

# **A Future for Camping Ministry:**

Assessing and Improving Camping Ministries in BC  
Conference

## **Report & Recommendations**

**To: Doug Goodwin, Executive Secretary, BC Conference**

**From: Derek Evans, Contractor**

**Date: 31 December 2004**

**Summary: This document presents the final Report on the study of the ten United Church Camps in BC, together with Recommendations to guide the future development of a Camping Ministry in the Conference.**

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# A Future for Camping Ministry

## Report & Recommendations

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Remit & Mandate

This is the latest in a series of studies outdoor ministries that have been carried out in BC Conference during the past several decades. At the beginning of this work, the author of one of those previous studies – from the 1980s – expressed his best wishes and hopes that this time the outcome would be met with the political will and spiritual vision called for by the current situation. “After all,” he said, “this needs to be the last of these studies. We cannot afford the luxury of not taking tough decisions any longer.”

This study has been carried out in a context in which the raw issue of basic survival is directly confronting all but probably one or two of the ten United Church Camps in BC Conference. All but two, or perhaps three, of the United Church Camps in BC are in, or appear to be approaching, a crisis condition.

The crisis is characterized by various combinations of several key factors, notably: a lack of human and financial resources; the burden of achieving and maintaining rising public standards of accreditation and accountability; declining markets or ability to compete; unclear mission or unfocused activities; and inadequate support or uncertain commitment on the part of their primary constituencies.

These conditions constitute a situation of high risk in terms of liability, financial integrity, and reputation for both the individual Camps and the Conference as a whole. At this point, change is not optional; maintenance of the status quo will lead to an unstructured loss of assets through attrition. At issue is the nature and extent of the change those involved in and responsible for the United Church Camps in BC choose to engage.

Survival is an interesting, ambiguous place. On the one hand, it can inspire the best in us as individuals and communities – creativity, commitment, even heroic action. On the other hand, it can sometimes provoke us to compulsively apply these virtues out of blind devotion, determinedly grasping onto that which we really ought to let go. It can lead us into compromised involvements with things we might normally oppose, or to become preoccupied with huge sideline entanglements in an effort to preserve the thing we cherish. It can drive us into competitive isolation in a struggle to emerge as one of the fittest, or it can call us into new relationships of compassion and collaboration.

The purpose of this study, *A Future for Camping Ministry: Assessing and Improving Camping Ministries in BC Conference*, has been to step back from the immediacy of the crisis of survival as it presents itself in relation to any of the individual Camps, to examine the health and condition of the camping enterprise as a whole, and to discern a framework for a viable, effective and sustainable outdoor ministry program that reflects the needs and values of the United Church in BC. Specifically, the study has sought to achieve the following Goals:

1. to be clear about the shared mission of camping ministry within BC Conference;
2. to be clear about the role each camp will play in the provision of camping ministry;
3. to take the best advantage of valuable property in order to provide financial security, quality capital infrastructure, and on-going staff support for a camping ministry.

The study has been specifically instructed not to investigate or assess the content of the programs or present ministries of the Camps.

The scope of the study was defined as including the ten Camps operating within BC Conference that are subject to United Church accreditation processes. Each of these Camps has a unique history and a distinctive character, including different terms of ownership and relationship to the Conference. The study proceeded on the basis of a recognition that the individual Camps operate under distinct conditions, but approached the task of developing a proposed framework for the future of outdoor ministry on the assumption that it should encompass all ten Camps. The Terms of Reference for the study are provided in Attachment 5.1.

## 1.2 Implementation of Study

This study was contracted to be undertaken between March and December 2004. Site visits – accompanied by Board and Staff members – were carried out at nine of the ten Camps (the visit of Rock Lake Camp had to be postponed). The purpose of the site visits was, in general terms, to enable the researcher to have an immediate and concrete appreciation of each Camp and, more specifically, to ensure that the assessment was grounded in an effort to see each Camp through eyes of the people who love and care for it.

Two extensive surveys were carried out.

- In July 2004 a survey instrument was addressed to all members of the BC Conference Executive, all Officers of the Presbyteries, and Conference Ministers. This survey sought to gather the views of persons responsible for exercising organizational leadership in BC Conference, the group representing the “ownership” of the Camps. The survey focused on the direction, role and priority camping as an area of ministry for the United Church in BC. The results of this survey were reported in a document submitted to the Conference Executive, *Conference Leadership Survey: Compilation of Responses*. A number of policy options were drawn from this material, and were tested with the BC Conference Executive at their regular meeting in November 2004.
- In August 2004 a survey instrument was addressed to all Boards of Directors and Executive Staff of the ten Camps. This survey was designed to obtain detailed information about the governance and operation of the Camps, and to invite the Board leadership to share their perspectives on and sense of vision for the mission of their own Camp and of outdoor ministry in BC more generally. The results of this survey and the documentation provided by the Camp Boards are substantially reflected in the information and analysis provided in Section 3 of this report.

In addition, as per the direction set out in the Terms of Reference, this study has consulted widely with a range of stakeholders and interested parties. These have included Camp users, rental groups, community organizations, civic authorities and development professionals, church leaders, and concerned individuals. Many of these persons, especially in the latter categories, sought an opportunity to express their views on their own initiative, reflecting the full depth and wide range of concern held by many in the constituency about the United Church Camps.

Proposing change in relation to the United Church Camps is a sensitive matter. The Camps bear the cherished memories of many individuals; they also represent the hopes and dreams – and considerable effort and investment on all levels – of many people. Although views and positions

may vary considerably on almost every particular issue facing the individual camps and outdoor ministry, there are two conclusions on which almost everyone is agreed. They are captured in comments made by the Board Chairs of two of the Camps:

- *“Our communities have fewer opportunities to explore God’s creation and community living. Young people especially need a healthy alternative to their daily social and societal struggles.”*
- *“I love church camping; it has been part of my life as a child, as a parent, and now as a grandparent. I care deeply about it. Let’s be frank, we’re all anxious about this study. All of us know that major changes are needed if camping is to survive, and all of us hope our own camp won’t be affected. I guess that’s only natural, and I’d like to think that if ours needs to go for the good of the whole that we’ll find a way to get behind that too.”*

### 1.3 Operative Assumptions

A number of basic assumptions or guiding principles have informed the basic perspective of this study, and have shaped our approach in proposing a framework for the future of outdoor ministry.

#### 1.3.1 A Shared Societal Trend

In facing the need to address serious challenges in relation to camps and camping programs, the United Church is “not alone”. All organizations that traditionally have been involved in this field find themselves somewhere in the process of re-considering the fundamental issues of the role, purpose, priority and operation of camping within the broader context of their work.

Some are dealing with these issues because they are no longer willing or able to fulfill increasingly demanding and explicit public standards and expectations of professionalism; others are being forced to deal with these issues because they have failed to adequately recognize the responsibilities or to effectively manage the risk involved in this work.

Like it or not, “good enough” is no longer sufficient, especially when offering and providing services to children and youth. “Excellent” is the new good enough, and is understood to apply to administration and management, programs and program leadership, facilities and equipment, organizational purpose and strategy and, in the case of church institutions, an articulate expression of identity based on Christian values, theology, worship, and experience

Scouts Canada, an organization whose “core business” is youth camping, made national news this year when it announced plans to sell twenty of its camps in Ontario. *“Jennifer Austin, director of communications for Scouts Canada, [cites] increasing liability, insurance, and maintenance costs – couples with a declining membership and volunteer base. ‘Kids have a lot more options than back in the 60s and 70s.’ While Ms. Austin acknowledges that the decisions have been difficult, she said the ‘business case for keeping these camps is simply not there.’”*

(The Globe & Mail, 11 August 2004)

It is important to recognize that the need to address change is not only related to camps – it should not be seen simply as a judgment on the performance of camps per se. Rather, it arises from a complex set of wider changes taking place both in the church and the society at large.

### 1.3.2 A Crisis of Human Resource Capacity

There is a tendency to see the difficulties facing the United Church Camps in BC as primarily defined by a lack of adequate financial resources. The financial challenges are indeed huge and real: many Camps are realizing serious annual operating deficits and most have no means to deal with the significant capital investments that are absolute necessities in the short to medium term.

However, at least as significant is the lack of human resources with which most Camps are struggling: the inability to attract and retain sufficient, stable and qualified staff; the consequently increasing burden of direct management and operational tasks being shouldered by Boards; and it is becoming increasingly difficult for Camps to find appropriate persons to serve in their governance. When asked in the survey what they would do with an unexpected bequest of \$1 million, one Board Chair pointedly responded: *“I’d just like four more Board members”*.

Another dimension of the crisis of human resource capacity is related to the systemic challenges being experienced by the whole church. Demographic changes mean that there are not only fewer children from congregations to be potentially involved in camping, but also that it is increasingly difficult for the constituency – the United Church congregations and presbyteries – to provide the support and supervision required and requested by the Camps. There are aspects of these issues that are particular or particularly acute for the church but, again, they reflect broader realities in our society.

Volunteerism, as a key example, has been undergoing a fundamental adjustment in Canada during the past decade. Time has replaced money as the scarcest “commodity” in the lives of North Americans. This is because we really are working harder: the average Canadian household must now dedicate 20 hours more per week to paid employment than was necessary ten years ago. As a result, one million fewer Canadians are involved in volunteer work than five years ago, and the total number of hours dedicated to volunteerism has declined by some 9%. Volunteer commitment is increasingly less likely to be motivated by a sense of duty to maintaining organizational structures and systems.

### 1.3.3 An Approach to Mission & Ministry

This study assumes that that the United Church in BC is seeking to act with real intention in fulfilling its Mission. This intentionality includes a commitment to stewardship, certainly, but we understand that it also extends to the approach to Ministry as well. Intentionality is characterized by being disciplined, practiced, and accountable.

We understand that this perspective should be at the heart of our approach to outdoor ministry. There will, of course, be many pastoral, educational and diaconal outcomes that are not designed or planned; such is the nature and gift of grace. At the same time, our perspective is that operating good quality summer camp programs or providing respectful social services, in and of themselves, do not necessarily constitute a Ministry. “Outreach”, “evangelism” or other forms of ministry activity are not accomplished or to be claimed simply by virtue of “having” or “being” something, but rather by what we actually “do” with declared intention and purpose.

Our perspective is that the public assumes this level of intentionality by established institutions, and that therefore much is at stake in terms of mission and reputation when activities are carried out or facilities owned and maintained in the name of the United Church. One litmus test must be whether we can feel publicly proud of the program and facilities offered in our name. In this

regard, the embarrassing physical condition of the facilities at a number of the Camps, and the apparent willingness of the owners to squander valuable assets, represents a real liability to the public image of the United Church, and this must have a potential impact on its mission.

### **1.3.4 A Conference-wide Framework**

The operative assumption of this study, as stated in the Terms of Reference, is that the United Church in BC has an on-going commitment to outdoor ministry. In addition, this study has been undertaken with a recognition that authority and direction for fields of ministry in the United Church is diffuse and shared.

Camps, and to some extent outdoor ministry more generally, have tended to be developed and guided in British Columbia with a view to serving relatively local needs on the basis of relatively local human and financial resources. The contemporary experience of other denominations and organizations in the successful operation of camping ministries is consistent in respect to a number of elements:

- they draw from larger, regionally-defined markets;
- they operate unapologetically on a professional, business basis in relation to staffing, governance and fee structure;
- they attract support and participation on the basis of excellence of their program and facilities, and clarity of their mission and management, rather than on the basis of localized allegiances.

The Terms of Reference for this study call for the development of a model for outdoor ministry that is not only sustainable in terms of resources, but that is also integrated (coherent with and contributing to the mission of the wider church) and accessible (for people throughout the Conference, and inclusive of financial and special needs). Given the challenges being faced by most of the United Church Camps in BC with respect to resources, the increased emphasis being placed on common and more stringent accreditation standards by the United Church nationally, and the objectives set out in the Terms of Reference for this study, it would appear that a viable model will require the development of a somewhat innovative approach to governance and management. It will also require a more precise definition of the mission of the Camps, and of the optimal provision (capacity) of camping opportunities to be offered by the United Church in BC in an appropriate and responsible manner.

## 2. Assessment & Analysis

### 2.1 General Situation

#### 2.1.1 Property

Each of the ten United Church Camps in BC is unique in its history, organizational culture, and the nature and role of its Mission. The ownership of the properties is also diverse:

- five Camps are owned by BC Conference (Fircom, Koolaree, Kwomais, Moorecroft, Rock Lake);
- two are owned by a congregation (Grafton – Kamloops United Church, Hurlburt – Trinity United Church, Vernon);
- one is owned by a Presbytery (Pringle – Victoria);
- one is owned by the General Council of the United Church of Canada (Mackenzie);
- one is owned by, and leased from, the Province of British Columbia (Cultus Lake).

In spite of their distinctiveness, the Camps share a number of common characteristics. Most of the Camps were founded during the early part of the past century (1910 – 1935), and the development of permanent facilities and formal governance structures mostly took place around the mid-century (1930 – 1960). With the possible exception of two cabins (one at Mackenzie and one at Kwomais) none of the Camping accommodations have been built later than 1975. Accommodation units built during the past three decades, such as those at Pringle or Mackenzie, have been built to serve other purposes – staffing, adult retreats, etc.

Capital investment since 1975 has primarily been focused on dealing with emergent liabilities or renovation of kitchen and dining facilities in order to comply with public building and health codes. Three of the Camps (Fircom, Koolaree, Mackenzie) have significant challenges in terms of accessibility in terms of either location or terrain.

#### 2.1.2 Governance

Except for Hurlburt and Cultus Lake, and Kwomais at the moment (trustee committees of Trinity United and Fraser Presbytery, respectively), each of the Camps is operated by a registered Society. Each of the Camps has some form of relationship and recognition with the Presbytery within whose bounds they operate, but the way this is exercised and experienced varies widely. At one end of the spectrum, Pringle is fully recognized as a Presbytery ministry, seeks to play an integral role in the educational and programmatic life of the Presbytery, and receives active scrutiny, care and support from the Presbytery. In most other cases, the relationship is more associative. Most Camps have benefit of a designated and diligent Presbytery liaison person and most receive some financial support from the Presbytery. Most, but not all, have been subject to at least one Presbytery Visitation during the past five years.

For the most part the Camp Boards do a remarkable job, especially in light of the resources available to them. However, each of the Camps, except for Pringle, has experienced serious instability and dysfunction in its governance during the past decade. Indeed, there is general

pattern in the governance experience of the Camps that appears to be endemic in the system, and that may be described as a “Leadership Crisis Cycle”. Typically, this cycle repeats the following pattern:

- Boom: a new Board is constituted, largely drawn from a single congregation or community. The Board has cohesion, and a sense of excitement, vision and mandate;
- Burn: the Board experiences increasing difficulties in managing its work load, feels unable to escape the financial pressures of urgent capital needs and operating budgets without sufficient margin, and becomes increasingly isolated and frustrated by a perceived unwillingness or inability of the wider constituency to provide practical support;
- Bust: a number of members resign or retire, and the Board is unable to attract new members, tasks become increasingly focused on a few determined shoulders until some new external difficulty appears and makes the load untenable and the Board (and often the individuals) collapses;
- Rescue: Presbytery assumes responsibility for the Camp, may suspend operations for year or more, and appeals to the constituency for a new leadership cadre to take over and “save” the Camp, Boom.

The leadership crisis cycle seems to occur on a periodic basis for a number of the Camps. Contributing factors appear to include: insufficient or inadequate staffing leading to untenable task burdens being carried by Board members; lack of necessary appropriate skill-sets among the Board members; a tendency to allow or foster dependencies on the leadership or dedication of a single individual; an unclear or non-existent focus for external supervision and accountability; lack of or uncertain commitment from the constituency.

Almost all the Camps have “working Boards”, directly responsible for implementation of all management, operational, and programmatic tasks. Although most Camps are guided by the United Church curriculum resources available on-line, programming often appears ad hoc in terms of selection, design, orientation and leadership. Very little program evaluation occurs in relation to defined educational goals or standards.

The Boards tend to be weak generally in the areas of supervision, strategic planning and development, evaluation, and promotion. The Camp Boards represent a major human resource investment of almost 150 volunteers per year.

### **2.1.3 Staffing**

The ten United Church Camps employed some 15 staff year-round in 2004, including four on a full-time basis. They also employed approximately 80 staff on a seasonal basis, most of them as camp counselors as a component of the Camp’s youth leadership development work – a sizeable cadre, but an average of only eight per camp.

Two Camps (Fircom and Pringle) have full-time Executive Directors and four others (Hurlburt, Kwomais, Mackenzie, Moorecroft) had part-time Executive Directors for at least a portion of the year. Two Camps (Grafton and Koolaree) have no staff whatsoever, other than limited seasonal employees hired in relation to their summer camp programs. In some cases, the lack of sufficient or appropriate staffing represents a risk to the safety and security of the Camp.

Except for the full-time Executive Directors and one or two others, staff tend to be paid by honorarium or at a wage rate (typically \$10 per hour) and without benefits. In many cases, the work-load assigned is understood by all to far exceed the capacity or ability of the staff member to accomplish it.

### **2.1.4 Financing**

Only Camp Pringle currently has the ability to operate residentially on a year-round basis in terms of access and facilities. Two others, Cultus Lake and Mackenzie, are nearly able to do so in terms of facilities, although the latter is limited due to problems of winter access. Most of the Camps have an operating season of four to six months, extending from May through October, including Camping and rental programs.

Only two Camps, Mackenzie and Pringle, operate with some form of capital depreciation in their management of finances. Less than half the Camps have audited accounts. Except for Cultus Lake, which pays an annual lease fee to the Government, all of the Camps operate with a tacit assumption that the asset or property component of the Camp is “free”.

Participant and rental fees are generally oriented to be as low as possible, on the expressed perception that higher rates would lead to a decline in registrations, despite the recognized fact that the low fees inhibit the Camps’ ability to offer the quality of services and facilities they believe is necessary. Ironically, the Camp with the highest rates also has by far the highest levels of registrations.

Camp fees are typically \$30-50 per day (\$55-\$75 at Pringle) all inclusive for residential camp programs, and \$200-\$300 per day for rental of the entire facility, and have not changed substantially for many years. In addition, all of the Camps offer bursary, sponsorship and discount arrangements. In almost all cases, the fees are below both market rates and the actual cost of operations.

## **2.2 Capacity & Cost**

None of the ten United Church Camps in BC currently operate at capacity with respect to the outdoor ministry programs they offer, and none of them have done so during the past five years. Participation in some Camps has been growing (notably Grafton, Mackenzie and Pringle), but most of the Camps have experienced declining registrations and some have reduced the number of program weeks. Given the capacity of the ten Camps and the actual participation levels it may be concluded that, on a strict numbers basis, about five of the ten Camps are surplus to current capacity within the existing program framework.

In 2004, approximately 2,159 children and youth participated in a week of summer camp programming offered by the ten Camps altogether. On the basis of the whole system, this represents an average of about 216 participants per Camp. However, this figure should be seen as somewhat inflated in that one facility, Camp Pringle, accounted for more than 30% of the total and another, Camp Kwomais, did not operate as a Camp during the past year (in 2003 it served 151 campers). Excluding these two anomalous components, the average number of participants served by the other eight United Church Camps in 2004 was less than 187 per Camp.

It is important not to reduce church camping simply to a matter of numbers, or outdoor ministry simply to an exercise of supply and demand. At the same time, it is also important to have

tangible measures so that we are not tempted to treat this field of ministry simply as a notion or concept that is supported on the basis of sentiment or nostalgia – or worse, for fear of offending vested interests or individual feelings! A mission-focused organization, especially one committed to stewardship values, is one that takes seriously the human and financial resources entrusted to it, and is preoccupied with the hard work of establishing priorities for their effective use.

Costs and benefits are real things when it comes to ministry. Yet, how do we go about determining the value in financial terms of an experience that can have a life-long and life-changing impact on a young person? We probably can't – it is one of those things that go onto the "priceless" list. Perhaps the best we can do is to try to figure out what it actually costs to make that experience available, and then to determine the best way of offering it to as wide a group of people as the we are reasonably and responsibly capable.

Any determination of the actual cost of an institution or service must take into account as many of the financial assets invested in it as possible. Ideally, this should include non-financial resources, such as volunteer time, but in this case that does not seem feasible. Although the value of the land itself may not need to be included in determining operating sustainability, it is essential in assessing the actual cost of a service. After all, the land assets are real, and valuable, and on some level we are choosing to use for this field of ministry and not others.

Of course, land as an asset is not always immediately transferable into cash, and a variety of factors (zoning, covenants, etc) may further limit its value. In relation to outdoor ministry in BC, this study proposes that actual cost be based on the combination of:

- the annual operating budgets of the Camps, and;
- a factor representing a reasonable annual "cost" of the land asset. (In this case, we propose that this be based on the rate of return that BC Conference would expect to realize each year if an amount of money equivalent to a conservative assessment of the estimated value of the ten Camp properties were invested in a regulated foundation or endowment fund.)

The following table presents the approximate operating budgets of each of the ten United Church Camps in BC, together with an estimate of the current market value of the Camp properties and the actual number of outdoor ministry program participants in 2004.

<i>United Church Camp in BC</i>	<i>Camp Program Participants 2004</i>	<i>Annual Operating Budget 2004</i>	<i>Estimated Property Value 2004</i>
<b>Cultus</b>	197	\$ 120,000	-0-
<b>Fircom</b>	293	\$ 300,000	\$ 5,000,000 +
<b>Grafton</b>	126	\$ 25,000	\$ 7,500,000 +
<b>Hurlburt</b>	225 *	\$ 80,000	\$ 3,000,000
<b>Koolaree</b>	119	\$ 45,000	\$ 3,000,000
<b>Kwomais</b>	-0-	\$ 175,000	\$ 20,000,000
<b>Mackenzie</b>	224	\$ 120,000	\$ 1,500,000
<b>Moorecroft</b>	257	\$ 100,000 *	\$ 10,000,000
<b>Pringle</b>	666	\$ 420,000	\$ 10,000,000 +
<b>Rock Lake</b>	52	\$ 40,000	\$ 1,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,159</b>	<b>\$ 1,425,000</b>	<b>\$ 61,500,000 +</b>

\* estimated due to lack of available information

We propose that a “conservative assessment” would be achieved by discounting the estimated land value by one-third (\$ 61.5 million less 33% equals just under \$ 41 million). The long-term benchmark for annual returns from BC Conference endowments, allowing for fees and a proportion of capital reinvestment, is about 5.5% (\$ 41 million @ 5.5% equals just over \$ 2.25 million).

On this basis, the financial cost of operating the outdoor ministries of the United Church in BC in the current framework of ten independent Camps is approximately \$ 3.68 million per year (\$ 1.425 + \$ 2.255). Of course, there are other considerations to take into account but, if providing camping experiences and leadership opportunities for children and youth is the “core business” of the Camps, that represents an institutional investment of more than \$ 1,700 per camper based on actual performance in 2004.

The determination of actual cost does not directly address the question of the priority level of outdoor ministry for allocation of financial resources – *“Is \$3.68 million per year the right amount to invest in church camping programs?”* That is an interesting, but different, discussion. Rather, the question posed by the determination of actual cost addresses the issue of change – *“Does the United Church in BC consider it appropriate to invest \$ 3.68 million per year in order to maintain the outdoor ministry program in its current structure and condition?”*

Given the poor condition and vulnerability of most of the Camp facilities, the marginal state of their finances, the low pay offered to most of their staff, and the general lack of resources available to the Camps, it may seem strange to refer to such an operation as a luxury, or even an extravagance. Yet, that is how it must appear to an outside observer – a member of the public – who does not take it for granted that one’s church should own ten extremely valuable and strategically located properties in order to serve what can only be described, after all, as a very small number of beneficiaries.

This raises the further question of capacity – *“Regardless of what the capacity is currently, what does the United Church in BC believe is an appropriate level of provision for its outdoor ministry programs?”* Contrary to the Mission Statements of some of the Camps, this study proceeds on the basis that the United Church is not committed to providing camping opportunities for “all people” but, as with the other ministries of the Church, that the United Church intends to offer camping opportunities for as many people as we can appropriately and responsibly serve, and to be as socially inclusive as possible in doing so.

Assuming, as set out in the Terms of Reference, an approach which seeks to be accessible to children and youth throughout the Conference, and recognizing that many congregations have no involvement whatsoever in outdoor ministry, and taking into account existing performance as equivalent to approximately ten campers per United Church pastoral charge in BC (208), we propose that it is reasonable to set the optimal capacity at provision for 2,500 places in summer church camp programs.

This is, inevitably, an arbitrary number, but it has the merits of being referenced to the current size of the United Church in BC, and providing scope for a reasonable level of growth (about 20%) in outdoor ministry. It also has the merit of defining a benchmark that can be used for planning, budgeting and evaluation purposes.

## 2.3 Liability & Claims

The ten United Church Camps in BC currently have a contracted accumulated debt of approximately of \$320,000 (Fircom – estimated \$200,000; Kwomais – \$38,000; Mackenzie – estimated \$80,000). Most of this debt is owed to, or is the liability of, BC Conference. In addition, the Camps have a collective capital debt of approximately \$ 1.6 million – representing the cost of capital investments required in the short to medium term to meet accreditation and other standards. The foundation, government, gaming and other grants obtained by Camp Mackenzie may constitute a lien on the property. Further, the lease agreement of Cultus Lake Camp includes an obligation to restore the property to its original condition, which represents a potential liability of perhaps \$150,000.

Much of British Columbia is included within the traditional territories of First Nations. This study has examined the full registry of land claims held by the federal government. We are not aware of any existing files registered with the “Specific Claims” that pertain to any of the ten properties under consideration by this study, nor are any of the properties specifically included under the comprehensive claims process (see Attachment 5.2).

## 2.4 General Observations

The assessment arrived at by this study was repeatedly reflected and readily recognizable in the observations of many of those consulted. There appeared to be a high degree of common mind among respondents to the surveys addressed to Conference and Presbyteries leadership and Camp Boards and Executive Staff – that the status quo is simply not an option.

This perspective was based on a clear recognition of the real challenges of the immediate future. Three comments may be said to capture these concerns:

- *“Worn-out facilities and staff”*
- *“Liability issues, rising costs, fewer resources, continued unfocused programming, very uneven leadership, growing embarrassment over our ‘product’.”*
- *“I fear we may be faced with hard choices we can no longer avoid.”*

Energy and resources are seen to be increasingly focused on basic maintenance and survival. There is concern at the lack of both financial and leadership resources to deal with potential emergent crises, let alone development. The status quo is widely recognized as presenting an untenable track of increasingly rapid decline, deterioration and exposure to serious liability.

In the course of this study, a number of key emergent issues were identified related to the role and mission of church camping that may have a bearing on the future approach to outdoor ministries by the United Church in BC:

- A variety of contributors noted that the camping experience in past generations established a personal link to “church” for people who very often had and sought no other or further connection or involvement. That is described as a benefit by some, but may appear to be a less compelling purpose in terms of the Church’s Mission in the current context;
- Camping in the United Church is seen by many as being burdened by the lack of a coherent strategy for respectful sharing of the Christian faith story, and a lack of clarity or agreement

about the place of apologetics / evangelism / outreach (as distinct from social service) in the basic purpose of the Camps;

- There appears to be a general recognition that changes in demographics (cultural diversity, economic disparity) and societal values, lifestyles, and standards (safety, quality, professionalism), raise serious questions about the viability, purpose, and appropriateness of camping as a United Church ministry.
- These considerations may reduce the significance of the good, but essentially ancillary functions of the Camps (a convenient venue, a means for leadership training, a social service), increase the focus on active programming over the Camp's passive role in faith formation, and tend to emphasize the need for clarity of purpose and integration with the Mission and priorities of the whole Church.

### 3. Camp Findings

#### 3.1 CULTUS LAKE CAMP

##### Description

Cultus Lake Camp (Motto: “*Building dreams and memories, one child at a time*”) is a well established facility near Chilliwack and has operated since the 1930s. The Camp occupies almost 15 acres of wooded land with extensive lakefront on the south side of Cultus Lake. This is a moderately developed recreational area, and the Camp is the first property after a string of provincial campgrounds providing over 300 public campsites and parking for over 700 day-users. The Camp is bordered on the other side by a small community of private houses. These apparently are supportive of the Camp in that it provides them with a buffer in relation to the “unsupervised” public in the parks. Cultus Lake is the only United Church Camp in the eastern Fraser Valley, although there are a number of other church camps in the area, including one (Mennonite) that is almost adjacent (Cultus Lake Camp provides them with some access to their waterfront).

The operating season of Cultus Lake Camp extends from mid-March through mid-November. The Camp comprises almost 20 buildings, some of which are winterized, with a total insured value of approximately \$350,000. The facilities are almost all more than 40 years old, but are well maintained and in relatively good condition. The site is generally level, enclosed, and safe, and the Camp is easily accessible by car and generally manageable for people with disabilities. It has a capacity to accommodate about 150 people.

##### Mission & Usage

The Mission of Cultus Lake Camp is: “*To provide an opportunity for campers to develop physically, emotionally and spiritually in a safe and Christian environment. To enable campers to have fun and adventure in a setting of nature, God’s creation. To further the outdoor ministry of the United Church of Canada.*” The Mission is visible at the Camp itself, and is used in the Camps promotional and public materials. The main purposes are identified as “building leaders, providing spirituality and fun”. Cultus Lake Camp received full accreditation (100% Mandatory Standards, 94% Desired Standards) from the General Council in 2004.

The Camp sustains a healthy schedule of group bookings, some of which are for congregational events as well as a wide range of community groups. These bookings involve some 4,000 – 4,500 users per year, making it among the busiest of the United Church Camps in BC. The direct “Church Camp” program, on the other hand, is one of the most limited, being offered for four weeks during the summer (with a fifth training week). Participation has been increasing during the past several years, but these four weeks continue to operate at less than 75% capacity. Participants: 2002 – 165; 2003 – 182; 2004 – 197.

##### Ownership & Liability

Among the United Church Camps in BC, Cultus Lake Camp is one of the most clearly and publicly identified as a “United Church Camp”. This is somewhat ironic in that it is the only

Camp that is not actually owned by the Church. The clear identification is particularly necessary, however, in order to distinguish the Camp from the many public campgrounds that occupy most of the south side of the lake.

The property is held under a lease arrangement from the Province at a cost of \$400 per year. No physical changes can be made on the site without permission from the Ministry, and there is no security of tenure. The current lease expires in 2014, although it is subject to cancellation with notice at any time. Near the end of their term the NDP government had, in fact, served notice of their intention to terminate the lease within three years, but this action was apparently put into abeyance in the change of government. A condition of the lease is that the site be restored to its original condition, and this should be recognized as a major financial liability (possibly as much as \$ 150,000).

## **Finances & Staffing**

The Operating Budget of Cultus Lake Camp is approximately \$100,000 to \$120,000 per year. During the past few years the Camp has realized an operating deficit ranging from 2% to 13% of expenditures, but the accounts for the current year indicate a likely surplus. There are no major debts; a small unsecured loan (about \$4,000) is due to be paid out in 2005.

There are 13 seasonal (summer) staff and one year-round staff person, Karen Corbett, who serves as manager and caretaker. Karen lives on site, and although she is paid at minimum wage for 25 hours per week, there is a tacit understanding that she and her husband actually each work more than full time (“10-12 hours a day, at least six days a week, because that’s what the place needs if we are to keep on top of it”). Board members also invest significant amounts of volunteer time in maintaining the day-to-day operations of the Camp.

While it is clear that all of these individuals deeply love and care of the Camp, and are extremely dedicated and competent, the situation is one of high risk in terms of operational stability and sustainability. The operation bears high dependencies on particular individuals and their depth of personal commitment. Staffing and human resources are extremely stretched and, given the scale of the facilities and level of usage, there is consequently a high degree of vulnerability to crisis.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

Like many of the United Church Camps in BC, Cultus Lake Camp has experienced the leadership crisis cycle in its recent history. The current Board, though clearly skilled and committed, continues to struggle to find sufficient members to carry out its tasks and responsibilities. When asked what they would do with an unexpected bequest of \$1 million, the Chair responded, “Give it to Conference to hire people to develop camping programs. Actually, I’d just like four more Board members”.

While the Board and Staff have made meaningful efforts to strengthen involvement in the Camp by Fraser Presbytery, there has been limited response. Eight congregations sent representatives to the Fun for All Camp event in August, and only five UC congregations used the Camp for retreats or other events in 2004 (compared to eight non-UC congregations and about 15 school or scout groups). Donation income, which is consistently in the range of \$5,000 - \$7,000 (about 5% of budget), and registrations in the church camp programs, consistently under 200 in total per year, are also important indicators of constituency support and/or capacity, and they must be judged to be modest at best.

## **Vision & Emerging Issues**

Cultus Lake Camp does not have at this time a strategic plan to guide its growth, development or promotion. It sees its primary focus of service as youth and young adults in Fraser Presbytery, but these constitute a relatively small component of its actual constituency. Secondly, it understands its Mission to be in service of “other church denominations, Scouts, Guides and like-minded groups”, and these are more clearly reflected in its active constituency. The Camp is attempting to reach out to the United Church constituency, but it is unclear whether the Presbytery or its congregations regards camping either as a priority ministry or as an appropriate strategic focus for its ministry with youth.

The question of vision is also raised by the issues of staffing and human resources noted above. The rationale provided for the limited resources provided for staffing is the lack of money. At the same time, the fees charged by Cultus Lake Camp – whether for church camp programs or for group rentals – must be regarded as low to the point of absurdity. All inclusive residential summer programs cost less than \$50 per day, before discounts or bursaries. For rental groups, the “basic package” provides the site, accommodation for 80, kitchen and dining halls, program rooms, etc for \$300 per day. The rationale for not raising the fees is the fear that people won’t come anymore – suggesting a perception that the services offered by the Camp either are not valuable or not valued. In any case, it reinforces the preoccupation of the Board with the constant struggle with maintenance and survival.

**CULTUS LAKE CAMP**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>Options</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a beautiful, safe and accessible facility</li> <li>▪ dedicated staff and board members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ no security of tenure</li> <li>▪ require moderate on-going capital investment to maintain safety</li> <li>▪ obligation to restore site to original condition</li> <li>▪ insufficient human and financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ discontinue operation</li> <li>▪ maintain operation on status quo basis</li> <li>▪ transfer operation to independent community-based Society</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ So long as the land is essentially “free”, no major crises arise, and the fee basis is adjusted, the operation of the Camp appears viable. However, it should realistically be assumed that the tenure of this property as a UC Camp is limited to 2014, at the very latest, as there is no justification for the provision of such a real benefit to a particular religious denomination by the state. It would therefore seem imprudent to invest further resources in enhancing the facilities, and to plan for future change.</li> <li>▪ It would seem advisable for Conference to develop a negotiating strategy with the Province concerning the obligation to restore the site to its original condition. For example, all changes made have been done with Provincial approval, and this may afford some flexibility in positions. At the same time, it would seem prudent to recognize this as an actual liability and to establish an environmental restoration trust fund of up to \$150,000 to provide for it if need be.</li> <li>▪ The Camp as a facility is clearly a benefit to the community, if not so much to the church. It may be appropriate to consider establishing a community-based Society to take over the operation of the Camp, and to allow church-based resources in congregations and the presbytery to be focused on specific camp programs.</li> </ul>		

## 3.2 CAMP FIRCOM

### Description

Camp Fircom (Motto: “*Experience the SPIRIT of Fircom ... friendships and unforgettable memories!*”) is located on Gambier Island in Howe Sound. It consists of “65 secluded acres offering sheltered swimming beaches, forested areas and playing fields overlooking the ocean and the mountains of the West Coast”, as simply and accurately described the Camp’s promotional brochure. It is a unique property in that it affords a remote coastal forest experience less than 30 kilometers from downtown Vancouver.

The Camp is bordered by undeveloped forest, and includes its own ocean dock facility. Gambier Island is governed by the terms of a regional Trust that has placed severe limits on future development on the island (eg. so roads linking communities), so the isolated, wilderness character of the site would appear to be protected for the long term. There is one other major camp on Gambier Island – the Anglican Church’s Camp Artaban (Slogan: “Excellence in Christian Camping Since 1923”). The site is generally level and self-contained. Access is a challenge but once there the property is or could be generally manageable for people with disabilities. It has a capacity to accommodate about 120 people.

The Camp’s isolation constitutes its major challenge as well as its prime asset. Access is by boat, usually a water taxi chartered from Horseshoe Bay or downtown Vancouver and, like any other ferry, this can be seen either as part of the adventure or as an obstacle. Fircom owns its own sea worthy water taxi, but generally does not operate it. The Camp includes an historic main building dating from the origins of “Fircom” as an expression of the social ministry of First United (“FIRst Church and COMMunity Services”) in Vancouver in the 1920s, as well as several houses, outbuildings and dorm cabins. The property is insured at replacement value in the amount of almost \$1.2 million, but it is difficult to link this amount with particular equipment or facilities.

The main building, including kitchen, has enjoyed substantial renovation as a result of the capital campaign of the past several years, but there is little indication of investment in other facilities in recent years. Camp Fircom frequently uses the term “rustic” to describe its facilities. The leader of one rental group that had recently held an event at Fircom (a school group from Vancouver) contacted for private comment for this study indicated that her group was surprised by “just how rustic” the conditions were, and that her students interpreted this as “dirty”. She indicated that she found the conditions generally “inappropriate for anyone with special needs” and that her group would not return to Fircom.

### Mission & Usage

The Mission of the Camp is as follows: “*Fircom, a United Church island camp, creates a safe and welcoming environment for all and nurtures personal growth and fun.*” This is reflected in some of the Camp’s public information and promotional materials. The main purposes or goals are identified as: to “promote co-operative living and healthy relationships”, and to “provide opportunities for people of all income levels to experience Camp Fircom”. Camp Fircom understands itself to be serving people of all ages and, although stated differently in their goals, to be primarily directed toward low-income individuals and families. Participants are drawn from throughout the Lower Mainland. Camp Fircom received provisional accreditation (90% Mandatory Standards, 94% Desired Standards) from the General Council in 2004.

Registrations in the Camp Programs offered by Camp Fircom have been significantly under-capacity (currently in the range of 60%) and declining for many years. From about 500 participants in 2000, registrations have declined in association with the erosion of financial support provided by the Ministry of Social Services. The number of summer program weeks has been reduced from nine to six during the past three years. Participants: 2002 – 382; 2003 – 324; 2004 – 293.

These reductions must be seen to have a critical and systemic impact; in addition to the financial losses they represent, these reductions limit the Camp's ability to provide sufficient employment to attract and retain appropriate staff. Camp Fircom has had limited experience or success with developing a program role or rental business during the non-summer seasons, although the need for this has been recognized for some time by the Board (only 5% -7% of income has been derived from this source in recent years).

### **Ownership & Liability**

The Camp Fircom property is owned by the BC Conference. The "Camp Fircom Society of the United Church of Canada" undertakes, as per its Constitution, to operate the Camp "in accord with the policies established by ... and in consultation with" the relevant bodies within the Conference.

Given the unique nature of the property, and the potential constraints on alternative usages by the Island Trust, the financial value of the site is hard to assess. However, waterfront property on Gambier Island currently sells for between \$75,000 and \$100,000 per acre. Although the Fircom site must be regarded as commanding a high premium, a conservative estimate on this basis would be in excess of \$5 million. Camp Fircom also has the benefit of income from endowments with a capital value of about \$200,000 vested in the Vancouver Foundation.

Camp Fircom carries a significant and growing debt burden, a liability that is likely in the region of \$200,000 (unsecured loans from BC Conference - \$50,000, 2004 and First United Church - \$45,000, 2003; a line of credit with the Royal Bank - \$50,000; and outstanding liabilities for taxes, mandatory staff deductions, and unpaid invoices – approximately \$50,000). Most of the facilities, particularly accommodations, are very old stock and require renewal or replacement, especially if the Camp is to seek to engage new constituencies.

### **Finances & Staffing**

Camp Fircom has faced substantial changes to a number of the fundamental assumptions undergirding its financial life during the past five years. Most significant has been the withdrawal of provincial government social service funding, although serious fiscal deficits were being realized prior to these political changes. Nevertheless, the gradual elimination of government subsidies has reduced registrations and challenged the basic orientation of the mission and program of the Camp.

The response of the Society was to seek to increase donation and grant income to replace government funding. This has been somewhat successful, with grant revenue increasing from about 20% of total income in 2001 to about 30% in 2003. However, donation income actually decreased from about 30% to about 15% during the same period. Income from fees for service remained essentially static, about 30% of total income; camper rates were not increased (all inclusive residential summer programs cost about \$45 per day, before discounts or bursaries, and

including transportation), nor was rental business expanded. A Strategic Business Plan was adopted by the Board at end of 2000, but this was very general in nature and tended to focus on guidance for the capital fundraising campaign. There is no indication of implementation of other aspects of the plan.

Camp Fircom has an annual operating budget of about \$300,000. Very significant operating deficits have accumulated during recent years – in the order of \$250,000 or more since 1998. During the past two years deficits have been in the order of 25% of total budget. Approximate figures, as financial reports are not consistent: 1998 - \$35,000; 1999 - \$35,000; 2000 - \$55,000; 2002 - \$20,000; 2003 - \$80,000; 2004 – est. \$75,000. It is perhaps symptomatic, but nevertheless of concern, that the Board optimistically expected the 2003 deficit to be “offset with a profit in 2004” (Treasurer’s Report to 2003 AGM) without undertaking any apparent practical changes to the Camp’s operation or business plan.

Camp Fircom has three year-round staff (Executive Director, Camp Director, and Caretaker) and 16 seasonal (summer) staff. All staff positions have explicit contracts, and are reasonably well-paid and with provision for pension and benefits as appropriate. The Camp maintains a year-round time office in Vancouver. This level of staffing seems excessive in relation to the actual level of program and other direct service activity realized by Camp Fircom in recent years.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

Camp Fircom enjoys strong public recognition and community support, particularly in the non-profit social service sector. This demonstrated in the substantial income generated from grants from the United Way and other agencies, and from donations from individuals.

Support from the United Church constituency is less evident. The orientation toward the social service agencies involves the UCC congregations to a degree, but more indirectly through outreach and sponsorship relations. Only 2% of income is derived from church donations, and few campers are directly involved in congregations. The report of the Presbytery Oversight Visit (March 2004) noted that only two congregations responded to a Fircom initiative to “gather information packages from UC congregations in the Lower Mainland in order to help connect campers with congregations at the conclusion of each camp”. This suggests that there may be some question about the Presbytery’s actual support or capacity to support the life, work and ministry of Camp Fircom.

## **Vision & Emerging Issues**

The Camp Fircom Board has established a “visioning committee”, but the results of their work is not yet known. It is difficult to do visioning work within a crisis, and that appears to be the situation of Camp Fircom at this time. We are concerned that the Board appears to be committed to working within the existing framework of the Camp’s traditional structure and operations. Unfortunately, a strategy focused on increased fundraising (grants, loans, donations) without demonstrable increases in activities, participants or qualitative outcomes is neither realistic nor sustainable.

**CAMP FIRCOM**

Assets	Liabilities	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a unique and valuable property offering wilderness camping opportunities on the boundaries of GVRD</li> <li>▪ an honoured tradition of community service and an extensive network of institutional and individual support</li> <li>▪ an endowment fund of \$200,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ unmanageable debt burden</li> <li>▪ unclear business plan and unviable operational structure</li> <li>▪ unmarketable accommodation facilities</li> <li>▪ lack of visible support from the ownership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ discontinue operations and sell property (within constraints of Island Trust), possibly to another church or camping organization</li> <li>▪ maintain the operation on a status quo basis, seek increased revenue and greater cost control</li> <li>▪ suspend the current operations and re-develop the Camp on all levels (mission, program, governance, facilities)</li> </ul>

**Assessment**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Camp Fircom is a unique and valuable property. Although the location presents challenges in terms of access, its combination of remoteness and proximity to urban BC also offers a range of exciting possibilities. In addition to church camping, there could be opportunities for a range of services such as retreats, environmental education, and partnerships with the school system, disability and respite organizations, and other social service agencies. Any of these options presume the ability to operate on a year-round basis, with an appropriate standard of facilities, and a concrete business plan based on the bulk of revenue being derived from fees for service.</li> <li>▪ If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps, Camp Fircom would appear to be the most appropriate site in the Lower Mainland. However, this would require a fundamental redevelopment of Camp Fircom – including a re-orientation of the Mission, a re-organization of the structure of governance and operations as a non-profit business (rather than as a social service agency), transitional financing for two years (likely in the order of \$250,000), and an investment in appropriate facilities for education and accommodation (likely in the order of \$1.5 million).</li> <li>▪ The Camp Fircom endowments vested in the Vancouver Foundation should become part of a broader endowment fund dedicated to providing bursaries to support children and youth in participating in United Church camping programs in BC.</li> </ul>
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### 3.3 CAMP GRAFTON

#### Description

Camp Grafton is located near Magna Bay on the north shore of Shuswap Lake, a thirty-minute drive from Chase. It is easily accessible by car, with a paved publicly maintained road that crosses the property. It is within a two hour drive from most of the main population centres of the region: Kamloops, Salmon Arm, Vernon and the north Okanagan. There are two other United Church Camps (Hurlburt and Mackenzie) within this region and one other camp (Scouts) in the immediate vicinity.

The Camp consists of a fine property of almost 100 acres of mature woodland. It is bordered by high-end summer houses and backed by small farms and forest. The land slopes down to the lake, sometimes steeply, and a mountain creek cuts through the property. An attractive network of marked trails has been established. Together these allow a sense of spaciousness and a diversity of environments within the property. The Camp includes some 3,000 feet of lake frontage including, unusually, full foreshore rights in what is generally considered to be the best area for swimming on the lake. The secondary highway serving the region runs across the property separating the lakefront from the main part of the Camp, but plans are in place to install a pedestrian underpass in 2005.

The facilities are very simple, but solid and improving. The buildings (a main assembly hall with modern kitchen, and half a dozen dorm cabins) are concentrated within a small area of the property. The Camp can accommodate about 50 people. There are no year-round accommodations, but there would seem to be much potential for development. The Facilities Committee is obviously active, and there is a new water system and new roofing on several of the buildings.

#### Mission & Usage

The Mission is stated as follows: *“The Camp Grafton Society is dedicated to fulfilling God’s will through the preservation, care and growth of Camp Grafton. The camp is an inclusive place where all God’s children can: Strengthen their relationship with God; Be stewards of and deepen their connection to God’s creation; Have fun and make friends in a rustic community.”* Among the United Church Camps in BC, Camp Grafton operates with one of the clearest understandings of and dedication to its purpose. Of particular note is the Board’s expressed sense of their role as stewards of the property and the link between this role and their program and community activities. *“We have an increasing awareness of how rare and precious a resource we have in the camp, and see this reflected in the growing school program and community use. The increased environmental degradation and over-development in the Camp’s region serves to highlight to surrounding communities what a ‘jewel’ it is.”* Camp Grafton received full accreditation (100% Mandatory Standards, 93% Desired Standards) from the General Council in 2004.

The current Board essentially has been in place for 2-4 years, coming into existence after Grafton’s most recent experience of the pattern of volunteer burnout/organizational collapse/institutional rescue observed elsewhere. The Camp suspended all programs for a year and the new Board has been re-building from zero, intentionally increasing their activity step by step as their capacity has strengthened. At this point they remain an entirely volunteer operation and offer four weeks of church camping per year for about 40-50 children per week, plus hosting some rental activities. Although the scope of their program activities remains therefore quite

limited, it is nonetheless impressive. The number of summer program weeks has increased from two weeks in 2002 to three in 2003 and 2004, and is planned to grow to four in 2005. Each week has operated at near to capacity. Participants: 2002 – 34 (19 campers and 15 leaders-in-training); 2003 – 73 (54 campers and 19 leaders-in-training); 2004 – 122 (111 campers and 11 leaders-in-training).

## **Ownership & Liability**

The property is owned by Kamloops United Church, and responsibility for oversight and use of the property was transferred to the Camp Grafton Society in 2003. The purpose in establishing the Society and contracting this arrangement was *“to remove or limit Kamloops United Church from legal liability [and] to create an independent accountable organization capable of delivering outdoor ministry to the community.”* (Chair’s Message to 2003 AGM). This was an innovative approach by the church, in large part based in a recognition of the lack of capacity within the congregations to provide the type and scale of human resources required to effectively run a safe and sustainable camping operation. The agreement with Kamloops United Church stipulates a variety of insurance and other safeguards the Society must fulfill, in exchange for which the Society has *“full use and responsibility [for] the camp – its buildings and all of its property.”*

As with most camps, the financial value of the property is difficult to assess, as it is influenced by zoning, and the terms of the original endowment of the land to Kamloops United Church. However, it is a significant asset by any measure, and likely to be valued at between \$5 million and \$10 million. The property is located in a highly desirable part of the Shuswap; waterfront property in this area is currently valued at about \$2,200 per foot – so the Camp’s waterfront alone may be estimated at more than \$6.5 million.

## **Finances & Staffing**

Camp Grafton has operated with a surplus since being re-established in 2002. The operating budget involves expenditure in the region of \$25,000, and the Camp has generated a surplus of about \$60,000 during the past three years. Donations consistently account for more than half of total revenue. The Camp has no debts.

Camp Grafton has no permanent staff. A number of staff (life-guards, camp program directors, etc) are hired to support the summer program weeks, but otherwise all work is done by members of the Board or other volunteers. Neighbours assist in monitoring the property when not in use. Fees are set at about \$40 per day, all inclusive.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

The Camp Grafton Society has been intentional in recruiting Board members with a view to establishing wide community representation and ensuring the diversity of skills required. The Board has been extremely effective in securing community support, reflected in the level of donation income and an impressive array of in-kind contributions. Most of the Board membership is based in Kamloops, and as a result the Camp draws most of its support and registrations from that market.

At the time of the last transition, the Board was re-constituted as an “ecumenical” joint venture, theoretically involving the PLURA churches in Kamloops with the United Church as the prime

mover, and approved by the Kamloops-Okanagan Presbytery in October 2000. Although the Constitution describes a very detailed structure of ecumenical representation, the reality is that most of the denominational “partners” have declined formal participation. Indeed, notwithstanding the contribution of the Camp itself and active support from Presbytery, this may be said to be largely the case in respect to the United Church as well. The members of the Board reflect the intended ecumenical diversity in their personal identities, but none of the respective denominations have officially appointed them. What this means in practical terms is that the Camp is a separate, community-based Society, leasing the property from the United Church, and coming under the umbrella of the United Church for financial accounting purposes. Church camping programs use the United Church guidelines as their point of reference, and the Camp participates in United Church accreditation processes

### **Vision & Emerging Issues**

Camp Grafton operates with clear sense of who they are intended to serve (youth and adults from the PLURA churches and the surrounding community), and have clear and realistic goals, targets and growth plans. As is the case with the other United Church Camps in the Kamloops-Okanagan region, the Board expresses a wish for greater streamlining of resources and coordination of tasks among the institutions.

**CAMP GRAFTON**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>Options</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a beautiful, secure, and largely undeveloped site w. extensive woodland and waterfront</li> <li>▪ a strategic, accessible location situated with equidistant proximity to the main regional population centres conveniently situated</li> <li>▪ a skilled and motivated Board with strong community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ potential difficulties due to lack of coherence between Constitutional vision and institutional reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintain the operation on a status quo basis, providing support as appropriate to encourage continued modest growth</li> <li>▪ strengthen the role of the Camp in the Presbytery in providing region-wide services</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Camp Grafton demonstrates that with clear intention, strong mission-focus, targeted marketing and carefully nurtured community relations it is possible to build an effective and viable camping ministry.</li> <li>▪ If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps and the proposed regional approach, Camp Grafton would appear to be the most appropriate site with multi-season access to serve the South and Central Interior region, including the Thompson, Okanagan and south Cariboo.</li> <li>▪ This would require some redevelopment of Camp Grafton to increase its capacity, extend its operating season, integrate a broader leadership base, and project a regional identity and mandate. This would involve an investment in facilities and organizational development likely in the order of \$1.25 million. It would also require revision of the current ownership and governance arrangements.</li> <li>▪ BC Conference should propose and convene a decision-making process involving all relevant parties in Kamloops-Okanagan Presbytery with a view to consolidating their camping ministries in one location, with the recommendation that this be Camp Grafton.</li> </ul>		

### 3.4 CAMP HURLBURT

#### Description

Camp Hurlburt (motto: “*where good things happen*”) has operated for more than 70 years and is located on the east side of Okanagan Lake in the south-west corner of the City of Vernon. It is easily accessible by car on paved, publicly maintained roads. It is about a fifteen minute drive from the city centre. There are numerous camps within the Okanagan region, and two other United Church Camps (Grafton and Mackenzie) and the Naramata Centre are within two hours drive. It is a few minutes from the Predator Ridge resort development and almost adjacent to Ellison Provincial Park (services for 50 camping and 120 day-users).

The Camp consists of about three acres stretched along a fine section of Okanagan lakefront, and includes an extensive sandy beach which is the main feature of the property. It is bordered by private residences on either side, and backed by Okanagan Landing Road. The land slopes down to the lake, abruptly at the road level, but the main Camp area is almost level and easily managed by a person with a moderate physical disability.

The facilities are simple and rustic, and appear to date mainly from the 1940s. These include six bunked cabins, two smaller cabins, toilet facilities and two showers, a large dock, and separate craft/activities and dining halls. Camp Hurlburt’s facilities have not received significant refurbishment in recent decades and the property is used, both as an urban day camp for Vernon and for church programs, though much activity is focused on the beach. It appears that about \$3,000 are spent on maintenance per year, and in 2003 another \$5,000 was spent on capital improvements. Significant investment (at least \$150,000) will be required in the medium-term. The buildings and contents are insured at replacement cost of only \$262,000. Camp Hurlburt has a capacity to accommodate about 60 people.

#### Mission & Usage

The Mission of Camp Hurlburt was revised in 2001 as part of a 5-year planning process: “*a safe, holy place to find friendship and grow with God*”. In addition, the Camp’s main promotional brochure states: “... *accountable to the United Church of Canada, Camp Hurlburt’s primary task is to provide wholistic, safe meaningful summer camping experiences for children of all ages and all socio-economic situations that help them to learn about themselves and to encounter and develop a relationship with the Divine.*” Camp Hurlburt received provisional accreditation (achieving 96.6% of Mandatory Standards, and 95% of Desired Standards) from the General Council in 2004.

Camp Hurlburt primarily serves children and youth, aged 5 to 16, from the local Vernon area. A number of the camp programs, especially those for younger children, are operated on a day-camp basis. In earlier times the Camp served an Okanagan-wide constituency, and was operated under the auspices of a Camp Hurlburt Association, which held title to the property and had a governance Board representing congregations throughout the valley. However, the scope of activities gradually became more localized over the years and, though the Association still formally exists, the property was transferred to the Trinity United Church congregation. For some years the Camp has been understood as an expression of the congregation’s outreach and Christian education ministry, although it is operated by the Camp Hurlburt Committee which maintains some functions (notably financial accounting) independently of the congregation.

Camp Hurlburt offers six weeks of summer camp program plus a leadership training event. Most weeks are fully registered, but capacity varies on the basis of the age group and the program. About 200 to 225 children attend summer camp programs each year. Fees are under \$45 per day all inclusive (\$15 for day camp), before bursaries or discounts. The Camp is also rented out to community groups and private functions from April to October when camp programs are not in session, at a charge of just over \$200 per day.

### **Ownership & Liability**

Camp Hurlburt is owned by Trinity United Church, Vernon, and the title is in the name of congregational trustees. As with other Camp properties, the value is difficult to assess and influenced by a number of speculative factors. Camp Hurlburt is by far the smallest of the United Church Camps in BC, but by no means the least valuable. Though only three acres, it essentially consists in its entirety of one of the most desirable commodities (suburban Okanagan lakefront) in one of the hottest real estate markets in Canada. The property would need to be properly appraised but, having consulted with local real estate professionals, a value of approximately \$3 million is proposed for purposes of discussion.

### **Finances & Staffing**

Camp Hurlburt has an annual operating budget of about \$80,000. Analysis of the Camp's financial statements is not straight-forward as the accounts are not audited and the organization of the material differs from one year to another. In addition, though Camp Hurlburt operates in some respects as an independent financial entity, there appear to be some significant aspects of the Camp's finances (such as insurance and property taxes) not included in their accounts, but covered by the congregation. We understand that considerable effort has been made during the past year to attempt to clarify the Camp's accounts.

Camp Hurlburt is classed as a "recreational facility" by the City of Vernon, and therefore is subject to taxation on 50% of its assessed value of \$815,000 (an amount of \$4,270 in 2004). Camp programs generate about half of the Camp's total revenue, and the rental program usually generates just under 15%. The remainder is provided by donations and grants. The operation appears to run at a balance or small surplus from year to year, but this is difficult to determine as there is uncertainty about the extent and inclusion of all real costs.

Camp Hurlburt operates with 8 full-time seasonal and one part-time seasonal staff. The five year plan adopted in 2000 envisioned the hiring of a part-time Executive Director and a full time resident caretaker by 2005 (and the development of a permanent residence), but these goals have not been realized.

### **Governance & Community Relations / Vision & Emerging Issues**

Trinity United Church is in a process of discernment with respect to the place of outdoor ministry within the life and work of the congregation, and the degree of commitment it has to continuing to independently operating Camp Hurlburt. A notice of motion presented at the 2003 Annual Congregational Meeting ("*... that Trinity United Church reduce or eliminate its financial support of Camp Hurlburt either by sale of the property or the transfer of the property to the BC Conference ...*") gave rise to the appointment of a Task Force to examine the issues and report to the congregation in at the Annual Congregational Meeting in February 2005.

**CAMP HURLBURT**

Assets	Liabilities	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a valuable property with an excellent recreational waterfront</li> <li>▪ a rich tradition of congregational and community service</li> <li>▪ dedicated and skilled core leadership group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ aging facilities that will require substantial capital investment in the short to medium term</li> <li>▪ lack of sufficient staffing to adequately secure the property</li> <li>▪ uncertain support for outdoor ministry as a major focus or priority for the mission of the congregation</li> <li>▪ lack of clarity in organizational structure and accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintain the operation on a status quo basis, seeking support as appropriate to encourage maintenance and growth</li> <li>▪ discontinue operation as a United Church Camp, and sell the property for re-allocation of the resources for a range of alternate mission activities, including the enhancement of United Church Camping programs in the region</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps and the proposed regional approach, Camp Hurlburt would not be an appropriate site for a multi-season, wilderness facility to serve the South and Central Interior region.</li> <li>▪ Pending these policy decisions, BC Conference should invite Trinity United Church to collaborate in and contribute to the development and implementation of a comprehensive outdoor ministry program for the region, including investment in excellent facilities, professional staffing, standardized training, and financial endowments to support participation by children and youth from throughout the Conference.</li> </ul>		

### 3.5 CAMP KOOLAREE

#### Description

Camp Koolaree (the name derives from “*KOOtenay LAke RELigious Education*”) was established in 1931 and is located near Eight Mile Creek on the south side of the West Arm of Kootenay Lake, about a fifteen minute drive east of the Nelson city centre. It is linked with Nelson by an operating CP rail line that runs unobtrusively through the property, but is essentially accessible only by a 10 minute boat ride from the north side of the lake. The Camp owns a small property (one-third acre) on the north side between highway 3A and the lake. This includes a parking lot and, significantly, the federal government wharf (McDonald’s Landing) from paddle-wheel days. The government has offered to sell the dock for \$1, but the Camp has declined in order not to assume responsibility for insurance and maintenance.

The property comprises about 137 acres with significant waterfront. The terrain is generally steep, heavily forested mountainside, except for the level area between the rail line and the waterfront where the main Camp facilities are concentrated. The Camp is bordered by a private residence (not visible) on one side, and otherwise surrounded by the new West Arm Provincial Park, a large wilderness preservation area with no access or amenities at this point. There are numerous recreational resources in the area, including Kokanee Creek Provincial Park, which has provision for 380 day-users and 130 campers, including group camping. Camp Koolaree is the only church camp in the area – a large Pentecostal camp on Kootenay Lake has recently been put up for sale.

The facilities at Camp Koolaree are rudimentary, but in good order and repair. Most buildings (activity hall, kitchen/dining hall, infirmary, accommodation cabins) appear to date from the 1940s, and none are winterized. Most buildings have new metal roofs, and there has been a steady stream of visible improvements during the past few years – solar power generation, a new water filtration system (financed by the Vancouver Foundation), plans for a micro hydro generation system, etc. Board members clearly invest significant time and energy at the Camp, playing a hands-on role in relation to maintenance and organizing periodic work parties. The facilities are insured at a replacement value of \$203,000 (though in order to reduce costs only three of the four main buildings are insured). Camp Koolaree has a capacity to accommodate about 50 people.

#### Mission & Usage

The Mission of Camp Koolaree is: “... to see Camp Koolaree used by all people for spiritual, physical and emotional growth, for leisure and recreation, and for a total living experience. We believe that deep spiritual growth can take place in an outdoor wilderness setting, removed from the everyday routine, in the company of others who are seeking recreation in the truest sense. We aim to uphold these goals and endeavour to preserve the natural environment of our God-given heritage. We hope that all who use the facilities will share the heritage and glorify God.” Camp Koolaree specifically offers the opportunity for wilderness camping; “rustic and in the woods ... no roads, no radios, no electricity – just an opportunity to grow, to learn and to ‘Be still and know that I am God’” as stated in the Camp’s main promotional brochure. The Board sees the main purposes of the Camp to be “to provide a safe, caring environment where the values we treasure can be expressed and to promote a feeling of self worth for children in particular.” Camp Koolaree did not meet minimum United Church standards (achieved 74% of the

Mandatory Standards, and 72.7% of the Desired Standards), and was not accredited by the General Council in 2004.

Camp Koolaree normally offers five weeks of summer camping programs, including a family camp. Assuming an optimal registration base of 40 participants, Camp Koolaree generally operates at less than 60% of capacity. In 2004 one of the weeks was cancelled due to lack of sufficient registrations. About 30% of participants are from United Churches, and about 55% have no religious affiliation. About 85% come from the West Kootenay region. Participants: 2002 – 115 (average 23 per session, largest group 40); 2003 – 114 (average 23 per session, largest group 31); 2004 – 119 (average 30 per session, largest group 36). Fees are only about \$30 per day all inclusive, before bursaries or discounts, by far the lowest among the United Church Camps in BC. About 25% of camper fees are sponsored by a congregation or other agency.

Camp Koolaree is operated during only four to five months per year. The Camp has established a developing rental program currently involving about ten school, youth and community groups and roughly as many individual participants as the church camp programs. Rentals are charged for site use and accommodation at a rate of \$8 per person per day.

### **Ownership & Liability**

Camp Koolaree is owned by the BC Conference of the United Church. The property is a significant potential asset. The timber on the property consists largely of 100 year growth and probably has a value of about \$300,000 – the Camp contracted to do some small selective logging a few years ago to raise some capital for renovations (around \$45,000 – see <http://www.westfibre.com/LOGNET/TIMBER/koolaree/>). Lakefront property with proximity to Nelson, isolation notwithstanding, commands a high premium – “typically” in the range of \$40,000 to \$100,000 per acre. Most of Camp Koolaree is mountainside, of course, but the property may have a value of approximately \$3 million. Camp Koolaree has no outstanding loans or liens.

### **Finances & Staffing**

The financial condition of Camp Koolaree appears fairly stable, and the Camp has traditionally managed to generate a small surplus, but the Camp is highly vulnerable to impact by even small changes in business conditions. The annual operating budget is approximately \$45,000. Though usage actually increased in 2003, the Camp realized a loss of about \$5,250 (12%) as a result of increased insurance costs and other expenditures, as well as short falls in most revenue streams. The loss was weathered by cutting costs, notably excluding some assets from insurance coverage and reducing capital work to a minimum, and by drawing on most of their reserves.

However, basic maintenance costs for aging facilities, as well as insurance costs, will necessarily keep rising. Part of the problem no doubt lies in the very low fees charged by the Camp for both programs and rentals. Income from these services amounts to only about 50% of the total revenue, with the rest derived mainly from donations. The Board believes that the economic conditions of the region mean that increasing fees significantly is not an option. Donation income has shown signs of declining in recent years and, though the level of constituency support it indicates is impressive, reliance on it without significant fundraising efforts is questionable.

Camp Koolaree has five full-time seasonal staff (two groundskeepers, two cooks, and a lifeguard). All are paid at a rate of \$10 per hour. Program is delivered and all management is

carried out by Board members and other volunteers. The individual responsible for leadership of a summer week designs the program, recruits and trains their team of counselors, and looks after all other components of the week. The role of the Board in overseeing and evaluating programs and leadership is not clear.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

Camp Koolaree has recently emerged from an experience of the crisis leadership cycle described elsewhere in this report. The Board was re-constituted about two years ago, and currently has a broad, highly dedicated membership drawn from most of the United Church congregations in the West Kootenays, and they have a keen sense of their regional context. The Board has a strong sense of themselves being a “United Church” camp, and draw actively on the program and other resources available on the national website. They see themselves engaged in a process of re-establishing the Camp on a firm foundation both programmatically and within the community, and have begun developing a strategic plan for Camp Koolaree. The strategic plan provides a clear recognition of the challenges and identifies an important set of desired goals, but at present a plan for addressing and realizing them has not yet been developed.

The Constitution is clear but irregular in the sense that it generally does not conform with the provisions of Appendix IV of The Manual.

## **Vision & Emerging Issues**

The short operating season, small local market in terms of United Church constituency, difficulty of access, rudimentary facilities, and limited human and financial resources all represent major challenges to the viability of Camp Koolaree. Some of them are also major strengths: the isolation of the Camp enables it to offer an authentic wilderness experience within easy proximity to the full services of a small city; the reliance on volunteerism has resulted in a diverse, highly committed Board; the simplicity of the facilities are somehow relevant in this context.

The fact that Camp Koolaree satisfied less than three-quarters of the mandatory standards required for accreditation by the United Church makes the challenges more acute. Significant human effort and financial investment will be required in the next two years in order to meet these requirements. It would appear that continued operation of Camp Koolaree within the current framework is not tenable for much beyond the immediate horizon. The current length of the operating season is too short to generate sufficient revenue to support the staffing that the Board recognizes is required to ensure the quality of the operation and avoid another round of Board burn-out. Under its current framework, the Camp is severely under-utilized, serving only about 250 individuals per year through all its activities, and on this very basic level it is difficult to justify the investment in human and financial resources required to sustain it either in terms of business or mission.

**CAMP KOOLAREE**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>Options</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a beautiful, well cared for site suitable for wilderness camping</li> <li>▪ proximity to Nelson and close to main United Church population centres in the region</li> <li>▪ a committed Board that believes strongly in outdoor ministry</li> <li>▪ good links with a reasonably supportive constituency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ no land access to support extended season or 12-month operation</li> <li>▪ lack of resources to support needed facilities development or staffing</li> <li>▪ scale of programming and revenue not sufficient to provide for necessary infrastructure (required for accreditation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintain the operation on a status quo basis, seeking support as appropriate to encourage maintenance and growth</li> <li>▪ discontinue operation as a United Church Camp, and sell the property for re-allocation of the resources for a range of alternate mission activities, including the enhancement of United Church Camping programs in the Conference</li> <li>▪ re-develop on a variety of levels (mission, program, governance, facilities) with a view to establishing a Camp to serve the needs of the whole Kootenay region</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Camp Koolaree has many positive attributes and assets, and at the same time some very real practical limitations. If the Camp is to be established as a viable operation solutions will need to be found to the problems of its limited capacity, season and physical access. Options for dealing with these issues, such as the possibility of negotiated use of the rail line, should be explored and assessed during the next six months.</li> <li>▪ If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps and the proposed regional approach, Camp Koolaree would appear to be the preferred site in terms of general strategic location to serve the Kootenay region.</li> <li>▪ This would require some redevelopment of Camp Koolaree to increase its capacity, extend its operating season, integrate a broader leadership base, and project a regional identity and mandate. This would involve an investment in facilities and organizational development likely in the order of \$1.25 million.</li> <li>▪ If the fundamental challenges to Camp Koolaree's ability to play this role cannot be resolved, BC Conference should serve notice of its intent to sell the property within the next two years and put in place means and resources to support participation by children and youth in outdoor ministry opportunities elsewhere in the Conference.</li> </ul>		

## 3.6 CAMP KWOMAIS

### Description

Camp Kwomais (motto: “*A Place of Vision*”) is a triangular property of almost 14 acres occupying the southwest corner of the Semiahmoo peninsula in Ocean Park, south Surrey. The site is pleasantly wooded, with a number of open field areas. The property is easily accessible by paved urban streets. The terrain is gently sloping for the most part, and generally manageable for people with moderate physical disabilities. The site is fronted by a steep cliff face that runs along the entire ocean side of the property. These 50 meter high cliffs offer wonderful sea views and sunsets, but the Camp has no access to the waterfront itself, due to the cliffs and the active Burlington Northern rail line that runs along the foreshore. There are a number of listed environmental assets on the property.

The other two boundaries of the property face onto established, generally affluent residential neighbourhoods of single family housing. This part of south Surrey is a fully developed mixed sub-urban environment. Downtown White Rock is a few minutes away, and the roofs of the houses immediately surrounding the Camp are visible from within many parts of the property. There is a substantial public park one block away from the Camp, and several others nearby. There are two other camp facilities (Camp Alexander and Faith Camp) located within a five minute drive of Camp Kwomais, and at least one major retreat centre (Rosemary Heights) and three United Church congregations within about a ten minute drive.

Camp Kwomais’ promotional brochure states that “*facilities include all-weather accommodation for more than 90 campers in cabins. There is a heated seasonal outdoor pool, washrooms, dining-hall, a large activity hall*” in addition to the outside amenities. With the exception of Sanford Hall, a multi-purpose activity centre built in 1989, most of the other buildings are in various states of disrepair and the serviceability of a number of them is questionable. Parts of the dining hall are closed off due to the hazardous conditions.

The accommodation units are wood frame cabins and date from the origins of the Camp in the 1920s (camping at Kwomais actually began prior to World War I, but buildings were not erected until the Great Depression) or the late 1940s. One was built in the 1970s. They have had various repairs applied to them over the years, but most of them should be considered beyond renovation. The concrete pool was built in 1961, and would require substantial restoration and investment (at least \$5,000) before it would be certifiable for use. The facilities are insured at replacement cost at a value of \$1.67million, but this may significantly overstate the actual value of the buildings.

### Mission & Usage

The Mission of Camp Kwomais is: “*Kwomais is a place of vision where people come with a desire to seek rest, tranquility and a vision of God’s purpose in a changing world. As a Ministry of the United Church of Canada: We provide a safe gathering place for all people to experience God in Creation; We offer campers the opportunity to share in a ministry of Christian acceptance; We offer our hospitality to groups who desire to provide programs and activities in the natural setting of our camp*”. This Mission is somewhat visible in the Camp’s public and promotional materials. Camp Kwomais was not included in the United Church accreditation process in 2004.

Camp Kwomais operates on a year-round basis. The Board sees its main purpose as strongly based in serving the United Church congregations in the four Lower Mainland presbyteries. Significantly, Kwomais understands its role in relation to both children and adults. The Camp did not offer summer camping programs in 2004, but the registrations for these activities have been seriously under-capacity (less than 30%) and in decline for many years. Prior to 2004, Kwomais offered camping programs during seven weeks each summer. Participants: 2002 – 205 (average 29 per session, largest group 50 including leaders); 2003 – 151 (average 22 per session, largest group 43).

Camp Kwomais offers facility rentals to a variety of groups ranging from regular afternoon private dance classes in Sanford Hall to the annual “In Harmony” summer music festival. Few of these appear to bear relevance to the Camp’s Mission. Or Purpose. There are a few United Church or other spiritually based events held at Camp Kwomais, including traditionally a women’s retreat (it was cancelled in 2004). The leader of one rental group that had held an event at Camp Kwomais (a women’s group from a Vancouver UCC congregation) contacted for private comment for this study indicated that her group was “disgusted” by the conditions, and described it as a “dump” that they would not return to or permit their children to attend. She indicated that these feelings were shared and expressed within her group, but acknowledged that they had not conveyed any negative views to Kwomais as they “wanted to be supportive”. However, the group plans to hold its future retreats at a private retreat centre on Bowen Island. In order to bring the basic facilities to an acceptable standard within the framework of the existing operations would likely require a short to medium term investment in the range of \$250,000.

## **Ownership & Liability**

The title to the Camp Kwomais property is held in the name of the BC Conference of the United Church (“Metropolitan Council”). The specific (Ocean Park waterfront view) and general (proximity to Lower Mainland, Vancouver International Airport, Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal, US Border and Seattle) location of Camp Kwomais, as well as its intrinsic attributes, make it an extremely desirable and valuable property. There have been, for several years, many parties actively interested in purchasing the property. Depending on the terms and approach taken, the property would likely have an immediate “wholesale” value of about \$12 million, or a development-based “retail” value of \$20 million or more (unsolicited proposals from developers received by this study during the past year have ranged as high as \$26 million).

Camp Kwomais has a loan with BC Conference with an outstanding balance of about \$38,000. Payments were not made during 2002-2003, but were scheduled to recommence (\$750/month) in June 2004. The current condition of many of the buildings on the site must also be considered a public liability, even if unused, both in terms of public safety and the general reputation of the United Church.

## **Finances & Staffing**

The last audit was done in 2002, and a current balance sheet is not available. Camp Kwomais has an annual operating budget in the range of \$175,000, and in recent years has been in near balance or in surplus (2002 – surplus about \$7,000; 2003 – deficit about \$2,750). Almost 90% of revenue is derived from program and rental fees, which must be regarded as an impressive achievement in light of the Camp’s circumstances. Fees for summer camping programs in 2003 were set at about \$45 per day, all inclusive, before bursaries or discounts.

Camp Kwomais has three permanent staff: a part-time office assistant and a resident caretaker, each of which are paid at about \$10/hour, and an Executive Director. This level of staffing seems excessive in relation to the actual level of program realized by Camp Fircom in recent years.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

A public controversy in late 2003 resulted in action by BC Conference to dismiss the Board of Directors and appoint a Kwomais Camping Committee in a trusteeship role, pending the outcome of this study. Summer programming was suspended, and the Executive Director of Camp Fircom was asked to oversee staffing and other matters on a part-time basis.

Although there are strong historical links, and often a strong sense of personal attachment, between Camp Kwomais and members or adherents of the United Church in the region, it is difficult to see these as active relationships. Few congregational or presbytery events are held at the Camp. No doubt influenced by the uncertainties and unhappiness generated by the public controversy, donation income declined by one-third between 2002 and 2003. Serious though it has been in terms of the public image of Camp Kwomais, the causal role of the 2003 controversy should not be over-estimated in terms of its general state of health; the fact is that participation rates have been in serious decline for many years – very few children or families have taken part in the camping programs offered during the past decade. Board members tend to point to inadequate promotion, which is no doubt a factor, but we must question whether there is a clear market for the camping programs being offered.

The same observations appear to apply to the linkages between the Camp and the community. The Camp is certainly a convenience to the public, and local residents clearly prefer the preservation of an unobtrusive green space over the prospect of commercial development. Many individuals also sincerely care about protecting some of the heritage and environmental values represented by the Camp. However, when asked, even vocal and organized citizens acknowledge that they have and desire no direct involvement in the Camp, and would not be willing to undertake substantial practical efforts to support it. The deteriorating condition of the facilities will likely become a growing source of tensions with the community.

## **Vision & Emerging Issues**

Camp Kwomais describes itself as “a place of vision”. If there is to be a future for this property as a United Church ministry it must be generated from a sense of emergent mission needs rather than derived from its past roles. Any future for Camp Kwomais will not include a role in providing camping programs for children or youth. The physical context of the “Camp” in 21<sup>st</sup> century south Surrey make this role neither realistic nor relevant. In fact, this has long been the case, and fully recognized as such. The 1981 “Recommendation of the Kwomais Committee” makes for sobering reading. Noting that “certain Kwomais facilities are now antiquated and unappealing” and that “the Kwomais site is now under-utilized” (it served over 4,500 campers that year!), the Committee recommended that BC Conference re-develop it as a retreat and conference centre (see Attachment 5.4). It would seem that not only vision is required for Camp Kwomais to find a future, but also will.

Any future for Kwomais will be rooted in its strategic location, and referenced to the social and spiritual needs of the church and the broader community in the region. The value of the asset is such that it could support significant initiatives in ministry, whether in this location or elsewhere. Whatever future use may be determined for the Kwomais property, a number of factors other than

financial interest should serve as additional criteria, including: protection and preservation of the key environmental values and continued community access to the site.

Because of the significance of the value of Kwomais and its potential to have an impact on other aspects of the Camping ministries throughout BC Conference, this study has investigated without commitment or prejudice a number of alternative scenarios for the disposition of the property. Primary among these, and with continuity for the long-standing vision of many people who have been dedicated to Kwomais over the years, has been the potential re-development of the site as a proper retreat and education centre to serve a defined role in relation to the needs of the United Church and of the challenging inter-faith relations that are increasingly defining and characterizing the region, and the Conference.

Specifically, we sought to test the viability of an approach that would involve the following conditions:

- Retention of ownership of the prime elements of the site (approximately 40%), including the key areas of environmental value, by the United Church;
- Residential development, possibly for modest seniors housing, of a major portion of the property (approximately 40%) in a manner that would include provision of a public park or other amenity (approximately 20%) and that would not interfere with either the discrete operation of a retreat centre or sight-lines of existing view properties;
- Generation of sufficient net funds to provide for both
  - the development and establishment of a retreat centre with facilities to accommodate 75 person with adequate administrative and programmatic infrastructure (estimated at \$4-5 million) and, additionally,
  - at least \$2 million for possible investment in other initiatives to strengthen the Conference's camping ministries.

Development professionals were able to devise several potential scenarios that would satisfy all of these conditions.

**CAMP KWOMAIS**

Assets	Liabilities	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a beautiful property of significant value</li> <li>▪ located in strategic location for alternative mission and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ situated in a fully developed suburban environment</li> <li>▪ inadequate and inappropriate facilities, particularly accommodations, and lack of resources to address these needs</li> <li>▪ compromised public image, lack of clarity in mission and purpose, and of community and constituency support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ discontinue operations and sell the property</li> <li>▪ sell a portion of the property to reinvest in camping operations</li> <li>▪ discontinue operations, retain the assets and re-develop with a revised mission and purpose</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Both the context and the facilities have changed to such an extent that they seem entirely inappropriate to a traditional church “camping” operation. The context is now fully urbanized; there is no waterfront access; there is no access to wilderness or even meaningful hiking opportunities. The level of demand for camping services of this nature and in the area is questionable. Kwomais should permanently cease operation as a church camp, with children and youth referred to other United Church Camps in the region currently and chronically operating under capacity (Cultus Lake or Fircom).</li> <li>▪ The Kwomais property is of such value that it can generate sufficient funds to finance a significant ministry addressing regional and Conference priorities, as well as to contribute substantially to strengthening camping ministries. It holds the potential to be transformed from an under-utilized liability into a flagship institution for the whole Church.</li> <li>▪ Since the value of the property will likely not diminish in the future, it seems advisable to retain as much of the asset as possible while at the same time making active and responsible use of as much of the latent resources as possible.</li> <li>▪ Given that a key component of the potential of the property is its strategic location in having ready access to people from throughout the Conference, the mission of the new Kwomais should be recognized and established as a Conference ministry and should involve formal programmatic relations with Naramata Centre and the Chalmer’s Institute.</li> <li>▪ BC Conference should appoint a development committee with the appropriate authority and technical skills to develop, in consultation and collaboration with all relevant parties, a renewed mission for Kwomais together with business and development plans.</li> </ul>		

### 3.7 CAMP MACKENZIE

#### Description

Camp Mackenzie (motto: “*Adventure, Spirituality, Fun, Friendship*” or “*Sparkling Waters; Sparkling Memories*”) is located in the community of Kingfisher, near where the Shuswap River joins Mabel Lake. It is a 45 minute drive from Enderby on the Mabel Lake Road, a paved publicly maintained secondary route. Access to the Camp must be pre-arranged, as it requires crossing the Shuswap River mouth by boat, a situation that provides the Camp with a measure of isolation while still being connected to mainline electricity and other services. The Camp itself does not actually own any waterfront, and in addition to the short boat trip, getting to the Camp involves hiking through the woods for about five minutes, up an embankment which is steep enough to be an obstacle for people with a moderate or greater physical disability.

Camp Mackenzie consists of about six acres, and in itself is a pleasant but unremarkable property. The buildings are grouped around a central open field, and most of the rest of the land is forested with a moderate slope. The Camp shares this side of the river with a number of summer cottages, and access to the waterfront is obtained by a road through the community. The Camp is bordered at the rear by Crown forest. There are numerous recreational opportunities in the area, including white water canoeing on the Shuswap River. There are two United Church Camps (Grafton and Hurlburt) within a two hour drive, and the Naramata United Church Education Centre about three hours drive to the south.

The facilities consist of the Alice Large Memorial Hall, a major all-season building of high quality that is nearing completion. Alice Lodge is a half million dollar all-season building that includes a well-equipped kitchen, a dining room that can accommodate 100, and eight dorm rooms (48 beds). This will effectively double the capacity of the Camp, and make it attractive to adult programs and retreats. There is also a craft hall, the old dining building, six cabins, and various other amenities.

All of these buildings are old and rustic, except for one of the cabins which has been updated and winterized, though most of the cabins have new roofing. Camp Mackenzie also demonstrates an active investment in programming – there are amenities such as a climbing wall, and staff offices with shelves of resources, computers and other equipment for program development. Camp Mackenzie can currently accommodate about 50 people, but this will double when the new Hall is completed. Camp Mackenzie has been working to develop a shoulder season business with a view to operating six months of the year in the future.

#### Mission & Usage

The Mission of Camp Mackenzie is: “*To create an accepting environment where people of all ages are acknowledged as unique, important and capable. To value the religions of all, focusing on love, acceptance and the need to respect each other. To help everyone who attends to grow socially, mentally and spiritually while having fun. To develop the self-esteem of campers and an awareness of the Creator by becoming closer to creation.*” The Mission Statement, which seems rather generic for a United Church Camp, is not visible anywhere in the Camp itself, and is not referred to in any of the Camp’s promotional materials or on their extensive and detailed website.

Indeed, Camp Mackenzie’s promotional materials make no reference whatsoever to a religious orientation, spiritual identity or Christian basis to the Camp. In their more extensive 12-page

pamphlet there is are two references to the United Church: one states that “*the United Church belief is that we are not alone, that God is with us and within us*”; the other is an acknowledgement on the back page that “*funding is provided by the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia, the United Church of Canada, Individual, private supporters*”. The website’s splash-page includes the following expressions of identity: “*An adventure in the wilderness on beautiful Mabel Lake; Programs for Schools, Summer Camp Sessions Ages 7-17; Family Camp; Rentals Accepted; Focusing on self-esteem building and environmental studies*”.

While offering no comment on the merits of the programs offered by Camp Mackenzie, this study is not able to identify any points of reference to indicate that Camp Mackenzie understands or projects its purpose or operation within a framework of outdoor ministry expressed on behalf of the United Church. Camp Mackenzie received full accreditation subject to meeting an specified condition (achieving 100% of Mandatory Standards, and 87% of Desired Standards) from the General Council in 2004.

Camp Mackenzie now advertises itself as the “Mackenzie Camp and Retreat Centre”, and has begun to offer adult events in addition to its school programs, summer camps and rental operations. The most prominent of these activities is the school program which began in 2001 and now operates for about 20 days in the Spring and Fall. This program is supported by school board and provincial contracts, and involved 374 children from 12 schools in 2004. In reporting the numbers of children and youth in its camping programs, Camp Mackenzie appears to include the participants of both its school and summer camp programs.

Camp Mackenzie offers six weeks of summer camp for children and youth, as well as a counselor training week, a family week and an adult specialty session. Participants (children and youth): 2002 – approximately 200; 2003 – approximately 200; 2004 – 224. Fees are under \$40 per day all inclusive, before bursaries or discounts.

## **Ownership & Liability**

The property is owned by the United Church of Canada (General Council). The property would be desirable, though hampered by its problems with access and lack of waterfront or view characteristics. Nevertheless, with the improved facilities, the property would probably be worth between \$1 and \$2 million, though the sources of much of the funding for the capital improvements (government, foundation and gaming grants) would likely act to restrict the sale or constitute an additional liability to be taken into account.

Camp Mackenzie has two loans outstanding: to BC Conference (\$47,000) and to the United Church of Canada (\$16,000). It also has a bank line of credit; the most recent (2003) balance sheet examined by this study indicated a draw of about \$17,250 against that facility.

## **Finances & Staffing**

Although required by its Constitution, the accounts of the Camp Mackenzie Society have not been audited in order to avoid the expense involved. This is unfortunate as the accounts are somewhat complicated due to the extensive capital development work undertaken during the past several years, with considerable loan and grant activity associated with it, and there appears to be some interaction in reporting of capital and operating funds.

Camp Mackenzie has an annual operating budget of approximately \$120,000 – the figure is not precise due to the problems noted above. Summer camp programs generate about 42% of the revenue and the school programs, although involving greater numbers of participants, produce only about 7.5% of revenue. Grants (from Presbytery, BC Gaming, youth employment programs, etc) account for about one-third of revenue. The 2004 budget projects donation and fundraising income of some \$29,000, although much of this appears to pertain to the capital project funds which we have attempted to exclude from consideration.

It appears that Camp Mackenzie has realized substantial operating deficits in 2002 and 2003, in the order of at least \$10,000 per year, and there appear to also be even more substantial deficits related to the capital projects. The 2004 operating budget includes as revenue a loan in the amount of \$40,000, but the explanatory note for this line item in the Annual Report provides no information to clarify the nature of this income. Board members have referred to giving priority to dealing with a “mortgage”, but there is no documentary reference to any such arrangement or whether this may refer to the bank line of credit.

Camp Mackenzie has reported that it has been seeking transfer of the ownership of the Camp property from the United Church of Canada to the Camp Mackenzie Society with a view to increasing its ability to secure commercial financing to support its development. This study notes that Camp Mackenzie receives significant funding from BC Gaming (\$45,000, and another \$52,350 projected); we believe it is salutary to also notice the comments provided in Schedule A of the 2004 Budget – *“Gaming is concerned that we don’t have title to the land and therefore do not have ownership of the building. The society will soon have trusteeship of the camp property.”*

We have not been able to determine the extent to which these issues, receipt of gambling revenues by a United Church Camp or the associated question of transfer of ownership, have been openly discussed by the Presbytery or other courts of the United Church. Again, it is not the role of this study to assess the appropriateness of the Camp’s program or activities, but we would be remiss in failing to observe that aspects of Camp Mackenzie’s financial operations may be at variance with United Church policy and ethical guidelines.

There is one part-time year-round staff (the Executive Director), and 11 full time seasonal staff.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

Camp Mackenzie experienced the leadership crisis cycle most recently in the late 1990s. At that time the Board was primarily drawn from Zion United Church in Enderby, but lack of resources and other pressures led to Board burn-out and the threatened collapse of the Camp. Operations were suspended for more than a year as Presbytery sought new leadership. The new Board was created, primarily drawn from First United Church in Salmon Arm, and James Bowlby agreed to serve as part-time Executive Director upon his retirement from teaching. The current Board and Executive leadership has engaged the task of re-establishing the Camp with skill, creativity and deep commitment – and considerable success.

The visible commitment of the members of the Board notwithstanding, the Board does have concerns about the future of the leadership of the Camp. Most are members of one congregation, and all Board members, and the Executive Director, are retired or near retirement in age. All recognize James Bowlby’s role and skills as pivotal, and that this constitutes a major dependency within the organization. James Bowlby has advised the Board that he will continue as ED for another two years at most.

According to Camp Mackenzie, there has never been a Presbytery Visitation.

## **Vision & Emerging Issues**

Camp Mackenzie has clearly moved forward in significant ways in the past five years – fostering a sense of professionalism, undertaking significant fundraising, developing excellent promotional work, expanding the program framework, and extending the season and broader role of the Camp. Despite the clearly strategic nature of these initiatives, the Board indicated that it had not yet developed a long-term planning framework for the Camp, and welcomed this study as providing impetus to do so.

In the course of the Board meeting associated with the site visit, the first question raised by the Chair was. *“Why don’t we have a shared, coordinated operation among the three Camps in our Presbytery? Instead of all of us having to scramble to find resources and leaders and reinvent the wheel and continually burning out our volunteers, we should have one full time ED for all of them. We need to stop looking at these places simply as Church Camps and start to understand that we are operating a business.”*

**CAMP MACKENZIE**

Assets	Liabilities	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ developed facility with some significant assets (Alice Large Hall)</li> <li>▪ organizational capacity and professionalism</li> <li>▪ credibility with secular sponsors and funding agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ unclear public identity in relation to ownership</li> <li>▪ significant debt burden</li> <li>▪ limitations on the use of the property due to location, size, and access of property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintain the operation on a status quo basis, seeking support as appropriate to encourage maintenance and growth</li> <li>▪ discontinue operation as a United Church Camp, and sell the property for re-allocation of the resources for a range of alternate mission activities, including the enhancement of United Church Camping programs in the region</li> <li>▪ sell the property to a newly established, independent, community-based Society separate from the United Church</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Camp Mackenzie has many positive attributes and assets, and at the same time some very real practical limitations. Some of the skills-based assets are transferable to other operations; some are facilities which are not. If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps and the proposed regional approach, Camp Mackenzie would not appear to be the preferred site in terms of general strategic location to serve as an accessible, multi-season, wilderness facility for the South and Central Interior region.</li> <li>▪ BC Conference should negotiate with the General Council to transfer ownership of the Camp to the Conference Property Development Council, with a view to integrating it as an asset or facility within a comprehensive, Conference-wide, outdoor ministry program.</li> <li>▪ Providing general, high quality, summer camping and recreational opportunities for children and youth is not a bad thing, but it simply does not necessarily constitute a United Church ministry. Pending decisions on related matters in this report, BC Conference should consider selling the Camp Mackenzie property, preferably through a covenanted arrangement with a community-based camping Society independent of the United Church.</li> </ul>		

### 3.8 CAMP MOORECROFT

#### Description

Camp Moorecroft is located on the Nanoose peninsula, about 10 km south of Parksville and 20km north of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. It is easily accessible by car on paved, publicly maintained roads. The Camp consists of approximately 85 acres of secluded woodland. It includes an extensive waterfront on the Strait of Georgia, including several coves and beaches, as well as its own small, stocked fresh-water lake. The land is generally rough and natural, and challenging for persons with moderate physical disabilities, but includes several fine hiking trails and open field areas. Camp Moorecroft is an extraordinarily beautiful property.

The Camp is increasingly bordered by “executive homes” on small acreages, and there are an expanding number of luxury golf, resort and high-end retirement developments on the peninsula (eg. Fairwinds, Schooner Cove). The northern edges of the urban development sprawl of greater Nanaimo have recently become visible from some vantage points in the Camp. There are numerous other camps within the general region of Camp Moorecroft, as well as a wide array of family holiday options. The nearest United Church Camps are Camp Pringle, about 90 minutes south by car, and Camp Fircom, about two hours by ferry from Nanaimo.

The Camp facilities include a dining hall in reasonably good condition, and an activity or meeting hall and ten cabins in generally basic to poor condition. Moorecroft Camp advertises itself as a year-round facility, and has a capacity to accommodate about 70 persons.

#### Mission & Usage

The Mission of Camp Moorecroft is: *“Moorecroft will promote the joyful celebration of God’s presence among us through its outdoor Christian ministry, its promotion of personal spiritual growth, and its fostering of environmental protection. Moorecroft will provide an opportunity to discover new understandings of faith and to discover new relationships with God, nature, themselves, and one another. Moorecroft will work to serve the spiritual and recreational needs of the people of Oceanside and the communities beyond. Moorecroft will offer year-round activities for adults, youth, and children with the intent of earning enough in the off-season to use the summer for Outreach.”* (“Oceanside” is a Tourism BC term referring to the region between Nanaimo and the Comox Valley.)

Perhaps because of the length and nature of this statement, it is not used widely and is not familiar even to members of the Board. The Camp’s main promotional materials, newspaper ads and brochures, make no reference to the Mission, nor to Moorecroft being a United Church Camp. There is reference to Moorecroft Camp being “owned by the United Church”, and the brochure includes as one of the four aims: *“to provide an opportunity for children, youth, and adults to interact, to have fun, and to grow in a warm, secure, Christian environment.”*

The Board understands the purpose of the Camp as providing Christian camping experiences for children and youth (6-19 years), from both the United Church and the broader community, but some Board members express a sense of real uncertainty about the purpose. Camp Moorecroft received provisional accreditation (achieving 93.5% of Mandatory Standards, and 81% of Desired Standards) from the General Council in 2004. This is essentially the same standing the Camp achieved at its last accreditation.

Camp Moorecroft offers six weeks of summer church camp programming, and an additional leaders training session. In 2004 there were 251 participants in the six camp programs (largest week 60, average 42), and six participants in the training event. This study has not been able to obtain participant statistics from previous years.

Camp Moorecroft occasionally offers events outside the summer program, although with difficulty. At the time of the site visit associated with this study, the autumn family weekend event scheduled for the next week had only 2 registrations confirmed. The Board has a keen sense of Camp Moorecroft as operating with considerable disadvantage in a highly competitive market. Other camps and alternative family holiday options available in the region are seen as offering better quality at less cost. The Board believes the main factor underlying the Camp's low registrations is the cost, though programs are offered at about \$45 per day all inclusive before bursaries or discounts. Very few campers come from areas outside the immediate region between Nanaimo and Courtenay.

The Board also feel burdened by the requirements of the BC Camping Association (eg. 32 hours training for a staff member who may be providing leadership for only five days) and of the Presbytery. One example illustrates not only the "regulatory" difficulties, but also the more general state of this latter relationship. Presbytery requires the presence of an ordered minister at each summer camp program week, yet despite considerable recruitment efforts the Board has not succeeded in securing the participation of ministers for more than three of the seven weeks of program offered. The Board reports that the response from clergy is that some do not feel equipped or able to carry out this role, or more typically indicate that they are simply not interested in camping ministry.

Camp Moorecroft does undertake some rentals to church, community and youth groups during the non-summer seasons. However, lack of reliable staffing (custodial) and the condition of facilities has limited this business. Bookings and management are currently dependent on members of the Board to service, creating a strain on human resources and risk to the security and reputation of the Camp. During the site visit conducted in the course of this study, we observed a rental group conducting a set of Wiccan rituals, complete with altar and a wide array of substances and paraphernalia. Such things can occur even in the most carefully controlled situations, and we should not draw too much import from a single incidence, but it does serve to highlight the vulnerability of the Camp and those associated with it.

## **Ownership & Liability**

The title to the Camp Moorecroft is held in the name of the BC Conference of the United Church ("Metropolitan Council"). The specific (pristine, ocean-front property with private lake) and general (proximity to Nanaimo, Ferry Terminal, and Parksville-Qualicum region) location of Camp Moorecroft, as well as its intrinsic attributes, make it an extremely desirable and valuable property. This is recognized by the variety of development schemes that have been considered in relation to the Camp for many years, and reflected in a several of the new private retreat and resort developments in the region.

Camp Moorecroft would likely rank as one of the most desirable properties in this area, which typically commands land values in the range of \$100,000 to \$200,000 per acre. A much smaller and less attractive adjacent property (under ten acres, with a substantial residence) was on the market in late 2004 for \$1.9 million. Depending on the terms and approach taken, the Camp Moorecroft property would likely have an immediate private "wholesale" value of about \$8

million, or a development-based “retail” value of \$12 million or more. The value may be somewhat discounted if sold with a view to preservation of its natural state.

The Board has indicated that they have failed to keep up to date with filing the official reports required by their status as a Society and a registered charity. There may be some remedial work or penalties arising. In addition, the current condition of many of the buildings on the site must also be considered a public liability, even if unused, especially in view of the lack of adequate custodial supervision or management control.

## **Finances & Staffing**

Many of the people dedicated to Camp Moorecroft have recognized for some time that the facility is significantly under-utilized relative either to its capacity or its potential. In conjunction with the Conference Property Development Committee a long range planning and marketing plan was developed several years ago, and some \$53,000 was invested in the consultancies related to this project. It is difficult to recognize any outcome. “Project 2000” was a capital fundraising campaign based on an apparent undertaking by Presbytery to match up to \$75,000 to be raised by the Camp. The initiative generated about \$20,000, largely from sales of windfall timber from the Camp property.

Camp Moorecroft does not undertake an audit of their accounts. We are unable to report precise or referenced information about the budget and financial operations of Camp Moorecroft, as the Board has declined to share any financial information with this study, and because their public reporting is not up to date. However, given the likely costs of insurance coverage and basic administration, the costs of staffing that has been in place during parts of the year, and revenue and expenditure related to 257 campers, we will suggest a provisional estimate in the range of \$100,000. We are not aware of any outstanding loans or liens.

The financial situation and organizational structure of Camp Moorecroft have made it very difficult for them to attract or retain appropriate, reliable or qualified staff. In recent years there have been various arrangements with part-time management and custodial staff, but as of October 2004 there were no staff at all, and no person resident at the Camp. The new Manager (paid \$17,000 per year – five months full time, seven months half-time) had recently quit, and the resident Caretaker (no pay, free accommodation) had left. The Camp has continued to accept rental bookings, but this would appear to be an untenable situation, both because of the task burden being carried by an already over-stretched Board and because of the high risk to which the Camp is exposed without supervision.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

The current Board of Camp Moorecroft is quite new, except for the Chair who has six years experience. Some of the new Board members have no background with the Camp, and express some uncertainty about their role and the purpose of the Camp. The Board appears to have inherited a difficult legacy of struggle with regard to financial and human resources, accreditation and status, leadership and constituency support. There has been a long-standing experience of a high degree of turnover in Board membership, and it appears that Camp Moorecroft has undergone several iterations of the leadership crisis cycle that has been characteristic of several United Church Camps.

Whatever the reasons may be that underlie it, the record of the relations between Presbytery and the Camp, as demonstrated by the Report of the last Presbytery visitation (2001) and by the actual participation of congregations in the life and work of the Camp, must be deemed to clearly indicate that the Presbytery is either not willing or not able, in practical terms, to support the continued operation of the facility at the level required. Only eight of the 28 congregations in the Presbytery have any form of involvement with the Camp. On the part of the Board, there seems to be a palpable sense of frustration, cynicism and resentment about this aspect of their operation.

## **Vision & Emerging Issues**

Any redevelopment of Camp Moorecroft, for example as a retreat and conference centre, would require substantial capital investment to provide facilities at a reasonable standard, as well as strong leadership, governance capacity and constituency support. Although there may be a general public market for these services, such a facility would need to be able to compete with several other established private operations in the region. It is doubtful that there would be a sufficient United Church – based market to provide more than a small portion of the business required to sustain it, especially if it had to compete internally with other existing or potential United Church centres with established expertise and constituencies (such as Naramata, and to some extent Pringle) or strategic advantage (such as Kwomais).

Still, Camp Moorecroft is an extraordinary property. Aside from their clear dedication to serving children through camping ministry, the Board expresses a high value for the natural assets of the property, and a significant measure of their motivation is drawn from their commitment to preserving and enhancing its natural condition, and ensuring that it is available for the enjoyment and inspiration of future generations, young and old.

**CAMP MOORECROFT**

Assets	Liabilities	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an exceptional and valuable property with significant natural assets</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ facilities in poor condition and requiring substantial investment</li> <li>▪ lack of constituency support or practical commitment to this camping ministry</li> <li>▪ insufficient financial and human resources for necessary staffing and governance tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintain the operation on a status quo basis, providing support to build constituency relations, achieve full accreditation and growth</li> <li>▪ discontinue or sideline operation as a United Church Camp and redevelop for alternate roles by sale of portions of the property</li> <li>▪ discontinue operation as a United Church Camp and sell property for reinvestment in other regional camping and ministry priorities</li> </ul>

**Assessment**

- If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps and the proposed regional approach, Camp Moorecroft would appear to be an inappropriate site for a Vancouver Island-based operation due to the current condition of its facilities and marginal constituency support. Re-development of the property for alternate purposes does not appear viable for the United Church in terms of priority, available financial resources, or potential market.
- The Moorecroft property is of such value that it can generate sufficient funds to finance significant ministries addressing regional and Conference priorities, including contributing substantially to strengthening other camping ministries and providing on-going bursary and training support for participation by children and youth in camping opportunities.
- The Mission and original intention of Camp Moorecroft should be honoured by seeking to preserve the property in its natural condition in perpetuity for the benefit of the general public. BC Conference should enter into discussions with potential partners or purchasers, such as the Province or Regional District, perhaps in association with The Land Conservancy or other community organization, with a view to entering into a covenanted sale of the property as a park or protected area.

## 3.9 CAMP PRINGLE

### Description

Camp Pringle (motto: “*quality caring leadership*”) is located on Shawnigan Lake, about 50 km north of Victoria and about 100 km south of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. It is easily accessible by car on paved, publicly maintained roads. The Camp consists of approximately 18 acres (verification required), including pleasant woodland, a number of open field areas, and a well-developed secure lakefront. The terrain is mostly level or gently sloping, and generally manageable for persons with moderate physical disabilities. Camp Pringle is one of the very few United Church Camps that specifically and explicitly welcomes people with economic and special needs in their promotional materials. Some 27% of campers received bursary support.

Camp Pringle is bordered by a day-use provincial park (120 picnic sites) on one side and private residences on small acreages on the other. Shawnigan Lake is a well established recreational, resort and retirement community, but largely retains its rural character. There are several other camps within the general region of Camp Pringle, as well as a wide array of family holiday options. There is a United Church in the community and the minister serves on the Camp Board. The nearest United Church Camp is Camp Moorecroft, less than two hours drive north.

The Camp’s facilities include a number of substantial, year-round buildings, including lodge-style residences and a multi-level dining/meeting hall in good condition, in addition to a range of more rustic cabins and other amenities and equipment oriented toward the summer camping operations. These are insured at a replacement value of more than \$1,865,000. Camp Pringle has a capacity to accommodate about 50 persons year-round, and an additional 70 campers during the summer program.

### Mission & Usage

The Mission of Camp Pringle is: “*to provide opportunities for children, youth, adults and families, to experience a closer relationship to God, themselves, other people, and the natural world. We believe that God wants us to be whole persons, and we seek to help campers have fun and develop mentally, physically, socially and spiritually. We express spirituality through role modeling and leadership, and by expressing community, caring and acceptance in all our camping activities.*” Camp Pringle also has an explicit set of core values, and these are stated in their public promotional materials.

In addition, their main brochure includes the following information about the spiritual dimension of their camp program: “*The United Church values inclusiveness and diversity, and welcomes campers of all backgrounds to Camp Pringle. We respect the beliefs and backgrounds of all participants, and share the stories, music and community of our own Christian community. Campers participate in Faith Exploration sessions, where they explore our camp theme in interactive discussions and activities. We also greet and close the day with songs, activities and reflections which encourage campers to reflect on the significance of their camping experience.*” About 22% of campers have a United Church identity or background, and Camp Pringle is therefore recognized as “*an important outreach ministry for Victoria Presbytery*”.

Camp Pringle received full accreditation (achieving 100% of the Mandatory Standards, and 92.4% of the Desired Standards) from the General Council in 2004.

Camp Pringle operates year-round, including its own retreat programs as well as hosted or rental events for adults as well as youth. The summer church camp program operates throughout July and August, including ten age or activity-based camps of from five to seven days duration, in addition to four youth leadership training programs.

The summer programs operate at about 85% of capacity, and fees typically run at between \$55 and \$75 per day, all inclusive before bursaries or discounts. Participants: 2002 – 677; 2003 – 676; 2004 – 666. It is the most heavily subscribed of the United Church Camps in BC, and also charges the highest fees. Camp Pringle does not promote its programs in Nanaimo or beyond on Vancouver Island in order not to interfere with Camp Moorecroft.

## **Ownership & Liability**

Camp Pringle is owned by the Victoria Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, and it operates consciously as a Presbytery Ministry. This status appears to be fully recognized by the Presbytery as well, and is reflected in financial support and active participation in governance structures. The most recent Presbytery Visitation took place over the course of two days in June 2004. The Constitution is of standard form, but is not in conformity with Appendix IV of The Manual in relation to borrowing powers and other financial matters.

As always, property values in relation to a camp are difficult to assess as they must take into account a number of factors. As a point of reference, however, lakefront property with improvements on Shawnigan Lake is generally valued at \$650,000 to \$1 million per acre. Members of the Camp Pringle Board consider that the property would command a market value of between \$10 million and \$15 million. Camp Pringle has no outstanding loans or liens.

## **Finances & Staffing**

Camp Pringle has an annual operating budget of approximately \$420,000. It generally runs a balanced budget or close thereto. About 16% of revenue is derived from donations, grants, fundraising projects, and endowment income. Camp Pringle has cash assets (GICs) of approximately \$60,000.

Camp Pringle has three full-time staff: the Executive Director, the Property Manager/Custodian, and the Registrar. About 20 other staff are hired on a seasonal or part-time basis.

## **Governance & Community Relations**

The Board and Management of Camp Pringle are clear about their role, professional in their functions, and well representative of and connected with their constituency. They operate with a clear and coherent Mission, and clearly apply it to their life and work as an organization. They are intentional in analyzing and undertaking systematic evaluation of their performance.

They describe themselves first as a “presbytery ministry” and then as a “camp” – and they are clearly actively supported. The extent of Camp Pringle’s hosted and rental program is a clear indicator of the healthy constituency community relations they enjoy: 11 United Church congregational events; 13 events of other denominations; 20 school groups; 19 other faith or community groups. Camp Pringle is able to confidently offer good quality programs in well maintained facilities, and to operate with a future-oriented plan that they are actively implementing.

## **Vision & Emerging Issues**

BC Conference and the United Church should be proud of the work carried out by Camp Pringle. Perhaps the key challenge faced by Camp Pringle is managing capacity and increased demand.

Although the Camp's facilities are in relatively good condition, the infrastructure (roofs, plumbing and septic systems, etc) is aging and capacity will likely need to be expanded in a number of areas. These needs will require significant capital investment (in the range of \$500,000) in the course of the next five to ten years.

**CAMP PRINGLE**

Assets	Liabilities	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an attractive and valuable established property with well-established facilities designed for church camping operations</li> <li>▪ professional staff and governance resources with community credibility</li> <li>▪ clear recognition by and integration with mission of constituency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ capital investment needs for infrastructure and capacity development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintain status quo operation and provide support for capital needs as appropriate</li> <li>▪ expand mission and capacity to serve as the United Church Camp for the entire Island, with support for partnership with and participation from Comox-Nanaimo</li> </ul>

**Assessment**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Camp Pringle offers a standard of care and quality of operation that should be expected more generally in the United Church Camping in BC. Camp Pringle demonstrates that with clear intention, strong mission-focus, targeted marketing and carefully nurtured community relations it is possible to build an effective and viable camping ministry.</li> <li>▪ If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps and the proposed regional approach, Camp Pringle would appear to be the most appropriate site with multi-season facilities and access to serve the needs and mission of the United Church on Vancouver Island.</li> <li>▪ This would require some investment in Camp Pringle to increase its capacity (about 10%), expand its bursary endowments, and to project a regional identity and mandate. This would involve an investment in facilities and organizational development up to \$1.15 million.</li> <li>▪ BC Conference should propose and convene a decision-making process involving all relevant parties in Victoria and Comox-Nanaimo Presbyteries with a view to consolidating their camping ministries in one location, with the recommendation that this be Camp Pringle, and to develop appropriate mechanisms for effectively supporting participation in Camping programs by children and youth from the northern half of Vancouver Island.</li> </ul>
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### 3.10 ROCK LAKE CAMP

#### Description

Rock Lake Camp of the United Church is located near Elko in the east Kootenays, approximately 60 km east of Cranbrook and 40 km west of Fernie. It is situated in an isolated area, and is accessible by a gravel road off Hwy 3. The property consists of some 480 acres, largely forested and with extensive lake frontage on the small but private Rock Lake. The Camp's main promotional brochure describes the property as "*a recreational jewel ... ideally designed (by nature and man) for a most fulfilling 'camp' experience.*"

The operating season of Rock Lake Camp extends from mid-May through mid-October. The Camp comprises about 15 buildings, including a meeting hall, a dining hall, and half a dozen cabins. Some buildings are winterized, and they are listed at a total insured value of \$460,000. The facilities are simple, but well maintained and in good condition. The Camp has a capacity to accommodate about 60 people. Rock Lake Camp is the only United Church Camp in the east Kootenays. Other camps. There are numerous forest service campsites in the area, as well as the Kikomun Provincial Park with some 700 public campsites.

#### Mission & Usage

Rock Lake Camp does not have its own particular, defined Mission. In the Camp's public and other materials, reference is made to the rationale for outdoor ministries set out in the camping materials on the national United Church website. "*We believe that valuable spiritual and recreational experiences can be obtained in the outdoor wilderness retreat setting, removed from the everyday cares and routines of life, in the company of others who are seeking recreation and recreation in the truest sense.*" Similarly, the purposes of the Camp as set out in the Constitution are derived from these sources.

The Board understands its constituency as: "*Anyone of any age or denomination interested in spiritual growth in a natural setting. All those who have an appreciation for the wonders of the outdoors for education, enjoyment and reflection. God often communicates with and reveals himself to us in an outdoor setting. Youth clubs, at risk youth groups, elementary and middle schools, families (reunions and weddings).*" Rock Lake Camp did not meet the minimum standards (achieved 73.5% of Mandatory Standards, 63.7% of Desired Standards – this was the lowest rating among the United Church Camps in BC) and was not accredited by the General Council in 2004.

Rock Lake Camp generally offers one or two weeks of summer camp programming per year, in addition to a leadership training session at the beginning of the summer. Participants: 2002 – 44 (plus 18 in leadership event); 2003 – 55 (plus 36 in leadership event); 2004 – 52 (plus 6 in leadership event). Church camp programming appears primarily to have been based in or undertaken by one congregation (Cranbrook United Church) but recently the Board has been increasingly assuming more direct responsibility in this aspect of the operations.

The Camp also offers itself as a rental facility, and in 2004 this function included one Presbytery workshop, two Baptist groups, six youth clubs, two school groups and five family events. In addition, Rock Lake Camp operates as a commercial day-use park and campground for public use, with 30 RV/campsites and toilets, change rooms and other amenities adjacent to the residential camp itself. The campground sites are largely let as an annual rental, and the Board

intends to increase the campground by five sites in 2005 as a means of increasing revenue. It is estimated that the Camp was used by approximately 600 children through all of these activities or enterprises. The Camp's location near the eastern edge of Kootenay Presbytery makes it physically marginal to the main base of its potential constituency and must be seen as a serious limitation in terms of its ability to expand participation.

## Ownership & Liability

Rock Lake Camp is owned by the BC Conference ("Property Development Council"). The Constitution of the Rock Lake United Church Camp Society indicates that the Camp is "*operated for the Kootenay Presbytery*". However, the Constitution does not conform in many respects to the general standards recommended under the Society Act of BC, nor does it address any of the issues related to accountability, financial activities, or ownership as prescribed by Appendix IV of The Manual for Societies or agencies operating under the auspices of the United Church.

It is very difficult to assess, even in broad terms, the financial value of the property. Undeveloped rural acreage in this part of the east Kootenays is generally valued at between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per acre, depending on timber values and other factors. Given that this property is partly developed, essentially includes its own private lake, various buildings and amenities suitable for general usage, it should be assumed that the property would command a certain premium. Estimated on a conservative basis simply on general land values, then, it is not unreasonable to consider a property value of \$1 to \$2 million. This figure is suggested for discussion purposes only; it is based on consultation with real estate agents but appraisal by a local professional is required.

## Finances & Staffing

Rock Lake Camp has not undertaken an audit of its finances. The Camp appears to have an annual operating budget of approximately \$40,000, of which about 80% relates to the commercial campground and rental activities. Although donation and fundraising income was budgeted for \$5,000 in 2003, less than 30% of this target was achieved. This is seen by the Board as an indicator of "self-sufficiency". The Camp realized a deficit for the year roughly equivalent to the variance in donations (-\$3,500), but has cash reserves of about \$15,000 available. Rock Lake Camp has no outstanding debts.

Rock Lake Camp has no permanent staff. A caretaker is resident year-round and contracted to work full-time for six months to prepare, maintain and "*operate the Camp, Campground and Beach*". A number of persons are provided with honoraria for leadership and work associated with the summer program week(s).

## Governance & Community Relations

Board ("Rock Lake Camp Committee") membership is drawn fairly widely from Fernie to Creston. The Constitution originally provided for representation from all pastoral charges in the region, but this apparently was not realized and did not produce a sufficient basis for effective operations. A number of pastoral charges declined to participate, and the Constitution was revised in 2003 to allow for additional non-voting members from some pastoral charges, and further revised in 2004 to simply allow for membership by any "willing participants".

The report of the Presbytery visitation to the Camp in 2003 draws particular attention to the many resignations from the Board during that year, and was concerned about the organizational capacity of the Camp “to the point that we believe there is a crisis around leadership and human resources”. The visitation committee stressed the need for the Board to develop healthier relations with the various levels of the Church concerned with camping ministry, and that the development and management of the Camp’s public relations strategy not be left to the work of the caretaker. They also enjoined pastoral charges to support the Board.

Communications with the Board in the course of this study have been difficult, and at times strained. Mail was returned-to-sender, e-mail unanswered, and phone messages not returned. A site visit was eventually arranged, but due to bereavement and a series of misunderstandings it did not occur. The Board expresses a keen sense of isolation and independence, and a measure of resentment. They describe relations with the United Church, no doubt to some degree of accuracy, as: “Benign neglect, talk the talk and request paperwork to be in order but no financial or practical support”.

### **Vision & Emerging Issues**

The Board also expresses concern at the aging of United Church congregations and a passion for church camping. *“It is a great way to teach all age groups about God and the church. More than ever people need a haven in a heartless world, a place of serenity, peacefulness and unconditional acceptance. ... We believe that camps are the best outreach that we have. We have lost the teens and young adults and will never get them back with the same old programs labeled ‘new’. Our only hope is to interest people while they are young (like churches used to do) and a Vacation Bible Camp is the best vehicle to do this. ... We must stop looking at ‘investment’ in dollars and start looking at ‘investment’ in terms of souls. Like all church committees, camp Boards are feeling isolated, frustrated and consequently are having trouble attracting people. The only way that camps can survive is for the local boards to become strong and committed. Members who grew up in the United Church attended camps as a child then went on to be a counselor. These camps are needed in our day and age to allow children to do the same.”*

A number of leaders in Kootenay Presbytery have privately expressed to this study their concern about the role, function and viability of Rock Lake Camp. They have also expressed interest in exploring alternatives used for the facility to serve what they regard as the priority mission and ministry needs of the United Church in this regional ministry – notably the need to provide training and support for rural, isolated and financially marginal pastoral charges. In discussion, they generally tend to accept that their focus on the camp as a potential means of addressing these needs is largely because they see it as a real and under-utilized local asset, and they also tend to recognize that envisioning alternate uses for the Camp as a facility may not be the most appropriate focus for their concerns. However, their concerns remain real and unresolved.

**ROCK LAKE CAMP**

Assets	Liabilities	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a valuable private property with a well maintained physical infrastructure</li> <li>▪ commercial sidelines that a stable income base for a low-to-modest level of operations</li> <li>▪ a high level of commitment on the part of a core leadership group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a lack of leadership capacity and organizational infrastructure</li> <li>▪ isolation from United Church and regional population centres</li> <li>▪ serious concern about the overall proportion of the camp’s non-charitable activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintain the operation on a status quo basis, providing support to achieve accreditation and growth</li> <li>▪ strengthen the role of the Camp in the Presbytery in providing region-wide services</li> <li>▪ discontinue operation as a United Church Camp and sell property for reinvestment in other regional camping, mission and ministry priorities</li> </ul>

**Assessment**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The commitment and dedication of the core leadership should be recognized, respected, and appreciated. Nevertheless, it seems apparent that there is insufficient leadership and human resource capacity within the broader United Church constituency in the region, and possibly an insufficient market base, to responsibly sustain the operation a camping institution.</li> <li>▪ Furthermore, the achievement of less than 75% of the mandatory standards for accreditation in the United Church indicated that substantial investment and development will be required simply to operate within the next two years. “Trying harder” does not appear to be a viable approach in this circumstance. Concerned parties should be invited to embrace this reality rather than engage it as a basis for further blame or struggle.</li> <li>▪ While there is nothing wrong and much to be admired in optimizing the commercial potential of the property to underwrite mission-based activities, the negligible level of camp programming relative to non-charitable activities raises legal as well as ethical concerns. Neither owning property, in and of itself, nor operating a commercial campground or rental facility is a “core business” of the United Church, and is not sufficient justification for investment in an operation without a demonstrably meaningful level of ministry related activity.</li> <li>▪ If the United Church in BC is committed to operating camping ministries in the future, and pending decisions in relation to other Camps and the proposed regional approach, Rock Lake Camp would appear to be an inappropriate site for a Kootenay-based operation due to its location at the margin of its constituency territory. Professional appraisal of the property should be undertaken, with a view to sale of Rock Lake Camp for re-investment in regional camping and other ministry priorities, including support for participation by children and youth in camping opportunities.</li> </ul>
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## 4. Conclusion & Recommendations

### 4.1 Strategic Framework

The Terms of Reference for this study calls for a strategic framework for a United Church outdoor ministry program in BC that is financially sustainable and characterized by:

Mission Orientation

*Church camping ministries will reflect the broader mission of the church as identified by BC Conference. It is to be part of an integrated approach to working toward healthy congregations, effective leadership and faithful public witness.*

Excellence

*Camping ministries will be characterized by high quality in programming, facilities, and values.*

Accessibility

*Camping ministries will be as physically and financially accessible as possible to the whole of BC Conference.*

Longevity

*Camping ministries will be planned and structured in such a way as to ensure that they have a long range future.*

This study concludes that the various needs and factors considered, the financial and human resources available, and the requirements set out by the Terms of Reference, indicate that a regionally based model would be the most efficient and effective means of providing this objective. This envisions the “establishment” of three to four United Church Camps, each operating with a regional mandate and within a structural framework of oversight and strategic direction at a Conference level in partnership with the supervising Presbyteries. The number of camps proposed is based on the analysis of optimal capacity presented in section 2.2 above.

It is proposed that the regional model be established on the basis of the following geographic regions:

- Vancouver Island – the capacity and facilities of Camp Pringle should be enhanced to serve the outdoor ministry needs of both Victoria and Comox-Nanaimo Presbyteries, as well as children and youth in Prince Rupert, Cariboo and Kootenay Presbyteries;
- Lower Mainland – Camp Fircom should be thoroughly re-developed to serve the outdoor ministry needs of Van. Burrard, Van. South, Fraser and Westminster Presbyteries, as well as children and youth in Prince Rupert, Cariboo and Kootenay Presbyteries;
- Central Interior – the capacity and facilities of Camp Grafton should be developed to serve the outdoor ministry needs of Kamloops-Okanagan Presbytery and the south Cariboo, as well as children and youth in Prince Rupert, Cariboo and Kootenay Presbyteries.

It is proposed that Cultus Lake Camp will continue to operate in medium-term, and would also be able to provide for the outdoor ministry needs of the Lower Mainland, particularly during a transitional period. Further, most people in BC Conference will appreciate that “the Interior” is a

region only from the perspective of “the Coast”. Consideration should be given to the possibility of developing Camp Koolaree as a fourth regional facility, if the significant existing obstacles can be reasonably overcome.

The regional Camps proposed would offer a diversity of wilderness environments and program opportunities. It is assumed that each regional Camp would be open to participation of children and youth from throughout the Conference. In addition, as ministries of the United Church in BC, it is understood that “outdoor ministry needs” is intended to encompass both congregation-focused and outreach-oriented functions. It is envisioned that this regionally-based outdoor ministry program would need to be supported by a comprehensive system including:

- a. a common policy framework, defining Mission, Purpose, Beneficiaries, and other primary standards;
- b. a systematic oversight responsibility vested in an appropriately equipped and authoritative body;
- c. a prescribed governance structure that is coherent with and accountable to the supervising court;
- d. a capacity in each Camp to operate on a year-round basis, and to accommodate 100 people;
- e. adequate staffing for each Camp, at a minimum level of an Executive Director and a resident Custodian;
- f. standardized and mandatory training programs for all Board members and persons involved in providing hospitality or leadership, coordinated as appropriate with Conference governance and youth ministry training programs;
- g. a permanent endowment to provide financial assistance for participants from throughout the Conference.

## **4.2 Mission, Purpose & Beneficiaries**

Although it is implicit in the Terms of Reference, this study proposes that Conference take formal action to re-confirm its recognition and support for church camping as a core ministry of the United Church in BC.

It is proposed that new, regional Boards of Directors will be established for each of the Camps, and that they will be responsible for developing Mission Statements for their respective Camps for approval by the Conference Executive. The Mission Statements will reflect the distinctive role and identity of each Camp, considering their different contexts and primary constituencies.

It is also proposed that the Mission Statements and other policies adopted by each Camp will be guided by certain common understandings in relation to the purpose and intended beneficiaries of outdoor ministries.

The regional Camps, and outdoor ministry more generally, may serve a number of valid and important purposes, such as in relation to adult education, leadership development, or community service. However, it is proposed that the primary purpose of the Camps and outdoor ministry in BC be recognized as:

- To provide an opportunity for children and youth to experience the sacred in themselves and in the natural environment;
- To provide an opportunity for children and youth to experience an encounter with Christ that leads to discipleship;
- To experience participation in a safe, residential and recreational Christian community.

The operative term here is “primary”. This is not to suggest that there are not other important purposes to be served by outdoor ministry, such as leadership development, but to recognize that these are secondary and may be addressed as a priority by other programs.

Similarly, when it comes to strategic planning, “everyone” can often end up meaning “no-one”! Recognizing that the Camps and outdoor ministries may appropriately serve a number of different sectors or beneficiary groups, it is proposed that the United Church Camps in BC:

- Are primarily intended to serve children and youth (ages 8-18) related to United Church congregations;
- And will not fail to be accessible to persons children and youth from low-income families, or who have other special needs.

The operative term here is “primarily”. This is not to suggest the exclusion of other important beneficiaries, such as young adults or families, but to recognize that these are secondary and may be more appropriately addressed as a ministry priority by other programs.

### 4.3 Policy & Governance

Given the diversity of ownership of the United Church Camps in BC, and wide range of stakeholders, implementation of the proposed regional model will require broad-based commitment, cooperation, and practical partnership. Fortunately, all owners are courts of the United Church and should have a strong basis for recognizing and supporting a shared mission.

In view of the diffuse nature of authority in relation to outdoor ministry in the United Church generally, a key element of this proposal is the clear definition and vesting of authority for the Camps in a more centralized and coordinated manner. Given the Conference-wide approach and the regional orientation of the proposed model, it is recommended that Conference be responsible for the definition of mission, strategic direction, standard setting (including ministry objectives), oversight and evaluation of the regional Camps – in effect, that BC Conference be recognized as the “owner” of the new Camps in policy governance terms.

It is proposed that operational management of the new Camps vested in strong, regionally-based Boards, with membership drawn from the full primary service area of each Camp.

Legal ownership of the Camp properties per se need not be altered. It is assumed that the new regional Camps will retain their original names. It is recommended that BC Conference invite all Presbyteries to undertake to support the proposed collective approach to outdoor ministry in BC, and to initiate decision-making processes involving all parties as indicated in the individual Camp assessments in Section 3.

## 4.4 Finance & Property

Simply putting the proposed model into effect, let alone ensuring that it is sustainable for the longer term, will require significant investment of financial resources. BC Conference is fortunate in that substantial assets exist within the current framework of the Camps, sufficient to fund this and other ministry initiatives. Long-term sustainability is not something that can be guaranteed, but the proposed model would appear to provide this ministry with a very firm foundation.

### 4.4.1 Cost of Proposal

This study proposes the reduction in the number of United Church Camps in BC from ten to three, possibly four. It is proposed that the following Camps will be maintained, re-oriented to serve a regional constituency, and their capacity enhanced and their facilities improved. The associated costs are as follows:

<i>Camp</i>	<i>Investment Required (estimates)</i>
<b>Fircom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of new / refurbished facilities: approximately \$ 1.5 million</li> <li>▪ Financing for 2-year transition &amp; organizational re-development: \$225,000</li> </ul>
<b>Grafton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of new / refurbished facilities: approximately \$ 1.2 million</li> <li>▪ Organizational development &amp; transition: \$50,000</li> </ul>
<b>Pringle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of new / refurbished facilities: approximately \$ 1.1 million</li> <li>▪ Organizational development &amp; transition: \$50,000</li> </ul>
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Approximately \$ 4.125 million</b>

These are assumed to be one-time costs, and that the new regional Camps will be established with valid business plans, be based on market-related fees for service, and that operating budgets will be designed to cover operating and on-going capital expenditure. If it was determined that Camp Koolaree also should be retained and re-developed, an additional \$ 1.25 million would be required (as well as an additional \$ 1 million for endowment investment to provide for on-going functions – see below).

In addition, the proposal calls for the establishment of permanent staffing for each of the Camps, provision for training and oversight, and funds to provide support for participants. It is assumed that these would be continuing annual costs.

<i>Function</i>	<i>Estimate Rationale</i>	<i>Annual Cost</i>
<b>Staffing</b>	Assume half of position costs for 3 FTE (ED) @ \$ 55,000 and 3 FTE (CT) @ \$ 40,000 (other half from operations)	<b>\$ 142,500</b>

<b>Training</b>	Assume partial support for training involving 60 young adult leaders and 30 Board members = 90 @ \$ 200	<b>\$ 18,000</b>
<b>Oversight</b>	Assume .25 FTE Conference staff @ \$ 60,000, committee costs and annual meeting @ \$ 10,000	<b>\$ 25,000</b>
<b>Participant Support</b>	Assume that sponsorship by congregations and agencies will continue as present, supporting up to 20% of participants. Assume need to provide assistance to an additional 20% (500) of participants @ \$ 200.	<b>\$ 100,000</b>
<b>Total Cost</b>	(initial capital investment required for endowment fund)	<b>\$ 285,500 (\$ 5.4 million)</b>

As annual recurring costs, we assume there is a need to establish a secure source of revenue for the long-term to fund these functions. The funds required for investment in an endowment operated in the basis of the current BC Conference benchmarks, including provision for maintenance and growth of the capital, would be approximately \$ 5.4 million.

In addition, the existing Camps have outstanding contracted liabilities of approximately \$ 320,000 that will need to be resolved (most of this, of course, is owed to BC Conference), and a further potential liability related to the restoration of Cultus Lake, possibly in the amount of \$ 150,000, that will need to be provided for (total liability: \$ 470,000). The total cost of implementing the proposed regional model, creating three high quality Camp facilities with a secure, professional infrastructure, will be approximately \$ 10 million. The proposed approach also has the merit of maintaining more than 50% of the investment in a secure capital endowment.

**Summary of Costs:**

Development & Transition:	\$ 4,125,000
Camping Operations Endowment:	\$ 5,400,000
Resolution of Liabilities:	\$ 470,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 9,995,000</b>

#### 4.4.2 Funding of Proposal

This study proposes the reduction in the number of United Church Camps in BC from ten to three, possibly four. It is proposed that the following Camps will cease to operate as a United Church Camp, with the disposition of the assets being made available to support the implementation of this plan for the future of outdoor ministry and other ministries reflecting the priorities of the owners.

<i>Camp</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Financial Outcome</i>
<b>Camp Hurlburt</b>	Cease operation as a UC Camp. Recommend Congregation to sell property. Recommendation would be to sell and encourage congregation make a contribution from proceeds to the proposed Conference outdoor ministry endowment for participant support.	Seek to realize \$ 3 million. Encourage TUC to contribute 33% to implement outdoor ministry proposal, and 33% to support other Conference and K-Ok Presbytery priority ministries.
<b>Camp Koolaree</b>	Investigate feasibility for re-development as a regional Camp. Otherwise, cease operation as a UC camp, and sell property.	Seek to realize \$ 3 million. Allocate 75% to implement outdoor ministry proposal, 25% to support other Conference and Kootenay Presbytery priority ministries.
<b>Camp Kwomais</b>	Cease operation as a UC camp. Sever approx 60% of site from the perimeter of the property for lease or sale for development of housing and public amenities. Develop a retreat/conference facility to accommodate approximately 75 persons, with a formal programmatic relationship with Naramata Centre and the Chalmer's Institute. Establish as a Conference Ministry.	Seek to realize approx \$ 7 million from property sale/lease. Allocate up to \$ 4.5 million to Kwomais redevelopment and operating endowment, and \$ 2.5 million to implement outdoor ministry proposal.
<b>Camp Mackenzie</b>	Cease operation as a UC camp. Sell property, possibly to a community-based camping Society.	Seek to realize \$ 1.5 million. Allocate 75% to implement outdoor ministry proposal, 25% to support other Conference and Kamloops-Okanagan Presbytery priority ministries.
<b>Camp Moorecroft</b>	Cease operation as a UC camp. Sell property, preferably as a park, to public authority in association with community-based environmental agency. This would likely mean realizing less than full market potential, but would honour the Camp's key asset and values.	Seek to realize approx \$ 5 million. Allocate 75% to implement outdoor ministry proposal, 25% to support other Conference and C-N Presbytery priority ministries.

<b>Rock Lake Camp</b>	Cease operation as a UC camp. Sell property.	Seek to realize \$ 1.5 million. Allocate 75% to implement outdoor ministry proposal, 25% to support other Conference and Kootenay Presbytery priority ministries.
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This approach allows for the complete funding of the proposed regional model, and includes a provision of a margin of almost 20% for possible errors in relation to estimates of costs, estimation of values, or other eventualities.

It is further proposed that:

- the endowment funds owned by Camp Fircom (\$ 200,000) be dedicated to the implementation of the regional Camp proposal, specifically the endowment to provide participant support;
- any future undesignated bequest or major donation income received by any of the United Church Camps be allocated to the Camping Operations Endowment with a view to liberating funds to support other Conference ministry priorities.

In addition to funding the creation of the three high quality United Church Camp facilities with a secure, professional infrastructure, the funding proposal would result in the potential creation of a major new and self-supporting United Church education and outreach ministry on the Kwomais property, and provide some \$ 4 million to fund other Conference and Presbytery priority ministries.

**Summary of Funding:**

Camp Fircom Endowment Funds:	\$ 200,000
Camp Hurlburt Sale:	\$ 1,000,000
Camp Koolaree Sale:	\$ 2,250,000
Camp Kwomais Re-Development:	\$ 2,500,000
Camp Mackenzie Sale:	\$ 1,125,000
Camp Moorecroft Sale:	\$ 3,750,000
<u>Rock Lake Camp Sale:</u>	<u>\$ 1,125,000</u>

Total: \$ 11,950,000

Allocated to Kwomais Re-development: \$ 4,500,000

Available for other ministry priorities: \$ 4,000,000

Total: \$ 8,500,000

Grand Total: \$ 20,450,000

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## 5. Attachments

### 5.1 Terms of Reference

The contractor will:

1. do a thorough investigation and assessment of the camping ministries and properties under the supervision of BC Conference;
2. prepare a mission plan for the financially sustainable future of a quality camping ministry in BC Conference;
3. after the adoption of the plan (or an amended version), implement the plan.

#### Background

BC Conference has ten camps presently in operation within its bounds. Each of these has an accountability relationship to the Presbytery in which they are located. BC Conference, however, owns the property through the Property Development Council of six of the ten camps. Mission Through Finance, as managers of BC Conference property, has an interest in assuring that properties are being used effectively to enhance the mission of BC Conference. In addition, all the camps, even if the property is not owned by BC Conference, have a direct relationship with BC Conference and would see themselves in some manner accountable to the Conference.

Although each camp is unique and finds itself in a different situation from the others, common to all is a sense of dis-ease. Insurance costs have risen dramatically. Buildings in general are being neglected in order to save money. Safety and health regulations are placing increased burden on finances and managerial expertise. Camping fees have been kept low in order to assure accessibility to camps resulting in difficult financial situations, including an accumulating debt at several major camps. BC camps share many of these problems with camps across the country. At the same time, many of these camps sit on very valuable property, most of which is owned by BC Conference through the Property Development Council. Like many other church ministries, including congregations, our camping ministry is land-rich and cash poor.

For the past two decades discussions have been held about the future of church camping in BC Conference. These have resulted in some improvements in camp programming. No significant actions have been taken, however, which have allowed our camping ministry to develop the infrastructure and financial stability necessary to produce a high quality camping ministry. Deciding to take such actions is difficult because of the strong passions around this ministry by supporters of individual camps, as well as by the conflict between strongly held values about land, property, nature, and the type of community camping provides. The will necessary to make tough decisions in the face of such conflict has been absent in the recent past. The circumstances facing camps named above have now brought about a willingness to take actions which have proved difficult to take in the past.

#### Mission and Goals

Mission:

- to have a financially sustainable, high quality camping program in BC Conference.

Church camping is a proven way of providing Christian nurture, education and training in discipleship for people of all ages, but in particular for children and youth. It is a place of conversion, discovery, and adventure. Church camping at its best provides a taste of Christian lived-community that is hard to duplicate in any other setting. Generations of church leaders can identify key turning points and calls as happening at a camp. Church camping has been, and can be, a significant way the church calls and nurtures faithful disciples and builds community.

Goals:

1. to be clear about the shared mission of camping ministry within BC Conference;
2. to be clear about the role each camp will play in the provision of camping ministry;
3. to take the best advantage of valuable property in order to provide financial security, quality capital infrastructure, and ongoing staff support for a camping ministry based on the Values below.

Values: The outcomes of this work will reflect the following Values:

1. Mission-Orientation  
Church camping ministries will reflect the broader mission of the church as identified by BC Conference. It is to be part of an integrated approach to working toward healthy congregations, effective leadership and faithful public witness.
2. Excellence  
God has richly blessed BC Conference. In response, we offer our best: our skills, resources, and dedication. Our camping ministries will be characterized by high quality in programming, facilities, and values.
3. Accessibility  
Camping ministries will be as physically and financially accessible as possible to the whole of BC Conference.
4. Longevity  
Camping ministries will be planned and structured in such a way as to ensure that they have a long range future.

**Milestones**

Phase One (March – September 2004):

Contractor plans and carries out the investigation and assessment, in consultation with existing camps and related ministries, the Executive Secretary, appropriate Conference committees and presbyteries and other interested parties. A written plan outlining the process of the investigation and assessment will be presented to the Executive Secretary by March 31, 2004.

Written progress reports will be made submitted to the Executive Secretary by May 1, 2004 and September 15, 2004.

Phase Two (October – mid November 2004):

Preparation and presentation to the Executive Secretary of a report containing a mission plan for church camping in BC Conference. The plan would include:

- clear mission for church camping in BC Conference;
- proposal(s) for the use of the land assets of BC Conference camps to provide financial assets for the further implementation of the plan;
- plan for the use of each camp property;
- plan for the continuing staff support and other support for church camping in BC Conference;

- recommendations for the improvement of the governance of church camps;
- clarification of the relationship of the camping ministry to other ministries, particularly closely related ones (such as retreat centres, education centres, etc.);
- identification of ongoing issues and future decisions related to church camping.

Phase Three (mid November – December 2004):

Decision-making led by the Executive Secretary involving Mission Through Finance, presbyteries, and other appropriate bodies; discussion with the contractor to develop a final plan begins.

Phase Four (January – December 2005):

Implementation of the plan by the contractor and Executive Secretary.

## **Expectations**

### Owners and Stakeholders

It is expected that the recommendations presented by the contractor will be his best wisdom on the issues at hand. It is *not* expected that the contractor will seek to build consensus among owners and/or stakeholders. It is expected that the contractor will make every effort to consult appropriate owners and stakeholders in order to gain enough information, analysis and opinion to make informed and defensible recommendations. It is expected that the contractor will visit the sites of camps that play a significant role in his recommendations. It is expected that the contractor will consult, at a minimum:

- the presbyteries that supervise camps, the Outdoor Ministry Committee of BC Conference, camp boards and Executive Directors;
- camp property holders;
- appropriate national United Church camping personnel;
- persons or groups with expertise in camping or related residential ministries.

### Property

It is expected that the contractor will investigate and clarify the legal standing of the camp properties, noting any liens, legal or moral obligations that may encumber the use of the property. It is expected that such findings will be accounted for in any recommendations presented by the contractor. It is expected that the contractor will consult with appropriate legal authorities, developers, potential buyers, or others interested in the camp properties in order to determine the most beneficial use of the properties to further the Goals above.

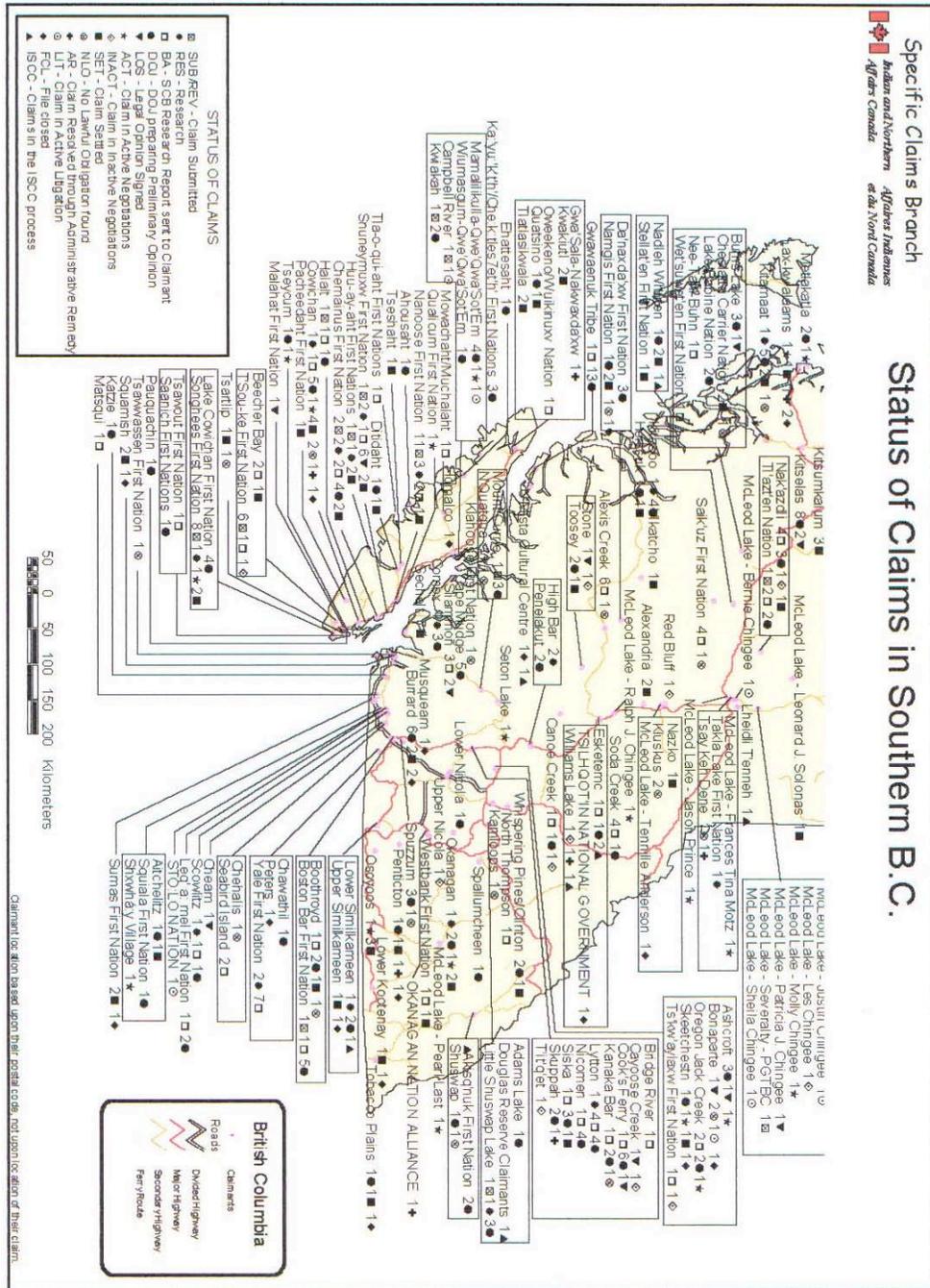
### First Nations

It is expected that the contractor will investigate any legitimate claims of First Nations on camp properties and that those claims will be taken into consideration in any recommendations.

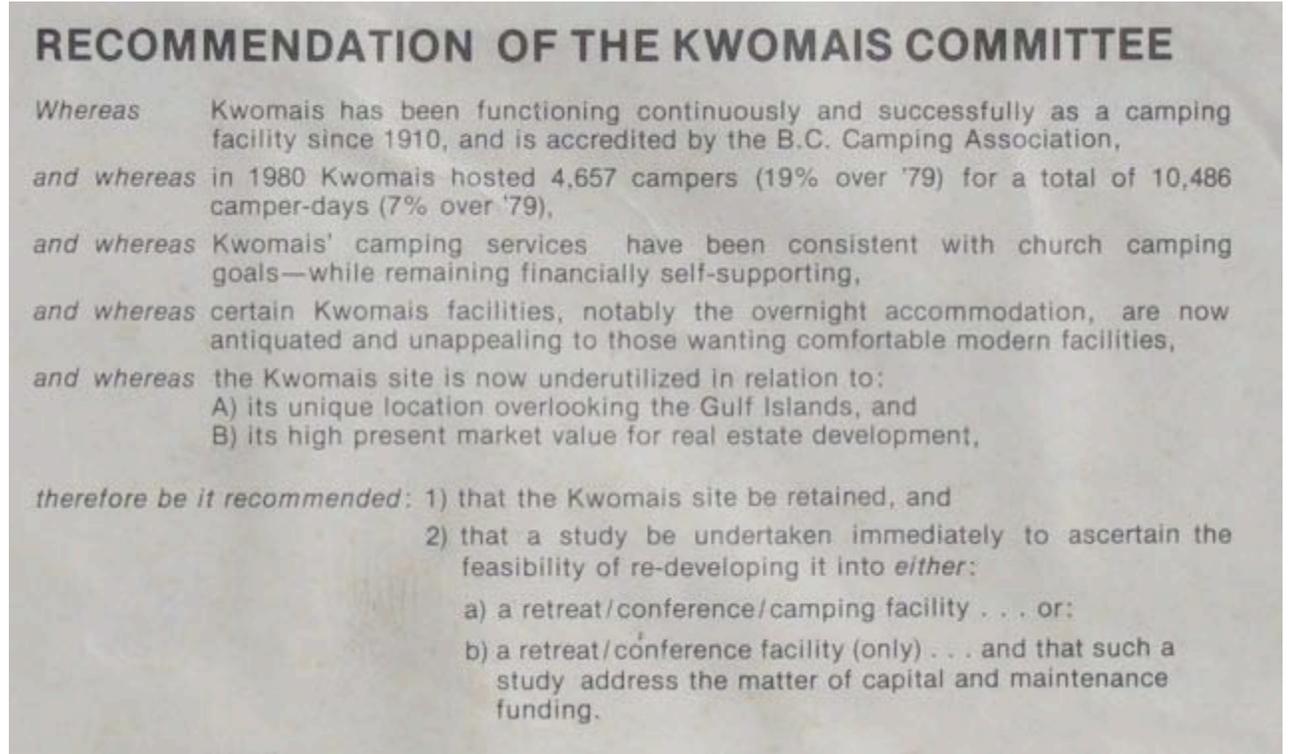
### Investigation and Assessment

It is *not* expected that the contractor will investigate or assess the present ministries of the camps except insofar as such assessment might help determine the potential future place of the camp in the BC Conference camping ministry.

## 5.2 Aboriginal Land Claims Map



### 5.3 Kwomais 1981 Appeal



### 5.4 Appreciations

Finally, the author of this study would like to express sincere gratitude for the kindness and cooperation of all who have been involved in this study.

The encouragement and support of Susan Lindenberger, Foster Freed and Daryl Auten, Conference Presidents past, present and future, has been deeply appreciated. The direction, good guidance and respect for independence provided by Doug Goodwin, Conference Executive Secretary, and the assistance and patience of Nan Koldewijn, Conference Executive Assistant, has always been clear, prompt and helpful.

The cooperation and courtesy of the Camp Boards and Executive Staff has been courageous and inspiring. We are grateful for the commitment and generosity of the many people who contributed their views and shared their experience, and of those who offered practical and professional help simply because they cared, notably Jane Shaak, and Stuart Lyster.

Blessings on you all!