## Report from the Camp Governance Study Committee

**Why Change Is Needed**

Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Camps have grown dramatically in scale and scope since they were first structured as a “program” of the Yearly Meeting in the 1960s. Today, our camps serve twice as many people as the Yearly Meeting itself and face a vastly different legal, operational, and societal landscape than they did sixty years ago.

This growth and change have exposed significant structural challenges. The current governance system—which spreads oversight and decision-making across five separate committees (CPC, CPMC, Stewardship & Finance, Trustees, and Supervisory)—has resulted in communication breakdowns, confusion for families and volunteers, and barriers to effective leadership and administration. For the 600 families that entrust their children to our care each summer, this fragmented structure can be disorienting and frustrating.

In 2023, the Yearly Meeting approved the Camp Strategic Plan, which named clarifying and simplifying camp governance as a core priority. Soon after, changes in the insurance landscape forced BYM to split our camp and church liability coverage into two separate policies, as no single insurer would cover both. This shift—advised by our insurance agent and legal counsel—highlighted the urgent need to establish a legal distinction between the Yearly Meeting as a religious organization and the camps as a complex operational entity.

As our General Secretary has observed, “Our structure no longer serves any of us.” This moment presents not a rupture, but a chance to faithfully evolve—preserving the deep spiritual and communal connection between camps and the Yearly Meeting while ensuring long-term sustainability, clarity, and legal protection.

**What We Are Proposing**

We are proposing to establish Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camps, LLC—a single-member, not-for-profit Limited Liability Company wholly owned by Baltimore Yearly Meeting. This governance model is designed to preserve unity while providing the legal clarity, administrative structure, and risk management appropriate for a large and complex camp operation. It reflects similar arrangements already in place in the wider Quaker world (e.g., Friends Camp under NEYM, Friends Place on Capitol Hill under FCNL, and Ramallah Friends School under FUM).

This is not a separation or a step toward our camps becoming their own independent nonprofit. Rather, it is a faithful structural evolution—one that ensures the camps remain spiritually and organizationally under the care of BYM, while clarifying roles and responsibilities, safeguarding assets, and improving function.

Key features of the proposed structure include:

* A Board of Directors appointed primarily by BYM through its Nominating Committee, with opportunities for the Board itself to recommend a small number of members. The Board would guide the strategic and operational oversight of the camps.
* The Board would hire and supervise an Executive Secretary, who would oversee all camp operations, including hiring Camp Directors and staff. The Board may also form committees.
* The Board would operate in the manner of Friends, conducting meetings in the Spirit and seeking the sense of the meeting rather than voting.
* Financial accountability and transparency would be maintained through annual reporting to BYM’s Annual and Interim Meetings, as well as shared fiscal oversight and planning with BYM’s Treasurer.
* While BYM Camps, LLC would handle most camp-related administration and staffing, BYM Trustees would retain sole authority over major decisions involving the ownership or collateralization of real property.
* The LLC would remain subordinate to BYM in both legal and spiritual terms, ensuring continued integration in values, mission, and witness.

This approach honors the legacy and spirit of BYM Camps while preparing us to survive and thrive into the future with clarity, resilience, and faithfulness.

**What We Hope to Achieve**

This governance change is grounded in faith, practicality, and love for our community. By moving toward a single-member LLC model, we aim to:

* Improve communication, alignment, and decision-making
* Strengthen our capacity for growth and long-term sustainability
* Provide legal clarity and liability protection for both BYM and the camps
* Preserve and deepen our spiritual connection between camp and the wider Yearly Meeting
* Create a structure that supports volunteers, staff, and families with greater transparency and trust

We recognize that this change may raise questions and strong feelings. But we are called to meet this moment with courage, clarity, and care—for the good of our camps, our children, and our collective future. As Friends, we trust that through discernment and spirit-led process, way will open.