

ANNUAL RETREAT

Purpose

A dedicated time for Brethren camping leaders of all levels to gather for professional growth, faith formation, and Outdoor Ministry community development

Key Components

- Spiritual Growth – local or denominational leader(s); daily worship including at least one devotion and one worship each day
- Professional Growth - focus on a current issue; keynote presenter
- Workshops - leadership and/or roundtable discussions for various areas of operation
- Recreation – local opportunities on-site and off-site; field trip
- Annual OMA membership meeting
- Camp Sharing
- Family Friendly - events/activities for family members who attend; space and supervision for children as needed
- Schedule – mid-November; three or four days in length (evening first day to noon on last day)

Location/Date

The retreat is held at a Church of the Brethren camp on a rotational basis. Every six years, the retreat is held at a camp on the West coast. The retreat is held the Sunday – Thursday, one week prior to Thanksgiving.

Planning Committee

There will be a planning committee made up of four members:

1. Representative of the host camp (“host”)
2. Representative of the previous host camp (“sofa”)
3. Representative of the upcoming host camp (“chair”)
4. One representative selected by the OMA membership meeting (3-year term)

Responsibilities

- Chairperson
 1. Organize planning committee and oversee the planning process
 2. Provide OMA Steering Committee (OMASC) with initial event information (dates, theme, keynote speaker, and major components) by the March meeting
 3. Provide event evaluations to the next planning committee and to the OMASC by the March meeting
- Host Camp
 1. Mail out publicity materials to OMA camps, steering committee members, and denominational liaisons
 2. Receive and process registrations
 3. Confirm registrations with participants
 4. Receive registration and/or lodging fees
 5. Distribute stipends and reimbursements to leaders and others, as necessary
 6. Assign housing and provide linens, as necessary
 7. Assist with transportation needs, as necessary
 8. Provide space for all aspects of the event
 9. Provide food service

- Planning Committee
 1. Arrange for keynote speaker, spiritual leader, workshop presenters, and roundtable facilitators
 2. Plan recreational opportunities and field trip
 3. Establish event schedule
 4. Set registration fee and/or lodging fee to cover all housing, food service, leadership, activity, and publicity costs
 5. Prepare marketing/publicity materials
 6. Arrange for childcare, as needed
 7. Gather supplies
 8. Create retreat program with schedule, camp map, leadership information, etc.
 9. Provide leadership during the event including coordinating camp sharing, welcoming and introducing keynote, spiritual, and workshop leaders, coordinating recreation opportunities, etc.
 10. Arrange for and distribute thank you gifts for leaders
 11. Create evaluation form and allow time for completion
 12. Distribute contact lists for attendees to all participants

- Publicity
 1. April 1st - Initial event announcement with dates, theme, keynote speaker, and major components sent via mail and e-mail
 2. July 1st – Full event brochure, including schedule and educational offerings, and registration form available at Annual Conference
 3. July 15th – Full event brochure, including schedule and educational offerings, and registration form sent via mail and e-mail (encourage camps to invite key summer staff and volunteers while they are still actively serving at camp!)
 4. Make phone calls to all member camps by September 15th
 5. Utilize OMA and denominational webpages, as well as social networking sites, to advertise the event

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

For many years a National Conference was sponsored and organized every three years by the National Conference Planning Team. This team was composed of a camp employee from the facility where the conference will be held and three other OMA members. The members of the team and the location of the National Conference were chosen at the Membership Meeting held during the Annual Retreat (then Director/Manager Retreat). The members held their position on the team until the conclusion of the National Outdoor Ministry Conference.

The event was typically held during the second or third weekend of November, often in conjunction or close proximity to the Annual Retreat (then Director/Manager Retreat). Activities were concentrated around a guest speaker(s) and a central topic of universal interest to professionals, staff, board members, volunteers, and others in the wider church and outdoor ministries community. Topic concentrations focused on stimulating music in our camps, recruitment and usage of volunteers, facilitating youth in their exploration of ministry, and hearing from outdoor ministry professionals from the ecumenical community. During the conference an auction is held to raise funds for either the Four Horseman Endowment Fund or some other designated OMA Steering Committee approved project.

Unlike the annual OMA Director/Manager Retreat the OMA National Conference was open to anyone who has an interest in Outdoor Ministries or the particular topic for that conference.

In 2010, the former Director/Manager Retreat was renamed the Annual Retreat and expanded to include a wider range of persons involved and interested in outdoor ministries. This change prompted the termination of the cycle of National Conferences until a need for this event resurfaces.