

# Hollyburn Historic Sites Summer Walking Tour



## History

In the early 20th century, after logging operations declined, the Hollyburn mountain area on the North Shore became a popular summer and winter recreation destination. The only access was self-propelled on foot. Starting in 1923, cabins were built for overnight accommodation. Hollyburn Lodge, built in 1926-27, became the centre for skiing and ski jumping, both recreational and competitive. Access to the area improved with construction of the Hollyburn chair lift in 1951, and popularity continued to grow into the 1960s. In the 1970s, as downhill and cross-country ski areas were developed, some cabins fell into disrepair and were demolished. Today, vestiges of some of the cabins and structures can be seen in the densely overgrown terrain. Follow the trails around First Lake to discover these sites.

## Approach

The walking tour starts and ends at Hollyburn Lodge and follows the trails counterclockwise around First Lake. It is about 1.2 km and takes about one hour to complete. The walk is best done in summer and fall with no snow on the ground. To reach Hollyburn Lodge, park in the Cypress Nordic ski area parking lot near the trailhead kiosk. Follow the well-marked Hollyburn Trail or Lower Burfield trail to reach the Lodge. (15-20 minutes).



1930's



2017

## 1 Hollyburn Lodge

Around 1927, Oscar Pearson and his cousins built a lodge near First Lake, using material from the abandoned Nasmyth Mill. It became known as Hollyburn Ski Camp and was the mountain's centre for skiing and ski jumping. Several ski jumps were built over the years.

In 1946, the Burfield family bought the Camp, and renamed it Hollyburn Ski Lodge. From 1951 to 1965, people could access the area by taking the single-person Hollyburn chairlift, followed by a short hike to the lodge. After 1965, when the top station of the chairlift burned down and the chairlift was dismantled, ski visits declined and interest in Hollyburn Lodge waned.

In the 1970s, after Cypress Bowl Road opened and the Nordic cross-country ski area was expanded, Hollyburn Lodge again became a popular day lodge for cross-country skiers, and a venue for summer activities. By the late 1990s, as the lodge structure deteriorated, plans began to form for its restoration. Finally, in 2015, after much fund raising and planning, the old lodge was dismantled, and a new building constructed on the site. The reconstruction retained the same shape and style as the original Lodge. Some materials saved from the original lodge were re-used in the new one. Hollyburn Lodge was opened officially on January 15, 2017.

## 2 Hollyburn Ski Camp Cabins

The Burfield family built several dormitory cabins adjacent to Hollyburn Lodge in the 1940s to accommodate the increasing number of visitors. Fred Burfield continued to live and work on the mountain until he retired in 1983. Hollyburn's cross-country ski operation then became part of Cypress Bowl Recreations Ltd.



## 3 Ranger Station

A ranger station has been near this location since 1932. The present building dates to 1950. The Hollyburn Rangers go back to the 1930s when they were first known as Inspectors, with duties including cabin inspection, public safety and security for the area. As snow sports became more popular, their duties grew to include



ski patrol, and search and rescue, and the cabin served as a first aid station. The cabin was staffed with rangers until the 1980s.

## 4 First Lake Dam & Nasmyth Bridge

The First Lake dam was located at the outlet stream from the south end of First Lake, site of the present-day Nasmyth Bridge. Around 1918, James Nasmyth dammed First Lake and the small lakes on the Hollyburn plateau to divert water to his sawmill and the log flumes located further down Hollyburn Ridge at the 760m level. The dam was replaced with a weir and bridge sometime after the sawmill closed. The present bridge was built more recently to carry the load of grooming machines used in winter cross-country ski operations. Walk east on Sitzmark about 150m then turn left onto the Baden Powell trail.



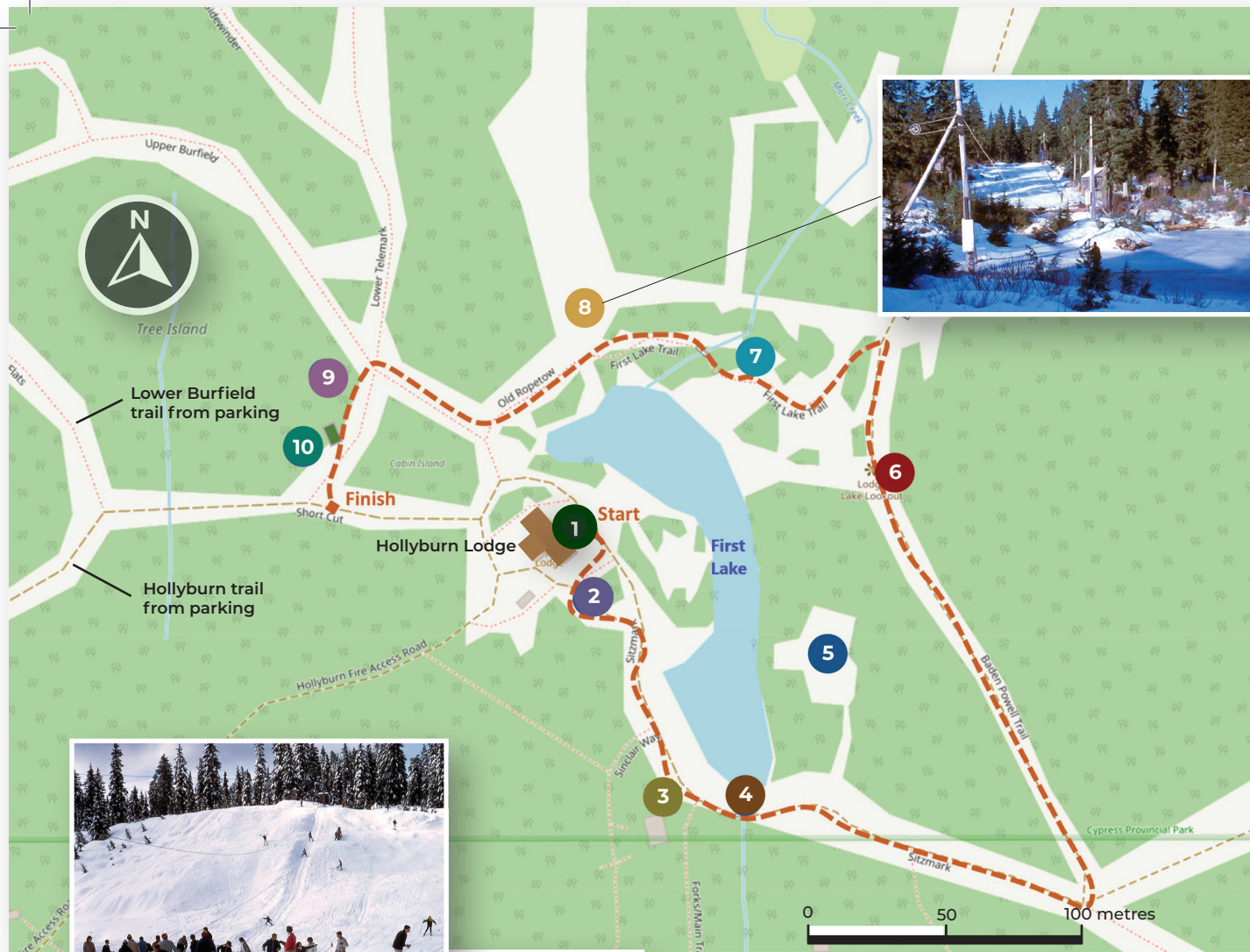
## 5 Vancouver Ski Club Cabins

In 1936, the Vancouver Ski Club began building three large cabins on the east side of First Lake a short distance south of the First Lake ski jump. The cabins were completed for the 1938/39 ski season.



They provided accommodation for skiers and a venue for meetings and social activities. The centre building formed the main clubhouse and became known as Viskie Lodge. The men's dormitory was on the south side of the clubhouse and the women's dorm was to

the north side. By the late 1950s, use began to decline. The men's dorm cabin was dismantled and replaced in 1963 with a smaller A-frame cabin for use by the YMCA. Viskie Lodge was dismantled in 1971. The YMCA cabin was finally torn down in 2007. Little evidence of the structures remains, and the sites have largely grown back into forest.



### 8 Blueberry Rope Tow

Located on the gentle hill sloping up from the north end of First Lake, this rope tow became known as the “Beginners Tow” or “Blueberry Tow” for the abundance of blueberries in the summertime. The rope tow is long gone, only the clearing remains visible.

### 9 Tennis Court

Sometime in the 1930s, just west of First Lake, a site was cleared, and a tennis court was built. It was close to the junction of the present-day Upper Burfield and Lower Telemark cross-country ski runs. The site has long since fallen into disuse and become overgrown.

### 10 Cabin 3

This is the sole remaining example of the guest cabins that were built around First Lake and Hollyburn Lodge. The cabin was saved from demolition in the 1990s and reconstructed on its present site.



### 6 First Lake Ski Jump & Popfly Rope Tow

The First Lake Ski Jump was located on the north side of First Lake across from Hollyburn Lodge. Built and enlarged between 1927 and 1930 to become a sturdy trestle structure, the First Lake jump enabled skiers to fly up to 150 ft (45m) and was the site of many competitions. Sometime in the early 1940s, the jump trestle collapsed. A new one was completed by Easter 1945 and remained standing into the mid 1950s.

The hill continued to be used for downhill skiing through the 1960s. A diesel-powered rope tow was constructed to pull skiers up to the top of the hill. The origin of the name “Popfly” is unclear; it may have been reference to skiers flying off moguls and jumps built on the hill. By the late 1960s, most of the rope tows had been dismantled. The Popfly rope tow remained in operation until 1983. Continue north on the Baden Powell trail about 50m then turn sharply left onto the First Lake trail.

### 7 Old Cabin Sites

In the early 1930s, Oscar Pearson and his cousins built 18 small cabins around First Lake to accommodate overnight guests at Hollyburn Ski Camp. A few cabins remained standing into the 1970s, but most were dismantled when the area became part of Cypress Bowl Provincial Park. One example survives today – see Cabin 3.



Hollyburn Heritage Society

[www.hollyburnheritage.ca](http://www.hollyburnheritage.ca)

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