

Camp Future Project – A Retrospective

December 2011



I. INTRODUCTION

The Camp Future Project of the BC Conference of The United Church of Canada is unprecedented. From the outset, the goal of this multi-year, multi-million dollar redesign and redevelopment initiative was to enable the United Church in BC to create *a sustainable and high quality camping ministry* that would meet the needs of campers for generations to come. It meant fewer camps, but with improved facilities and renewed programming that will serve more campers in new ways.

The Camp Future Project, which oversaw the divestiture of two United Church camp properties and the redevelopment of two United Church camps, will officially conclude as 2011 ends. BC Conference is already shifting its energy and attention to operating the new Conference Camping Ministry at Camp Fircom and Camp Pringle. With a “big picture perspective” in mind, both Fircom and Pringle have begun positioning themselves to serve a larger, broader constituency through innovative, diverse and relevant programming and services. The decision-making process and the lines-of-accountability between the two Camp Societies and BC Conference continue to take shape.

“Camp Future” imagined new possibilities for United Church camping in BC, and – most significantly – it provided the resources to make it happen. We will continue working to ensure that Pringle and Fircom live into the hope of the *Future* and that resources are available to help new camping programs throughout the province.

II. SUMMARY

It was late in 2003 when the Conference Outdoor Ministry Committee met to discuss the very serious challenges facing United Church camps in BC. Over the course of the next several years, consultations took place, research was done, reports were written, the project was debated and approval was finally granted to proceed with the Camp Future Project (CFP). From the beginning, it was clear that some very significant changes needed to be made to how camping was being done in order to renew the camping ministry. The scope of the Project was immense.

When the implementation of the CFP began in late 2006, the aim was to *sell four camps and rebuild three*. In the end, we *sold two and rebuilt two*. We sold **Camp Kwomais** for \$20 million to the City of Surrey and **Camp Moorecroft** for \$4.8 million to the Regional District of Nanaimo. Both are now public parks, accessible and environmentally protected. On the development side of the Project, we invested almost \$11 million into the site and facilities at **Camp Fircom** (on Gambier Island in Howe Sound) and **Camp Pringle** (Shawnigan Lake on Vancouver Island).

The two camps earmarked for divestiture that were not sold were **Camp Koolaree** and **Rock Lake Camp**, which are both located within the Kootenay Presbytery. Although significant process was made and several proposals pursued, agreement was not reached between the Conference and the Presbytery on sales and the future of camping within that Presbytery.

It was also the Project's goal to invest in **Camp Grafton** as a third regional camp. We were also unable to achieve this objective. Despite the efforts of people working on behalf of BC Conference, Kamloops United Church and Grafton Camp Society we were never able to arrive at a clear, mutually agreeable plan for the development of that camp. However, we are pleased that it saw some tangible benefits from the Camp Future Project, and that we were able to provide \$27,000 for the construction of a perimeter fence (Spring 2009) and contribute \$25,000 towards operational funding for Grafton's 2010 camping season.

While we did not accomplish everything we had hoped for, we did achieve some significant outcomes. Rebuilding Camp Pringle and Camp Fircom is a considerable achievement. We have designed a new organizational model and governance structure for the redeveloped camps, and have established a secure Camp Future Endowment Fund of approximately \$10 million for the new Conference Camping Ministry. It is now possible to develop new and innovative ways to share the benefits of camping throughout the Conference.

The Camp Future Reports also envisioned that once the new camping ministry was established, funds would be available to support other ministry initiatives throughout the Conference. We anticipate the new year will see significant progress in this area.

The decision to sell camps was not taken lightly but it was critical to the success of the project. The church often dreams big but rarely does it also do the hard things that allow those dreams to become reality. Proceeds from the sales of Moorecroft and Kwomais have provided the resources needed to re-imagine and rebuild "a high quality, sustainable camping ministry." This is an amazing legacy for both Moorecroft and Kwomais.

From beginning to end, the Camp Future Project has been both visionary and well-grounded, future-oriented and responsive to the ever-changing needs and hopes of a multi-year project.

We have confidence that with renewed camp facilities, a major endowment, and accountable, inspired leadership, the Conference Camping Ministry will be able to do exactly what it was designed to do: provide long-term, sustainable, and high quality camping ministry for decades to come... and it will do so while still leaving the next generation of church leaders major resources at their disposal for the next new thing God calls the church to do.

For more information, contact Terry Harrison at:
250.385.3064
terry2@shaw.ca

CAMP FUTURE PROJECT MILESTONES

FALL 2003	Conference's Outdoor Ministry Committee asks BC Conference to investigate new ways to finance and govern the 10 United Church Camps in BC
MARCH 2004	Derek Evans is contracted to review the United Church Camps in BC
DEC 2004	Derek Evans submits " <i>A Future for Camping Ministry: Assessing and Improving Camping Ministries in BC Conference</i> "
SPRING 2005	General Meeting of BC Conference vigorously discusses the "Camp Future Report", affirms key elements, but defers final decisions; Evans spends the year gathering additional feedback from the key stakeholders.
JAN 2006	Based on the follow-up feedback and response process, Evans makes several amendments to the Report. The Report confirms the following recommendations: that four Conference-owned Camp properties – Koolaree, Kwomais, Moorecroft, and Rock Lake – be sold; and Camps Fircom, Grafton, and Pringle be redeveloped and re-organized as a regional camping ministry. A progress report was submitted to BC Conference Executive in March 2006, who accepted the direction being followed by the report.
MAY 2006	General Meeting of the BC Conference again debated and discussed the Report and recommendations. Following the General Meeting, real estate market research was undertaken and negotiations with specific Presbyteries and Congregations continued until October 2006.
NOVEMBER 2006	The final Camp Future Report was accepted by BC Conference Executive, and approval was granted to proceed with the Camp Future Project.
JANUARY 2007	Terry Harrison was hired to manage the implementation of the Project.
SEPTEMBER 2007	Camp Kwomais is sold for \$20 million to the City of Surrey as a public park.
SPRING 2008	Capital Development Renewal Plans for Camp Pringle and Camp Fircom are approved for a combined budget of \$10.5 Million. Construction begins at both camps in fall 2008, continues throughout 2009 and concludes in 2010.
WINTER 2009	The Camp Future Endowment Fund is established to provide an ongoing source of funds for the new camping ministry. Income from the Fund is also made available to support ministry priorities other than camping.
OCTOBER 2010	Camp Pringle celebrates the opening of their redeveloped facilities.
MARCH 2011	Camp Moorecroft is sold for \$4.8 Million to the Regional District of Nanaimo as a public park, with a Conservation Covenant registered on title.
SPRING/SUMMER 2011	Camp Fircom re-opens, offering several new programming options as well as a summer camp program for the first time in 5 years.
FALL 2011	The new Conference Camping Ministry governance model is designed, to be implemented early in 2012.
YEAR END 2011	The Camp Future Project concludes, as the Conference Camping Ministry moves into the operational phase.

Camp Future Project Capital & Infrastructure Upgrades:

Camp Fircom (Hard Costs = \$6,475,000)

- **New Dining hall** – 5,000 sq. ft. interior hall (200 max capacity) with commercial kitchen and out tripping facilities with over 1,000 of patio/deck space and 2,500 square foot covered outdoor space replacing the “picnic shelter”
- **New South Camp Big House** – 2,500 sq. ft. 6 bdr house with large kitchen for private rental and staff accommodation
- **New South Camp Manager’s House** – 960 sq. ft. 2 bdr house for staff and management accommodation year round
- **New Camper Cabin** – new duplex unit built in the fashion of duplex cabins currently on site, which sleeps 24 campers (plus 2 counselors)
- **Rebuilt Jubilee Hall** – from the “studs up” restoration and adaptive reuse of 5,500 sq. ft. facility into wash house, nurse/ first aid station and indoor multi-use space including crafts & arts room
- **Rebuilt Craiggroft** – restoration of 2,000 sq. ft. dormitory building into a fresh and new living space
- **New Generator Shed** – 200 sq. ft. building accommodating two generators and electrical switching equipment; 15,000 litre diesel storage tank; water treatment system providing UV, filter and chlorine treatment
- **Completely Overhauled Water Distribution & Treatment System:**
 - Potable water capacity increased to approximately 8,000 gallons with double treatment capacity incorporating Chlorine and UV treatment
 - Automatic cistern refill capacity and treatment
- **Completely Overhauled Sanitary Treatment System And Outfall Extension** – provision of high quality treatment facility providing 10/10 standards of treatment of effluent with deep discharge in Howe Sound
- **Brand New Electrical Generation And Power Distribution System:**
 - Dual generators for improved efficiencies (40Kw & 180Kw) housed in an isolated generator shed away from main camp minimizing noise and exhaust
 - 18KwH inverter and battery system with an intelligent switching gear that automatic signals between the inverter and generators, minimizing generator usage; and providing capacity for storing energy from a full range of alternative energy capture systems as they become available
 - Smart design and appliances: the buildings were designed from the ground up to be energy efficient as possible, from the light bulbs to windows, appliances to the insulation

Camp Future Project Capital & Infrastructure Upgrades:

Camp Pringle (Hard Costs = \$2,847,000)

- **New Dining Hall & Commercial Kitchen** – (14,000 sq. ft., 220 max occupancy)
 - **Residential Wing** – Director’s Residence (2 bdrm) and Cook’s Residence (bachelor suite)
 - **Multi-Purpose space** – in door and out (covered exterior space)
 - **Offices**
 - **Infirmary**
- **New Branter building** ~4,000 sq. ft. providing additional sleeping capacity, improved functionality, and significant indoor storage
- **Two new Camper Cabins** ~ 14 person capacity each
- **Infrastructure Upgrades – septic and water systems**
 - Expansion of septic field to accommodate increased site capacity
 - Expansion and improvement of water system capacity and treatment exceeding current Provincial standards
- **Landscaping**
- **New multi-sport court where the old dining hall was located**
- **New roof on Laura Butler building**