



# Camp Stephens Stepping Stone Project

## 10-Year Master Plan Summary



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## 10-Year Master Plan: Summary

Camp Stephens has been a cornerstone of children and youth development for over 130 years. With the support of generous donors, and the oversight of the Camp Stephens Stepping Stone Advisory Committee, the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg was able to undertake a year long process to develop a 10-Year Master Plan. This plan has been informed by extensive stakeholder engagement and a comprehensive physical assessment of the camp's infrastructure. This plan balances preserving the camp's rustic character with necessary modernization, sustainability, and accessibility enhancements.

### The plan was shaped by two major efforts:

- **Campfire Consultations** (400+ participants, including campers, staff, alumni, and community partners) to identify what makes Camp Stephens special and what needs to change.
- **Infrastructure & Operations Assessment** conducted by an external architecture firm, evaluating facilities, utilities, and sustainability needs.

Together, these reports provide a roadmap for renewal, ensuring that Camp Stephens continues to be a place where children and youth grow, connect, and thrive.

## Key Findings & Priorities

### 1. Connection to the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg's Strategic Plan

Although Camp Stephens in and of itself is a wonderfully unique entity, efforts to develop its renewed vision must be done within the framework of Y Winnipeg's existing Strategic Plan. This has been achieved by helping to further two of Y Winnipeg's three Key Commitments:

#### **Ignite Potential & Nurture Belonging**

Developing youth as a new generation of community leaders, delivering transformative programs and spaces, and elevating diversity and equity through our programs are all expressed objectives within YWinnipeg's Strategic Plan. These are also core guiding principles in the development of Camp Stephens' 10-year Master Plan.

#### **Be Unforgettable**

This Key Commitment is one that Camp Stephens lives and breathes as much as anywhere else within the Y. But we realize there is more work to be done.

In order to fully realize the renewed vision for Camp Stephens, we must build strategic partnerships with organizations and communities who share that same vision – most notably with Indigenous communities who can help inform our efforts. We must also focus on capturing the countless stories of personal impact Camp Stephens represents, as well as engaging with the philanthropic community to help support what will no doubt be a significant financial commitment.



## 2. Camp Stephens' Unique Value & The Need for Renewal

Camp Stephens is more than a place—it's an experience that fosters:

- **Personal Growth & Leadership:** Campers develop self-confidence, resilience, and life skills.
- **Deep Connection to Nature:** A device-free, wilderness-based environment is central to its identity.
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** The camp strives to be a welcoming place for all youth, but improvements are needed to enhance physical accessibility, affordability, and gender inclusivity.
- **Sustainability & Stewardship:** A strong commitment to environmental responsibility must guide all future development.

However, aging infrastructure, evolving camper needs, and climate change challenges now require urgent action to ensure the camp remains safe, accessible, and resilient.

## 3. Immediate Challenges & Strategic Responses

Challenge	Strategic Response
Aging Infrastructure & Facilities	Demolish and rebuild key structures (Dining Hall, Showerhouse, Staff Housing), upgrade water/wastewater and electrical systems
Limited Staff Accommodations and Appropriate Staff Spaces	Develop a Staff Village with appropriate accommodations, improved workspaces, and amenities that support overall wellness
Limited Accessibility for Mobility & Gender-Inclusive Needs	Build universal washrooms, accessible pathways including docks, and gender-inclusive spaces
Leadership Pipeline Disruptions	Strengthen youth leadership programs to reconnect with YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg branches and develop future campers and camp staff
Sustainability & Climate Risks	Implement climate-resilient construction, renewable energy solutions, and strategies to address wildfires
Limited Off-Island Community Engagement	Develop formal partnerships with Treaty 3 First Nations communities, Kenora, and local businesses

## 4. The 10-Year Revitalization Plan

The Master Plan outlines a phased approach to infrastructure renewal, with a focus on preserving the camp's identity while ensuring safety, sustainability, and inclusivity. It also provides the pathway for addressing infrastructure challenges while ensuring ongoing operations of the camp throughout.

### Phase A (High Need & In Progress) Immediate Priorities:

- **New Showerhouse & Washrooms:** Universal design, gender-inclusive, fully accessible (already under construction).
- **Improve Wastewater Systems:** Replace biofilter
- **Welcome Dock Expansion:** Create a more accessible entry point to camp, expand capacity of current dock design
- **Redesign High & Low Ropes Courses:** Improve capacity and efficiency with a circuit-style course

### Phase B (2026-2028) Key Infrastructure Upgrades:

- **Replace Dining Hall & Kitchen:** Modern, expanded kitchen and dining space to enhance camper experience
- **Renovate Lodge as a Central Program Hub:** More indoor space for all-weather activities
- **Improve Water System:** Address filtration systems and improve water sustainability
- **Upgrade Power Infrastructure:** Address voltage drops, expand energy efficiency solutions and generator system for redundancy

### Phase C (2028-2031) Heart of Campus & Staff Village:

- **Welcome to the Island:** Redevelop the area that welcomes everyone to the island with a new Wellness Centre, Welcome Centre and programming space
- **Develop Staff Village:** Private accommodations, communal spaces, and leadership support for retention

### Phase D-G (2031-2035) Expanding Capacity & Inclusion:

- **Wilderness Trail Program Village:** Establish a dedicated space for wilderness out-trip program to improve on-island experience
- **Enhance Accessibility & Inclusion:** Build gender-neutral washrooms, improve trails, and ensure cabins meet diverse camper needs
- **Infrastructure Supports for Off-Island Programming:** Build capacity for wilderness trips by strengthening support systems and formalizing Indigenous partnerships

## 5. A Vision for the Future

This plan provides a clear roadmap for the next decade, ensuring that Camp Stephens remains a transformative experience for generations to come. By 2034, Camp Stephens will be:

- A thriving, wilderness-based leadership hub for children and youth from all backgrounds
- Fully accessible & inclusive, ensuring all campers feel safe, welcome, and supported
- A place that provides staff with appropriate accommodations, spaces and supports
- Environmentally sustainable, with reduced ecological impact and improved resilience to climate change
- A stronger community partner, fostering meaningful relationships with local and Indigenous communities

**Thank You!** This exciting next chapter in the long history of Camp Stephens would not be possible without the dedication and passion of the Stepping Stone Advisory Committee. We can't thank them enough for their invaluable contributions.

Dave Wright, Co-Chair

Cordella Friesen, Co-Chair

### Advisory Committee Members:

John Karras, Sara MacArthur, Megan Parsons, Kevin Hunter, Amber Legal, Brittany Girard, Cam Young



# Appendix A: Consultation Summary



What We Heard

# Engagement Report

YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg  
Stepping Stone Project

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**Contact**

Joanne Zuk  
(204) 391-7161  
[joanne@joannezuk.com](mailto:joanne@joannezuk.com)

# Introduction

Camp Stephens is a place of magic nestled in the heart of Treaty 3 territory. As a set of islands in the expansive Lake of the Woods region, its past, present, and future is deeply tied to the natural landscape of the island and the waters and communities that surround it. It is also inextricably linked to the staff and campers who have built memories on its shores for the past 133 years.



As a place where young people build skills, relationships, and a sense of belonging, Camp Stephens is an integral part of the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg's vision, where the potential of each individual is unlocked through meaningful connections that inspire a ripple of shared success. In fact, the organization's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, *Heartbeat of Community*, included specific priorities that have directed an intentional focus on the future of Camp Stephens. These priorities include a commitment to ignite potential and nurture belonging by investing in youth, building transformative programs and places, and centering diversity in equity in programs, services, and spaces.

These commitments matter, because now more than ever, young people need the experiences of Camp to help them grow into their full potential. The personal growth and development experienced at Camp arises from the intentional and natural challenges embedded in programming paired with the genuine connections are formed within the Camp community. But none of this would be possible without the visible and hidden infrastructure that is the foundation of Camp.

Each era of Camp has had its own unique challenges and today is no different. An interruption of Camp Stephens during the global pandemic (the first in its history since World War I), created a new set of challenges. The needs and behaviours of children, youth, families, and staff have shifted, prompting a necessary focus on mental and emotional well-being. Interruptions to the connections between Camp and Y Winnipeg's branches has resulted in challenges in identifying, developing, and growing young leaders. And the opportunity to pause and review the current state of Camp within the context of our changing climate and these other factors has exposed risks and gaps in Camp's aging infrastructure.

Through the generous contributions of committed donors, in spring 2024, the Stepping Stone Project was established to create a long-term Master Plan for Camp Stephens. The one-year project was designed to be completed in three phases:

- + Engagement with the people who have close ties with Camp Stephens – current and former campers and staff, families, and community partners – to understand what makes Camp so special, and how it must evolve to meet the needs of young people.
- + Comprehensive assessment of the islands, with goals of documenting the lifespan and maintenance requirements of existing infrastructure and making recommendations toward future development, through the lenses of sustainability and accessibility.
- + Development of a Master Plan, using the inputs from the other two phases to finalize a ten-year plan to manage and develop the infrastructure of Camp Stephens.





This report offers a summary of the extensive stakeholder engagement work that our team completed during the summer of 2024. This engagement was focused on connecting the dots between Camp Stephens' infrastructure and assets and the experiences and memories of campers and staff. It included:

- + 326 surveys completed by engaged Camp Stephens staff and alumni;
- + 117 interviews with current and former campers and staff, families, partners, and community members;
- + Visits to other YMCA camps to understand how they have approached their own master planning processes;
- + Collaboration with HTFC, the architectural firm that worked on the comprehensive assessment of Camp Stephens infrastructure. The feedback we gathered through stakeholder engagement was actively shared with HTFC and a small planning group during discussions of Camp's infrastructure needs and options.

### Why was there so much engagement?

Since 1891, thousands of young people have made memories and built relationships at Camp Stephens. Those experiences have shaped their lives and bonded them to one another and to the island itself. Each of these alumni carry their own memories and views about what made Camp special, and they hold a commitment to ensuring Camp remains a lifechanging experience for future generations.

As we approached this project, which included a large and invested alumni community, we knew it would be important to cast the net widely – to ensure we listened to voices from all generations to understand the threads that connect them across time. This diversity of participants offered us a wealth of stories, information and advice to consider within the realities of the current context, pressures, and opportunities that face Camp Stephens today.

This report answers the important questions of *What makes Camp Stephens so special? And how should Camp Stephens evolve over the next ten years?* The result is a set of recommended guiding principles designed to shape both the master planning process and the ten-year implementation timeline and sequence for the Master Plan itself.

# Why is Camp Stephens so special?

The magic of Camp Stephens is in the community it creates through shared experiences. This connection between campers and staff is at the heart of the memories that shape alumni throughout their lives. But this heart only beats because it is nurtured in a special place where water, land, and the natural environment define boundaries and opportunities to learn. In other words, the wilderness of the island is essential to the experience, memories, and impact of Camp Stephens on generations of campers and staff.

## Personal Growth

Camp Stephens provides an environment where young people are welcomed as they are, to experience a week or more of adventures in a safe and accepting community. Their shared experiences encourage them to understand and accept themselves while planting the seeds of the people they will ultimately grow into.

Every aspect of Camp, from being away from home, to trying new activities, to learning new skills, and building new relationships are opportunities for campers to face limiting beliefs, overcome challenges, and build the self-efficacy and confidence they will carry throughout their lives. Whether on island or on trail, the guidance and encouragement of staff who recognize and acknowledge the unique spark in each camper and believe in their potential propels these young campers to see themselves in a new light. It helps them grow their own self-acceptance and encourages them to dream about the impossible.

The progression of time supports this personal growth. Whether it includes accomplishing a physical feat that seemed impossible at the beginning of a camp session or returning year after year to develop more advanced skills and overcome greater obstacles and challenges, the progressive nature of Camp programming supports the emotional growth of campers with physically tangible experiences.

When alumni reflect on how Camp Stephens influenced their lives, they often share stories that point to this personal growth as a key element that made their time at Camp Stephens such a memorable, foundational, and transformational chapter in their lives.



## Connection to Nature

Since 1891, Camp Stephens has been a wilderness-based camp that has based its programming on the natural landscape of the island and its environment. Over time, it has evolved to include a range of activities and program elements but has always remained focused on providing campers with the opportunity to build personal relationships with nature through wind, water, and land-based activities.

In our current world, disconnecting from technology can create a significant void. However, alumni and current campers agree on the importance of keeping the Camp Stephens experience device-free. Young people especially see value in being themselves and challenging themselves in an environment where they have no worries about their experience being recorded and shared. While many campers experience an initial anxiety related to missing out on what their friends are doing at home, most find their experiences at Camp are so engaging they forget that they could be spending time online. They also find that as their time at Camp proceeds, they relish the ability to not have to maintain their public persona and participation on social media.

The values of sustainability, connection, and responsibility that evolve from time spent engaged with nature also contribute to a deep commitment to environmental sustainability that was notable among alumni in the survey data. It seems their early experiences on the island deeply affect their views on the environment throughout their lives. According to survey responses, alumni hold strong opinions about the importance of applying a sustainability and climate resiliency lens on the Master Plan and on the importance of embedding those values and eco-friendly practices in the programming offered at Camp.



## Diversity and Accessibility

Camp Stephens has evolved over the past 133 years, and aspires to be a place that reflects diversity in its people and spaces. Creating a welcoming space to be inclusive of different dimensions of diversity increases operational complexity on many fronts. However the richness of experience for campers that exists within a diverse and accessible Camp environment is well worth the effort.

The importance of bringing youth together from diverse lives and backgrounds can't be understated. During the impressionable years of Camp, young people form opinions about the world and the people in it; being in community with others from different backgrounds offers powerful lessons that shape their values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and community. Continuing to build a diverse camp community is therefore critical in supporting all youth to see one another as equal and valued.

## Gender

When it was first established, Camp Stephens was developed for boys and the only female on island was the Camp Nurse. Over time and as interest among boys waned, Camp Stephens took the opportunity to create a girls' session at the end of the summer. This change prompted the welcome addition of female staff. Eventually, the decision was made to eliminate the practice of segregating girls and boys to their own weeks, establishing the co-ed model that continues to operate.

Today, in the effort to also be inclusive of non-binary youth, Camp encourages youth to register for cabin and trail groups in alignment with their gender identity, acknowledging the wisdom of youth and adapting to the inclusionary practices that young people accept as the norm. In our interviews with current campers and staff, they shared an appreciation for the sense of safety, acceptance, and inclusion created by this practice. However, as one camper shared, "the people here are inclusive, but the facilities are not," referring to the gendered toilet and shower facilities that represent spaces of heightened vulnerability, especially for non-binary youth.

## Income

For many years, efforts have been made through the Sunshine Fund and directly in partnership with generous donors to create more opportunities for youth from diverse backgrounds to experience Camp Stephens at low or no cost to their families. This access to Camp for youth from at-risk and historically marginalized backgrounds has a strong impact on both the recipients of sponsorship spaces and the youth with whom they experience Camp.

As an island-based experience that is more than two hours from Winnipeg by car, sending a young person to Camp Stephens is a significant financial commitment, regardless of the socioeconomic status of that child's family. However, without sponsorship, the costs associated with Camp would be out of reach for many families – and often, these are the young people who benefit most from their time at Camp Stephens.

In our interviews with families and community partners who help match youth to sponsored spaces, we learned how transformative the Camp experience is for these young people. Their parents talked about how they returned from Camp with increased confidence, new skills, and an expanded sense of self-reliance and independence. When we spoke directly with sponsored youth at Camp, they deeply appreciated the opportunity to be in nature and were relieved by the opportunity to fill their plates in the Dining Hall without

worrying about whether there would be enough for others.

Building relationships with youth from more privileged backgrounds offers low-income youth exposure to the different experiences of people outside their communities and families, which expands their perceptions of what is possible for themselves. Similarly, youth from privileged backgrounds benefit equally, by building relationships with and empathy for young people with different lived experiences than them.



## Culture

Diversity of culture and background is another dimension that is evolving as Camp Stephens is making efforts to reach out to communities that may not have experience with Camp. Increasing cultural diversity is challenging, particularly for newcomers from countries where camp experiences are not commonplace. It also places increased pressure on kitchen staff to provide culturally appropriate and nutritional options and on counsellors and program staff to establish respect and awareness of cultural and religious traditions in cabin groups and programming.

This cultural diversity is further enhanced by access to diverse staff. While the staffing gaps resulting from the pandemic led to an increase in the number of international staff at Camp Stephens, the exposure of young people to leaders from around the world expands their mental borders and invites a deeper understanding of connection across the globe. International and local staff who find their way to Camp without prior family connections to Camp Stephens often do so in search of their own place of belonging in the world.

There is a strong feeling of family among staff at Camp Stephens, and this is reinforced by both the experience of working together through challenging seasons and the multi-year commitment that many staff make to Camp. Further reinforcing these dynamics are the family legacies that many staff live out as they carry on their family traditions of Camp involvement as campers, canoe trip participants, and staff. Whether part of a legacy family or as a new staff member, current and former Camp staff belong to a unique family of connections and belonging that comes from their shared experiences at Camp.

Many staff whose families had legacy involvement in Camp expressed that the ability to commit to the long hours and low wages (compared to what they might earn if they were to take summer jobs related to their fields of study) of working at Camp might be out of reach for potential staff who come from lower-income backgrounds. They indicated that they were willing to sacrifice time and wages for the opportunity (and sometimes pressure) associated with carrying on their family legacies. However, they felt it was important to find ways to encourage many kinds of diversity among staff, as they see the presence of diversity in staff as critical to creating positive experiences for campers.

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## Leadership

The youth of today will become our community leaders tomorrow. The YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg has had a long history of nurturing young leaders to become inspiring pillars in our community, many of whom were once campers and staff at Camp Stephens. Today, Camp Stephens offers opportunities for youth to grow their leadership skills. In fact, for the most part, staff are comprised of young people who have developed these skills organically through the trail stream of progressive canoe trips or formally through Camp's Leadership Development Program stream (formerly the Counsellor in Training program).

In the past, many Camp Stephens staff remained connected to Winnipeg branches throughout the fall, winter, and spring as participants in the YMCA-YWCA youth leadership program or as part-time staff. However, the youth leadership program had experienced declining participation through the 2000s and 2010s and, while it is still minimally operational, requires renewal.

To compound the impact of fewer trained leaders available from Winnipeg branches, the pandemic disrupted the natural flow of developing leaders through progressive staff opportunities at Camp. The suspension of programming during the pandemic meant that young people took jobs elsewhere, diverting their path away from Camp Stephens. As a result, Camp has relied more heavily on international staff in recent years than in the past.

Offering leadership as an area of skill development and potential employment opportunities serves as just one more challenging opportunity for personal growth among youth. As they look up to their counsellors, Trippers, and program staff as role models, campers can make the choice to follow in their footsteps through a progressive path that can lead from training and development into increasingly responsible roles as Camp staff. While the formal programming and connections between Camp Stephens and the Winnipeg branches need renewal, this relationship and commitment to youth leadership development is essential to providing high quality experiences at Camp Stephens for both campers and staff.



# Engagement Feedback and the Master Plan

Throughout this engagement project, our team focused on connecting what we were learning from stakeholders with the broader purpose of the Stepping Stone Project. The overall goal was to inform a comprehensive Master Plan to optimize the lifespan of existing infrastructure while renewing and rebuilding key assets that are essential to the Camp experience.

Camp Stephens is not simply a set of islands in Lake of the Woods. It has a backbone of visible and hidden infrastructure - buildings, systems, and equipment – that support the quality of experiences of campers and staff. These functional components were only rarely mentioned by stakeholders. So our work involved deeply listening to participants to understand the hidden but integral connections between Camp infrastructure and their memories.

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## Community

Community is created in spaces where people come together. Throughout the memories shared by campers, staff, and alumni, we heard about the importance of spaces that support community building within cabin groups and across the entire Camp community.

Inside cabins, micro-communities are nurtured as adventures are lived. These are the places where campers and counsellors build relationships, discuss challenges, and celebrate achievements as they bookend their days together. The ponderings of late-night conversations open campers' minds to new possibilities, inspiring them to reach higher, challenge themselves, and develop a keen sense of who they are. The size of cabin groups, the open nature of cabins, and the extended roofs and porches that allow for shelter from the hot sun and rain are all features that support the open and important conversations that happen in cabin groups.

## Aesthetics of Camp

The aesthetics of buildings like Lount Lodge and the Thomas Sill Foundation Dining Hall was a topic that generated a good deal of interest and opinions among participants. There is a general recognition that the buildings on the island have maximum lifespans and they are unlikely to last forever. Yet, there is a strong view that when these buildings are renewed or replaced, the new iterations should ensure the natural environment is centred in the design of these buildings. The builders should consider opportunities for temperature optimization, accessibility, views of the water, and they should aim to channel the woodsy, island feel of the existing building aesthetics.

Even though these buildings were predominantly built within the past 50 years, there is a nostalgia associated with them and there is a preference for maintaining them as long as feasible. We were fortunate to interview some of the original builders, who relayed that, while they built the best buildings they could with the resources that were available at the time, there were plenty of changes they would make if they could go back in time. In general, there is a common hope that as these old buildings reach the end of their lifespan, they are replaced with buildings that are built for purpose, but also which maintain an aesthetic that honours the spirit of what had been there before.



In larger spaces, like the Thomas Sill Foundation Dining Hall, Lount Lodge, the Depot, and the campus itself, large groups – including the entire camp community – come together in spaces that encourage reciprocity, communal responsibility, creativity, competitiveness, and fun. It is important to have spaces where the entire Camp community can come together to engage in programming, celebrate achievements, and honor traditions like trip returns and the Camp Stephens Games.

The Dining Hall was identified by a variety of staff as being particularly problematic and contributing to a range of unique challenges. The kitchen facilities are largely outdated, which makes repair and replacement of equipment extremely difficult. When equipment fails, it becomes even more challenging to meet the increasingly diverse dietary needs of campers and staff. Despite the beautiful views of the lake from its deck, the design of the Dining Hall contributes to poor circulation of air. This lack of circulation is compounded by its internal steel structure, which retains heat and sound – creating a space that can become hot, humid, and – when full of young people – extremely loud. These conditions only increase the difficulty in recruiting qualified kitchen staff to Camp Stephens, which has led to Camp contracting with a food services company that brings staff in from other centres for rotating shifts throughout the summer.

While the Depot is new, both the Dining Hall and Lount Lodge are aging rapidly. It is important that the Master Plan address renewal or replacement of these large and important buildings, as Camp Stephens needs these types of spaces to generate a sense of belonging among campers and staff.



## Personal Growth

The experience of overcoming challenges that once seemed impossible is a life changing experience for campers. They shared memories about program options like high ropes, climbing, canoeing, and swimming. These may be the activities within which they experience achievements, but the infrastructure is the means by which Camp offers those options.

The quality of experiences in all of these skill development spaces are enhanced or diminished by the quality and state of small assets like canoes, lifejackets, and ropes as well as foundational assets like docks, the high ropes course and the climbing wall.

## Program Feedback

Although we heard about programming frequently throughout the engagement process, a review of programs was not in scope for this project – and some stakeholders were disappointed with this limitation. However, throughout this engagement process, it became clear that, while programming is important, the personal growth that happens by overcoming challenges is far more important than the kind of program that offered the challenge.

For example, the sailing program was frequently raised as one that requires significant new investment if it is to be continued. However, when campers and alumni shared memories of sailing, it wasn't the act of sailing that was centred. What mattered most was learning a new skill, overcoming an obstacle, and coming away from the experience with a sense of empowerment and confidence.

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## Inclusion

In conversations with campers and staff, we frequently heard about the limitations of the Camp's physical environment, which led to passionate discussions about the importance of inclusion. Young people are particularly sensitive to the fact that Camp is not physically accessible for individuals with mobility-related needs. We observed this in action as family members attending the 6-week canoe trip return struggled to step onto and off the Camp dock from Camp Stephens boats. Additionally, campers and staff noted the state of disrepair of some of the island's pathways and the physical inaccessibility of many of the island's buildings.

In addition to accessibility concerns, staff expressed frustration over the limited number and distribution of toilet facilities. Depending on their location on the island, access to restrooms could entail a long walk and lead to disruption of programming and concerns about not having sufficient ratios of staff to campers in place at any given time.

Young people also had strong opinions about gendered toilet and shower facilities. Their strong preference, rooted in deep acceptance of a non-binary world, is for non-gendered facilities built with privacy and safety in mind. Our visit to Camp Chief Hector in Alberta offered an example of best practice in wash and toilet facilities that were built as individual, lockable, floor-to-ceiling stalls based on recommendations to optimize safety and minimize vulnerability of youth.

## Mental Health

Since the pandemic, Camp Stephens has seen a notable rise in the number of campers experiencing difficulty with their mental health. This includes campers who require control and distribution of medication, campers who experience dysregulation, and some more serious issues that require more support than can be provided on the island. Camp Stephens has responded by providing increased access to Mental Health First Aid training for staff, and this is seen as a positive improvement.

However, one of the frequent topics of discussion we had with current staff was their own mental health. They commonly expressed that they felt overwhelmed by the volume and intensity of the needs of campers, and this contributed to negative mental health, which in turn, had an impact on the energy and enthusiasm they were able to bring to campers.

In addition to the increased mental health needs of campers, they pointed to limitations in staff housing as significant negative contributions to their mental health. Specifically, counsellors who stay in cabins with campers expressed frustration at a lack of privacy and alone time. Trail staff who stayed in a makeshift tent city expressed that they felt like the lack of housing and intentional space for them indicated they were not valued by Camp. There was also frustration expressed about highly uncomfortable beds within the housing options that are available on the island.

From our perspective, resolving staff housing is one of the most pressing issues that should be addressed early in the Master Plan. Concerns about mental health and feeling valued can quickly translate to poor retention rates, which can have significant ramifications for Camp Stephens' ability to hire enough qualified and enthusiastic staff to support excellent experiences for campers.

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## Undeveloped Wilderness

Throughout our conversations with staff and campers, we noted that there was a strong preference for Camp Stephens to retain undeveloped spaces, like Raspberry Rock and narrow pathways through the woods. There is a deep appreciation for the half of the island that is largely untouched, as it offers opportunities for silent contemplation and personal renewal.

Campers and staff expressed frustration that these spaces were inaccessible because of invasive poison ivy, and were very hopeful that in future years, there would be more access available for the untouched part of the island.

## Off-island Adventures

Whether as part of a cabin group excursion or a longer trail program, we heard clearly from campers, staff, alumni, and families that the off-island wilderness experiences offered by Camp Stephens are an important element that sparks a lifelong love for adventure, a commitment of reciprocity with community, and a deep connection with our planet.

We heard strong views among staff and experienced campers that every camper should experience at least one night camping outdoors under the stars as part of their Camp Stephens experience. This level of interest and commitment to off-island camping provides a rationale to consider enhanced usage of the other Camp-owned islands for day and overnight trips.

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## Underlying infrastructure

A hard reality faced by the operations team is that their work is typically noticed only when the background infrastructure of the island experiences problems. The core systems of Camp – water treatment, wastewater, electrical, and transportation are largely invisible to campers and staff. In our interviews with them, core infrastructure was only raised when there were complaints that toilets or showers were not operational, or when limitations were placed on activities. But they are critical to the core functioning of a fun and safe environment.

In our discussions with the building operations team, there is a culture of making do with existing budgets however when this is compounded over decades, it can make maintaining older infrastructure very challenging over time. For example, the use of non-commercial grade materials might be penny-wise but in the end is pound-foolish, as those materials are not designed to withstand the 200 or more campers and staff who are on the island each week during the summer.

## Community Relationships

Longer trips create the conditions for respectful interaction with neighbours and neighbouring communities – and the 6-week canoe trip participants and Trippers express deep appreciation for the generosity of the communities they interact with during their travels. However, throughout our discussions with Camp staff and alumni, it was striking that, aside from canoe trips, few relationships exist beyond the shores of Camp. Camp Stephens may be an island, but it would benefit immensely from developing respectful and reciprocal relationships with its Treaty 3 neighbours, the City of Kenora, and businesses in those communities.

## What should the future of camp look like?

There is a strong consensus across all engagement participants that Camp Stephens should remain true to what it does best – offering progressive trail and on-island leadership programming through a wilderness-centric, device-free environment.

Camp Stephens aspires to be a diverse and welcoming community – and the infrastructure that supports Camp needs to be built for inclusion. This means improving physical accessibility on the island, ensuring privacy and gender inclusivity in showers and toilet facilities, and ensuring kitchen facilities can accommodate a diversity of dietary needs.

While there is a recognition that upgrading and replacing core facilities is necessary, Camp should maintain the feel of a wilderness camp that optimizes the experience of being in nature, rather than shifting toward a state-of-the-art modern vibe.

Buildings should be maintained or replaced in alignment with this aesthetic, but the functional elements of those buildings (like kitchen equipment, showers, and storage) should be modern and efficient. Similarly, core program activities should remain focused on human-, water- and wind-powered skill development, with small assets and equipment managed and maintained to preserve them for their full lifespan.



A strong commitment to environmental sustainability should be incorporated into the Master Plan. In fact, environmental stewardship was identified as the most important consideration for the evolution of Camp Stephens. This means Camp must minimize its environmental footprint, take steps to improve its climate resiliency, and be intentional about the sustainability of new development.

Camp Stephens should be a more intentional neighbour and partner with nearby communities. This is primarily work that should be undertaken by the Camp Director during the off-season where trusting and reciprocal relationships with Treaty 3 communities, the City of Kenora, and business owners in those communities can be slowly built. Campers and staff recognize the importance of water as the element that connects Camp Stephens to surrounding communities. Just as young people hold strong convictions about the need for accessibility and inclusion, they also want to see Camp demonstrate its appreciation and recognition of the First Nations Peoples who have been the caretakers of the water and lands of Turtle Island for thousands of years.

Finally, the alumni of Camp Stephens are a passionate and invaluable part of its legacy, and their continued involvement will be essential to Camp's future. We encourage Camp Stephens to create a focused engagement approach that would invite alumni to contribute meaningfully to Camp – for example, by participating in seasonal efforts like spring cleanup, using their networks to connect Camp with tradespeople and businesses, and by serving as enthusiastic boosters who champion Camp's vision within their communities. With clear opportunities for involvement, alumni can play a pivotal role in strengthening the future of Camp Stephens, building new connections, and supporting the campaign that will bring the Master Plan to life.



# Recommended Guiding Principles for the Master Plan

Based on the feedback generously provided through nearly 450 survey responses and interviews with campers, staff, alumni, families, community members, and partners, we recommend that the following guiding principles be used to guide the development and implementation of the Master Plan for Camp Stephens.

## Belonging and Inclusivity

Infrastructure – both visible and hidden – must enable programming that fosters community, belonging, and inclusivity. This includes ensuring equitable access across dimensions of gender, culture, ability, and income, creating an environment where every camper and staff member feels valued and empowered.

## Progressive Skill Development

Camp Stephens offers progressive skill development through both on-island and trail streams. All infrastructure must be built for program flexibility and to support activities across multiple levels of learning and mastery, encouraging personal growth and self-efficacy for campers and staff alike.

## Nature-Centric Design

The built environment should harmonize with the natural landscape, “fitting” within the surroundings while reflecting Camp’s wilderness character. Structures must be modern and functional, but without adopting an overly polished or state-of-the-art aesthetic that detracts from Camp’s rustic feel.

## Balanced Investment Across Streams

Both the on-island leadership and trail streams are essential to the Camp Stephens experience. Investment in one stream must not come at the expense of the other, ensuring that each offers high-quality and meaningful opportunities for personal and collective development.

## Reciprocal Relationships and Reconciliation

Camp Stephens is committed to building respectful and reciprocal relationships with Treaty 3 communities. As part of ongoing reconciliation efforts and intentions to be a good neighbour, Camp will acknowledge and honor the history of the land and water and will foster mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with communities.

## Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship

Every element of development and renewal must reflect a deep commitment to environmental sustainability. Infrastructure must minimize environmental impact, enhance climate resiliency, and promote sustainable practices across Camp activities and operations.

# About Us: Joanne Zuk Strategy

Joanne Zuk Strategy is a Manitoba-based soloist consulting firm that specializes in strategic planning and stakeholder engagement for community-based and heart-led organizations that have a complex relationship with government. We partner with other talented consultants to meet the needs of our clients. This project involved:

- + **Joanne Zuk**  
**Project and Engagement Lead**  
Joanne worked closely with the Advisory Committee to establish and oversee execution of the engagement plan, conducted most of the project interviews personally, visited Camp Chief Hector, and prepared this report.
- + **Pam Grahame (Shop Floor Leadership)**  
**Engagement Specialist**  
Pam collaborated with Joanne on the engagement plan, visited Camp Thunderbird and conducted interviews with the families of sponsored campers and community partners.
- + **Sigrid Penner (Focus Further Solutions)**  
**Survey Specialist**  
Sigrid designed, created, fielded and analysed the stakeholder engagement survey and presented the results to the Advisory Committee in a comprehensive briefing.

## Our Commitment to Reconciliation

As settlers who live and work in Treaty One territory and often work in communities that span the territories of Treaties One through Eleven and unceded territories across the lands known as Canada, we are deeply aware of our own responsibilities to listen to Truth and walk a path of Reconciliation that begins with re-education of ourselves.

We have been gifted many teachings through generous interactions with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Community members who have helped us better understand our place in history and our roles in walking a respectful path alongside Indigenous Peoples.

While we continue to learn about our shameful shared history, we are inspired to continue learning from those who hold our histories – and are committed to carrying the lessons of those stories forward to ensure we live, work, and support our clients in a good way.







# Appendix B: Master Plan Outline





# Camp Stephens

## Physical Assessment and 10-Year Revitalization Master Plan

January 30, 2025

Submitted to  
YMCA-YWCA OF WINNIPEG  
3550 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0Z8

Submitted by  
HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN  
500-115 Bannatyne Avenue East  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0R3

In partnership with:  
SIERRA CONSTRUCTION  
Site 215, Comp 20  
4 Parmeter Road  
Kenora, ON P9N 3W8



*The YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg is grateful to operate on Treaty 1 and 3 Territories in the original lands of the Indigenous Peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We acknowledge that Winnipeg's clean drinking water is sourced from Shoal Lake 39 and 40 First Nations and electricity, from Treaty 5 Territory. We are committed to honour and respect the Treaties that were made on these territories and dedicate ourselves to moving forward with humility in partnership with Indigenous Peoples in a spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration.*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Camp Stephens, owned and operated by the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg, is a long-standing wilderness camp on Lake of the Woods in Kenora, Ontario. Every year, thousands of kids' identities are formed by the camp experience and the memories created that they carry through life. Welcoming youth from ages 8-17 years, Camp plays an important role in their education and empowerment by developing wilderness and leadership skills, promoting activity, and encouraging self-confidence through a series of programs and activities both on and off-island. The camp offers day camps, summer camps and multi-week canoe trip experiences to thousands of children each year.

Camp Stephens is known for its rustic character, but as time evolves, the infrastructure and facilities continue to age. As camp programming is growing in demand, the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg wants to ensure that any modernization and expansion of the camps facilities not only retain this rustic character, but also strive for sustainability and provide a safe and natural environment where each camper and staff are ensured to have a welcoming and inclusive experience.

Looking forward, Y Winnipeg identified Camp Stephens as a priority in their 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. In partnership with HTFC Planning & Design and Sierra Construction, a physical assessment of the Camp's assets was completed, and a 10-Year Reinvestment Plan was developed. This plan is driven by the immediate needs of the camp to operate safely and effectively, adopts camp programs and amenities that can run smoothly with trained staff over the coming years, and includes a phasing strategy for how this growth and development will take place over the next decade.

This Reinvestment Plan complete with funding targets and implementation strategy will serve as a roadmap to success, helping the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg to develop a business case for the project and secure funding for improvements to utilities, main camp buildings, staff accommodations, camper cabins, recreational amenities, trails, and natural landscapes throughout the main island and on the four near by tripper islands.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION A BRIEF HISTORY

Camp Stephens has had a presence on Lake of the Woods since 1893 when 4 individuals (R.D. Richardson, C.M. Copeland, W.D. Bayly Sr. and J. Ball) came upon a grouping of 5 islands, later named after prominent YMCA Members (Mr. G.F. Stephens, Mr. C.M. Copeland, Mr. Fleming, Mr. T.D. Patton, Mr. James Ball and Sir George Williams).

Historically, the Camp was for young adults of both genders, but in 1910 the camp became primarily used by boys. It wasn't until 1962 that a two-week camp session was introduced for girls which lasted until 1980 when Camp Stephens became a fully co-educational program all summer.

Camp Stephens has a long-standing history as a wilderness camp serving thousands of children each year and developing comradery, promoting education and self-confidence, and developing critical skills that are taken into adulthood. For this reason, the Camp's alumni are a huge support system for the Camp and Y Winnipeg and play an important role in the development of the Camp.

Understanding that times are changing, and the camp experience and longevity is of top importance, Y Winnipeg is striving to ensure that a safe, respectful, inclusive and sustainable environment at Camp. To achieve this, changes are necessary to the Camp's facilities and infrastructure. Already underway with the construction of a new showerhouse, Camp Stephens is well on their way to becoming more accessible and inclusive for all.

Throughout its history Camp Stephens has added in new programs, such as a high ropes course in 1998, and had upgraded infrastructure critical to the camp experience, such as new camper cabins in 2007 and 2008, and wastewater and electrical updates. Upgrades are still required for many of the facilities and program amenities on site, but understandably, Camp Stephens wants its' rustic character to remain to reflect itself as a true wilderness camp into the future. These are a few of the items that have become drivers for this masterplan and more will be expanded on further in the report.

The process it took to develop this masterplan, research completed, the necessary upgrades, and recommendations are outlined in this report and come together into a Preliminary Long-Term Development plan with associated phasing and costing that the Y Winnipeg can use as a roadmap in the coming years.



## 2.0 PROCESS

As part of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg developed a Stepping Stone Project to push the revitalization of Camp Stephens forward. This project involved a 3-phase approach: Campfire Consultations (Phase 1), Island Exploration (Phase 2) and Camp Stewardship (Phase 3).

In Phase 1, the Y consulted with an engagement specialist who led interviews with current leaders, staff and camp alumni. These interviews gave leaders, staff, and alumni the opportunity to provide critical feedback of their experiences and the camp's infrastructure and operations. After completing Campfire Consultations, the Y selected HTFC Planning & Design as the planning team to complete Phase 2 and Phase 3 of their Stepping Stone Project.

During Phase 2, the planning team, in partnership with Sierra Construction, traveled to Camp Stephens in July 2024 to survey the camp facilities, walk the island to get a feel for the camp and its character, and to gather data relevant to the project objectives. A mapping exercise of the existing conditions, opportunities and constraints of the Camp and its 5 surrounding islands followed, including a life-span assessment of the existing camp facilities and infrastructure, resulting in a prioritized asset management plan.

In August 2024, HTFC Planning & Design held a workshop with the Project Advisory Committee, assembled by the Y, to present its findings and asset evaluation in conjunction with the Phase 1 consultation results to receive direction on the camp and brainstorm expanded programming opportunities and facility needs as part of the 10-year revitalization plan. Following this session, research calls were made by the planning and design team to gain a greater understanding of the condition and constraints of the existing water, wastewater, electrical, ropes course and building infrastructure and what requirements are necessary for expansion.

From the Project Advisory Committee's direction, two preliminary long-term development options were developed as part of Phase 3 to incorporate demolition, renovation, revitalization, and new built amenities into a functional, accessible, flexible, and sustainable camp, while maintaining existing and introducing new programs. The Project Advisory Committee were presented with both options (Appendix 3) in a secondary workshop in October 2024 and were given the opportunity to provide their feedback on what was believed to work best for the camp moving forward. Once there was consensus on the preferred aspects of each option, those were then compiled into a preferred Preliminary Long-Term Development Plan (Section 4.0), complete with a corresponding Order of Magnitude Budget and a phasing strategy (Section 5.0) that will help form an integral part of the plan as the YMCA-YWCA moves forward.







# 3.0 RESEARCH

During Phase 2, a field visit was completed to survey the Camp in its entirety. From this field visit, a comprehensive asset evaluation was completed which provided a framework for understanding the opportunities and constraints found with the Camp and on island. After reviewing this evaluation with the Project Advisory committee, several calls were made to contractors and companies that are familiar with the Camp and have completed work on the island previously (Appendix 2). The purpose of this research was to determine the state of the island’s existing infrastructure and to understand if the Camp’s current needs were being met or whether repairs or improvements were required moving forward. Future infrastructure needs were also assessed to understand what requirements exist should the Camp expand in the future. The research focused on servicing, such as water, wastewater and electrical, but also explored certain amenities like the Ropes Course, on-and-off island programming, and all the existing buildings on island.



## FIELD RESEARCH

In July 2024, the planning team, along with Sierra Construction, traveled to Camp Stephens and spent the day on island measuring the camp’s buildings, studying the terrain and understanding how the camp operates by seeing it firsthand. The island was toured with Camp staff, looking at docks, shelters, buildings, trails, natural areas, and land and water activities. Visiting during the operating season was very informative and this helped the planning team to site proof many elements which was critical in advising the plan. As the planning team went on to compiling an asset evaluation reflective of this field visit, Sierra Construction returned to island a couple of times further to study the more technical requirements that would determine the future needs and possibilities of the existing facilities.







## ASSET EVALUATION

An Asset Evaluation (Appendix 1) was compiled for each element that currently exists on the island, including communal buildings, operation & maintenance facilities, servicing infrastructure, water sports and access, accommodations, outdoor recreation, outside island opportunities, and other concerns, needs, and opportunities to take into consideration in the future.

These elements were then identified further into construction type, size, occupancy, and location. They were each given a rating on their existing condition (green= good, orange = fair, and red = poor). The needs for each were further categorized into 3 priority levels, with the top priority (Level 1) being of immediate need. For example, the biofilter wastewater system was rated Poor, because the peat filter requires immediate replacement for the camp to operate another year.

This asset evaluation was presented to the Project Advisory Committee to gauge whether HTFC's findings from their field visit were in line with what the committee believed to be of top priority. Once confirmed further technical research was completed to understand infrastructure conditions and implications of development and expansion on island.

## TECHNICAL RESEARCH

During Phase 2, the planning team completed a series of research calls with outside contractors, familiar with Camp Stephens, to understand the technical aspects on Camp with respect to its facilities, servicing (water, wastewater, and hydro), operations, programming elements (ropes course), and future climate considerations as the Camp looks to the future. Discussions included what the history of these elements are, their existing conditions, work completed to date, requirements that need to occur in the near or immediate future, and recommendations as further development takes place on the island over the coming decade. This section summarizes each of these conversations and the key takeaways. Below is a listing of our key contacts:

### Building Facilities & Water

*Sierra Construction*

Contact: Jamie Minor

Office: 807.548.5038

Email: [info@sierra-construction.ca](mailto:info@sierra-construction.ca)

### Wastewater / Septic

*Canadian Shield Consultants Agency Inc.*

Contact: Gerry Dignard

Phone: 705.867.5242

Email: [gerry@canadianshieldconsultants.com](mailto:gerry@canadianshieldconsultants.com)

### Pinchin Ltd.

Contact: Dale Wiebe

Phone: 807.468.4110

Email: [dwiebe@pinchin.com](mailto:dwiebe@pinchin.com)

### Electrical

*Shield Power & Fibre, Northern Energy*

Contact: Jon Patrick

Phone: 807.548.5225

Email: [jon@northernenergy.ca](mailto:jon@northernenergy.ca)

### Ropes Course

*The Canadian Ropes Course Company*

Contact: Peter Bailey

Phone: 905.892.9086

Email: [bailey@canadianropescoursecompany.com](mailto:bailey@canadianropescoursecompany.com)



## FACILITIES RESEARCH

Contact: Jamie Minor, Sierra Construction

### What We Heard

Sierra Construction visited Camp Stephens on a few occasions to assess the current facilities and servicing. Some of the major concerns amongst the YMCA-YWCA and the planning team were the Dining Hall, the Lodge, and Robinson's Cabin. These are the facilities that require the most infrastructure work and it was necessary to determine if the cost of repair made economic sense for the YMCA-YWCA to invest in. Most other facilities were structurally sound but required minimal refurbishments, such as adding eaves troughs to help with drainage or re-leveling around ramps and stairs to ensure accessibility is not impeded.

Sierra found that the kitchen within the Dining Hall required significant repairs and upgrades. They noted that the Dining Hall could be adapted for re-use, but doing so would require foundation work, new decks, new windows, improved ventilation, and any new framing and finishing required for re-use. The deck foundation is degrading from changes in water level and shifting. As these repairs are not insignificant, Sierra did a cost analysis to understand how the cost of repair to the existing Dining Hall would compare with the demolition of it and rebuilding a new facility. It was found that the repairs and any adaptive re-use would not result in any significant cost savings compared to constructing a new facility from the ground up. Concerns were also raised by Sierra about investing in an older building as this can lead to compromises in design and functionality. For this reason it was determined that the Dining Hall and Kitchen should be a top priority and should be replaced in the immediate future.

The Lodge, with its beautiful character, is one of the first distinguishing features of Camp as one arrives to the island. Preserving this is an important aspect to the future of Camp. The structure of the Lodge itself is in good condition; however, the upper and lower exterior decks are significantly rotting and require replacement. The planning team was shocked to find that the Lodge is not frequently used for indoor programming as it is a remarkable indoor space. Currently home to two offices, a storage room, staff lounge, and common area, the planning team recommends renovating the interior of the lodge to keep the program office and open the remainder of the interior to host more indoor programming opportunities. Sierra Construction assessed that there would be no issue in removing some or most of the walls as they do not interact with the ceiling. The wall that does could be removed and a beam added relatively easily if the wall was deemed to be structural.

At the end of cabin line, sits Robinson's Cabin, one of the last original camper cabins. It has not been in use in recent years due to its condition. With mold issues and a structurally poor floor, it does not make economic sense to invest time and money into renovating it. A new cabin could be rebuilt in its place, but with YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg looking to the future, they feel another camper cabin is not required at this time, so the recommendation is to remove Robinson's and reforest this area.

### Action/Response:

- Remove existing Dining Hall and rebuild a new facility
- Remove both upper and lower exterior decks on the Lodge and rebuild a new deck; renovate interior to increase indoor programming opportunities
- Remove Robinson's cabin and reforest area



## SERVICES CAPACITY RESEARCH

### Water

Contact: Jamie Minor, Sierra Construction

#### What We Heard

Camp Stephens currently uses filtered lake water and a potable water system to service its facilities. The filtered lake water is used for non-potable applications, such as toilets, while the potable water systems support places where ingestion may occur, such as showers, sinks, and water fountains. Continuing the use of lake water in future development presents a more advantageous options compared to sourcing from a well.

It can be noticed while walking the site that many water lines are exposed, spanning from building to building on top of the grounds' surface. Due to the Camp's terrain and its location within the Canadian Shield it is understandable that some lines may be exposed, but this does increase the risk for damage. As development occurs in the future, it is advisable to bury new and existing water lines in high-traffic areas where possible, to protect them from potential damage. In lower traffic areas they can remain exposed and be utilized effectively.

The existing potable water treatment system is housed beneath the existing Dining Hall. As the facilities research indicated, the removal of the existing Dining Hall is recommended, meaning the potable water system will need to be upgraded as well to suit a new facility. Upgrading and relocating the treatment system will allow for odour controls measures to be installed and will eliminate the odour that the existing system emits through the visitor path of travel as they arrive on island. In assessing whether the Camp would benefit from individual water systems at each facility or larger systems that each facility can then be fed from, it was recommended that larger systems would be best. Establishing centralized water treatment systems would be more beneficial as it would allow for efficient distribution to various areas on island as needed. This centralized approach would also streamline testing and maintenance processes.

#### Action/Response:

- Continue the use of lake water in non-potable applications
- Update and install new treated water and greywater lines as required with new development and bury new and existing lines where possible in high traffic areas
- As expansion occurs and when the existing Dining Hall is removed, install new centralized water treatment systems on the northern and southern ends of development accordingly



## Wastewater

Contact: Gerry Dignard, Canadian Shield Consultants Agency Inc.

### What We Heard

The wastewater treatment system at Camp Stephens, due to its system capacity, is regulated under the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

The YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg had an Ecoflo Biofilter Audit completed by Canadian Shield Consultants in August of 2023. The resulting report noted the status of the filter media and any recommended repairs. The peat moss filter media was determined to be in good use for treating the Camp's wastewater for a least one more year. At the end of the 2024 operating season, an inspection should take place to reassess its capabilities and replacement of the filter should take place as required. The Dosing Tank, Control Panel, and TLV-240 Blower were all functioning correctly at the time of the audit.

The Camp's current system is designed for an occupancy of 260 persons/ day with a DDSF capacity of 24,190 L/day, as indicated in the approved Environmental Compliance Approval # 8149-6WEK5F. This daily flow is not currently exceeded. Regardless of how many weeks, months, seasons that the camp is open, the maximum every day is 260 persons per day. The camp could extend into shoulder season with their current system, so long as the daily usage does not exceed 260 persons per day. Any day where more than 260 people are on island would push the limit of the wastewater system.

The capacity not used in one day cannot be rolled over to another day to increase above 260 persons/ day, therefore, an options assessment would be required if expansion were to occur to allow for more than 260 persons/day. An analysis would look at the total increase in number of persons per day, where any new buildings would be situated, an evaluation of the space of a new system, subsurface discharge, and the distance to water. From there, options for a new system type could be determined for how best to proceed with expansion. It is recommended to leave the existing system as it is and provide a separate secondary system to fulfill any expansion requirements. The footprint of the new system would be dependent on the type of treatment technology chosen and would ideally be situated within proximity to the existing system. Any new system would require an ECA (Environmental Compliance Approval).

### Action/Response:

- Replace peat filter and repair septic tank immediately
- Assess future needs and if persons per day will exceed 260, pursue an options assessment for a new secondary wastewater treatment system



## Electrical

Contact: Jon Patrick, Shield Power & Fibre, Northern Energy

### What We Heard

The island of Camp Stephens is serviced through a submarine hydro line. Surfacing at the north side of the island, this submarine line powers the distribution panel and transformer south of the existing Wellness Centre. This submarine line is sufficient to service the Camp through any expansion, however the island currently experiences voltage drop at the south end of cabin line with a single transformer and undersized conductors. This means that a secondary distribution panel and transformer is required as new development occurs.

For this expansion to take place, the primary hydro line would need to be extended from the existing transformer with another primary feed further south, close to the Depot, and installed underground where possible. At this southern location, a second distribution panel would be installed with similar power setup to what already exists to the north.

From there, additional poles could be added to the central area of the island to pick up this secondary power. Due to the current voltage drop, it is recommended that the existing overhead lines running along camper line are separated and re-fed with approximately half of cabin line receiving power from this south location. It is also recommended that the existing overhead lines are upgraded to new conductors to accommodate the number of services that we see today and will continue to see as development occurs. Doing this will ensure that the power being used on the island is equally distributed between both transformers, will solve the line loss issues that are currently being experienced, and will provide room for future growth and upgrades on either side of the island.

### Action/Response:

- Install new primary feed line to new south distribution panel and secondary transformer
- Install additional poles and cut triplex line to re-feed and equally distribute power between both transformers
- Upgrade existing overhead lines to new conductors





## PROGRAM & OPERATIONS RESEARCH

### General Programming, Scheduling and Operations

Contact: Camp Stephens Camp Director and Director of Wilderness and Operations

#### What We Heard

The planning team had several follow up conversations with Camp Stephens staff who are aware of the operations and programming as a whole and who could advise on current and future logistics planning. The Camp Director and the Director of Wilderness and Operations provided relevant information to the planning team with respect to programs offered, scheduling within each session, staffing, transportation to and from the island, general operations of the facilities, and established safety plan procedures and protocols.

Documents were provided to the planning team that outlined the various camp programs and events as well as the scheduling of opening and closing of camp, camper and tripper arrivals and departures, on island camp programs, and off island canoe trips. This information allowed the planning team to understand Camps' comings-and-goings, the facilities' daily usage, the camp experience at varying times, and the number of staff and campers on island at any given time.

It was noted that there is a shortage of staff in some areas with respect to programs and operations. Lots of training is required and not all staff are trained in certain areas limiting which staff can help in certain situations. One of the reasons that training is limited within Camp's operations is because much of the knowledge is exchanged verbally. There is no clear manual for facility maintenance and operations. Some of the repairs and maintenance that arise require trained professionals, but as there none on staff, the operations personnel wind up making quick-fixes with limited knowledge. This leads to serious concerns regarding system upkeep and safety.

The review of the Camps' scheduling informed the planning team of the transport days and made them aware that the Camp does not have enough boats to run heavy transport days effectively. An expanded Welcome Dock with floaters could allow space for more boats to be brought into operation in time. Camp Stephens currently joins forces with B'Nai Brith Camp to run Super Transport Days which is a collaboration that works well and could develop further for other heavy transport days. Due to the number of campers arriving and departing at the same time, additional marshaling space is desired where campers can gather close to the Welcome Dock prior to receiving further directions. More marshaling space close to the Welcome Dock will also be beneficial should an emergency arise. The YMCA-YWCA Camp Stephens Safety Plan was provided to the planning team, which outlines emergency procedures, Wellness Centre Guidelines, and risk management protocols. This document is critical to the safe operation of the camp and will need to be updated accordingly as future development takes place.

#### Action/Response:

- Review Staffing and add training protocols where needed
- Bring in trained professionals for repairs and maintenance when required
- Develop a written operations manual to pass along knowledge from current operations staff to future staff
- Establish a transport system with B'Nai Brith Camp to run heavy transport days timely and effectively



## High and Low Ropes Course

Contact: Peter Bailey, The Canadian Ropes Course Company

### What We Heard

The High Ropes Course was built in 1998 and after 20 years it is due for a major refit. In the past, the Canadian Ropes Course Company has maintained only critical items, such as safety (belay) cables. The lifeline load cables were replaced at the 15-year mark. To date, no cosmetic work had been completed.

The poles that anchor the course are rated for 50 years, meaning they are only halfway through their lifespan. The Camp can get close to another 25 years out of them. To refit the high ropes course, it would need to be taken back to 90% to the pole, replacing all safety cables, wood elements, wear points and more. In retrofitting the high ropes course, there are two styles of park available to Camp Stephens that can be adopted using the existing pole: Adventure (Circuit-style) Park or an Up-Down Course (currently what the camp has).

The Adventure style park has a lower staff-to-camper ratio requiring 2 staff for 10-12 campers, as staff are used at transfer points only. More campers can go up at once, resulting in less campers unoccupied on the ground waiting for their turn. Training for the circuit-style course is easier as less staff need to be trained and would focus on emergency protocol. Currently 8-10 staff are trained for the ropes course, however with the circuit style course, a minimum of 3-4 staff should be trained, but the course could operate with only 2 staff.

The Up-Down course has a higher staff-to-camper ratio requiring 1 staff for every camper, requiring more staff to be trained and on more items as they are holding ropes constantly to ensure safety.

A hybrid style course is not ideal, but the Camp can select either style. The recommendation is to proceed with the circuit-style course when the time comes for a few reasons. The funds put into retrofitting would be high but result in little changes to the camper experience should the same course be reinstalled. Campers like to experience new things. With the recommendation to relocate the climbing tower to the ropes course, the climbing tower will provide that up-down element that the current course provides, leaving opportunity to make changes to the course to create a variety of experiences. Lastly, although loved by campers, due to its governance by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority of Ontario, and the paperwork and cost associated with certification each year, the removal of the zip line is recommended. If a circuit-style course is installed, the zip line will not be as missed by campers.

To provide a variety of experiences, the reestablishment of the low ropes course is also vouched for. Currently there is a minimal low ropes course at Camp but over time it has become overgrown and is no longer in use. As the low ropes course is good for group dynamics, a rebuild is recommended with the installation of 6-7 new elements.

### Action/Response:

- Retain existing high ropes course poles but install all new wear points, safety cables and wood elements
- Relocate Climbing Tower
- Install 6-7 elements for a new low ropes course
- Permanently close zip line



## CLIMATE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE RESEARCH

Resource: Climate Atlas of Canada, Region: Kenora (<https://climateatlas.ca/>)

### What We Found

In August 2024, the YMCA-YWCA released the YMCA Climate Strategy Report outlining their facilities environmental impact, including Camp Stephens and where most of the impact was occurring from each. Feeding off this, the planning team completed further research on what changes in climate will impact Camp Stephens in the future and what planning can be done to accommodate these changes.

Planning for facilities and for outdoor programs have typically been informed by past experiences with climate and weather. However, the climate has changed, and it will continue to change such that past experience is much less relevant. The change we are witnessing today will continue to escalate in coming decades regardless of what the nations of the world accomplish by reducing adding greenhouse gases (GHG) to the atmosphere in the future. A trajectory of change is with us. Ongoing mitigation can reduce the speed and modify the trajectory of change but is unlikely to decelerate or reverse it.

As such, we must consider how future climate will change the way we think about seasons and how we address the consequences of change, both risks and opportunities. The following provides some points for consideration as we enter this uncharted territory.

### Overview of Key Projected Changes

Future climate will be significantly different than it was in the past. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather will continue to change. Seasonal patterns will be less reliable.

Every climate variable will be affected in some way. The scope and scale of change is projected by an ensemble of climate models and is presented in The Climate Atlas of Canada. We have relied on this source for the information contained herein.

The Atlas presents projected conditions for 23 climate variables. Some variables have more significance in some regions than others, but for Camp Stephens and Kenora/Lake of the Woods the key variables will include:

- **More heat** – Very hot days and tropical nights;
- **Less cold** – More freeze/thaw cycles and longer frost free season;
- **Fluctuations in Precipitation** - Changes in rain and snow patterns, more intense rain events and heavy precipitation in some areas and more drought in others; and
- More obscure weather events like winter rains and very intense rainfall are much more likely.

The key aspect of future climate is that the thing we call “normal” will be much more elusive. We can no longer rely on our experience or anticipate a predictable range of conditions like we could in the past. Extremes are becoming much more extreme and the range of what is possible much broader.

The following discusses some of the issues related to each of these variables within the context of the projections for the near future, the next 30 years, under a lower GHG future (RCP4.5). Of note, higher future



GHG levels are not expected to materially effect change in the near future but are projected to have profound impact as time progresses.

The Climate Atlas of Canada shows much more information on other variables as well as models for higher GHG concentrations and longer time frames. A Climate Atlas Report for Kenora (Appendix 2) was compiled by the Climate Atlas of Canada which illustrates many of the below variables:

### 1. More Heat

#### +30° days

Historical Climate Normals (1976-2021) show a very narrow range of +30° days, between 5 and 15 days more than 90% of the time. An average summer would see about 6 such days. This is how a “normal” summer was experienced on Lake of the Woods and residents adapted to this range accordingly.

Near term future summers will be much hotter. The 90% range of will grow to 35 days of +30° and a mean of 19 days. In some years weeks will past without relief from high temperatures. Heat waves will be much more common.

#### +20° nights (tropical nights)

Historical Climate Normals depict that in an average summer we would see 1 or 2 such days.

In the near future summers tropical nights will occur on average 5 or 6 times a summer. The 90% range extends to 12 such nights. Warm nights exacerbate the effects of heat waves.

### 2. Less Cold

Date of frost: (Calendar date when temperature does not exceed 0°C – proxy for when spring and fall start)

The mean last date of spring frost is expected to happen about one weeks earlier, while the date of first frost will occur on average about 12 days later. The frost free season is projected to increase by about 3 weeks on average and as much as 8 weeks at the 90th percentile.

Icing days: (days where the temperature does not exceed 0°C)

Historical Climate Normals record a mean of 114 days each year.

In the near future Icing Days are expected to decrease by an average of 14 days to 100, with a 90% range of as few as 80 days.

-15° days: (days where the temperature does not exceed -15°C)

In the near future -15° Days are expected to decrease by an average of 14 days to 65 from 79. The number of very cold days (-30° or colder) will also decline significantly.

### 3. Fluctuations in Precipitation

Overall annual precipitation is expected to increase only slightly from a previous mean of 597mm to 624mm. Increased precipitation is predicted to occur more so in the spring and fall and remain about the same in the summer.

Climate models project that by the end of the century, an extreme rainfall event that now occurs once every 20 years in Canada could happen every five years, and the amount of 24-hour extreme precipitation that occurs once in 20 years, on average, is projected to increase by 12 per cent (Canada Climate Institute 2024).



## Potential Impacts of Key Projected Climate Changes

The most apparent implications of a changing climate include the following observations. Readers should consider these as indicative of the types of change likely to occur. A more detailed climate resiliency plan may be in order at the hands of the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg.

- 1. Warmer air temperatures and longer summer season (less cold) may contribute to:**
  - Heat related health issues to those residing on camp and those on trail
  - Increase in forest fire risk both on camp and on trail
  - Opportunities for forest pests to thrive, contributing to fire risk and landscape change
  - More heat and a longer open water season with altered lake water conditions: more algae, more emergent vegetation, and warmer water temperatures are likely
  - Potential challenges for winter road access; shorter winter road season or poor ice preventing access
  - Opportunity for longer summer camp season and longer shoulder season operation without fear of frozen water lines
- 2. Increased frequency of potentially violent storms may contribute to:**
  - Potential hazard to those on camp and on trail due to direct damage to equipment from wind, rain and hail and the impact of falling trees are of particular concern
  - Vulnerability of trippers on wilderness trips; trippers need to know how to find refuge quickly
  - Land drainage and erosion concerns on Camp

While these projected changes are alarming they are indicative of the future we need to plan for. While there remains considerable uncertainty about the world's capacity to mitigate the amount of GHGs in the atmosphere, there is considerable certainty about where we are today, how climate is likely to continue to change, and how we can think about climate and weather and how we can respond.

### Action/Response:

- Develop a detailed climate resiliency plan
- Provide additional ventilation and air conditioning in buildings where warranted
- Consider highly reflective roofs and other building modification/design features to reduce heat accumulation in buildings
- Establish staff training programs on the awareness of heat related health issues, monitoring heat dangers and mitigation strategies, avoidance of fire risk, identifying and response to violent storms, how to be safe on trail, and emergency response to all climate-related risks
- Develop a Forest Management Plan for the Camp to provide methods to enhance forest health, lower forest fire risk, and to address species composition and diversity
- Consider "Fire Smart" principles including vegetation management, emergency planning, and interagency communication
- Monitor impacts on potable water treatment and safety of swimming/water-based activities
- Conduct risk assessments when planning major construction
- Consider opportunity to expand into shoulder seasons
- Consider potential for erosion resulting from extreme events and plan/design facilities accordingly
- Consider need for a safe refuge building space on Camp
- Consider hazard trees and plan for their safe removal
- Establish systems to identify risks and communicate early warning for trail staff (by sat phone or similar technology)



# 4.0 10-YEAR REINVESTMENT PLAN

## OVERALL CAMP VISION

The ten year Camp reinvestment plan has been developed through planning sessions with staff, alumni, camp personnel, the steering committee and Y leadership. Consultations and discussions led to the following development charter for the plan (Appendix 4). This charter should be used with every project to ensure the overall camp reinvestment stays true to the core values of Camp Stephens:

1. Maintain rustic character of the Camp with modern conveniences
2. Developments and renovations should be simple, flexible, and multi-purpose
3. Belonging and Accessibility are essential at every level
4. Respect user needs and patterns
5. Support staff and volunteers through improved amenities and accommodations
6. Build in system redundancies to limit disruptions in operations
7. Be sustainable and climate resilient and use camp as a teaching tool for these initiatives
8. Grow towards closer relationships with Indigenous communities around the lake
9. Plan camp construction seasons to allow for uninterrupted summer operations

With these planning drivers in mind and knowing the character, the experience, and the importance of the Camp to its campers and staff, the reinvestment plan aims to balance history and character with modern sustainable amenities. The plan recommends demolitions, renovations, refurbishments, and new developments.

Staying true to the charter, the west side of the island will continue to be the activity hub and the centre for new building developments while the more wild east side will see minimal recreational investment to improve access to nature education and recreation opportunities. Redevelopment of buildings is focused on creating a modern heart of the camp and supportive staff accommodations in a staff village on the northeast side of the island. Lower impact development such as a new tripper tenting zone close to the Depot, back-half trails, wetland boardwalks, and outdoor classrooms provide the wilderness experience Camp is famous for on the main island slowly getting campers ready for tripper adventures as they grow in experience and skills. Based on this approach the plan has been organized into the following areas of development:

1. In-Progress Construction & Immediate Operational Needs
2. Heart of the Camp
3. Staff Village and Guest Accommodations
4. Camper Cabin Line Enhancements & Lone Pine
5. Tripper Zone
6. Ropes Course Zone
7. Wilderness Exploration Activity Nodes & Chapel
8. Camping Supports (Chief's Point and Surrounding Islands)
9. Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion (10+ yrs only if occupancy on island increases)

Each of the above sections describes the existing conditions and limitations to the existing infrastructure in the area as well as the building and site development initiatives that will be required to bring the Camp up to modern standards that support the staffing, programming and ongoing vitality of this essential wilderness education and recreation facility.





**NOTES:**

- THIS IS THE OVERALL MAIN ISLAND CAMP PLAN. IT SHOWS THE INTERCONNECTED NATURE OF ALL THE ZONES IDENTIFIED FOR REDEVELOPMENT.
- DETAILS FOR EACH AREA OF DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING NUMBERED FEATURE DESCRIPTIONS ARE PROVIDED IN THE DETAILED ZONE DESCRIPTIONS AND DRAWINGS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

**Preferred Plan Legend:**

- ⋮ Dashed outline - Demolition
- Pale Yellow – Existing Building to be retained as is
- Orange – Renovation/Refurbishment
- Red – New Building





## IN-PROGRESS CONSTRUCTION & IMMEDIATE OPERATIONAL NEEDS

The beginning stages of the masterplan are already underway at Camp. The showerhouse was removed in October/November 2024 in preparation for constructing a new universal and accessible showerhouse and washroom facility from December 2024 to May 2025. As the new showerhouse includes washroom stalls, Clivus 2 is also scheduled for demolition in the coming months.

As the 2024 camp season has come to an end and the wastewater treatment system has completed its job for another year, the peat filter has reached its lifespan and needs to be inspected and replaced as required. Any repairs to the holding tanks should also be completed, along with odour control measures, to prevent leaking and unwanted odours during camp operation in the upcoming 2025 season.



## HEART OF THE CAMP

### Vision

The Heart of the Camp is the main activity hub of the island, comprised of the Welcome Dock, Welcome Centre, Program and Activity Centre and the Dining Hall. The main activity hub presents visitors with the Camp's first impression and should therefore be welcoming, accessible, and provide visual wayfinding so that where one heads as they arrive on island is clearly distinguished. The buildings are situated to hug the shoreline, eliminating any confusion about where visitors should be, while also respecting the importance that the Lawn plays in outdoor programming at Camp.

Seven Teachings Lodge, a beautiful cedar pavilion, is situated at the entry point to the bay, standing as a symbol of the camp and welcoming its visitors. Amongst a backdrop of newly planted trees to aid in reforestation efforts on the island, this space, complete with in-the-round seating and a lake overlook deck, can be used as sheltered exterior programmable space with operable weather shelter shades that can be lowered during inclement weather. This space also serves as an expanded marshaling space in closer proximity to the Welcome Dock where arrivals, departures, and emergency evacuations can be accommodated.

To accommodate heavy transport days and to address the accessible concerns of the dock during low water levels, all contractor and service deliveries are relocated to a newly constructed Service Dock behind the existing Shed, and the Welcome Dock is expanded using three floating docks and walkways to allow for ease of movement for loading and unloading campers and visitors only. Upon arriving at Camp, visitors and campers will be met with a fully accessible wood walkway leading them from the Welcome Dock up to the Welcome Centre, which acts as a check-in point for all guests on the island, who will then be directed accordingly from there.

Attached to the Welcome Centre is the Wellness Centre. The existing wellness centre does not currently provide the required number of patient beds required under health and safety regulations. This new wellness centre, located near the Welcome Dock to allow for quick transport when required, features 2 nurse residence bedrooms, 4 overnight patient rooms (with 2 beds each), a nurse lounge with kitchen, exam room, laundry facilities and 2 washrooms.

As visitors proceed through the Heart of the Camp, down a widened granular main circulation loop, they will reach the renovated Lodge. Built in the 1970's, the Lodge stands as a piece of history and its log construction evokes the character of the camp. With an increasing demand for more interior programmable space during inclement weather events, and with the lodge currently housing office and storage spaces that could be relocated, the lodge is renovated to remove walls from 3 out of the 4 offices to open up the space to create a centralized, weather-protected Program and Activity Centre for the campers. One office would be retained for program staff. The new accessible deck on the exterior of the Lodge provides tiered seating for Campfire and for viewing of the Waterfront Ceremony Space, which features a fire pit, cantilevered deck and ceremonial flagpoles.





To accommodate additional weather-protected programming space, the Dining Hall is moved to bookend the Heart of Camp and has increased in size to support an occupancy of 300 persons, complete with washroom facilities and an expanded commercial kitchen. There is a front deck with roof overhang to provide additional outdoor eating and programming space.

Situated between the Program and Activity Centre (Lodge) and the Dining Hall, is an active sports zone complete with existing basketball court, relocated Gage Pit and a series of wood nature play elements that can be used for prescribed programming or during camper's free time.

### Servicing

To proceed with this new layout of the Heart of the Camp, adjustments will be required to the servicing infrastructure to fulfill the service requirements of this area. The existing water treatment system is currently housed under the existing Dining Hall. With the existing Dining Hall being removed, the water treatment system will need to be relocated. It is best suited in a central location to the buildings it is servicing. New water, greywater and wastewater lines will need to be installed to service all of the new buildings, hydro lines will require updates, and a backup generator system will be installed for emergencies. The hydro service needs to be split into two zones on the island to properly service all areas without encountering voltage drop, as is currently being experienced at the end of Camper Cabin Line. Splitting the lines into NW and SE zones and redistributing the hydro from the existing transformer (NE) to a secondary SE transformer and power distribution panel, will not only meet the demands of the current service requirements on the island, but will also allow for expansion on island over the coming decade.

Features .....	#
Wellness Centre	1
Welcome Centre	9
Program and Activity Centre (Lodge)	10
Dining Hall with Commercial Kitchen	11
Seven Teachings Lodge	14
Active Sports Zone	15
Waterfront Ceremony Space	16
Wayfinding	37
Expanded Welcome Dock	39
Service Dock	40
Existing Electrical Transformer	45
Centralized Water Treatment System	46

*Demolitions: Dining Hall, Burt's Cabin, Clivus 1*

*Renovation/Refurbishments: Lodge, Welcome Dock*

*New Buildings/Infrastructure: Seven Teaching Lodge, Welcome & Wellness Centre, Dining Hall, Service Dock*

## STAFF VILLAGE & GUEST ACCOMMODATIONS

### Vision

Through conversations with Staff it was clear that the lack of accommodations and the condition of what they did have was reflecting poorly on their experience. They desired more designated cabins for their use and more private lounging areas away from camper activity during their off time. Senior staff also asked for a quiet meeting area where sensitive conversations could be held within a comfortable environment.

These requests lead to a designated Staff Village, kept back-of-house with maintenance and operation facilities, with access controls for campers. Within the Staff Village are 5 new staff cabins surrounding the existing Director's Cabin, that are designated for Senior, Operations, Program, Leadership, and Service staff. Each cabin can house 8 staff and includes a deck and screened porch for staff to lounge within their own space. The cabins are accompanied by a small outdoor gathering area with firepit and wood bench seating.

When not in their cabins, or on shift, staff can make their way to the Staff Lounge, which is the renovated Wellness Centre. The former centre already includes washroom, shower, and laundry facilities, and a small kitchen. The remainder of the building would be renovated to establish a large open lounge area where multiple staff can get together, socialize and build comradery between one another. The goal of providing staff with their own space away from camper activity is to discourage pop-up lounge areas in other facilities, such as the Depot, where the space could be better used to serve the operations of the Camp.

Should a sensitive conversation need to occur, a freestanding meeting gazebo off the back of the Director's Cabin is accessible for staff. Situated on the water, this gazebo aims to create a comforting and peaceful environment for when heavy conversations arise.

To accommodate the space for the Staff Village, and control access to this area, the life vest storage for the swim programming would need to be moved, providing the opportunity to expand off the existing swim storage shed to provide weather-protected storage for the life vests.

The Main Camp Loop Trail, expanded and resurfaced, runs through the Staff Village connecting the staff to the Heart of the Camp and all the way to Camper Cabin Line. Outside of the access-controlled Staff Village, lie the Guest & Volunteer Accommodations. The layout of the existing Legs lends itself well to being renovated into guest and volunteer cabin. Converting the 4 exterior doors to windows and bringing the access to the cabin rooms through the interior, guests are provided with their own room but have access to a central common area should they choose to gather with one another. A 2-stall washroom is added to provide guests with more convenience during their stay, as well as an exterior porch and deck for outdoor lounging.





### Servicing

With the renovation of the staff lounge and guest accommodations, lines would need to be updated and installed accordingly to service these renovations. Water, greywater, and wastewater lines need to be installed to service the new washroom in the guest cabin (Legs) and be inspected for continued use in the staff lounge. Hydro lines would need to be updated accordingly for the renovations and new lines would need to be installed to service the new staff cabins.

Features .....	#
Staff Lounge (Renovated Wellness Centre)	2
Staff Village with 5 new staff cabins	3
Director's Cabin Private Meeting Room	4
Guest & Volunteer Accommodations (Renovated Legs)	5
Expanded Swim Dock Storage	25
Main Camp Loop Trail	34
Existing Electrical Transformer	45
Centralized Water Treatment System	46

Demolitions: High Rise  
 Renovation/Refurbishments: Wellness Centre, Legs  
 New Buildings/Infrastructure: 5 Staff Cabins, Director's Cabin Private Meeting Room, Expanded Swim Dock Storage

## CAMPER CABIN LINE & LONE PINE

### Vision

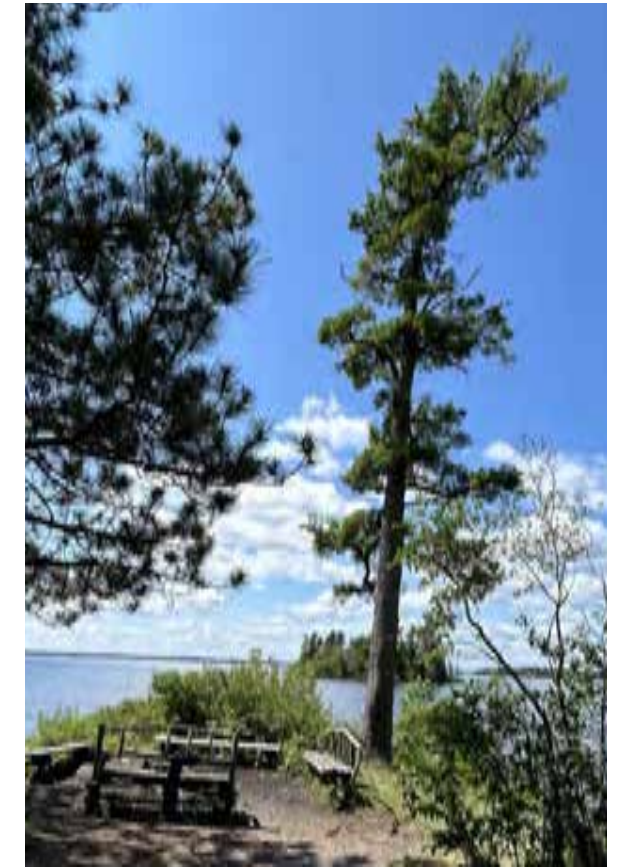
The cabins on Camper Line, rebuilt between 2007 and 2008, are currently in good condition. The cabins sleep 12 people (10 campers and 2 counselors). Currently configured as one large room, counselors currently sleep amongst the campers and have voiced concerns over privacy, and campers have expressed being uncomfortable changing in front of others. It is not unusual to see towels or sheets strung up between bunks to provide a private space to change. To resolve these privacy concerns, it is recommended to add a 5' x 16' addition off the back of each camper cabin, filling in the exterior space that is currently used as cut-through path behind cabin line. This addition would be divided into two sides with a partition wall, with each side provided a curtain. One side would be dedicated to the counselor's sleeping quarters with the other side providing a space for campers to change away from the rest of the cabin.

To draw campers out to the front of their cabins and provide sociability amongst cabins, more exterior gathering spaces are provided, and the Main Camp Loop Trail is widened and resurfaced to encourage use along this main path as opposed to behind the cabins. The remainder of the path behind the cabins that is not occupied by the new cabin additions, will be reforested to improve the Camp's environmental sustainability. Three gathering spaces are provided off the main trail between series of cabins, each featuring crushed granite, log and plank benches, and metal laser cut fire pit rings, for campers to gather, participate in campfires, and share stories.

Off Camper Cabin Line is one of the most sacred spaces on the island to many staff and alumni. The history of Lone Pine Point runs deep in Camp Stephens' legacy and is not something that can be ignored. The concern, however, as with all trees, is that the Pine will come to the end of its life and it is best to address the future of Lone Pine now while it is still a choice, as opposed to waiting until a safety issue presents itself and the Camp is forced to act.

The masterplan focuses on securing the history of Lone Pine Point with the recommendation to carefully cut back the heritage pine, leaving the trunk in place. To promote reconciliation and build indigenous relationships with nearby communities, the Camp could hold a ceremony and invite an Elder to bless the tree, the carving process, and a new pine seedling. The pine trunk, carved into a totem pole for the Camp, will stand as a reminder of the meaning of the space, while a new pine seedling roots in preparation of continuing its legacy. The meaning of the space, with new wood bench seating and granite rock fire pit, will remain intact for future campers to experience and enjoy.

The Main Camp Loop Trail, complete with visual wayfinding, acts as the backbone to secondary trails on Camp. Spanning from the main trail at cabin line to the main trail at the Dining Hall, runs a secondary path that is adapted into a fully accessible path using wood walkways and ramps. This will ensure that the showerhouse operates as intended, an accessible facility on Camp. Continuing down cabin Line on the Main Camp Loop Trail past McKinney's, will bring campers to the new East washroom that is both accessible and universal, featuring 11 stalls. This washroom will fill a gap by servicing the southern half of the island, for trippers, campers and staff, that are situated at the Depot, Ropes Course, or on the wilderness exploration trails.





## Servicing

With the addition of a new camper washroom, a secondary centralized water treatment system should be installed close to the Depot building. From there, new water, greywater, and wastewater lines would need to be installed to service the washroom, as well as new hydro lines and a backup generator system.

Features .....	#
Camper Cabin Line	6
Leadership Development Program (LDP) Cabin	7
Woodland Activity Node	17
Lone Pine Point	23
Cabin Line Gathering Spaces	24
Secondary Trails	35
Accessibility Features (Wood Walkways and Ramps)	36
Universal Washroom and Showerhouse	38

Demolitions: Rex's, Robinson's

Renovation/Refurbishments: N/A

New Buildings/Infrastructure: Expanded Camper Line Cabins, LDP Cabin, Universal Washroom and Showerhouse

## TRIPPER ZONE

### Vision

The tripper zone, located near the Depot, is an area dedicated to watersport activities for new and experienced campers, and serves as the home base for trippers.

The existing watersport dock, used primarily for the sailing program, is currently in poor condition with the existing crib deck disintegrating. In re-building the dock it is recommended that it moves south, closer to the Depot, to allow for easier transport of equipment and more space to develop Paddle Beach. Although the current sailing program is no longer serving the best needs of the Camp in terms of maintenance and operations, sailing provides a unique experience for campers that stays with them for life. It was suggested to the YMCA-YWCA that a potential lies in hosting a mobile sailing program by inviting a local sailing association, who would bring all necessary equipment to the island, once a session, to teach the basics of sailing. For this to occur, the watersport dock would need to be in good working condition.

For campers who remain on island, this camp zone is where they will develop their canoe and kayak skills. For beginners, Sunrise Bay is demarcated with buoys to provide a 'safety zone'. This demarcation will alert up-and-comers to a line in which they are required to stay within.

For Trippers, those that go out on the water, to explore Lake of the Woods and surrounding areas over 2-, 4-, and 6-week periods, this camp zone represents their launching and return point. Prior to leaving and when returning, trippers erect tents on the great lawn at the entrance to camp, which has become known as Tent City. Tent City occupies a large portion of the lawn restricting the programmable space during those days and situating trippers in the middle of camper activity. It is recommended that Tent City be relocated closer to the Depot, which is the tripper's home base. This relocation would see 5 spaces cleared, 4 for tenting, and 1 communal space, featuring long and plank benches and granite firepit rings, for gathering and catching up with one another after time apart. Each tenting space could hold up to two 8-person tents. When trippers are off island these tenting spaces double as exterior programmable spaces for the campers who remain on island.

Additional amenities to this tripper zone are Paddle Beach, a sand beach that provides a larger space for trippers and campers to learn, and to safely launch and dock their canoes, and an expanded open-air paddle storage shelter against the Depot. Within the Depot itself, development of the mezzanine level is incomplete. Increasing storage capacity by way of lockable metal cage storage units and wood shelving would help develop the space further, increasing its use and discouraging staff from using it as an undesignated lounge space.







Features .....	#
Flex Tenting Space	8
Depot with Increased Storage	13
Paddle Beach	27
Main Camp Loop Trail	34
Universal Washroom	38
New Watersport Dock	41
Outdoor Equipment Storage Shelter	42
Demolitions: N/A	
Renovation/Refurbishments: Depot	
New Buildings/Infrastructure: Outdoor Equipment Storage Shelter	

## ROPES COURSE ZONE

### Vision

The High Ropes Course is highly used and loved amongst campers, staff, and alumni. A staple to the Camp, the programming of the ropes course needs to be retained into the future.

From an operational and land-use standpoint, the Ropes Course works better as one entity, including all three course elements: high ropes, low ropes, and the climbing tower. For this to occur the climbing tower needs to be relocated from the entrance lawn to the ropes course. Doing so will minimize training requirements and keeps programs of similar nature together.

The high ropes course poles are only halfway through their 50-year lifespan, but the cables, wood elements, and wears points all need to be replaced to safely operate the program moving forward. With the removal of the zip line, and the relocation of the climbing tower which provides an up-down element, an adventure (circuit) style high ropes course is recommended to replace the existing up-down course. This will require less staff to operate and give campers more time to experience the course.

The low ropes course elements, no longer maintained and overgrown, have fallen to the wayside and have disappeared from camp programming. As the low ropes course offer great group dynamics opportunities it is recommended that the low ropes course be cleared and re-established with 6-7 new elements.

Amongst both courses, a shade structure and a series of shade sails and picnic tables will provide cooler, more comfortable, spaces amongst the open area for campers to find refuge from the sun while they wait for their climbing experience.





Features .....	#
Ropes Course	18
Secondary Trails	35

Demolitions: Zip Line  
 Renovation/Refurbishments: High Ropes Course, Climbing Tower  
 New Buildings/Infrastructure: Low Ropes Course, Shade Sails and Structures

## WILDERNESS EXPLORATION ACTIVITY NODES & CHAPEL

### Vision

The natural landscape of the Camp is what makes it special. Playing host to a large undeveloped swathe of land, the Camp allows for exploration to occur naturally without prescription. There are fond memories from staff recalling the record-breaking balancing act of a group on the Whale Watcher. The masterplan encourages this type of exploration amongst the trees by providing secondary natural woodchip mulch trails throughout the island, interrupted by special moments, like the Whale Watcher, along the way.

These moments include programmed spaces that already exist, such as the Chapel or relocated Whale Watcher, with newly added program and exploration opportunities as can be seen at the Woodland Activity Node or Orienteering Point.

Each of these nodes features a variety of seating elements from granite boulders to log stumps that aim to draw in 1 to 2 cabins each for different experiences. Woodland Activity Node provides a space for a small group to gather in a circle and share stories, Mindfulness Overlook Node offers a place for relaxation and individual reflection on the island, and Orienteering point acts as a communal gathering space that anchors the south part of the island in a similar way that Chiefs Point and Lone Pine Point do complete with benches and a fire pit. The Log Cabin, with roof removed for safety, become historical ruins at the camp where interpretive signage tells the story of its past.

Moving along Explorer's Trail, campers will come across the Chapel, expanded to hold large ceremonies, gathering, reflection and performances around the existing stone podium. To the north of Chapel, Emblem Rock stands as a physical symbol of Camp with a mural that can be expanded on with a local indigenous artist and camp alumni as a prominent fixture along the shoreline. The southeast shoreline of the island is developed into a large exploration and adventure zone with Raspberry point becoming an ethnobotany adventure zone, complete with outdoor classroom seating and interpretive signage, along with rock climbing grip holds down the vertical cliff to the lake to challenge experienced climbers in a natural environment. The beautiful marsh at the south of the island is an underutilized natural entity and begs to be developed into a science discovery zone providing campers with a unique experience where along a wood boardwalk they can walk and stop at nodes and have an opportunity to explore the natural ecosystem of the marsh.

Altogether, these moments along the trail, will provide a special and unique experience that encourage campers' creativity, education, and leadership skills to develop in a natural and rustic environment, free of modern technologies.





Features .....	#
Log Cabin	12
Chapel Performance Space	19
Emblem Rock	20
Raspberry Point	22
Lakeshore Marsh Discovery Zone	28
Explorer's Trail	30
Mindfulness Overlook Node	31
Orienteering Point	32
Boardwalk Bog Trail	33
Secondary Paths	35

Demolitions: N/A

Renovation/Refurbishments: Log Cabin

New Buildings/Infrastructure: Lakeshore Marsh Discovery Zone

## CAMPING SUPPORTS

### (CHIEF'S POINT AND SURROUNDING ISLANDS)

#### Vision

Chiefs Point and the surrounding islands are currently used by trippers. The masterplan embraces this and establishes more formalized spaces for tenting, docking and launching to occur.

Chiefs point was formerly home to a yurt, however, after requiring repairs, the yurt was removed and never replaced. The platform that housed it remains, but is unable to be used for tents as there is no place to secure them too. Knowing this, and the costs associated with a new yurt, it is recommended to remove the yurt platform from the area and open the space up for more tents. Moving the firepit and seating to the stunning rock shelf at the water's edge, allows the tenting space to hold three or four 8-person tents.

Sir George and Fleming Islands are currently used for tripping, while Patton used to have one campsite, but concerns with Poison Ivy have limited its use in recent years. To expand the Camp's footprint, but maintain its natural character, these three surrounding islands are cleared of poison ivy where required and naturalized tenting sites are established complete with tenting space ranging in size from two to five 8-person tents, granite rock fire pits, and log and plank seating. Each island has a minimum of one launching and docking point, and all gathering and tenting spaces are connected with natural woodchip mulch paths.

As Patton Island is larger and is connected to the main island with a shallow sandbar, additional programming is added here. With the sandbar demarcated with buoys, it can serve as a location used in swim programming or for a competitive element during Camp Stephens Games. For its potential use in events and ceremonies, a wood deck ceremony space is situated on Patton Island, similar to the one found across from the Lodge on the main island, complete with fire pit and ceremonial flagpoles.

Features .....	#
Chiefs Point	21
Surrounding Islands:	
Sir George Island	
Patton Island	
Fleming Island	

Demolitions: Yurt Platform on Chiefs Point

Renovation/Refurbishments: Chiefs Point, surrounding islands

New Buildings/Infrastructure: N/A



Chief's Point



Chief's Point

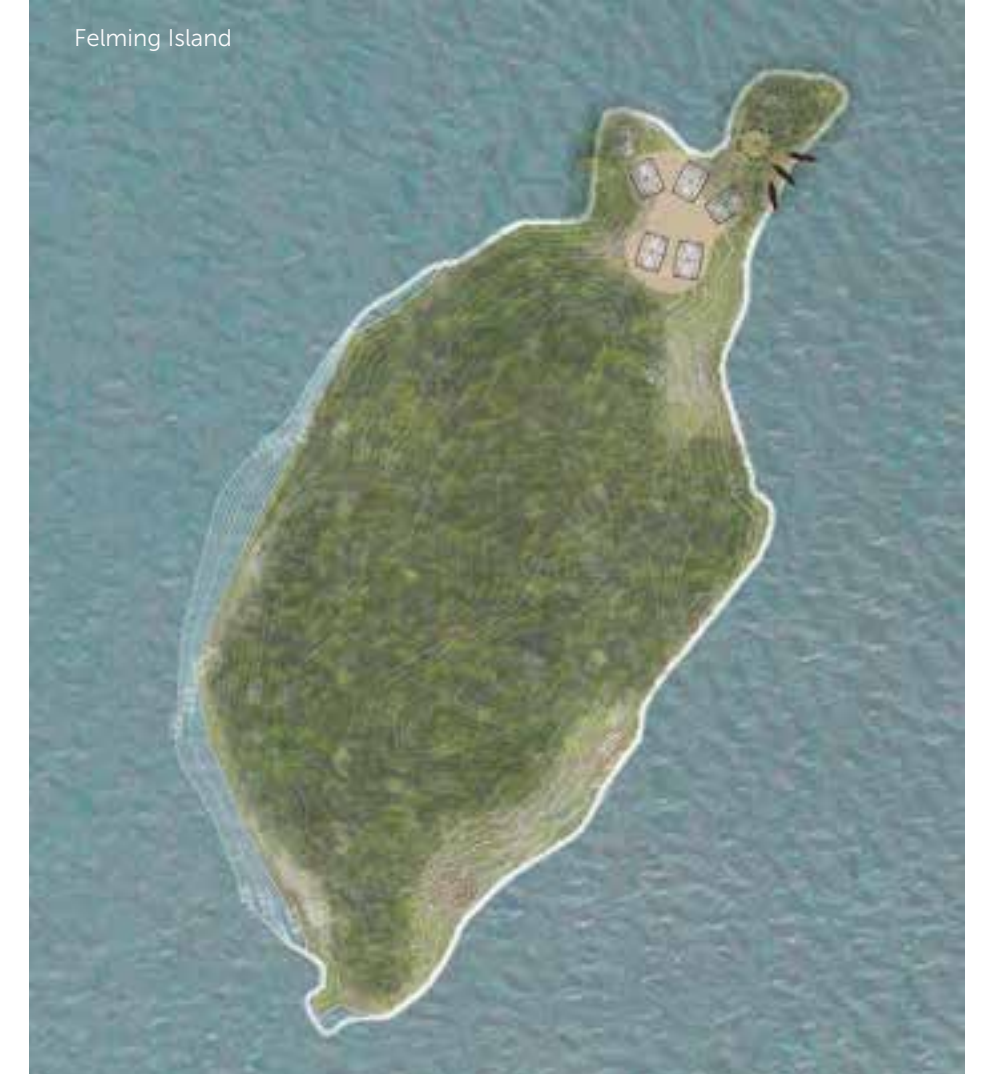
Sir George Island



Patton Island



Felming Island



## WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY EXPANSION

### Vision

The existing Wastewater Treatment System is currently serving the needs of the Camp, with a designed capacity of 260 persons per day, however it does require a peat filter replacement to operate into the 2025 season and a repair and odour control measures caused by a leak in one on the tanks.

In developing this masterplan and knowing that expansion will occur on island, there is a potential for additional persons to be present on island. Exceeding 260 persons per day today, would push the wastewater system to its limit. If further capacity is required and the daily population of camp on island plans to exceed 260 persons, a secondary wastewater system will need to be installed.

Prior to installation an options assessment would need to take place, which would analyze the total increase in number of persons per day, where any new buildings have been or will be situated, and the space for a new system, including subsurface discharge and distance to water. This masterplan proposes a potential location for this new secondary system near the existing system, but the assessment and technology chosen would help confirm the best location suited for the new system.







<b>Features</b> .....	<b>#</b>
Existing Wastewater Biofilter System	43
Future Wastewater Expansion Zone	44

Demolitions: N/A  
 Renovation/Refurbishments: Existing Wastewater Biofilter System  
 New Buildings/Infrastructure: Future Wastewater Expansion