

# **Dickey Lake Bible Camp and Conference Center**

## **-How we began-**

In 1946, Pastors Arvid Erickson, Harold Erickson, Johnny Tieszen, Everett Hansen, their families and local church families from Trego, Fortine, Evergreen, and Ronan, Montana, joined with missionaries Ms. Anna Sontra and Ms. Belle Thompson of the CM&A working with the Flathead Indian Reservation, the local Ross McKenzie family, The Bible Club Ministry in Kalispell and other ministry minded families, to create a camp where they would minister to youth and adults. The setting was a small parcel of land set on the shores of beautiful, crystal clear, Dickey Lake in Trego, Montana.

From the beginning the mission was clear and that was to create a place where young and old alike could retreat to the beauty of God's creation and learn more about His love, salvation and His commission for all Christians. Initially meant to serve solely as a Christian 'Summer Camp', the facilities were rustic and humble, yet provided a great atmosphere for youth in particular, to come together in an atmosphere of fellowship, learning about Christ and worship.

For many years running of the camp was the responsibility of local and area pastors, but as the camp grew, so did the required amount of work to properly facilitate the camp and the responsibilities then became shared between members of the DLBC Board of Directors, local and area pastors and volunteers from the churches and local communities.

## **-The need to grow-**

Eventually, permanent structures were built including a Kitchen/Dining Hall (right on the lake) and rustic sleeping cabins. As the camp grew and times changed, eventually a 'Shower House' was added to the camp giving the campers an alternative to bathing and brushing their teeth in the often frigid lake. Running water was also a welcome improvement to the kitchen staff, who up to that point had been washing the dishes and cookware in the lake.

Humble beginnings gave rise to hope of camp expansion. In the mid 1990's a purchase of roughly 20 acres of land across the road from the camp became available and the Board of Directors made the decision to make the purchase. Since that time, DLBC has grown to provide facilities and services for approximately 150. Part of this transition was to sell a small portion of the property due to its difficult access across a Burlington Northern RR track

Dickey Lake Bible Camp and Conference Center now sits on roughly 22 acres of land. The primary camp ground campus sits on the shore of beautiful Dickey Lake, and additional land across the road that offers recreational areas and several RV Campsites with power hook-ups and secluded and semi-secluded tent camping spots. The DLBC property is adjacent to National Forest Lands which provides the camp with a nice sense of seclusion and solitude.

## **-The need for faith and good stewardship-**

Back in the early 2000's, age, use and the elements of the environment had taken their toll on several of the original and even on some of the replacement buildings. One particular building in dire need of replacement

was the camp's kitchen and dining hall. Although the building was rich in history and tradition, over years the building was literally sinking into the lake on the lake side of the building. So a difficult decision was made to take on the monumental task of replacing the existing kitchen and dining hall.

Board members decided that a fund raising effort, unlike had ever been undertaken by the camp before, would need to be done to provide the much needed replacement structure. With faith in the mission and ministry of the camp and more importantly faith in God's provision, a decision was made to move forward to build much needed replacement facilities.

#### **-God's blessing of provision-**

Years of hard work including countless volunteer hours, dedication, generous giving, working with the CM&A denomination and Rocky Mountain District of the CM&A and lots of prayer, resulted in the completion and dedication on July 7, 2012 of what is now known as Founder's Hall. This monumental project was completed entirely debt free with donated labor, materials, and funds.

Founder's Hall houses a commercial grade kitchen, dining hall for 200, men's and women's restrooms and shower facilities, a large primary storage area and offices for kitchen and administrative staff. In addition to providing a wonderful environment for meals, it also serves as a primary meeting place and recreation room/area housing activities such as Foosball Tables and the *very popular* Carpet Ball.

#### **-Adapting to growth-**

Up to this point, with all the great things happening at the camp, the camp had still primarily been run by dedicated board members and other volunteers from Alliance Churches and the community. From 2006 through 2008 Camp Directors were hired to head up the summer programs and facilitate the growing number of renters, while still relying greatly on volunteer help. Through these years, the realization increased that for the camp to move forward and continue to thrive and grow, we needed year-round leadership. The DLBC board reached a decision to fill the position of Managing Director. This person would be responsible for business and administrative operations of the camp and would be able to relieve some of the burdens of running the camp from the dedicated volunteers and board members. The camp operation was simply too big to expect it to be managed solely by volunteers. The first full-time Executive Director was hired in 2009.

#### **-Addressing a fundamental need-**

One of the challenges the camp faced was housing for a full-time Executive Director. Due to the camp's unique and somewhat remote setting, it was obvious that housing should be on-site, which would again require a building program and funding. This would not only solve the housing and responsiveness factors for the camp, but it would also provide a means towards achieving goals of expanding the camp operations beyond the traditional summer camping season.

Through tireless and faithful efforts of the board and volunteers, much prayer and the gracious generosity of many donors, funds were raised to begin the building in 2014. By the summer of 2016, construction of the house was 95% complete and able to be occupied. Again, operating in faith and in the practice of good stewardship of God's provision, the house was completed and completely paid for, allowing the camp to remain debt-free.

### **-Looking ahead to a bright future-**

The core desire of Dickey Lake Bible Camp and Conference Center has always been and will continue to be; to provide a profound change in the hearts of youth and adults that inspires a deep desire to grow in relationship with our Heavenly Father and to take to heart and actively serve as disciples of Jesus Christ; to go and make new disciples sharing the Good News of Salvation. Our mission and ministry are to provide a beautiful and fun-filled setting where people from all walks of life can learn and grow in their faith in the splendor of God's creation.

As our camper numbers increase, additional sleeping space and facilities are needed. We are identifying the appropriate facilities plan for the future. All the while, keeping our goal of remaining debt-free, we strive to provide the best Christian Camping experience that God will allow us to offer through good stewardship of His provision.

All of us who serve in the ministry at Dickey Lake Bible Camp will continue to seek, through prayer and supplication, ways to improve and enhance the camp and the associated ministry. We will ask for God's guidance to expand the reach of our ministry and will constantly look for better ways to serve as God's Ambassadors to our campers, our volunteers and our community.

### **-History and Heritage -**

We at DLBC are thankful for our heritage and history, but not because of our own efforts or for our own glory, but because of the provision God has provided to allow us to serve Him in this ministry for over 70 years.

Over the years, we have counted on the never-ending supply of generosity and countless volunteers that God has provided to us and each year we are grateful for the support this camp receives. We have families who have tirelessly served and dedicated a significant portion of their lives and finances to the ministry at DLBC for three and four generations and are teaching young members of their families the joys of serving in this ministry. For those people in particular, we are extremely grateful. We are grateful for all the volunteers and for all those who have served here.