HOLLYBURN LODGE

The Hollyburn Lodge 2015 Renewal Project is a result of a remarkable team effort going back over 90 years.

The story of Hollyburn Lodge began in 1924 when Rudolph Jules Verne and a group of fellow Scandinavians converted the abandoned Nasmyth mill buildings on Hollyburn Ridge into the first commercial ski operation on the North Shore mountains. One of these Scandinavians, Eilif Haxthow, took many photos and wrote a compelling account of his experiences operating the 'ski camp at the old mill' from the fall of 1924 to the spring of 1926.

In 1926/1927, Oscar Pearson and his cousins, Ole Anderson and Andrew Irving, moved the 'old mill' ski facilities to First Lake, renamed the facilities the Hollyburn Ski Camp, and were owner/operators of the ski camp from 1927 to 1946. By 1930, the Swedes had built several, small rental cabins near the main lodge, a ski jump atop the Popfly hill and had cleared a ski run from First Lake to Hollyburn Peak. Their efforts to introduce skiing and ski jumping to local residents, and the weekly 'Hollyburn' articles that Pollough Pogue wrote for the Daily Province during the late 1920s, enticed many Vancouverites to climb the Hollyburn trail to hike, ski, and build private cabins on Hollyburn Ridge.

Ski Camp at the Old Mill 1925

Eilif Haxthow 1925

The Swedes at the Hollyburn SKi Camp 1927

By 1930, the Hollyburn Pacific Ski Club and the Vancouver Ski Club had formed and were active on the mountain. The two clubs built cabins near First Lake and organized ski jump tournaments and ski races, which eventually drew competitors and spectators from towns and cities throughout the Pacific Northwest. The Hollyburn Ski Camp became the unofficial community centre for the two ski clubs, the cabin owners on 'the Ridge' and their guests. Saturday night dances at the ski camp grew into legends.

In 1932, Pollough Pogue began to publish the Hiker & Skier magazine, which included articles about the North Shore mountains and reports from local ski clubs. The exploits of local ski jumpers and ski racers such as Nordal Kaldahl, Tom Mobratten, Henry Sotvedt, Noel 'Irish' Beaumont, Gus Johnson, Harry Burfield, Jack Pratt, Jack Rockandel, Daisy Bourdon and Peggy Harlin, on the slopes of Hollyburn, drew more people to the mountain.

In 1946, the Burfield family purchased the ski camp and renamed it Hollyburn Ski Lodge. Soon after the Hollyburn chairlift opened in 1950, baby boomers began to appear on Popfly hill above Hollyburn Ski Lodge. During the 1950s and early 60s, three lodges on Hollyburn Ridge, Hi-View Lodge, Westlake Lodge and Hollyburn Lodge were open for business. After the loss of the chairlift and Hi-View Lodge due to fire in 1965, visitors to the Hollyburn Ski Lodge decreased dramatically. Fred Burfield was able to keep Hollyburn Ski Lodge open, thanks in part to the continued patronization of the Lodge by Hollyburn's cabin community. When the Cypress Bowl Road was completed in 1973, and chairlifts were built on Mt. Strachan and Black Mountain, Hollyburn Ski Lodge became a favourite destination for growing numbers of cross-country skiers.

Cypress Bowl Recreation Limited purchased the Lodge from Fred Burfield in 1984 and renamed it Hollyburn Lodge. After Westlake Lodge burned down in 1984, Hollyburn Lodge was the last of the historic lodges built on the North Shore mountains before 1960. Without this backstory, Hollyburn Lodge would not be the important and much loved heritage building it is today.

In the mid- 1990s, Bud & Naomi MacInnes organized the first Pioneer Skiers' reunions at Hollyburn Lodge. Gordon & Iola Knight, and Bob & Greta Tapp, concerned about the deteriorating condition of Lodge, created the Hollyburn Ski Camp Project in 1998, and formally established the Hollyburn Heritage Society (HHS) in 2000.

Hollyburn Lodge–a place of memories since 1927

1928

2007

1950

Recognizing the many challenges related to the restoration of the Lodge, particularly fundraising and jurisdictional issues, HHS focused on collecting and sharing the history of Vancouver's North Shore mountains, with a particular focus on Hollyburn.

The Swanson family at their cabin, "The Doghouse" in 1962

The Donald Luxton Report is presented to Hollyburners attending the Pioneer Skiers Reunion in the fall of 2006

In 2001, Peggy Massey, daughter of Eilif Haxthow, contacted HHS regarding the photos her father had taken on Hollyburn Ridge in the 1920s and 30s. She had also found her father's journal, written in Norwegian, which was soon translated by Jurgen Dahlie. Copies of Eilif's photos and his journal were donated to HHS.

During the next decade, people who were active on Hollyburn in the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s donated thousands of photos, home movies, articles, newspaper clippings, and artifacts to HHS. Alex Swanson, owner of "The Doghouse", contributed over 2000 photos taken on Hollyburn during the 1960s and 70s.

A detailed history of Hollyburn Mountain began to emerge. Francis Mansbridge, assisted by Lois Enns, used material collected by HHS to write "Hollyburn: The Mountain & the City", which was published in 2009 by publisher Ron Hatch, owner of Ronsdale Press.

HHS continued to be a strong advocate for the restoration of Hollyburn Lodge. In 2006, the District of West Vancouver provided funding for a Hollyburn Lodge Restoration Feasibility Study, which was completed by Don Luxton and Associates later that year. This assessment included a Statement of Significance, information about the condition of the Lodge, and a suggested plan for restoration.

In 2007, HHS created a website (hollyburnheritage.ca) to increase awareness of the history of the North Shore mountains and the heritage value of Hollyburn Lodge. Today, over 1500 photos, videos, articles, and memoirs are displayed on this website and an HHS Facebook page.

Tony Flower, who, along with three of his West Vancouver High School buddies had built the cabin "Mildew Manor" in 1961, contributed several articles and poems about Hollyburn Mountain to the website including the poem, "Hollyburn Lodge." Here is an excerpt: "It's a milepost of history for mountain pioneers, an artifact encompassing eventful yesteryears. Standing still beside First Lake; keeping vigil on the past, An old, red lodge just weathers on, its destiny yet cast."

"Hollyburn Lodge through the Trees" February 2007

Also in 2007, Peter Tapp and his father, Bob, began to work on the restoration of Fred Burfield's John Deere crawler. Employees at the local John Deere plant in Langley completed the restoration in May 2011. The tractor has made appearances at the West Vancouver Community Day and other local venues.

During the past decade, the Hollyburn Ridge Association directors led by Catharine Rockendal, and later Jackie Swanson, repaired and strengthened the relationship between the Hollyburn Ridge cabin owners and the District of West Vancouver. Deputy CAO for the District of West Vancouver Brent Leigh's involvement regarding this matter was crucial, as was his leadership in moving the Hollyburn Lodge project forward.

Since 1997, Cypress Mountain's management team have been strong supporters of the Hollyburn Lodge Renewal Project. Last year, the Cypress team submitted a proposal to the ownership group including CNL Lifestyle Properties and Boyne Resorts to facilitate the core funding for the project out of Cypress' capital reserve. CNL and Boyne's support for the project funding was confirmed in October, 2014, in recognition of the importance of this community initiative in preserving this winter recreation legacy in Cypress Provincial Park. Engineer Kevin Healy's expertise has been key in the later stages, as has been the support of West Vancouver's Mayor Michael Smith and Council.

With all this in mind, it is clear that the Hollyburn Lodge Renewal Project is a result of a community-wide team involvement and an effort going back four generations.

TO DONATE TO THE HOLLYBURN LODGE RENEWAL PROJECT:
www.hollyburnridge.ca/lodge2015

Hollyburn Lodge - a place of memories since 1927

circa 1934

2004

circa 1960