



May 30th, 2017

Dear Alex Jurgensen,

In response to your self-compiled “2017 Safety and Accessibility Report” for the Bowen Island Lodge, I would like to address your questions and concerns. The Bowen Island Lodge values the history of the property, and cares for the safety of all its guests. We would be pleased to work with your group to accommodate special needs wherever possible, and have outlined some responses and suggestions regarding your safety concerns.

Background:

The land and buildings of the current Bowen Island Lodge were previously owned and operated by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (not associated with Camp Bowen). The CNIB sold to the previous owners of this property, who enacted their right to “...choose to redevelop the Facilities for use as a recreation, training and meeting centre and as an assembly conference centre”. -Page 4(D) of the Restrictive Covenant Land Titles Act 219.

Previous owners operated as such for several years, before selling the land, buildings, and business to the current owners, Hundred year Education Group Corp. (DBA The Bowen Island Lodge). We continue to operate as a recreation, training and meeting centre and as an assembly conference centre for the public, and no longer operate in any way as a facility designated for the benefit of blind, deaf, and visually impaired persons. Camp Bowen often reserves as a group guest booking at the Bowen Island Lodge once per year, most of Camp Bowen’s guests are disabled, deaf, or blind. Camp Bowen is requesting a long list of upgrades to the Bowen Island Lodge Facility to accommodate their group which I have addressed in this letter:

1. **Regarding the Bowen Island Lodge Dock:** Please note that the dock at The Bowen Island Lodge is not considered a safe area for blind, deaf, and visually impaired persons. If a disabled guest wishes to visit the dock we require that they be accompanied by a sighted companion at all times for safety reasons. In regards to the small metal plate, we are currently in the process of ongoing remediation to our dock area, we hope for these to be completed by spring of 2018. These remediations may limit availability to the dock area periodically for guests.

2. **Yellow Lines Painted Along the Bowen Island Lodge Dock:** Please refer to Point 1.

3. **Yellow Lines Along Pathway Edges:** Painting and paint touch ups of outdoor areas are weather-permitting tasks which will take place as soon as possible. However, the Bowen Island Lodge property is extensive and features many paths, cobblestones, walkways, and uneven outdoor surfaces. We recommend that guests who find this to be a safety concern be accompanied by a sighted companion at all times for safety reasons. Otherwise, we recommend that these guests enjoy the paths that are indicated with white or yellow edges only, our staff will be happy to point these out to you after we complete our outdoor seasonal paint touch ups.

4. **Yellow Lines Along the Main Outdoor Patio:** Painting and paint touch ups of outdoor areas are weather-permitting tasks which will take place as soon as possible. We do not plan on painting yellow trim along our patio, however, we will be indicating the edge with a contrasting color to the main patio.

5. **Lack of Railings Along Outer Edges of Property:** Previously, Camp Bowen had provided temporary poles which were fastened with ropes to create a railing system in areas they felt required such for the special needs of their group. It is indicated in your letter that these poles have “disappeared” over the years. We encourage Camp Bowen to recommission a similar pole system, or to consider renting a temporary fence system for their event. Our staff will be pleased to assist in setting these up for your group if provided with them ahead of time. There will be no charge for this set up. Otherwise, we recommend that guests who find the edges of the property to be a safety concern be accompanied by a sighted companion at all times, or, to enjoy the extensive areas of lawns and paths which are not close to a drop-off area. Camp Bowen will need to be responsible for storing any materials in between event dates.

6. **Lack of Braille Signage:** We would be pleased to provide Camp Bowen with a list of our current signs for translation into braille. Additionally, if Camp Bowen would like to provide additional in-room or beverage station braille signage, we will be pleased to place these around the Lodge for you free of charge. Please note that it would be most effective to receive these signs ahead of time at the Lodge, and the signs would be placed temporarily for your special event. Camp Bowen will need to be responsible for storing any materials in between event dates.

7. **Lack of Braille Large-Print Production:** Please refer to Point 6.

8. **Bowen Island Lodge Emergency Procedures:** We would be pleased to send you a copy of our emergency procedures and floor plan for you to have translated into braille, and we recommend that these are sent out to your guests ahead of their stay at Bowen Island Lodge. In addition, our staff are willing to review these with your group on the first day of their stay. Please let us know if you would like to proceed with arranging a 20 minute gathering with your guests to review as we will need to pre-arrange this. We are happy to provide this service free of charge. We require that your group have designated sighted companions who will be in charge of safe evacuation of your group if needed, as we often only have one to two staff members on hand at any given time. **As in any emergency, our staff are directed to evacuate themselves first, and pass on guest information to the fire chief or emergency official upon their arrival. Our staff are not**

required or trained to enter or remain in an unsafe situation to evacuate guests at any time in any situation.

9. Bowen Island Lodge Evacuation Procedures: Please refer to Point 8.

10. Lack of Contrast in Interior Paint Schemes: The Bowen Island Lodge has no plans to repaint interior walls or doors. We recommend that guests who find this to be a safety concern be accompanied by a sighted companion at all times.

11. Lack of Visibility of Doors Which Feature Large Glass Panels: We will be pleased to use tape to place brightly colored signs indicating glass paneling on our doors during your groups' stay at the Lodge. Please provide these ahead of time so we may be best prepared. Camp Bowen will need to be responsible for storing any materials in between event dates.

12. Lack of Distinguishable Edges to Sets of Stairs: Our small set of interior stairs is carpeted and feature a handrail for safety. The stairs going up to the hot tub area outside also feature a handrail. We recommend that guests who find this to be a safety concern be accompanied by a sighted companion at all times.

13. One Handrail on Stairs: We find this to be sufficient as the small amount of steps which are featured are not highly trafficked areas. We recommend that guests who find this to be a safety concern be accompanied by a sighted companion at all times.

14. Sections of Cracked Pavement: Repaving the Bowen Island Lodge Property is not in our current business plan. However, we will be happy to place brightly colored cones around areas of concerns if you could point them out to a Manager ahead of time. We recommend that guests who find this to be a safety concern be accompanied by a sighted companion at all times.

15. Lack of Safe Swimming Environment: First, please refer to Point 1 regarding the accessibility of the Dock. Second, under no circumstance does the Bowen Island Lodge recommend or encourage our guests to swim off of the dock. The current can be strong and unpredictable, and the water of the bay is not considered sanitary with many derelict boats who dispose of their bilges in the water of the bay. Those who choose to swim in the surrounding oceans or lakes on Bowen Island do so at their own risk.

16. Lack of Braille Signage Continued...Please refer to Point 6.

Conclusion:

Although we would like to work with camp Bowen in the future and continue to host your annual events, I recommend the following considerations:

1. The Bowen Island Lodge is no longer an institute for the deaf, blind, and disabled, and has not been for many years. We would like to do our best to accommodate special requests from all of our guests, but your groups' "severe safety concerns" leaves the question of whether or not this is still the appropriate venue for Camp Bowen.
2. If we proceed with hosting your group, I highly recommend a briefing with your group members at the beginning of your stay, to review a few of the key safety concerns around the property. For example, areas to avoid, areas to be cautious, and areas to visit with a companion only. In addition, as mentioned, we would be pleased to review the emergency procedures at that time and we will be happy to have our manager on duty be there to assist with this briefing. I recommend setting aside 20 minutes for this in the main hall.

As no contract is in place as of yet, and with our current Lodge Manager about to take his retirement, please connect with me personally to secure your booking at The Bowen Island Lodge for 2017.

Sincerely,

E. Cassels

Erin Cassels
Manager, Product Development

Bowen Island Lodge
380 Cardena Drive
Bowen Island, B.C.,
V8V 1X2
erincassels@bowenislandlodge.ca