email addresses for the survey; those were used solely to identify whether the respondent was a current member, lapsed member, or non-member, and to act as a safety valve in case some other group attempted to swamp the survey with bad intent (this did not happen, but it is sadly a risk of public online surveys.) Only our Chairman and our Communications Chairman had visibility to those email addresses. They will not be shared or used for other purposes.

We have and will share quotes from the survey responses in this report, and in other places as we report out here. Those quotes will only be presented anonymously, again for the privacy of those who responded. A full report, with the complete responses (but with email addresses removed) was made available to our Executive Committee. The conclusions presented here are the same as those presented in the complete report. Should a member want to see the complete report anyway, please contact us at info@cachalotalumni.org.

WHO WAS OUR AUDIENCE?

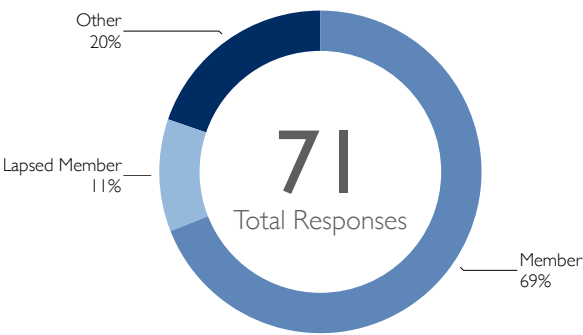
The survey was sent out to our mailing list (265 recipients), and was posted both to our Facebook page (309 follower) and our Facebook group (843 members and 21 recent non-member guests). There is significant overlap between those groups.

Facebook's feed algorithm and the mail tracking features our mailing list platform provides unfortunately don't give a good picture of how many of those different groups actually saw the posts (or the reminders that went out a few times during the survey period), but we can get some rough information about the minimum number of people who would have seen it. An estimate of at least 300-400 people for the low end would not be unreasonable.

WHO RESPONDED?

We received a total of 71 responses to the survey. This is better response than we have seen with past surveys, and exceeds the typical number of responses we receive for activities like Wall of Fame voting.

Class	#
Member	49
Lapsed Member	8
Never a Member	14
Total	71



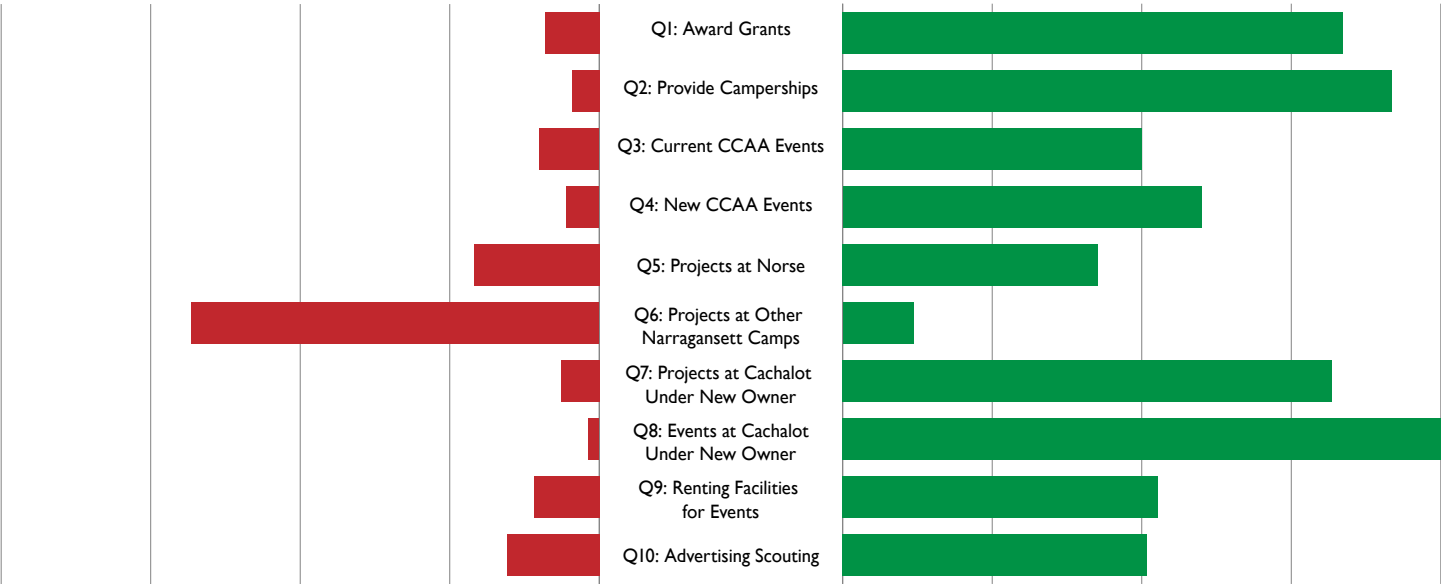
Most of our respondents were members of the Association, including 8 lapsed members. The non-members who responded were not from any consistent outside group: former staff members and Cachalot campers represented most of those respondents.

Why not only current members?

We intentionally did not limit our audience to current members. Not everyone who has contributed money (via donation, merchandise purchase, or other means) to the Association over time is a current member, and people who are not current members but who are motivated enough to respond to a survey like this one represent the group of people most likely to become members in the future. As such, it seemed worthwhile to seek input from that group as well.

IDEA SENTIMENT

This is a **sentiment chart** of the 10 ideas we presented in the survey. Responses of **Neutral** do not affect a sentiment chart. A response of **Strongly Support** or **Partially Support** adds 2 or 1 point to the green Support bar, respectively. A response of **Strongly Opposed** or **Somewhat Opposed** adds 2 or 1 point to the red Oppose bar, respectively. A green bar significantly larger than the corresponding red bar represents support for the idea, while a red bar significantly larger than the corresponding green bar represents opposition to the idea.



Q1: WRITING GRANTS:

“THE ASSOCIATION WOULD WRITE GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE UNITS (TROOPS, PACKS, CREWS, ETC.) WITH A FOCUS ON HELPING THOSE UNITS GET OUTDOORS. THIS WOULD INCLUDE HELPING THEM BUY EQUIPMENT OR HELPING TO COVER TRIP EXPENSES.”

This idea should have been phrased as “awarding grants.”

There was strong support for this, with some concern that this kind of funding is the responsibility of the unit, and a caution to be sure to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of bias in awarding these grants.

Q2: CAMPERSHIPS

“THE ASSOCIATION WOULD PROVIDE CAMPERSHIPS TO YOUTH FROM ELIGIBLE UNITS (TROOPS, PACKS, CREWS, ETC.) TO ATTEND SUMMER CAMP”

There was strong support for this. It is interesting to note that one supporter noted that they would want this for in-council camps only, others that don't want it for in-council camps at all, and others who want to ensure it's available for out-of-council camps.

It is also interesting that both supporters and detractors noted that sufficient campership money has historically been available, making this possibly not the best use of our funds.

Q3: CURRENT ASSOCIATION EVENTS

“INCREASE SPENDING ON ASSOCIATION EVENTS LIKE THE WINTER GATHERING. THIS COULD INCLUDE PAYING TO CATER THESE EVENTS, RENTING OUT LOCATIONS WITH ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN, OR HIRING SPEAKERS OR ENTERTAINMENT FOR THOSE EVENTS.”

There is good support for this, but there was a large group of neutral responses. We expect that the specific details of what we're spending on will matter to the group, and spending more on these kinds of activities than on the other ideas that garnered more support would likely not be well-received.

It is very possible that members don't realize that we do spend some of our operating budget on our events already, to keep them free to attend. We also did not ask about whether we should endeavor to keep all of our events free to attend.

Q4: NEW ASSOCIATION EVENTS

“ADD ADDITIONAL EVENTS TO THE ANNUAL CALENDAR FOR ASSOCIATION MEMBERS.”

Curiously, this had slightly more support than spending more on existing events did, but the same conclusions would apply: the details of anything we'd propose here will matter, and there are other ideas that should come first.

Q5: PROJECTS AT CAMP NORSE

“SUPPORT THE REMAINING NARRAGANSETT COUNCIL CAMP IN MASSACHUSETTS BY HELPING FUND PROJECTS AND IMPROVEMENTS THERE, POSSIBLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE NORSE ALUMNI.”

There was more support for this than we expected, although the response is still widely divided. Those neutral or opposed to the idea mostly noted that Norse has its own alumni group to provide such support, and that they do not want us to merge with that other group. We will not pursue ideas in this area.

Q6: PROJECTS AT OTHER NARRAGANSETT CAMPS

“SUPPORT OTHER NARRAGANSETT COUNCIL CAMPS BY HELPING FUND PROJECTS AND IMPROVEMENTS.”

We were not surprised by the overwhelmingly negative response to this idea (it was placed on the survey to confirm that our members were opposed to this.) We will not pursue ideas in this area.

Q7: PROJECTS AT CACHALOT

“IF CACHALOT IS SOLD TO THE STATE OR ANOTHER ORGANIZATION WHERE WE COULD CONTINUE TO RENT OR OTHERWISE USE CAMP, SUPPORT PROJECTS AND IMPROVEMENTS THERE FOR THE NEW OWNERS.”

This is the second most popular of the ideas proposed by the survey, and one of the two ideas with the least certainty to them given that we have no idea who the new owner will be or what they will be open to. It does tell us that we should engage with the new owner at our first opportunity to see what kind of relationship, if any, they will be open to.

The observation that “landlords pay for improvement” is interesting, in that we've been making the same observation about Cachalot with Narragansett Council as the landlord for our entire existence. While we do not pay to use Cachalot with Narragansett Council as the owner, we do still need to get approval on the projects we do there, and many of the projects that we've funded in the past are maintenance projects that would be paid for by the owner/landlord in typical property rental situation.

Q8: EVENTS AT CACHALOT

“IF CACHALOT IS SOLD TO THE STATE OR ANOTHER ORGANIZATION WHERE WE COULD CONTINUE TO RENT OR OTHERWISE USE CAMP, HELPING TO PAY THE FEES INVOLVED IN RENTING IT FOR ASSOCIATION, DISTRICT, OR COUNCIL EVENTS.”

Easily the most popular idea on the survey, with only a single opposing response. This further reinforces the need to quickly open a dialog with the new owner.

Q9: RENTING OTHER FACILITIES

“HELP PAY TO RENT FACILITIES FOR DISTRICT EVENTS THAT SERVE UNITS IN THE CACHALOT FAMILY.”

There was a decent level of support for this, with the caveats that we should only be serving the “Cachalot area” and that the events would be those that would have taken place at Cachalot. One respondent made the good observation that what “Cachalot districts” means with respect to what towns are assigned to which districts can change over time.

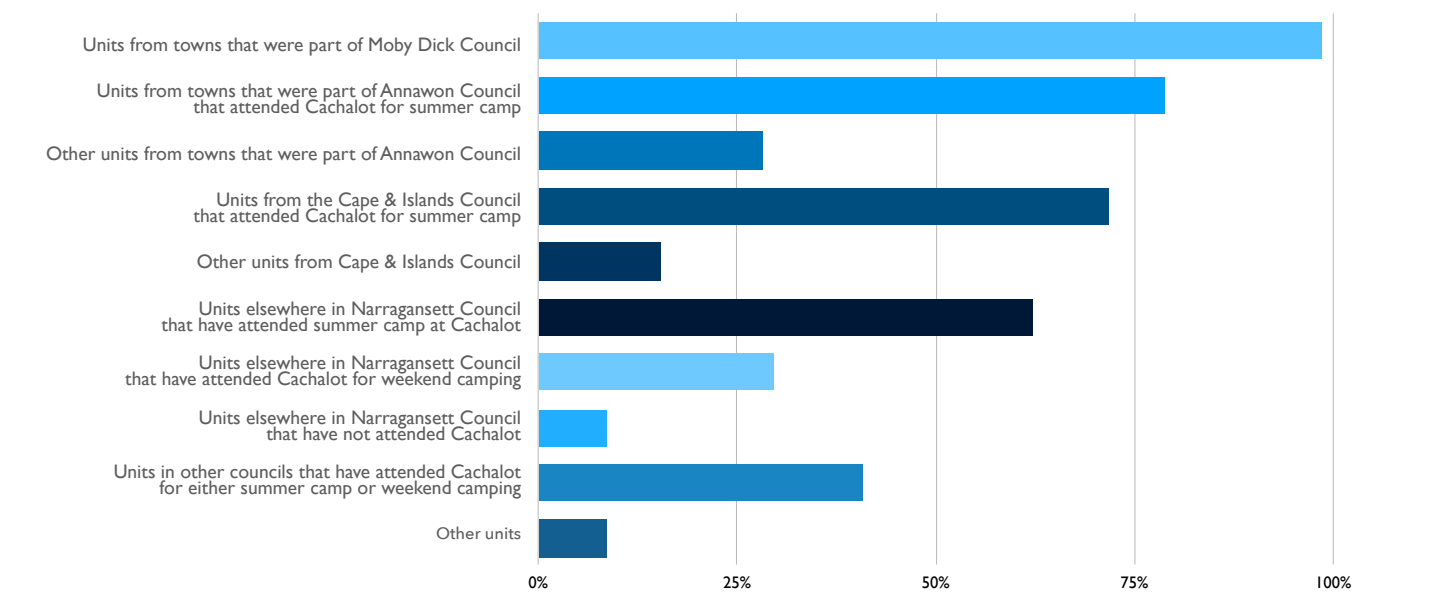
Q10: ADVERTISING SCOUTING

“PROVIDING FUNDS TO ADVERTISE SCOUTING OR RECRUIT NEW SCOUTS IN THE AREA THAT CACHALOT SERVED”

Split response here, although mostly supportive. Another area where the specific details will matter should we pursue ideas here. Many feel this is the Council's responsibility, but we have also heard from multiple active leaders in the past that the Council has been failing in that responsibility in southeastern Massachusetts for some time.

ELIGIBLE UNITS RESULTS

The third section of the survey asked some questions in an attempt to define what “eligible units” or “Cachalot units” are for things like the grants and campership ideas. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents that agree that the named group should be considered “eligible.”



The results are quite clear that respondents want to support in-council or Cape & Islands Council units that took advantage of Cachalot, with near-universal support for former Moby Dick Council communities and majority support for units from just about anywhere in-council or from Cape & Islands that attended summer camp.

That said, in retrospect we could have asked this question better.

Different groups had different possible responses, which makes apples-to-apples comparisons a bit harder. Moby Dick Council units were treated as one group, regardless of whether they used camp for summer camp, weekend camping, or not at all. Annawon and Cape & Islands (SEMCA) units were only divided into summer camp users and “other,” but Narragansett units were divided into summer camp users, weekend camp users, and “other.” A better design would have divide the various by-Council groups into the same 3 buckets.

We are also not sure whether all of our respondents understand that Cachalot was the Boy Scout summer camp for all three councils in the SEMCA (SouthEastern Massachusetts Camping Association) for nearly 25 years, although we did try to explain that in the survey.

How we might deal with new units in any of those areas was also completely unaddressed by the possible answers to this question.

So, although it’s clear that people want to support the units that used Cachalot, especially those that used Cachalot for summer camp, there is more discussion to be had around this question.

RESPONDENT-SUBMITTED IDEAS

The final section of the survey gave respondents the ability to submit their own ideas, along with an option to tell us how serious they were about the idea. These responses mostly fell into a few broad categories:

- A slight rephrasing of one of the ideas from earlier in the survey
- Requests to continue to do things that we already intend to continue doing
- Proposals to build or partner with a museum or historical society to preserve artifacts from Cachalot
- Proposals for events we could run, either for ourselves or for local units
- Proposals for new merchandise we could sell
- Proposals to find a way to preserve one or more buildings from Cachalot either in-place, with cooperation with the new owners, or by moving a building elsewhere
- Proposals to support Cachalot units by helping Scouts from those units get to regional or national events including high adventure bases, National or World Jamborees, NYLT, and MassJam, or to host a Cachalot area of some sort at MassJam.
- Proposals for scholarships for various youth (Cachalot-area Eagle Scouts, children of former staffers, children of alumni members)
- Proposals to help resolve some of the issues of chartering organizations that no longer wish to hold charters as a result of issues stemming from the BSA's bankruptcy proceedings, such as forming a nonprofit to hold those charters or setting up an equipment bank and borrowing service for Cachalot area units.

There are a lot of good ideas worth considering in your submissions, and we will be considering many of them as we make our future plans. You can continue to submit your ideas to info@cachalotalumni.org.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Partnering with Cachalot's future owner in a way that allows the Cachalot family, including Cachalot units, to continue using the property has the highest degree of support.

The second-highest priority of those who responded was to provide financial assistance to Cachalot area units and Scouts via grants and camperships.

Expanding our current events or adding new Association events has decent support, but the details will matter, and our priorities should be on the more-supported ideas

Helping keep events that took place at Cachalot in the "Cachalot area" also has some support.

General promotion of Scouting and/or recruiting has some support, with detractors making the point that money isn't always useful here and that this is the Council's job.

Respondents unsurprisingly do not support or outright oppose us spending at Narragansett camps or Narragansett events outside the "Cachalot area."

Respondents want our efforts to support "units that used Cachalot" and "the Cachalot area", but defining what that means may need more discussion as the survey design didn't capture all of the potential issues adequately.

WHAT'S NEXT?

For now, we wait. We will continue to use Cachalot for as long as Cachalot is available to us. We think it is highly likely that our planned Memorial Day Family Camping weekend will be able to take place as planned, but we are actively looking at a Plan B for Homecoming later in the year.

The highest-priority ideas are also the ones with the most uncertainty around them, as we do not yet know who the eventual new owner of Cachalot will be. Once we know who the new owner will be, we will reach out to see what kind of relationship may be possible with them.

We will use the guidance you've given us via this survey to frame our discussions around what our future will be, and we will consult you again if we have more questions.

Finally, we will do all of this “in the open” and keep you informed of our progress.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to submit responses, and a huge thank you to all of our members and donors over the last 18 years who have put us in the financial position to be able to continue to help support the Cachalot family and Scouting in the Cachalot area into the future.

#WeAreCachalot