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Scouts keep Camp Sheldrick

WINCHESTER SPRINGS — Scouts Canada has agreed to help Camp Sheldrick succeed over the next four years until the lease with South Nation Conservation (SNC) is up. The camp is located on Webb Road off of Nesbitt Road a few kilometers south of Winchester. It is a 55-acre pocket of land that straddles Hess Creek.

What convinced the council to keep the camp open was a walkabout tour in early May when council members were accompanied by SNC general manager Dennis O'Grady.

"Conservation and scouting are a good fit," said O'Grady. "We're pleased with this partnership. They take good care of the property, and it's in line with SNC's current

goals for passive recreation opportunities."

The camp serves the needs of scouting youth, including Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers, in the Upper St. Lawrence Valley area where there are about 400 members from Morrisburg to Brockville and north to Kemptville and Winchester. Scouting sections from other areas such as Ottawa and Cornwall are encouraged to access the camp.

"It's a great spot," said Tom Graham, area co-commissioner, in his presentation to North Dundas Township Council at its regular meeting, May 24. "It's still alive and well, in fact, we're having the opening this weekend (May 28 and 29) with an

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Camp

international camp. We just wanted to let council members know what we're doing in their back yard."

The camp is fully wheelchair accessible. The large pavilion was donated and built by six local Lions Clubs.

The camp has the support of other local service clubs as well, including the Rotary Club and the Knights of Columbus. The Township of North Dundas recreation camp could also possibly use the camp in the future.

Scouts Canada was reviewing properties based on use and were prepared to cut funding for the campground because they felt it was underutilized. After many discussions, the camp will remain available.

"I'm happy to say that after 10 months, we have a letter from Scouts Canada saying they're happy to help us see the camp succeed," said Graham. "Even if it is only until the lease is up in four years."

The camp is not open to individuals or all service clubs because the expanded logistics would be too hard to manage. However, groups aligned with scouting values can make a special request to use the campground. In fact, Dwayne Holmes of the Winchester Lions Club may use it for a Leo's retreat in the future.

"I'd like to see it used as much as possible," said North Dundas Mayor Alvin Runnalls.

First things first, a process has been initiated to give the property a civic address. At this point, if an emergency occurred, it would be

difficult for 911 dispatchers to find the camp without an address.

"We're very pleased to have Scouts Canada's continued support and involvement," said Graham. "Thanks to our team, who have demonstrated the necessary commitment to run the camp. Now we can focus on further developing the camp as a fun place to be for out-

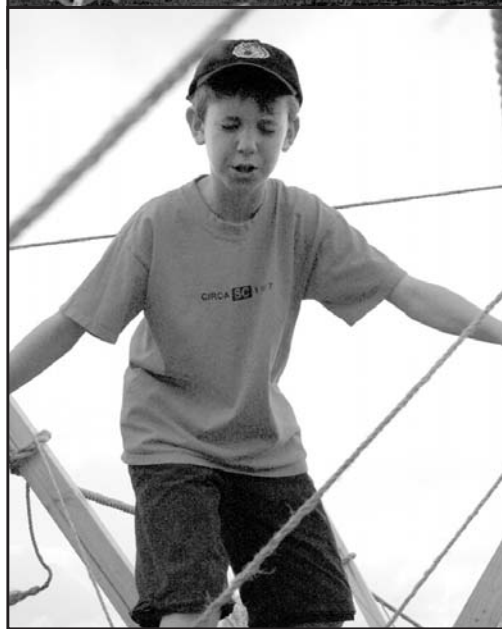
door activities for our members."

The camp, started in 1984, was born of a vision held by long-time area Scouter Bill Sheldrick, who passed away in 2002.

"This was his dream," said Graham. "Bill was from Morrisburg and he worked in Winchester. He wanted a camp to serve the communities in this area."



(Above) John Ducham (left), 15-year-old Justin Savage, and 14-year-old Joe Palaco sit on top of a wooden structure that the Scouts built without using any nails or screws, just ropes and knots.



(Left) Eleven-year-old Michael Richer of Iroquois makes his way across a monkey bridge backwards, while keeping his eyes closed, during one of the many initiative activities held during the opening day at Camp Sheldrick, which Scouts Canada just announced will stay open for at least the next four years.

Photos — Meagher