

Dear Panther Pond Neighbors-

As many of you may know, many people at the north end of Panther Pond, along Plains Road and the Tenney River, were aware of increased firearms noise from the Boy Scout camp, Camp Hinds, especially in the fall of 2015.

Over the past six weeks, a number of property owners located in the north part of the lake have been working with Camp Hinds to:

- Air our concerns about increased firearms noise;
- Meet with representatives of Camp Hinds to find a mutually agreeable path forward;
- Frame a mutually agreeable document that would summarize our discussions and understanding.

We are happy to report we have now completed this process. The fruits of our collective labor are attached and we believe establish a path forward that will be agreeable to all concerned and allow us to continue to coexist in a neighborly way.

It is our intent to observe this understanding we have developed over the next year and assess its success at the end of that time. We will ask everyone for any input they may have, either positive or negative, late in 2016, so please make note of anything you may want to provide as input.

During the discussion with Camp Hinds representatives, John Facella also expressed a wish that all firearms used on the shooting ranges at Camp Hinds be equipped with noise suppressors. See the following document, the meeting summary, for more detail about suppressors.

The following document also provides names and contacts for more information and/or to sign up for a proactive push email of Boy Scout provided dates with possible louder firearm noise. We will also post dates provided by the Boy Scouts on this PPA website.

Brian, John, Neil and Peggy, representing property owners in the soundscape of Camp Hinds

(Camp Hinds Update Document below)

Camp Hinds Update

On Friday, February 12, 2016 Panther Pond residents Neil and Peggy Jensen, John Facella, and Brian Walker met with senior representatives of the BSA Pine Tree Council's Camp Hinds Boy Scout camp to discuss the perceived increase in firearms noise emanating from Camp Hinds. Representing the Pine Tree Council were Horace W. Horton, Scott Martin, and Eric Tarbox.

Among the issues included were increased amount and loudness of gunfire, especially noted in the fall, concerns that gunfire was occurring at times outside the parameters previously outlined by Camp Hinds, and that the emphasis on use of the property was shifting from youth camp activities to use of the firing ranges. Contributors to the summary were all property owners in the vicinity of Camp Hinds.

Note: for the purpose of this document, "large caliber firearms" includes:

- a) Firearms with a bore size larger than a standard .22 caliber bullet, including shotguns and muzzle loaders; and
- b) Any firearm of approximately .22 caliber which uses a powder charge significantly more powerful than a common .22 Long Rifle cartridge.

The Boy Scout representatives responded with steps they have taken to address the concerns raised:

1. There will be no future use of the firing range by law enforcement members in the line of duty or for training. It appears that this was one of the major contributors to noise this fall due to the individual weapons fired.
2. No use of the firing range by commercial entities is authorized.
3. For 2016 fall, movement of the "Maine Shooting Sports Experience" ("MSSE") Boy Scout fundraiser to after Labor Day and on a Friday. In addition, the event will end by 4:00 PM to eliminate any conflict with Kingsley Pines ("KP") events that begin on Friday evening. The exact scheduling of MSSE will be determined annually based upon local events, and be limited to once a year. (Note: This year, the Maine Shooting Sports Experience will be held on September 9, 2016, from 9:00 AM-4:00 PM.) Since the initiation of the MSSE, the Pine Tree Council has been in communication with KP in order to decrease the impact on KP's weekend activities (such as weddings.) PTC has advised KP of the MSSE update in advance, scheduled the event after Labor Day, and shortened the hours of the event.
4. Anticipated utilization/installation of noise suppression on large caliber firearms that are owned by Camp Hinds. (Please note: Noise suppression devices are highly regulated and Camp Hinds is working diligently to get the required federal ATF approvals for the 2016 season, but this is anticipated and cannot, at this time, be guaranteed.)

The Boy Scouts also clarified a number of areas:

1. The Boy Scouts do not allow their firing ranges to be used after dark. The use of their firearms is very controlled; when not in use, the firearms are stored in a locked and secure space. Any gun fire heard after dark is from sources other than the Boy Scouts. Residents can contact law enforcement agencies to ask for investigation into shots heard after dark. The Boy Scouts keep a written log of all shooting activities which occur at Camp Hinds.
2. While Camp Hinds is working to add noise suppressors to all of their large caliber firearms, some Explorer Post-sponsored events include groups who bring their own firearms and will not have noise suppressors. Explorer Post groups are invited to use Camp Hinds facilities once a month. Twice a year, in the spring and in the fall, there are competitions for Explorer groups and collegiate teams are also invited to participate in the competitions. During Summer Camp, youth will continue, as they have historically, to take Rifle Merit Badge, which includes use of .22 and black powder rifles, and Shotgun Merit Badge, which includes use of shotguns. Also, periodically youth will practice the use of .22 rifles throughout the year. Camp Hinds has some of the best and safest outdoor shooting ranges at any camp in Maine. The ranges have been upgraded in the last two years, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, including the military units as part of the Innovative Readiness Training Program under the Department of Defense.
3. Also, the group agreed to increase communication to apprise local residents of any events where large caliber firearms (these are the ones that cause the loud noises that carry far from the range site) might be fired. This information is already on the Pine Tree Council website, and Panther Pond Association (“PPA”) will also publicize such events on its website and on its Facebook page. PPA is offering to send email messages to members and other interested parties regarding these events that are likely to generate noise that carries. Please send your email address to PPA (ppa@raymondmaine.org) if you would like to be included in these e-mailings.

If residents have any questions on any aspects of the discussions that took place, please feel free to call Brian Walker (207-655-2175). If residents have any specific questions about particular issues with Camp Hinds, they are invited to contact Scott Martin, Camp Hinds Ranger at (207 318-8754).