

Public Information Paper

Re-designation Options for Tetrahedron Park

Overview

Tetrahedron Park is an important asset to the local community, both as a place for preservation and recreation as well as for its role in providing 22,000 Sunshine Coast residents with a safe, clean supply of drinking water. One of the purposes of establishing the park in 1995 was to protect the water supply for the residents of the Sunshine Coast, and to enable the long-term needs for a secure supply of drinking water.

The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) has applied to BC Parks for an amendment to their park use permit to enable improvements to the community water supply infrastructure in Tetrahedron Park. The proposed improvements are not permissible within a Class A park. If the requested future improvements to the community water supply in Tetrahedron Park are to be allowed, re-designation of all or a portion of the park to a different status of protected area would be required.

BC Parks is presenting three initial re-designation options to the public for input, and would encourage the public to bring forward other options through the 30-day consultation process. The input from the consultation process will then be summarized and a recommendation made to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Minister may then make a decision on whether or not to bring forward a recommendation to re-designate the park, or a portion of the park, to Cabinet. If the Minister forwards a recommendation to re-designate the park or a portion of the park and Cabinet decides to support the recommendation, the re-designation would go forward to the Legislature. The final decision will then rest with the Legislature.

Options

BC Parks has explored options to implement the direction in the Tetrahedron Park Management Plan and identified the three initial options outlined below.

The intent of this public consultation process is to solicit input on all possible options. All comments and suggestions with respect to designation options are welcomed. Feedback from the consultation will provide a clearer indication of the best options moving forward.

Option 1: Re-designate the entire Tetrahedron Park to a Protected Area

Implications:

- Protected Areas are established by Order in Council under the *Environment and Land Use Act*.
- The *Environment and Land Use Act* empowers a Land Use Committee of Cabinet to ensure that all aspects of the preservation and maintenance of the natural environment are fully considered.
- Allowable activities in Protected Areas are determined by the specific provisions set out in the Order in Council establishing the area.
- The Order in Council would apply relevant sections of the *Park Act* and regulations to the Protected Area, and one or more activities not usually allowed in a Class A park are allowed to occur and described in the Order.
- Aside from what the Order in Council would allow for (in the case of Tetrahedron Park, the community water supply infrastructure's construction, operation and maintenance), provisions of the *Park Act* would apply, giving the area the same level of protection as a Class A park.

Option 2: Re-designate a portion of Tetrahedron Park to a Protected Area, and maintain Class A park status on the rest of the park.

Implications:

- Protected Areas are established by Order in Council under the *Environment and Land Use Act*.

- The *Environment and Land Use Act* empowers a Land Use Committee of Cabinet to ensure that all aspects of the preservation and maintenance of the natural environment are fully considered.
- Allowable activities in Protected Areas are determined by the specific provisions set out in the Order in Council establishing the area.
- The Order in Council would apply relevant sections of the *Park Act* and regulations to the protected area, and one or more activities not usually allowed in a Class A park are allowed to occur are described in the Order.
- Aside from what the Order in Council would allow for (in the case of Tetrahedron Park, the community water supply infrastructure's construction, operation and continued maintenance), provisions of the *Park Act* would apply giving the area the same level of protection as a Class A park.

Option 3: Re-designate the entire Tetrahedron Park as a Conservancy.

Implications:

- As are Class A parks, Conservancies are managed under the *Park Act*.
- Both the Class A and Conservancy designations offer a high level of protection to ecosystems, biological diversity, and cultural and recreational values.
- The intended purpose of a conservancy explicitly recognizes the importance of these areas to First Nations for social, ceremonial and cultural uses.
- Commercial logging, mining and hydro-electric power generation, other than local run-of-the-river projects, are not allowed in Conservancies.
- A wider range of low impact and compatible activities may be permitted in a Conservancy than in a Class A park as directed by a Management Plan.
- Any activity in a Conservancy must not restrict, prevent or hinder the development, improvement or use of the Conservancy in accordance with protecting and maintaining their biological diversity and natural environments, preserving and maintaining social, ceremonial and cultural uses of First Nations, protecting and maintain their recreational values and

ensuring the development or use of their natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner.

If a decision is made to re-designate the park or a portion of the park, re-designation will ensure that there is no overall loss of protected area and will allow BC Parks to continue to manage the overall area in a manner consistent with the management of the current Tetrahedron Park.

Government has afforded parks and protected areas a high level of legislative protection and all three re-designation options outlined would require an Act of the Legislature.

Maintaining Class A Park Designation

Several members of the Tetrahedron Advisory Committee have requested that BC Parks consider no change to the park designation, maintaining the current Class A park designation for Tetrahedron Park. This option does not address the direction in the Park Management Plan which directs BC Parks to undertake the following:

“...designation options will be prepared and a decision will be sought that will enable BC Parks to authorize the SCRD to enhance and manage the Chapman/Gray Creek watersheds within the park for future population needs.”

If the current Class A status were to be maintained, any future upgrades to the community water supply infrastructure in the park could not be permitted.

This public process is focussed on exploring alternate designation options as set out in the park management plan. As such, it does not consider the full scope of options that are considered when boundary modifications are proposed. Through the public comment process, BC Parks welcomes hearing from those who do not support the options presented, prefer other designation options, or prefer to see no changes to the park designation.

Background: History

Tetrahedron Park was established in 1995 as the result of recommendations from the Protected Areas Strategy and the Local Resource Use Plan, with much involvement of local residents. The Tetrahedron Advisory Committee was established to ensure public input from a wide cross section of community interests, knowledge and experience was available to assist BC Parks in developing a Park Management Plan. Some of the “Key Issues” summarized in the 1997 Park Management Plan include:

Role of the Park: The roles of Tetrahedron Provincial Park are to maintain and enhance the area’s water quality and community watersheds for Sunshine Coast residents and preserve its wilderness characteristics by offering limited backcountry recreation opportunities.

The Park Management Plan describes the challenge to fulfilling this role under the existing designation:

“Government, upon park designation, made a commitment to allow for continued management and enhancement of the Chapman/Gray Creek watersheds as future community water supply sources for the Sunshine Coast residents. However, the Park Act does not allow for improvements to existing watershed infrastructure in the park, and new methods of land designation must be reviewed in order to permit this type of non-conforming use within Tetrahedron Provincial Park.”

The SCR D has maintained the Chapman and Edwards watersheds for community water supply since the 1970s. Recognizing this pre-existing use, a commitment was made in the Park Management Plan to consider changes to the park designation at some time in the future when the need to upgrade the community watershed infrastructure arose.

“Objective: To review the park designation as it relates to the management of the Chapman/Gray Creek watersheds within the park and determine the appropriate course of action to manage and maintain the existing watersheds, and enhance these watersheds as a continuing community water supply source for the Sunshine Coast.”

Background: Park Use Permit

As a part of its long-term drinking water supply strategy, the SCRD has submitted an application to BC Parks for authorization to install permanent piping in Chapman Lake and increase the allowable drawdown of the lake. Details on the Chapman Lake expansion proposal are available on the SCRD [website](#).

If the Legislature approves a re-designation, BC Parks would be in a position to consider a park use permit application for water supply improvements from the SCRD. Any park use permit application is subject to review under the [BC Parks Impact Assessment Process](#), including completion of a detailed environmental impact assessment. The permit authorization process helps ensure the preservation and maintenance of protected area values and the recreational opportunities they provide and BC Parks can apply permit conditions restrict the use of any additional capacity to emergency use during droughts and that other solutions to reduce future dependence on Chapman Lake water are developed.

Background: SCRD Comprehensive Regional Water Plan

In 2013, the SCRD developed a [Comprehensive Regional Water Plan](#). The plan examined options for the near- and long-term supply of potable water to Sunshine Coast communities and recommended actions such as intensive demand management, additional source supply capacities, additional treatment capacities, reservoir upgrades and distribution system upgrades. The SCRD is implementing a range of initiatives which aim to conserve, maintain and expand a sustainable drinking water supply. In addition to these initiatives, the proposed enhancements to the Chapman Lake water supply infrastructure remain an integral component of the SCRD's provision of a safe and adequate community water supply.