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- AGM and Visitor's Day info

December 2008

Camp Fircom Society

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2008: a year of growth

What a year! Our property has nearly doubled in size, and we've navigated some complex geographic changes. We've been planning business strategies, and solidifying a vision.

We've forged new relationships that have allowed us to offer our mission in a different way while we undergo this transformation. We are always learning and growing!

We have a score of new neighbours on the island. We have moved into a bigger, more adequate office. We have tuned up and cleaned up the site in some special ways in advance of our major construction. We completed a \$100,000 upgrade of our sewage system.

In many of these endeavours, we have worked alongside the Camp Futures Project and BC Conference: with Terry Harrison, the manager of the Camp Future Project, with two Property Development Managers, Justen Harcourt and Gordon Easton of Colliers International Realty Association. Craig Burns and Greg Johnson, (Marceau Evan Johnson Architects) long-time Fircomites, have been hired by BC Conference to design our buildings. In this way, we are working hard toward a sustainable camping model at Camp Fircom.

Real work is underway to bring Fircom back into full service as soon as possible! Keep current on our most recent projects at Fircom by visiting: www.campfircom.bc.ca/projects.shtml

So what will 2009 hold? Well, take a browse through these pages and find out. We welcome your expertise, your input, and your financial support as we work to solidify Camp Fircom as your camping community.



Fircom circa 1935

Land Gift Doubles Fircom

The Camp Fircom Board and staff are very pleased to announce the completion of a monumental agreement between Camp Fircom, BC Conference of the United Church of Canada, United Church of Canada, and some of Fircom's dearest neighbours: Marguerite, Denys, and Joan Ford.

This year, the Fords made a very generous gift, in the form of a partial trade, partial donation of land to Camp Fircom and the United Church. In exchange for a five acre piece of property, (Jake's Point) the Fords have made a gift of approximately 60 acres, roughly doubling Fircom's size! (map on next page). The agreement ensures that a huge area, contiguous to Camp Fircom, will not be developed privately, and Fircomites will have direct access to an expanded waterfront, new hiking trails, Halkett Bay Marine Park, and The Mount Artaban Nature Reserve, in perpetuity!

This is a huge and amazing gift, and generations of Fircomites to come will have the benefit of a quiet, beautiful site, close to nature.

Marguerite, Denys, and Joan have been wonderful neighbours to Fircom for many years, generously allowing us passage on their land, and we have used it for games, hiking, and playing. Some may know their property very well; if you were to take 30 big paces to the north from Jubilee Hall, or wander across Sunday School Beach to the "helicopter pad", then you would be on their property. (As it turns out, it isn't a "helicopter pad" at all, but a breakwater that Denys built so they could moor their boat.)

Continued on next page...

To join our email newsletter list, please email: info@campfircom.bc.ca

fircom footsteps

75 Fircomites blow the lid off of Jubilee!

Our Annual Visitor's Day Picnic at Fircom was truly a memorable day. Past staff and leaders cooked up a great event for 75 guests from the extended Fircom community.

A highlight was the first-hand stories from Fircomites who had been to Fircom as campers, leaders and staff in the 30's, 50's, and 1960's!

Welcome back to John, Nell, and Babe, many thanks for sharing your experiences with us!

Please join us for our next Visitor's Day on June 20, 2009. Registration will open in January.



What I learned at Fircom
that I probably wouldn't have learned anywhere else
(a list, by Joel Thygesen)

1. If you want to be a hero: circumnavigate Gambier Island.
2. A fern held in front of your face renders you invisible.
3. TaterTots are a precious natural resource.
4. Upper Jube is a percussion instrument.
5. A perimeter of PFDs and paddles should, in theory, protect your sleeping, gaping mouth from slugs.
6. With a little imagination, Out-trip food can be turned gourmet.
7. The Benches are a nexus for life-altering events.

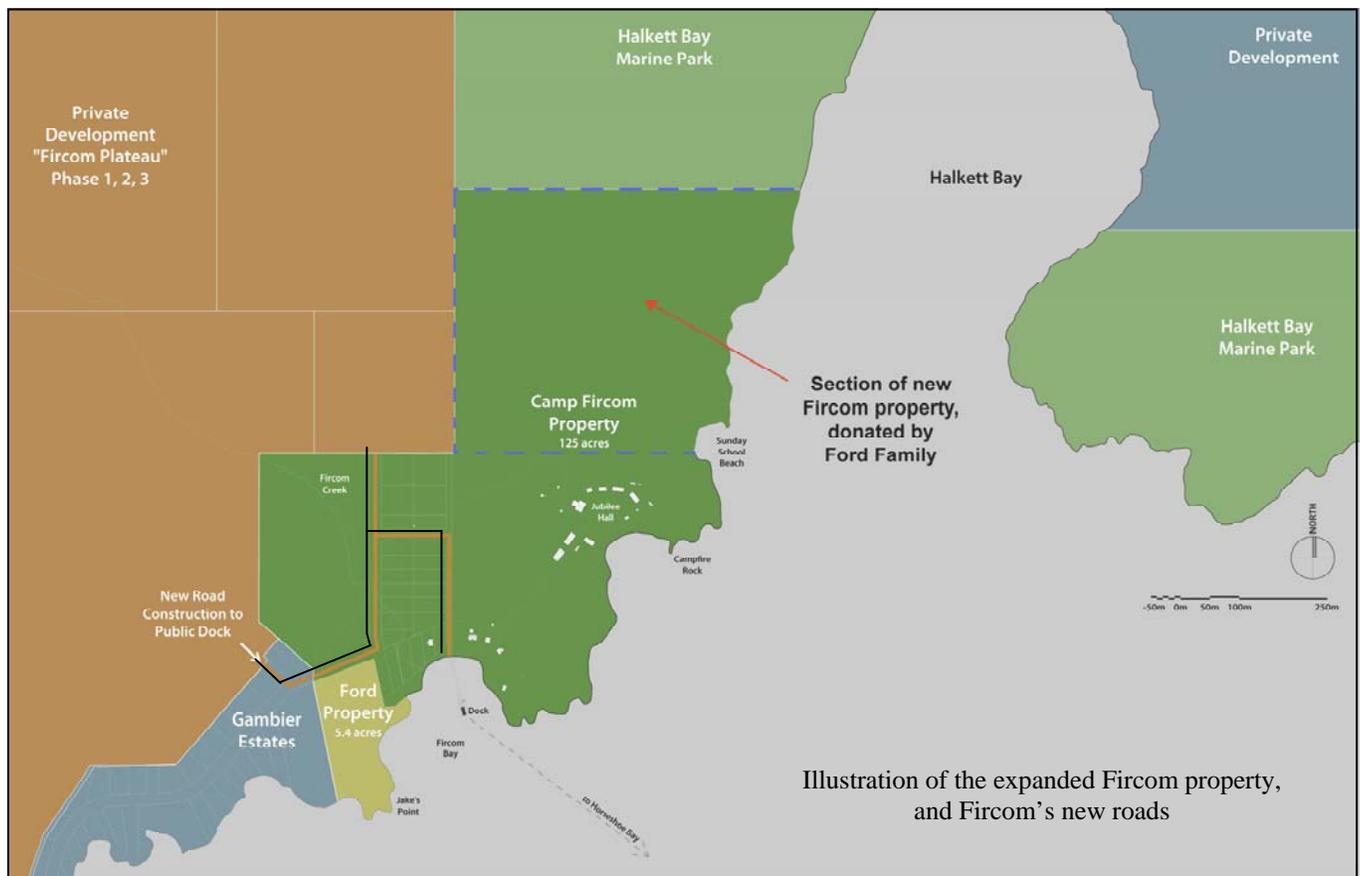


Illustration of the expanded Fircom property, and Fircom's new roads

Ford Gift, continued

At one point, the Fords owned most of Halkett Bay, and some years ago, they donated that land to the province, for what would become the "Halkett Bay Marine Park" where we canoe, hike, and picnic.

Camp Fircom honours the Ford family for this amazing gift. They have truly made a huge difference in the future of Fircom's ability to provide great camping experiences and in our ability to imagine future adventures beyond our present dreams!

A dedication and celebration picnic to officially open this property to Camp use, will take place at our next Visitor's Day at Fircom, on June 20, 2009.

All are welcome, please join us!
Registration opens in January.

VICTORY over Waste Woes!

One freezing cold January weekend, there was a flurry of activity at Camp Fircom. After 2 years in design, study, and planning, Camp Fircom installed its new state of the art waste-water disposal system. This is a solution for dealing with our site waste-water that meets the environmental standards of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

This project was integral to the future operation of Camp Fircom, and it is great to have it completed. Installation of the 150 metre pipe was a feat of engineering, design, construction, diving, and environmental monitoring.

Thank You to everyone: contractors, volunteers, and our committed donors for their hard work on this project!

See some pictures of the installation of our new waste-water disposal system:

www.campfircom.bc.ca/projects

Fircom's New Roads

Many Fircom volunteers have worked successfully to bring a positive conclusion to the road development issue. A public road up from our existing dock was inevitable; there have been lines on the map for years (visible in orange on the map on page 2). Due to the increase of development on Gambier, there was immense pressure to have this historical public right of way built. Because of the great efforts from a score of people, we are now assured a safe, well designed public road for access from our property to the Government maintained dock. This road has been designed to meet strict standards for camper safety, long term environmental impact, and addresses parking, drainage, rock stability, and utility supply issues. Special thanks to Jill McIntyre, Wayne Savigny, Craig Burns, Ron Injates, and Margie Savigny for their incredible work on this project!

The benefits of the new road design include:

- transforming our current road access to a vehicle-free footpath: a new 'front door' to welcome campers
- minimizes the impact to the natural waterfront setting when compared to any alternative routes
- Fircom will hold no liability for road, no responsibility for maintenance
- "in-kind" benefits from the development: drainage improvements, security gates, new driveway access, new trees planted
- controlled access to camp property = less traffic + more safety
- neighbours will have more direct access to their properties
- added safety measures like fencing, caution signs, rock bolting, and slope stabilization

Join Us!

Join our dynamic team of caring people, working together to build Camp Fircom. We want you to help us dream big and make it happen!



We are a circus of Teachers, Policemen, Architects, Researchers, Students, Information Systems Analysts, Office Employees, Psychologists, Special Needs Workers, Jugglers, Geological Engineers, Foresters, and Comedians.

We are Campers, Leaders, Staff, Parents, Renters, and people who have only been to Fircom once. We are a variety of ages, and have many talents. We enjoy the outdoors, long walks on the beach, and campfires.

We are seeking individuals with some time to commit, who want to share ideas and talents in a great project.

To offer your support, and to find out where your skills can fit in, please contact Neil at the Camp Fircom Office.



Mark your calendars now for the next...

Camp Fircom Golf Tournament May 26th 2009

Your golf game makes camping possible!

For more info, contact:

info@campfircom.bc.ca



2008 Golf Tournament Raises \$16,000

On May 26th, the Fircom community helped us raise \$16,000 to support our redevelopment work in 2008.

Special thanks to:

COMMONWEALTH INSURANCE
ANONYMOUS FRIENDS of FIRCOM
WENDI VARLEY (Quilchena Golf Club)
COLLIERS INTERNATIONAL REALTY ADVISORS
LYNN VALLEY UNITED CHURCH (MEMBERS)

FLETCHER'S FABRICARE
DR. STEPHEN BRADY
THE GILMORE GIRLS
TD CANADA TRUST
BGC ENGINEERING
APOLLO TRAVEL
JOHN YAP, MLA

Special thanks to the Family of Bruce Sangster, for their donation in appreciation of his life.



Camp Fircom extends a warm thanks all our 2008 supporters!



Dunbar
Heights
United Church

Highlands
United
Church



West Vancouver
United Church
Endowment Fund



BC Conference
United Church Women,
Projects Fund

Will Fircom be open in 2009?

YES!

Camp Fircom has some creative ways that you can get re-involved, as we ramp-up to resume our summer programs. The coming year's programs are designed to encourage YOUR involvement; to create a space for everyone to come to Fircom next summer, without drawing down our resources, while benefitting our community and our site. Please join us for some events! Make sure you are on our email list to receive registration information as it develops.

Camp Fircom Annual General Meeting March 26th, 7:00 PM - Youth Leaders, Parents, and Campers, please join us!! You can play an active and important role in the future of Camp Fircom. This is your camp! Lakeview United Church Thursday, 2776 Semlin Drive, Vancouver. Goodies will be served!

May Retreat May 15-18—This is the awesome retreat for youth in grades 7-12. Leadership is provided by Camp Fircom young adult volunteers, and Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the United Church. Registration opens in February!

Visitor's Day June 20—A great day trip for the whole family! Intergenerational fun, a picnic, a hike, field games, and a campfire! Come visit the site, share stories and see old friends. Help us celebrate the opening of our new property, donated by the Ford family! In 2008 there were 75 people at Fircom for the day! Registration opens in February, and will be announced in our e-newsletter.

Fircom Family Retreat July 10-13— A four day intergenerational family retreat. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles welcome! Canoeing, archery, meals together, hiking, relaxing, and guided project sessions where families can contribute to camp; teach their kids to swing a hammer, help rebuild the outdoor chapel, plant the garden, and make connections with other Fircom families!

Paddle-On! The Ultimate Outtrip (long weekend) September 5-7 —Young adults and old adults, your chance for a great Fircom adventure! Paddle around Gambier Island to raise money for Fircom, enjoy a catered barbecue and an overnight at a remote island location. This is a joint event with Cultus Lake United Church Camp. Details will be released in February in our e-newsletter.



Work Retreats all spring, summer, and fall— A great way to contribute to your camp, and fit in a relaxing retreat at the same time. Groups of 10 –20 people live in the Fircom community for the weekend, cooking and sharing meals together. Each day there is time for canoeing, swimming, reading, meditation, campfires, and free time, and a few Fircom projects, designed to challenge your skills and keep the camp running. Please contact Neil at the Fircom office, and get on the special email list for these events. 18 and older only please, except with parental accompaniment.

Rental User Groups—Fircom invites groups to use the Fircom environment for spring, summer, and fall retreats, meetings, camps, picnics, and family reunions. Please contact the Camp Fircom office for details.

Honouring Beatrice Jane Short

In 2008, Camp Fircom received a generous bequest from long time Fircom supporter,

Beatrice (Bea) Jane Short.

Bea died October 12, 2007 at the age of 94.

Described by her friends as a bright and dynamic woman, Bea lived in West Vancouver her entire life. Along with a 35 year career at West Vancouver Municipal Hall, Bea was an active participant in the West Vancouver United Church and a founding member of the Business and Professional Unit of that congregation. Over the years, Bea was a constant supporter of Camp Fircom and its mission!

She was a frequent guest at Visitor's Days and through the Business and Professional Unit and the Irene Skinner Garden Tea, raised funds to provide summer camperships for children. The value Bea placed on Camp Fircom's role in the lives of children and families is heart-warming. Bea's contribution came at a most crucial time as the Fircom society and the United Church work towards reopening Camp Fircom. All of us who love Fircom are inspired by Bea's generosity. Thank you Bea for a lifetime of service.

New Memories of Camp

Even though Fircom summer programs have been closed for the past few years, the site has been in use by other organizations for their programs. Church youth groups, family reunions, and groups of friends

have all been able to create their own community at camp, share their ideas and their visions for the future of Fircom. These groups have been wonderful to have onsite, as they have not required Fircom staffing costs, and they have made great contributions to the property.

One group that has had a significant impact this year is called **StandUp HQ**, a brand new organization dedicated to providing a "drug-free day" to small groups of Downtown Eastside residents who are dealing with addiction. This innovative program focuses on creating a supportive environment, so participants can contribute and participate in meaningful community life. Fircom is proud to be a part of such a positive initiative, and Fircom has benefited from the hard work of our new friends.



“We are drops of water, in a mighty ocean!”

Together, we can make a great change in Camp Fircom’s ability to offer camping experiences to Children, Families, and Youth!

Please join our monthly giving program, administered by the United Church of Canada.

If you have automatic debits going from your bank account to pay for insurance, cable TV, taxes, fuel, or mortgage, then you understand the PAR principle. It means regular contributions throughout the year.



Many people use the PAR system for their church offering, finding it a convenient way to take care of their regular commitments to the church month by month. Now you can participate in this program, for the benefit of Camp Fircom.

Your account will be debited on or about the 20th of the month and Fircom’s account credited with the amount payable from all members who participate. You may change the details of your contribution at any time by contacting the Camp Fircom Office.

Many thanks for your generous contribution to Camp Fircom! Tax receipts for your contribution amounts will be issued by Fircom and mailed to you at the end of the year.



Three easy steps to get involved:

1. Decide the amount of your monthly offering.
2. Fill in the Authorization Card and attach a sample cheque from your account marked “Sample” or “Void.”
3. Mail Both to Camp Fircom at the address above.
(please note: processing fees for withdrawal by void cheque are less expensive for Fircom than by Credit Card. Please use that option if possible.)

PAR AUTHORIZATION CARD

I hereby request and authorize:

Camp Fircom Society

to cause a debit to be drawn on my account each month in the amount of \$ _____ as a contribution by me to Camp Fircom.

Contributor’s Name _____

Financial Institution or VISA or Mastercard # _____

TO ENSURE ACCURACY, A SAMPLE CHEQUE, MARKED “VOID”, MUST ACCOMPANY THIS CARD.

Signature of Contributor

Date

This Authorization may be changed by the donor at any time.

The use, retention and disclosure of personal information collected from this form is done in compliance with privacy legislation including, but not limited to, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (2000, c.5)*.

How to turn the gears of Fircom...

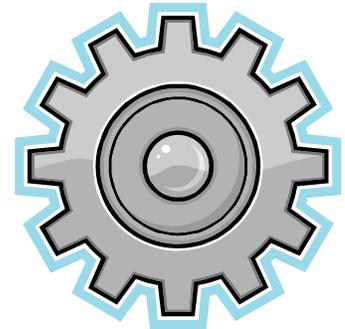
Over the course of 2009, we will be working hard on some projects to get Fircom back up and running!
Here are a few of those projects that we would love your help with:

- Rebuilding our **office systems** to make them more efficient, less wasteful of our resources. Website and registrations systems upgrades.
- Purchase of some new **mattresses** and vinyl covers for our camper cabins. Over the years, these have become quite worn, and we would like to replace 50 of them this year, at a cost of approximately \$7,000
- Purchase of Lifejackets, Paddles, and safety equipment for **Waterfront**. 50 lifejackets and 50 new paddles will cost us approximately \$5,000.
- Purchase of fruit trees and equipment to recreate an **orchard** that once stood at Fircom. The orchard, as well as an improved organic garden will compliment an important aspect of our summer program, teaching inner city kids about how to care for the earth, through local gardening and food production.



- Purchase of two huge “**event tents**” for use for outdoor games in rainy weather, special occasions, outdoor picnics, and overflow sleeping quarters. In addition to being functional during our summer program, many of our shoulder season rental groups, on whom we depend for much of our operational revenue, ask for these as a feature. Having them would increase Fircom’s rent-ability, thus increasing revenues for our summer program. The estimated cost for these two tents is \$4,000.

- We would like to channel money to a **Camp Fircom Camper Assistance Fund** to assist, in perpetuity, campers who cannot afford to go to camp. Each \$10,000 investment in this fund can raise enough interest each year to send 5-6 campers to camp!
- Up-grade our **Hospital** facilities. We need to purchase everything from sunscreen to spine-boards, oxygen tanks to Tylenol.
- **Archery Equipment**- bows, arrows, targets and strings.
- **Outtrip equipment**- backpacks, stoves, kettles, maps and compasses...and of course, pancake mix!
- Lumber for all the smaller building projects on site: new benches in Jubilee, repairs to bunkbeds, steps and railings, and new benches in the chapel



Your donation to Fircom will help us make the gears of Fircom turn, please consider becoming a monthly donor, using the opposite side of this sheet!

