



October 30, 2017

We, the members of The Montana Northern Wyoming Conference are starting an exciting and critically needed project to renew and revitalize Mimanagish. This marks a significant step in a Conference-wide challenge to prepare Mimanagish to serve our churches now and for coming generations.

Mimanagish is a sacred wilderness sanctuary where we engage with Spirit, community, and creation. Outdoor ministries at Mimanagish have, for generations, transformed the Christian experience of everyone who has crossed its threshold. It is our turn to continue this vital mission.

This is not an ordinary plea for money. We seek a sustained, multi-pronged effort to strengthen Mimanagish as a primary mission. Know, also, that our financial request is only one part of a thoroughgoing plan to improve Mimanagish as a useful and accessible resource.

As you undertake annual budgeting, we ask that you consider increasing your financial commitment to the MNWC. Whether you undertake this support as a matter of budget or of special initiative, we urge you to participate in these four ways:

- ✦ **Our Church's Wider Mission.** This general fund is the core revenue source for all Conference activities, helping member churches and providing Conference-level pastoral and administrative support. For the last eight years, this fund, along with Conference annual dues, have not covered the full cost of Conference activities. The Conference has become very lean and has relied on withdrawals from endowments and one-time gifts to make ends meet. Please increase your OCWM budget.
- ✦ **MNWC annual dues.** These per capita dues, along with OCWM, are intended to support all activities of the Conference.
- ✦ **Mimanagish general support.** Many churches include a budget line specifically to support activities of Mimanagish. In launching this critical revitalization effort, we have added and restructured camps to increase camper participation in outdoor ministries. More camper-day revenue will only cover the basic costs of camp operations. Completing deferred maintenance needs and making improvements will require significant funds. We ask you to support this, either with a budgeted increase or special fund drive. Some of our best-established churches aim to increase this budget line by \$5000. We offer that challenge to you.





- ✦ **Mimanagish camperships.** With hard work by member churches and Conference staff, we have added and reformatted many camps to meet new and changing needs; to revitalize our youth and family camp programs; and to increase rental income. We aim to increase camp utilization many-fold, and your support through tuition assistance is a key tool for doing that. We hope you agree Mimanagish is a significant way to reach and serve youth and adult participation in Christian life. Our Columbus church has been very creative in developing a youth program and providing nearly 100 percent tuition support for 10 kids to camp. That is a model and challenge to us all.

This missive focuses mainly on the financial part of the initiative, but again, please know that we are similarly energized in areas of camp programming, recruitment, transportation, and promotion. You will be learning about these aspects soon. Monthly bulletin inserts and newsletter inserts will be sent to each church beginning in November. Mimanagish's 20-year plan will be in draft this February and we will seek your church's input around that time.

We know very well that budgets are tight and that these requests are challenging, but the time has come to undertake this renewal. We are brimming with excitement and plan to grow this energy in all our churches and individual members.

To support this effort, we earnestly request that each church designate up to three liaison members to serve as "firestarters" who will help coordinate communications and efforts we have planned.

Leaders from churches around the MNWC have worked hard to develop this initiative, and we assure you the enthusiasm is contagious. We are on fire with the prospect that Mimanagish and MNWC will change lives as a place and a people of spiritual growth for generations to come. Join us.

Yours in the Spirit,

Marc Stewart, Conference Minister
Josie Caton, Mimanagish Director
Gus Byrom, Conference Moderator
Maurie Petterson, Columbus – Stewardship Committee
Hal Fossum, Helena – Outdoor Ministries Committee

