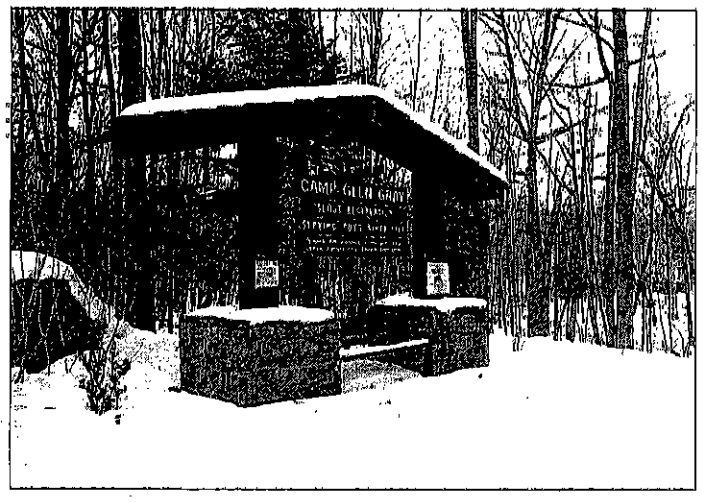


NOAH ADDIS/THE STAR-LEDGER

Some parents, council members, Scoutmasters and benefactors of the Boy Scouts' Northern New Jersey Council oppose the sale of Camp Glen Gray in Bergen County, fearing they would deal away their sovereignty and make Scouts depend on leasing land.

A house divided: Boy Scouts' plan to sell camp draws fire

Site would be turned over to Bergen County for preservation

BY BRIAN T. MURRAY
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Camp Glen Gray, the oldest operating Boy Scout camp in the nation, was a sleepy, forested valley in the Ramapo Mountains when it was dedicated more than 80 years ago as "a little bit of Scout's paradise as nature made it."

Now, a plan to sell the 800-acre lake-front property in Oakland for $4 million is dividing the Boy Scouts' newly formed Northern New Jersey Council, which incorporated in 1999 when old Scouting councils from Essex, Bergen, Hudson and Passaic counties merged.

"Camp Glen Gray not only has historical significance, but program value," said Joseph Fucito, an Eagle Scout and council member who is leading the opposition to the sale. "I understand the reason for selling land at times, but at what point do they stop selling property, and are we one day going to find ourselves relying on others for land and unable to determine what we do on that land?"

The battle of Camp Glen Gray is not a case of developers waiting to bulldoze yet another pristine corner of New Jersey. The potential buyers are the

[See **SCOUTS,** Page 40]

Any New Year's resolutions?

"I don't really have one," Llanos said, a gray knit cap covering his

tragedy was probably the best way to begin what is certain to be a dif-

Whitman's State of the State address in Trenton.

Varo Llanos scarfed nachos and pepperoni with them, and for them.

SCOUTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

Plan to sell camp divides council

nonprofit Trust for Public Land, which plans to turn it over to Bergen County for preservation.

"Glen Gray is part of an area that has been slated for preservation for 10 years. Negotiations are ongoing, but there's nothing formal yet," said Adam Struble, a spokesman for Bergen County Executive Pat Schuber.

But many parents, council members, scoutmasters and benefactors of the Northern New Jersey Council oppose an outright sale, fearing they are dealing away their sovereignty and leaving the scouts to depend on leasing land they do not control.

More than 30 of them signed a letter last week urging council leaders to keep the camp that was established in 1917 by a founding father of American scouting, "Uncle" Frank Fellows Gray.

The Northern Council's executive committee, comprising more than 140 people, will meet next week to decide on the sale. Yesterday, some council members said they were hoping to introduce a compromise — a plan by which the core area of Camp Glen Gray, about 100 acres around Vreeland Lake, would remain in the scouts' hands, while the rest of the property and all development rights would be sold.

Once a jewel of the old Essex Council of the Boy Scouts, Camp Glen Gray has been a summer campground for generations of Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. A good portion of the Northern Council's 40,000 scouts use the camp every year.

Under the merger of the former councils two years ago, the camp became an asset of the Northern Council. Mergers among Boy Scout councils have become increasingly common as scouting organizations struggle for financial stability, said Greg Shields, a spokesman for Boy Scouts of America. Today, there are seven scouting councils in New Jersey; only 30 years ago, there were dozens.

"When this council consolidated in 1999, the different councils from Essex, Bergen, Hudson and Passaic each brought in properties or lease agreements," said John Malone, executive for the Northern Council and secretary of the corporation. "We ended up with nine camps, and the bottom line is the council doesn't need nine camps."

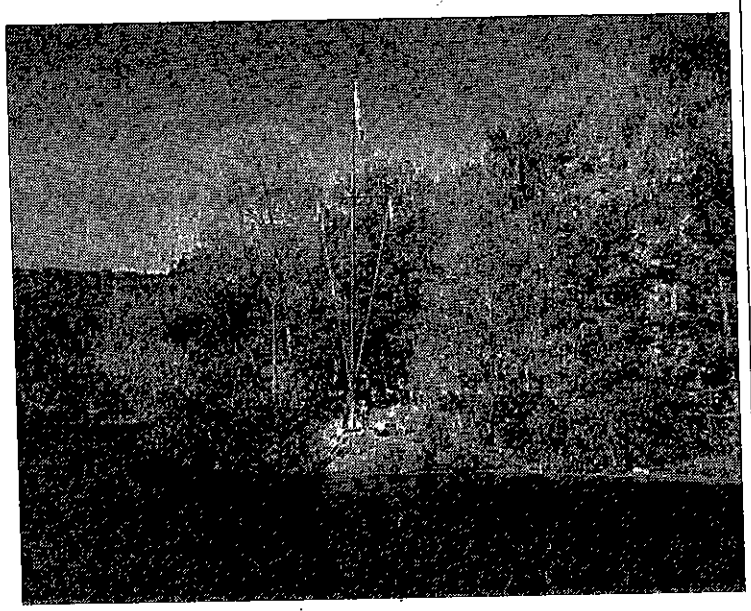
He dismissed what he called rumors that the sale is fueled by a desire to pay off internal debts incurred by construction of a new headquarters in Oakland. He also compared the situation to a marriage or inheritance in which a family ends up with several homes.

"The question becomes, do you keep them all or do you better try to utilize your assets?" Malone said.

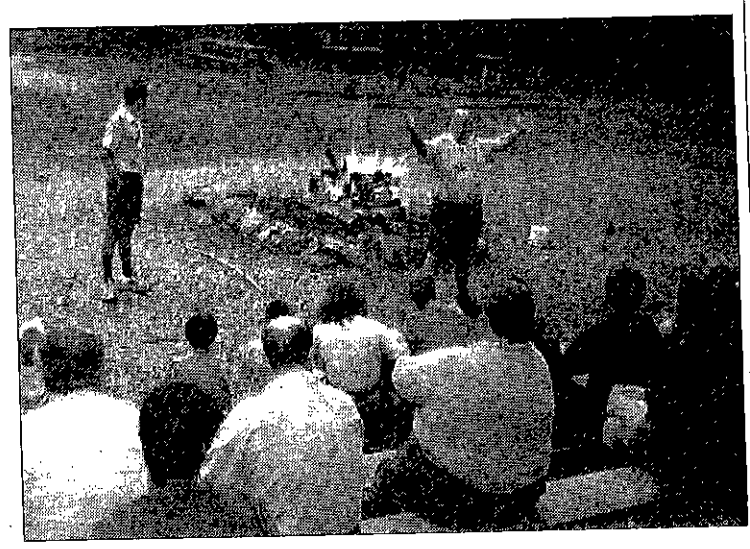
But opponents of the sale note that the council does not own all nine camps, and that Glen Gray is key because it is close to urban scouts in Paterson and Newark — target groups of the organization.

The Northern Council also owns a Pennsylvania camp and two tracts of land in New York, but leases two other New Jersey sites from the state. One other New Jersey site, Camp Yawpaw in Mahwah, is leased through a foundation with close ties to the Boy Scouts, but it, too, is targeted for purchase by Bergen County.

"The state is letting us use land now for our programs, but who's to say that the state will not change its mind or some other organization won't challenge some of the exclusive agreements the Boy Scouts have to use some state-owned sites," said Fucito, who has been leading the opposition.



Camp Glen Gray, an 800-acre lake-front property in Oakland, was dedicated more than 80 years ago as "a little bit of Scout's paradise as nature made it."



Campfire circles like this one last summer may become a thing of the past if plans to sell Camp Glen Gray are completed. The nonprofit Trust for Public Land hopes to turn it over to Bergen County for preservation.

He noted that the Boy Scouts have come under heavy fire because of the organization's successful Supreme Court battle to exclude gays, and he fears the scouts are asking for trouble by relying on leased land. Having property the Scouts own gives the council some ability to improve cabin and camping facilities at their discretion.

lature.

Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein (D-Middlesex), the bill's sponsor, said New Jersey residents get more than their share of calls. "Because New Jersey is a wealthy state and has an abundance of consumers and many senior citizens, it has been targeted by the telemarketing industry as a profitable place to do business," she said.

The lists have proved very popular, she said. In Connecticut, where a similar law took effect Jan. 1, 220,000 households signed up. More than 400,000 people have signed up throughout New York state.

"If a family wants to eat dinner in peace without receiving a disturbing phone call from a telemarketer, then the state should protect that privacy," said Greenstein.

A decade-old federal law requires telemarketers to keep their own no-call list of those annoyed consumers who request not to be bothered. The law also allows people to sue telemarketers if they keep calling after being asked not to. But Greenstein, an attorney and former deputy attorney general, said the federal law "has not been enforced and is largely ineffective."

Jerry Flanaga
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Bullets end long friend

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two men who had been friends for more than 30 years got into an argument and one fatally shot the other, authorities said yesterday.

George T. Martin Jr., 54, of Weymouth is charged with murder in the death of George Harrington, 55, of Philadelphia.

The two had spent Wednesday together at Martin's house when they got into an argument after dinner, according to Atlantic County Prosecutor Jeffrey Blitz.

Martin ordered Harrington to leave but he wouldn't, and the two began fighting. Then Martin pulled out a .38 caliber pistol and shot

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