

Camp Byng Status Update

A Message from your Council Key 3

Scouts Canada camps and properties hold emotional ties for many Scouters, alumni, staff, and youth. It can be difficult to see a camp close its doors after years of memory-making adventures.

That said, it is important to note that camps must be safe and offer Scouting members and other visitors a positive program experience. In addition, property operations must be supported by a sustainable financial and operating plan to ensure that they can be available for the enjoyment of Scouting members for years to come.

Camp Byng has been struggling with declining use and significant maintenance requirements over the course of many years. In October 2021, the Camp Byng Committee received approval from the Property Operations Team to re-open the property; it was agreed that the camp would open temporarily from January to August 2022 with modified services and facilities.

During that period, we heard from members expressing concern with the state of the property and its lack of suitability for continued use. We immediately engaged Scouts Canada's Property Operations Team and asked the National Key 3 to intervene to address these concerns. We visited the site in the spring of 2022 and again on June 10th with the National Key 3. At that time, it was confirmed with key property stakeholders that the property would be closed and would require significant maintenance and a modified operational plan prior to re-opening.

Despite that decision, a local camp volunteer took it upon themselves to continue to host events at Camp Byng. Regretfully, as the Council leadership team, we approved some events and attended the Mardi Gras event at Camp Byng from September 24-25. For that we sincerely apologize. It was an error in judgement based on misinformation that we should have followed up on and has created confusion about the status of the camp.

We would like to set the record straight and ensure transparency about Camp Byng. Good faith attempts were made to open the camp in the Spring of 2022 by the Property Operations Team and the Camp Committee; however, safety and maintenance concerns remain unaddressed. We have supported a decision that Camp Byng should remain closed until maintenance activities are undertaken and operational plans are in place to ensure its operations are both safe and sustainable.

Sincerely,



Cathy Hauen
Council Commissioner



Ethan Russell
Council Youth Commissioner



Simon Evison
Council Relationship Manager

Timeline:

March 2020	Camp Byng, along with all Scouts Canada properties, officially closed due to the pandemic.
October 2021	Camp Byng Committee receives approval from Properties Function to re-open Camp Byng temporarily from Jan.-Aug 2022, with modified access to services and bookings.
Spring 2022	Pacific Coast Council Key 3 visited Camp Byng and expressed concerns about the property's state.
June 2022	National Key 3 visited Camp Byng, further confirming it was not fit to be open.
Sept. – Nov. 2022	Scouting events took place 'off the books' and unsanctioned, at the officially closed Camp Byng.

Key Points:

- Camp Byng is closed due to unsafe conditions of the property; it is unusable for members and requires an extensive business and camp maintenance plan to be considered for re-opening.
- Despite rumors that Camp Byng was the intended site for Pacific Jamboree 2024 (PJ24), Camp Barnard is in fact the approved site for this celebrated, major event. Camp Byng remains closed for the foreseeable future.

Actions Taken:

- The volunteer responsible for allowing unsanctioned events to take place at Camp Byng has been officially removed from their Scouting responsibilities.
- The current interim PJ24 Chair is Bill Schulte.
 - As a former Camp Chair of PJ, Bill has the wisdom and experience needed to lead the PJ24 Team while a new Camp Chair is sought out.
 - Bill and the PJ team will continue to work with the Event Support Team and the NK3 towards the goal of welcoming everyone back to PJ in July, 2024.

Lessons Learned:

- Lack of an open and honest dialogue regarding Camp Byng.
- Lack of communication between Properties and Council leadership, resulting in CK3 unknowingly endorsing unsanctioned Camp Byng events.
- Lack of oversight and follow-up with Camp Byng staff and volunteers to ensure the camp remained closed.