

## Scout Leaders Hit Camp Site Review

The chance that a summer outdoor camp for Boy Scouts might be moved from upstate to Suffolk County has left some Nassau Scout leaders who use the upstate camp feeling left out in the cold.

"There's no way that camp will match what we have upstate," said Andrew Johns, leader of Troop No. 97 in Manhasset. "In terms of high adventure and true outdoor activity, the difference is like night and day."

A six-member task force of Scout leaders from Nassau was created this spring to determine whether activities at the six-week summer program at Oteora Scout Reservation in Livingston Manor should be shifted to Camp Wauwepex in Wading River to save money and help recruit staff.

Under the proposal, the 800 Scouts from Nassau who now use the upstate campsite would instead use Wading River, which already is a Scout camp run by the Nassau Council. The Livingston Manor camp, also owned by the Nassau Council, would still be available for outdoor camping, but would not be staffed with Scout employees supervising the merit badge program and other activities.

But Johns said the Wading River site doesn't match the facilities upstate. He and other supporters say Wading River is close to roadways and development, and does not offer a "a true outdoor experience."

And, he said, the task force does not include leaders of any troops that use the upstate facility regularly.

Nassau County Council Scout Executive Steven Humphrey said the task force would base its recommendation primarily on which camp would be more cost efficient. Also, it will consider whether the Scouts would have an easier time recruiting employees for the six-week summer program, he said.

Youngsters pay \$140 per week to attend the camp, but officials declined to discuss operating costs.

"We were expending significant resources in time, money and people to run the camp for only six weeks," Humphrey said Tuesday. "We want to make much better use of our resources."

He expects a recommendation from the task force within the next month.

Johns, in a Sept. 12 letter to volunteer Nassau County Council President Thomas Lovely, criticized the organization for not soliciting alternatives and suggestions from troop leaders. The letter was signed by 25 other volunteer leaders. Johns said troop leaders were willing to work with the council to revise the camp's programs.

Lovely, who had not received the letter yesterday, said no decision would be made until "all the appropriate information is in."

Of the 165 troops in Nassau, about 50 troops, or about 800 Scouts, use the upstate campsite yearly, Humphrey said.