

Annual Report 2023



**Crowsnest Lake
Bible Camp** Est. 1956

Deep - Integrated - Life Giving - Community

Director of Camping Report

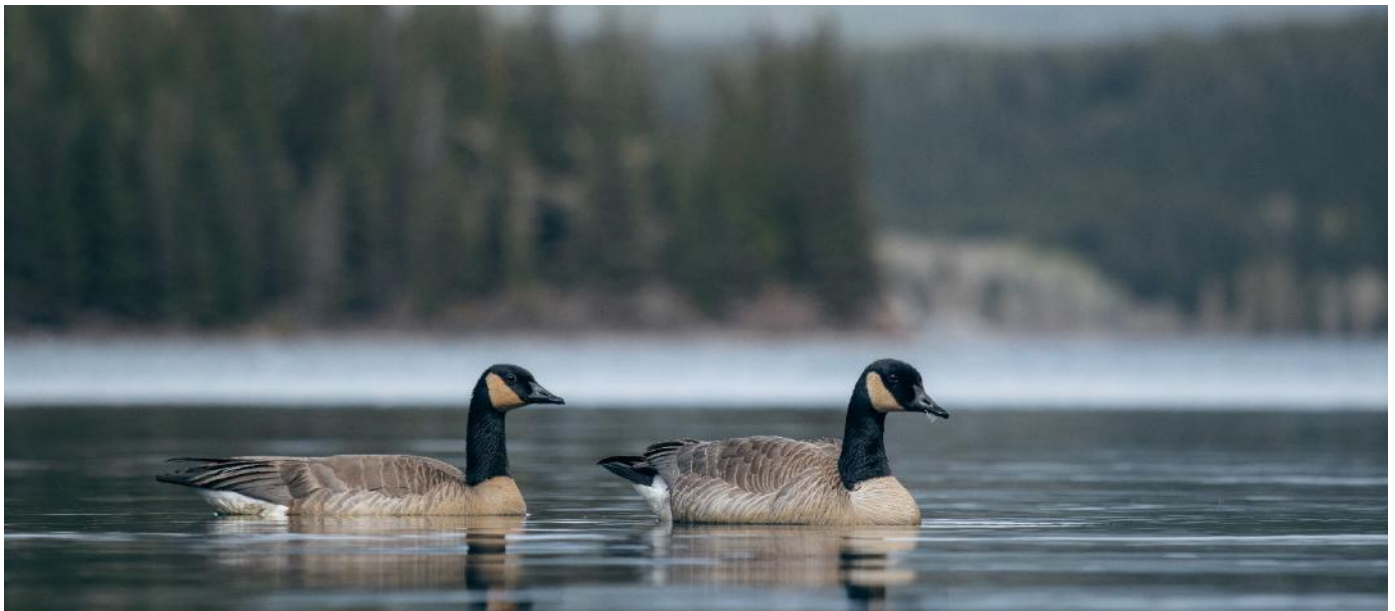
From the time I was a small lad, I have loved camp. When I was 5, and 23 (and every year in between) there was for me nowhere better on earth than the shabby lodge on the shores of the coldest lake in Southern Alberta.

I loved camp so much that I couldn't understand anyone who would choose to spend their time anywhere else. In those days, John Hengen was fond of asking people, "What are you doing this off-season?" which matched my judgment: we spent ten months of the year variously wasting time, or preparing for the two months when *real life* - **CAMP** - was happening.

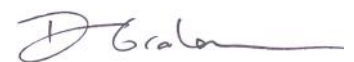
Now I am in my dotage, and I still love camp, but I do understand. I understand the camper families who gamely contend with one week of Camp's predictable chaos, and that's enough. I understand those who love to get their dose of camp from a safe remove; from Facebook, or from the sidelines - far enough away that there is no risk of being smashed with a water balloon. The water balloons & mud fights (constituent parts of camp's predictable chaos) are pretty photogenic, and so they are frequently showcased in our photo shows. But camp is more than that.

These past years have been a painful kind of unpredictable chaos, at camp as elsewhere. Today, I feel optimistic - I do! - and also tired. Maybe you feel the same way too. I want to remind you that Crownsnest Lake Bible Camp is here, and that, underneath the predictable chaos, Crow continues to be what it has always been: a place of rest. You know this, if you have been to camp in the almost-light of the very early morning, when it is still so cold, before even the cooks are up... You know this if you have stayed awake past lights out, after all of the predictable chaos has gone to bed for the night... at those moments, you know how *quiet camp* can be, and how calm, and how peaceful the lake can be, when no one is trying to throw you into it.

He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while." ~ Mark 6:31



This world will wear you out, and in this world you will have troubles. It's a promise. Now, as of old, Jesus gives an invitation, or a command maybe. Listen. And come away, by yourselves, to the remote place called Crow. Come. Rest a while. You are welcome.



~ David Graham, Director of Camping

Director of Outdoor Programs Report

Step, weight-transfer, rest,...step, weight-transfer, rest,...

That's the simple progression of the rest-step, a requisite principle to travelling in the mountains. The idea is that you rest for a split second every time you take a step; this works when travelling uphill, as all our out-trips do at various points. Because each step provides ongoing rest, one can avoid prolonged breaks and ascend a steady slope for hours. And teaching our campers the rest-step enables them to go to neat, awe-inspiring places.

From a physiological perspective, your skeleton bears all the weight for a segment of each step instead of your muscles. Strictly using your muscles to continuously bear the weight while hiking leads to unnecessary exertion and wasted energy. If you are carrying a heavy load, or are in steeper terrain, then it is especially pertinent to utilize your skeletal system to give yourself micro rests at fixed intervals.

Micro rests are important when rest stepping, but they are also worthwhile in other ways at camp. This upcoming summer will be my tenth one working at camp, and it has been a long hike. Busy season starts in April when we train our out-trip directors for the upcoming summer and it extends into September before I slow down for the off-season. Summer is one big step; winter is one big rest; and the weight transfer between the two is substantial. From a daily perspective, summer staff meetings start around 0700h each morning, with programs lasting to around 2230h at night. These seasonal and daily demands are taxing! Step, weight-transfer, rest,...step, weight-transfer, rest,... It is important to see the big picture as we rest-step along. This summer we guided 624 people on backpacking trips; this summer we camped in 37 different locations across B.C. and Alberta; this summer we taught roughly 104 people how to belay; and this summer we made and consumed countless flapjacks (estimation: about 1,250). It is with these ventures and programs that we ought to consider how and why we rest along the way.

Solo reflective times are one of the most effective components we build into our out-trips. Campers get the chance to sit in nature with only the local ecosystem to provide the sounds and features. Even though our leaders go through extensive guide training and preparation pre-summer, the most valuable moments are often the ones where they let go and give the campers space to engage with God through nature. One of our out-trips this summer had a last-minute change to the route plan due to a medical limitation, causing the whole group to discontinue the plan to move camp that day and instead have more solo time at the current camp site. The out-trip director's (nod to Tina and Liz) reported back on the efficacy of that decision and how the group needed that change. Afterwards, the campers, too, kept talking about the improvised chapel they constructed and the life-changing discussions that ensued. Another story about rest happened this summer when a staff member who was on the brink of exhaustion came back from an out-trip "needing to nap but ready to be of service!" But my favourite stories about rest happened when campers were saying how they - even at camp - were unable to really step away from their internal dialogue (homesickness, anxiety, mental health, etc.) until they were on the out-trip, resting in nature.

It's stories like these where people experience the wilderness through our programs while encountering God that get me most excited about Crow. For this reason, I get stirred to be a part of this mission, of this commission, of this organization. We teach campers how to physically rest utilizing the rest step on hikes, but we also show people how to spiritually and mentally rest. This happens not from our own strivings, but by purposefully bringing campers into a setting where they experience a micro rest from their life by witnessing Creation. That's who we are; that's how we rest.

Look well to each step,
Daniel Vanderpyl
Director of Outdoor Programs



PIT Report

Over the last few years Personnel in Training (P.I.T.) has looked a little different. However, this year it fully returned to Lake Site. We supported four camps there and went on a couple excursions to Mountain Site.

From Jr. 1 at the beginning of July to Jr. 2 at the start of August the 2023 P.I.T. crew went from being strangers to family. As part of their staff training, we kicked off the program with a five-day outtrip along the continental divide trail. If you know anything about a Crow outtrip you would recall the impact of that shared experience on any relationship. Needless to say, we all became closer over that expedition.

Between sessions on first aid, skills training, evangelism, prayer, and cabin leading we implemented Bible study throughout the program. As a group we walked through Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs with an emphasis on wisdom. This nurtured an understanding of the importance of time spent with God while staffing at camp.

We could not be prouder of the 2023 P.I.T. crew. The photo to the right was taken on our last day at Crow all together as we geared up for our final outtrip. This photo perfectly encapsulates the goofiness and joy that we got to experience with this crew throughout the summer. During this last outtrip we had the chance to unpack the events of the summer, reflect on the spiritual growth, and say our goodbyes.

-Joel "P.I.T. Dad" Dyck and Brigitt "P.I.T. Mom" Morton



2023 Registration Report

While signing in campers, you see a wide array of human emotions. To list a few, the intrigue in the eyes of junior campers who will be away from home for the first time, the concerned or relieved faces of parents, the outwardly stoic senior campers, and the gregarious guys and gals dying to know who else is in their cabin. The experience of Crow begins that first moment you are signed in and leaves a lasting mark on the lives of everyone who attends. Although registration is primarily about the numbers and ensuring all those pesky forms are signed, seeing the Christ-like love campers experience is encouraging. Crow cares about changing lives. Depending on who you are, the data is fun to look at, and I hope it continues to show how Crow is on Mission.

I will avoid reiterating everything in the presented charts to focus on the significant information and highlight the direction we hope to shift. This summer, Crow had a record-breaking number of Cancellations and No-Shows. These are camper families who cancelled the day a camp was starting or did not arrive after being registered. Thirty-eight is a lot compared to past years and significantly complicates staff allocation and cabin groups. Once a camp is at capacity, we have to defer people to the land of limbo called the Waitlist, where they are not guaranteed a spot. In years before 2020, this would have been significantly more impactful while having hundreds on the waitlist, but lowering our waitlist to zero is the goal. Avoiding occupied spots with people who will not attend is a challenge we plan to reduce next year.

We ran a Family Camp at Lake Site and had to cancel the Mountain Site Family Camp due to having no volunteers. Fortunately, we transferred a few families over, but volunteer numbers were a limiting factor at multiple camps. In total, we had 22 families and 117 people attend Family Camp. The only other camps cancelled this summer were the AGOT and SWOT, because of low registration numbers. The trend was high initial interest, followed by a slow decline from people needing to cancel due to other summer plans. Of course, we hope that camp is everyone's priority, but we understand that life is complicated and sometimes spending time in the mountains is a luxury our schedules do not permit. Keenagers, a camp for people over 50, also ran this Spring for the first time since 2019. A total of 31 people attended, and left with plenty of anticipation for the next one happening May 17-20, 2024.

Crow continues to offer world-class education and experiences that we want to share with as many people as possible. As the Registrar, I would like to see every camp at capacity, with no one waitlisted, and the perfect amount of volunteers where everyone is in a role they thrive at. As a staff, we work and pray toward finding that sustainable balance.

Peace,

Mason Unrau - Interim Registrar

Next summer's registration dates will be announced in the winter of 2024.

15 Onsite Camp Programs:

- 7 Lake Site Programs: 2 Junior, 2 Intermediate, 2 Senior, 1 Family Camp
- 4 Gladstone Programs: 2 Junior, 2 Intermediate
- 5 Mountain Site Programs: 2 Junior, 1 Intermediate, 1 Senior, 1 Family Camp

3 Special Outtrip Programs:

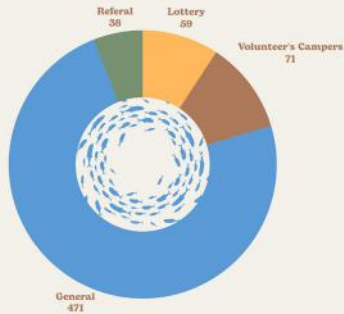
- Senior Women's Outtrip (SWOT)
- All Boys Outtrip (ABOT)
- All Girls Outtrip (AGOT)

3 Cancelled:

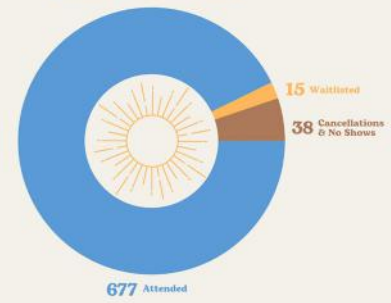
- Mountain Site Family Camp
- AGOT
- SWOT



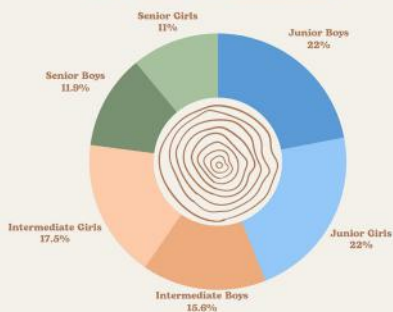
Registration Method



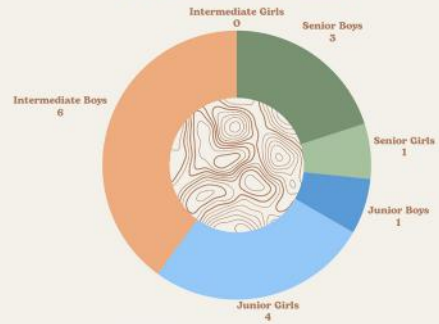
Camper Overview



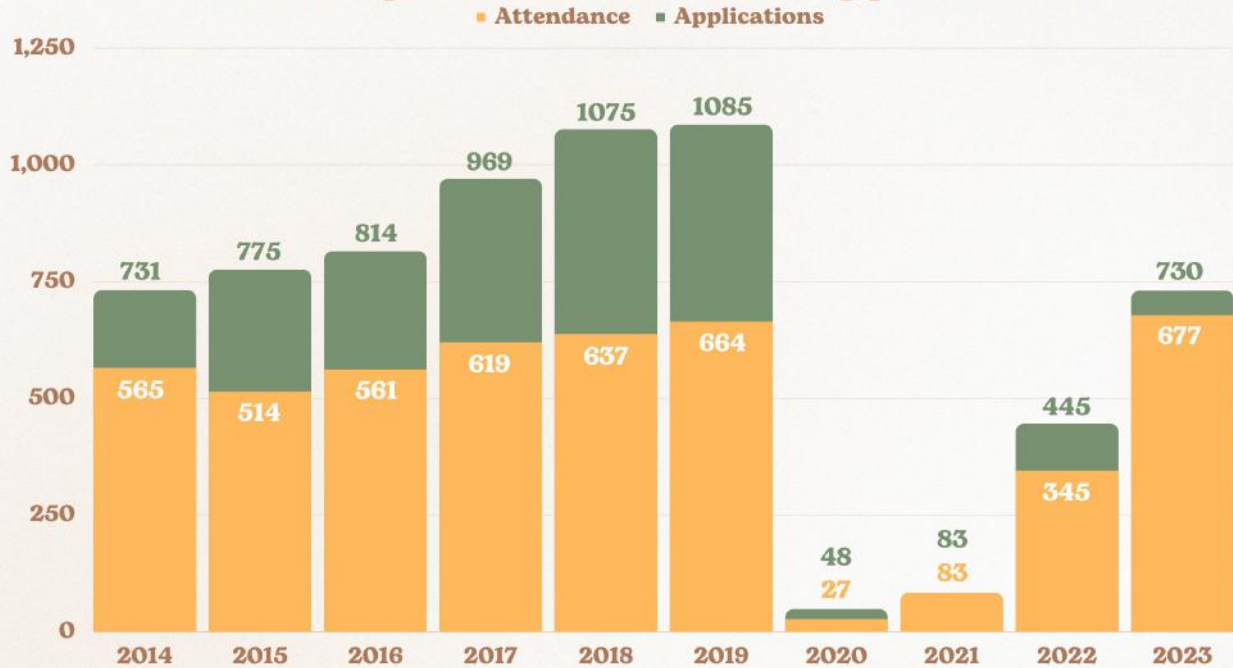
Age Group Attendance



Age Group Waitlist



Total Campers Attendance & Applications





Integration Report

As the Crow Staff debriefed the Summer of 2023 together, the wins and losses seemed to pile up into two broad categories. Most of our misses were in logistics & administration. We saw ways that camp could run more smoothly, and ways we can be more organized (which will help us be more welcoming). We are working on improvements, and I'm confident next summer will be even better than the summer of 2023.

Our wins were all connected to people - the extraordinary people who call Crow home. Camp doesn't work without a team of excellent people. We are blessed to have a loyal constituency of reliable, capable, funny, smart, and faithful workers from all over!

The Head cabin leaders, PIT leaders, COLTS II, Chaplain, Cabin leaders, Program Directors, Speakers. On and on. That's where our big wins were: in the people. They were a really exceptional group this summer.

I recently coined a new phrase: Teamwork makes the dream work. I really think I am onto something there. Teamwork makes the dream work - it's true everywhere, but I think that is particularly true at Crow, and especially when it comes to integration. Crow intends to be a partner to the local church. We want to serve local churches. After all, Jesus didn't institute Bible Camps - he built a church. Crow is working for the church. We are on their team. (No matter what, and whether they know it or not!) Integration means that we recognize our role within the yearly rhythm of the church.

In 2023, nearly 25% of campers indicated that they were not connected to a church or youth group. That's an immense opportunity! And for the others - those children who already have a home church - we want to be sure that their camp experience is communicated to their community back home. We want their pastors, mentors, leaders, and friends to know what they've learned; the challenges they faced at camp; and the ways they have grown. All of this can be foundational - transformational! - to a child's spiritual development, but it requires communicating, deliberately, and regularly with their home churches. How could this information reach the local church if we don't tell them!

The bottom line is this: We want to be on a team with churches, your church in particular!

So - introduce us to your church. Tell us what their priorities are, what their strengths are. Tell us how we can help your church achieve its piece of the Great Commission. Connect us with your church to expand the Crow team, and increase our effectiveness in the work of Discipleship and Evangelism!

I'll even buy your pastor/ministry leader lunch (unless they want something like caviar (fish eggs!?!?!)), which are expensive and gross).

~ Wil Luchka, Volunteer Co-ordinator

Testimonials

Leah Wee



From growing up as a camper, to doing PIT to now cabin leading, Crow has always held a huge place in my heart. What amazes me is that year after year I continue my faith to depths I'd never even imagine. Having this opportunity to strengthen my foundation, be a part of this life giving community, and serve, is what keeps me coming back to Crow!

Tea Jansma

Camp this year was wild. A few months before summer I had a job lined up. The Lord put it on my heart to come back to Crow. It's funny how that works. No matter how hard I tried to convince myself that working this summer was the best plan, God used this incredible and diverse community of people to lure me back. Camp is a place where I and many others feel supported, loved and at home. This summer I was blessed with new mentors, dear friends and opportunities to serve Christ. Before I came to camp as staff, I was a fairly insecure and shy person. Camp has become a safe place for me and many others to learn and grow as Christ followers, people, and lovers of the outdoors.



Austin Logue



Getting back to "normal" camp was my favourite part of 2023. Full cabins, very noisy full dining hall. The general atmosphere of fun was great, and I think the Biblical teaching was spot on this summer with all the speakers clearly having sought the will of God in what to say. I come to camp because I love making an impact, and all actions in the camp settings have meaning. Everything - from endless rounds of gaga ball to cabin devotionals - show the staff and campers the kingdom of God. The reason for camp, I think, is simply because God wants it to be, a free camp does not continue for some decades without divine help. It is a great comfort to see God's providence so constantly as you are there. Knowing God is providing for the work, means to me that He wants it to continue, and we are on the right track!

Louise Jorgenson

CLBC has been my favourite part of my summer for years and growing up with this camp has developed my faith and shaped my walk with God. Cabin leading this summer meant spreading the joy of the Lord and experiencing His goodness in creation firsthand. I have loved the transition from a camper to cabin leader and it is only more and more evident how God's unfailing love is the foundation of Crow!



Adion Vandenberg



I've been going to Crow since I was a kid and started volunteering when I was 16. Crow has always been an exciting part of my year and I look forward to encountering God through camp and helping others do the same whenever I am able to go. In 2023 I returned to volunteer a few different times and each was fun and life-giving. The people and activities at Crow may change but the heart does not. The impact that Crow has had on me has been pivotal in my relationship with God and I hope that it will continue to have a similar impact on others for a long, long time.

Alex Rawlings

Going to camp is always an exercise in humility. When I showed up to Program Direct this past summer, I expected to waltz into camp and execute my plans with little difficulty. I quickly learned how much I was lacking in a lot of critical areas and had to swallow my pride and ask for help. Even though it still wasn't an easy week and my plans had to constantly shift, I was given the tools and support I needed to run camp. Every time I show up to Crow, I come away having learned something more about how God works in my life through His Church, and how the Gospel applies to every aspect of my life.





Finance Report

We face a lot of tricky questions here at the Bible Camp - roughly split between theology and dating advice. But the toughest question I ever face is, "How is the camp doing financially?" It's a difficult question because finances may be better or worse, but they are always strained. Year by year, we vary from "tragic" to "we're gettin' by."

It's akin to asking Daniel how hard a hike is: there's a range - a mountain range, usually - between what we two think of as "hard." Finances at Crow are a matter of perspective, and 2023 is no different:

- We have accomplished so much;
- We spent our money well;
- We aren't completely broke.

The rest of the annual general report is about what we accomplished, and how we spent the money entrusted to us. The facilities report covers capital projects, and the rest - the registrar report especially - describes what we did, the programs we ran, and the children we served.

"How's Crow doing financially?" is probably best answered, "Please give."

Crow has a \$60,000 CEBA loan outstanding and we do not currently have the funds available to pay this as well as our outstanding and upcoming bills. If we repay \$40,000 before the end of December 2023, the remaining \$20,000 will be forgiven. We are asking our constituents to consider giving specifically to cover this loan, which would help alleviate some pressure, and upgrade our current financial status all the way up to "we're gettin' by." ~ David Graham, DoC, and Mike Oosterhof, Treasurer

The Crow Finance Team is committed to providing regular financial updates throughout 2024, by email and on our blog. If you would like to receive updates on our budget, fund development plans, and current financial status, please contact David@Crowcamp.ca

Facilities Report

We got a lot done.

The big projects? Water Treatment, and the Motel.

Camp's water treatment plant - operational since 1 June - is a milestone, and a huge weight off our shoulders: we aren't paying for hauled water anymore! Ola Arokoyu was instrumental in getting the plant running. We couldn't have done it without him.

The Motel - aka the Cozy Nest Cabins - are being renovated to alleviate our summertime space constraints. Initially, work was slow (with a lot of time and effort devoted to finding tradespeople) but we're getting close now - probably 6-8 weeks from completion. As we draw toward the end of the project, we are also drawing toward the end of the project budget: we'll need some funds to finish things off, and to furnish the units (we have already purchased bed frames and mattresses, but that's it).

Apart from these big capital projects, there's daily maintenance: replacing light bulbs; patching window screens; unclogging drains.

For most of 2023, Crow has not had an "Official" Facilities Manager. Instead, we've had many hands: people stepping up to keep camp going. It's risky to start thanking people - knowing how likely it is with such a big group that someone will get missed. Mike Gordon is near the top of the list, and there are so many others: Danica Jensen, Josh & Jolene Sonnenberg, and Dave Shenton at the Mountain Site. Andrew Hills, Kat Ferrie, Lance Krogman, and Chermi Schalk (along with the whole Building Committee) on the Motel Project. Jason Lyons, and Andrew Lodge, (and Graeme Collins and Julyan Lanting) helped everywhere, and especially with water treatment. Charles Timms and Randy Demman chipped in, too. FireWise Forest Solutions did a significant brush clean-up in Spring. Thank you, to all who contributed. OH! And Jessica & Josh Landry! That was close: I almost forgot (and probably did forget many others - apologies).

In addition to excellent volunteers, Crow needs someone on staff to look after the facilities. Right now, that's Jesse Goodbrand & Ian Bergsma. Jesse has stepped up in a big way: he's the guy who keeps track of what is getting done, and what needs doing. In Jesse's phrase, he's "the guy who holds the clipboard" - taking charge of the whole To Do list. And Ian just loves camp: he's literally made himself at home here (he's living in Crow Manor) and is cheerfully chipping in all over the place, surprising us with all the stuff he knows how to do. Together, they've made great progress toward completing the exterior of the Nurse's cabin, and renovating the PIT cabin.

~ David Graham
Director of Camping



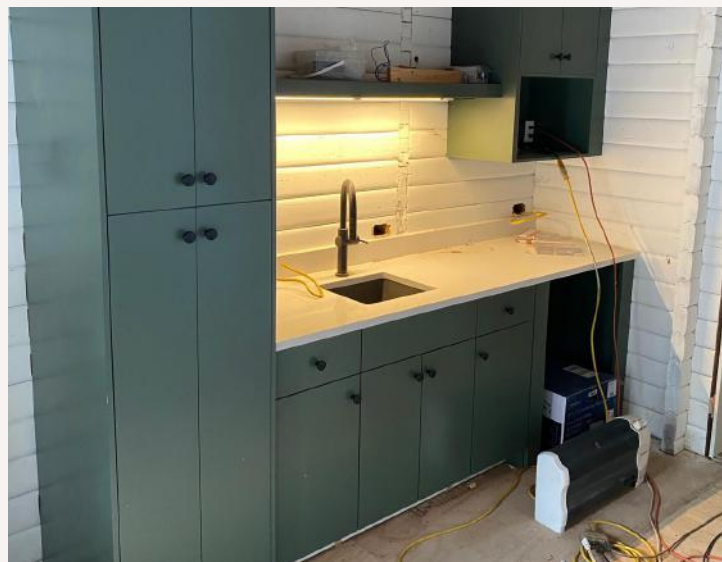
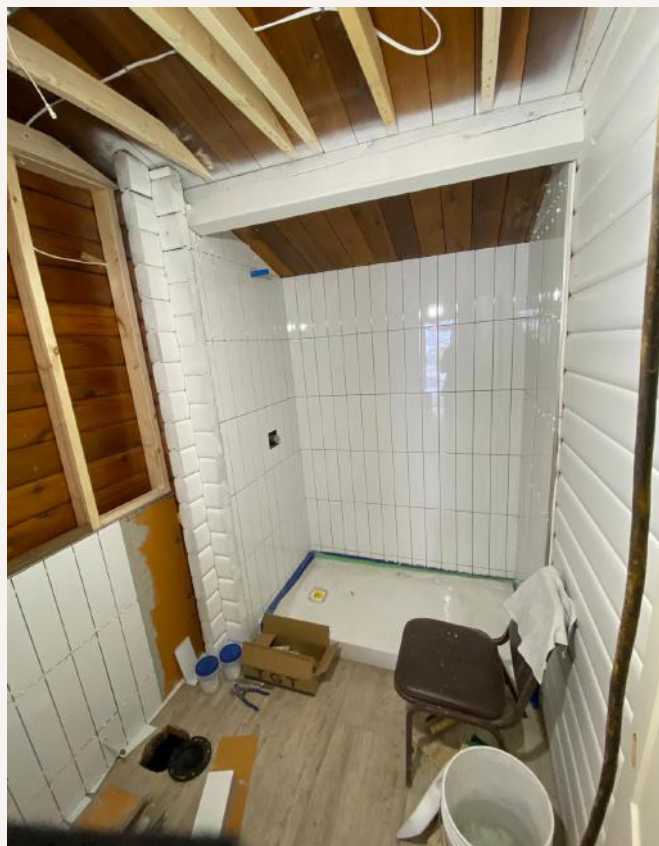
Maintenance Team

On behalf of the Facilities Team at Crow, I asked Jesse, "What's next?" Here's what Jesse said: We need to completely finish all the projects that have been started. The Outtrip Room exterior has been on the list for many years, and needs to get done soon. The micro-cabin renovations in the Boy's Dorms have to get finished - those spaces are essential accommodations for summertime volunteers. There's work to be done up at Mountain Site, repairing the bathroom trailer, and building a director's cabin. The large windows in the office building need replacing. And we're doing it all for the glory of God: that is the purpose of all our work at camp. We want to be a blessing to everyone who comes through the camp gates.

I am continually learning that Crow is a large family. We always know someone willing to help - with their time, skills, or resources. We will be hosting Work Days throughout the Fall, Winter and Spring. That's a great opportunity for people to join in on the work, and connect with camp friends at the same time! Check www.crowcamp.ca for an ongoing list of the required materials and supplies, and upcoming projects. We need volunteers to help us get things done, but more than that... having people come & help is encouraging. It's a double blessing. So if you get the chance, drop in - to help, or just to visit. We'd love to see you.

Blessings,

Jesse Goodbrand
Interim Facilities Manager





2024 Summer Camps

Lake Site Junior 1

June 28 - July 4

Lake Site Intermediate 1

July 7 - 14

Lake Site Intermediate 2

July 17 - 24

Lake Site Junior 2

July 27 - August 2

Lake Site Senior 1

August 7 - 16

Lake Site Senior 2

August 20 - 28

Family Camp

August 30 - September 2

Gladstone Junior 1

July 9 - 13

Gladstone Intermediate 1

July 16 - 20

Gladstone Junior 2

July 23 - 27

Gladstone Intermediate 2

July 30 - August 3

Mountain Junior

August 19 - 23

SWOT

July 4 - 7

AGOT

July 13 - 20

ABOT

July 27 - August 3

Keenagers (ages 50+)

May 17 - 20



Director of Camping

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Jr: Born 2012-2015 **Int:** Born 2010-2012 **Sr:** Born 2006-2010