

# Guiding Principles for Camp Moorecroft

## September 30, 2010



### Background

The “Camp Future Project” of BC Conference of The United Church of Canada is a multi-year project to ensure that BC Conference has a high quality, sustainable camping ministry well into the future. The Camp Future Project supports a regional-model for camping, wherein a smaller number of camps, operating under the auspices of the BC Conference, provide high quality camping to an increased number of children (ages 8 – 18).

The Regional Camping Ministry will receive significant and ongoing support and resources to contribute to its sustainability. The resources needed to improve and sustain these regional camps will come, originally, from the proceeds from the sale of other camp properties. Moorecroft Camp will be one of those properties. Camp Kwomais was the first property to be sold as part of the Camp Future Project. The City of Surrey bought it from BC Conference in the summer of 2007, and developed it into a city park. Kwomais Point Park, as it is now known, is a spectacular park in South Surrey perched on the top of the bluffs above Semiahmoo Bay. All the direct proceeds from this sale went into the ongoing development of BC Conference’s new camping ministry, including large capital development projects at both Camp Pringle (Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island) and Camp Fircom (Gambier Island, Lower Mainland). Proceeds from the sale of Moorecroft Camp will contribute to the ongoing sustainability of the Regional Camping Ministry, as envisioned in the Camp Future Project.

### Sales Values

Recognizing that several camp properties are expected to be sold as part of the Camp Future Project, and that they are all valuable in a *myriad* of ways, BC Conference developed a sales policy in 2007, in the form of a *values statement* to guide the property divestiture process. Here is a summation:

*As stewards of the land, we place a real value on preserving the natural condition and maintaining public access to the properties we are selling, in so far as is practical and possible under civil law. We must also place a real value on the material and financial resources to be realized in the transaction, in as much as they form the financial foundation of the future of the Conference’s Regional Camping Ministry. We must hold these values in balance.*

*Therefore, we will work to ensure that all property transactions undertaken as part of the Camp Future Project allow for flexibility and seek a balance between these values:*

- 1) Protecting the natural environment of the property,
- 2) providing public access to it,
- 3) realizing a fair market value for it.

### Moorecroft

For many years the Moorecroft property was owned by Miss Gertrude Moore, a niece of the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, and a Physical Education instructor at UBC. She operated summer camps for girls for twenty years before selling the property to the United Church in 1955. For several decades, the United Church ran the property as a summer camp, eventually expanding into a year-round camp for school groups, retreats, and other community groups. We are grateful to The Moorecroft Camp Society, the members of which have operated the camp for the last many years. They have worked hard to live up to their mission *to serve God, church, community; to promote spiritual growth and foster faith; to provide leadership and fellowship in a safe haven.*

### The Guiding Principles

Like all property transactions undertaken as part of the Camp Future Project, we will adhere to our stated ‘sales values’. In the case of the sale of the Moorecroft property, in particular, BC Conference has further detailed and delineated the divestiture process in a series of ‘guiding principles’. *The Guiding Principles* encompass the Camp Future sales values – and also provide for additional conditions as determined by Comox Nanaimo Presbytery. These conditions are summed up in the *Agreement in Principle* Motion that was passed by majority at an official meeting of the Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery on Feb, 27, 2010:

*“That the Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery gives permission in principle to the BC Conference Property Development Committee to sell Camp Moorecroft with a conservation covenant in place and honouring the values of the Camp Futures Project Sales Policy and, all things being equal, give preference to a local community based buyer who would allow United Church camping to continue. In order for such a buyer to be able to make an acceptable bid, the bidding process would remain open for at least six months, thus enabling the proposed buyer to make an accredited offer with a secured funding source already in place.”*

# Guiding Principles for Camp Moorecroft September 30, 2010



## The Guiding Principles

### PRINCIPLE #1 – *Protecting the natural environment of the Moorecroft property:*

BC Conference will create a Conservation Covenant pursuant to Section 219 of the *Land Title Act*, and accompanying Section 218 Statutory Right of Way, to be registered on title at the time of the sale, which will protect portions of the land and ecological values in perpetuity. To achieve this, we have engaged the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to identify and inventory the ecological qualities of the property, define conservation values and recommend land use restrictions. The wording of the covenant will be finalized in consultation with between the BC Conference, the new owner and the NCC.

The use of the property is currently restricted by the Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) Zoning Bylaw, which only permits **campground** and **outdoor recreation** uses as well as **single family residential** (RC1V - Recreation 1); the property is further restricted by the RDN through the Official Community Plan's "Resource Lands" designation, which recognizes and protects the property's unique environmental attributes. As restrictive as these legal designations are, a conservation covenant will go even further in its application of protective restrictions.

Attached, is the **NCC's initial report on Conservation Values (the NCC Report)**, which describes the various components of the Moorecroft property with conservation value. The NCC undertook a thorough evaluation of the property, and created an inventory of the various and diverse Ecological Units and Ecosystems that make up this property. The vast majority of the property's 85 acres are intact ecosystems within the Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimate zone, which –according to both global and provincial rankings – is imperiled and needs protection.

At the same time, the NCC Report identified the area in the heart of the camp, where the camp buildings are located, as having experienced significant *human impact* for many decades. Recognizing that the life and work of the Camp has taken place in harmony with this extraordinary natural environment for many years, we anticipate the life and work of the next owner can too. To this end, the Report proposes a multi-purpose covenant for the Moorecroft property that will include *two* management zones: a **conservation zone** encompassing the vast majority of the property, and featuring imperiled ecosystems which are to be protected by the restrictions of the covenant; and a **development zone** – the general area where the camp buildings now exist– which has been severely impacted by human activity, and where human activity will be allowed to continue.

Having accepted the ecological findings of the NCC Report, BC Conference's process moving forward will be to work with the NCC and the buyer to formalize the covenant conditions and restrictions in the form of a legal agreement between the NCC and the party/person who buys the property. Regardless of who buys the property, the conservation covenant will be constituted to ensure:

- There will be two management zones – a conservation zone and a development zone.
- That the development zone make up no more than 10% of the entire property, in &/or adjacent to the area demarcated by in The NCC Report (Figure 14) as the "development zone".
- That the Landowner's Reserve Rights enable reasonable and managed access in/through the conservation zone in such a way that does not destroy, impair, diminish, negatively affect, or alter the conservation area and the natural ecosystems within the area from the condition described in the Report.
- That all conservation restrictions apply equally to both lots that comprise the Moorecroft Property (located at 1563 Stewart Road, Nanoose Bay, BC and legally described as PID# 006-884-849 and PID#001-170-228)
- That the terms of the Conservation Covenant will be in accordance with the Land Title Act, Section 219 with an accompanying Section 218, statutory right of way for monitoring purposes; thus meeting the statutory requirements of the conservation agency who will have the perpetual obligation to monitor and enforce the covenant.

## Guiding Principles for Camp Moorecroft September 30, 2010



### **PRINCIPLE #2 – *Providing public access to the Moorecroft property:***

Recognizing issues of liability and privacy must be considered, BC Conference will seek, at a minimum, to define a legal agreement wherein the new owner might provide safe and legal public access to Vesper Point.

### **PRINCIPLE #3 – *Realizing a fair market value for the Moorecroft property:***

In order to determine an appropriate selling range, BC Conference commissioned an appraisal of the Moorecroft property by an accredited appraiser. Based on the appraisal we have an objective indication of *fair market value*; both with and without the Conservation covenant. The best indicator of *fair market value*, however, is that price that a willing purchaser is prepared to pay (and a willing seller is prepared to accept) for the property in the context of a comprehensive marketing effort. The asking price that has been established by Colliers and BC Conference is based on the goal posts identified in the appraisal.

### **PRINCIPLE #4 – *All things being equal, preference will be given to a local community based buyer who would allow United Church camping to continue; furthermore, we will provide a waiting period of six months (March 1, 2010 – Sept 1, 2010) to enable such a buyer to make an accredited offer :***

As of September 1<sup>st</sup>, having achieved the six month waiting period, BC Conference instructed Colliers International to begin their efforts, by providing information about the property and sales process to prospective buyers. BC Conference will consider offers for the property from private parties and from public or not-for-profit entities, for either personal or public use no earlier than November 2, 2010.

- All offers are welcome and encouraged, but we will consider only those offers that are consistent with our principles, as outlined above. Those offers that provide the *best* balance between our Guiding Principles will be given priority.