



History of Watch Lake – North Green Lake Volunteer Fire Dept.

In the summer of 1971, the Watch Lake – North Green Lake Volunteer Fire Dept. was formed with the acquisition of a 1946 International pumper truck from the Squamish Fire Dept. Founding members of the fire dept. were Fire Chief Shorty Horn, Assistant Fire Chief Gordon Prentice, and Howard Wormell. Thirteen residents of the area volunteered to serve as firefighters, and the fire dept. was off and running.

With the very kind donation of one acre of land by Shorty Horn, construction of Hall #1 at Watch Lake (later to be known as the “Shorty Horn Memorial Fire Hall”) began in October of that year. Three weeks later, the building was completed.

On Thanksgiving of 1972, as the firefighters were in their respective home getting ready for the first Annual Firemen’s Ball, the dept. was called out on its first fire. With little

experience amongst them, they very quickly extinguished a brush fire, and still made the Firemen's Ball on time.

In 1973, enough funds were collected to purchase and station a portable water pump along North Green Lake Road. The fire dept. immediately joined the Justice Institute out of Vancouver to acquire the necessary training to become qualified fire fighters.

In 1975, with the full acceptance of the fire dept. by residents of the area, the original truck was retired and a more modern truck with a 350 gallon tank was acquired. A two-bay structure at the hall was completed with the assistance of the community in 1980.

In January 1983, the fire dept. purchased a 1970 International tanker truck with a 1,800 gallon water tank, which became invaluable in fighting fires where water was not accessible. The fire dept. also joined the Central Cariboo Volunteer Fire Fighters Association, which was the parent organization for 11 surrounding volunteer fire depts. The purpose of the association was to assist each other with training and dealing with the legalities that come with being a fire dept.

The tradition of Tuesday night fire fighter practice sessions date back to this time and continues up to this day. (Listen for the fire trucks go by on Green Lake Road North every Tuesday night around 7:00pm). A list of fire fighters in June of 1983 was uncovered and included; A. Wray, J. Pelletier, D. Smith, D. Pelletier, J. Varney, P. Simpson, M. McClean, G. Lundihn, A. Karman (Deputy Chief), F. Winnig, M. Case, B. Martin, W. Horn (Chief), T. Burt, P. Kolodinski, B. Baker, B. Patriquin, and W. Krupp.

As the fire dept. did not come under the jurisdiction of the Cariboo Regional District, they had to (and still do) maintain their operation by collecting a nominal annual fee from each surrounding property owner. Funds at the time were also raised by holding several yearly functions – the Firemen's Ball, Klondike Night, and Wheel Days Dance.

*Thanks goes out to Dimps Horn, and Viv Obermiller for providing much of this information. If any long time residents have additional historical information about the fire dept. or know of the whereabouts of former firefighters, please use the "Contact Us" tab on the Watch Lake – North Green Lake Volunteer Fire Dept. website to reach us.