

STRATHCONA PARK PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

June 12, 2009

6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

BC PARKS BOARDROOM, RATHREVOR PARK, PARKSVILLE

SPPAC MEMBERS: Gary Schaan (Chair), Barb Baker, Paul Erickson, Peggy Carswell, Tawney Lem, Philip Stone, Dave Campbell, Dave Vincent, Nick Page, Warrick Whitehead.

BC Parks: Andy Smith; Kirby Villeneuve (Recreation Section Head)

Guest: George Trousdell, Mount Washington

Recorder: John Milne

Absent: David Vincent

Public: Karl Stevenson, Peter Rothermel

Opening Remarks – Gary Schaan

1. Confirm Previous Minutes (February 13, 2009) - All

- Discussion about format of minutes – should be summarized
- Will be two versions of minutes created for this meeting, a short and long one.
- BC Parks and SPPAC Chair will do the best they can to review and circulate minutes to SPPAC as quick as work loads permit after each meeting.
- Minutes accepted as circulated with a few deletions on page 9, item 9.

2. Paradise Meadows Water Quality – Nick Page

- George Trousdell is Mount Washington Resort's new environmental contact
- Nick outlined concerns about potential impacts to Paradise Meadow's sensitive wetlands coming from the Resort lands, such as construction impacts, both short term and, cumulative, and sediment loading. Impacts are potentially similar to urban impacts. Subalpine wetlands are different and more sensitive than low elevation wetlands. Impacts may be irreversible in this type of environment. There is a lack of information on this. There is a need for a plan and more monitoring.
- George agrees with Nick's concerns and some remediation is planned for on resort lands later when the Resort can afford it. Some minor things are being implemented right now .i.e. Mountain bike jumps are being moved; will be no construction on the mountain for a while
- Emcon (Dept. of Highways' contractor) is also responsible for some impacts.

- Amphibian studies being started in June 2009 to help establish baseline information.
- Nick will be the SPPAC contact person to deal with this issue, and Maggie, Henigman is the main contact for the Ministry of Environment. Emcon is the Comox Valley Regional District, highway contractor, etc.

3. Strathcona Park Operations (Resource overview - fiscal 2009/2010) - Andy

- Parks's budget is not finalized and may not be until Fall. For now, Regional Operations is working with bridging funds of approximately 50% of last year's budget until a new budget has been finalized
- Both back country rangers have returned to Strathcona this year.
- Parks are managing operational priorities at this time, with health and safety being the highest.

4. Paradise Meadows Accessible Trail Loop Completion - Andy and (KirbyVilleneuve Recreation Section Head)

- Proposal to complete the trail loop in Paradise Meadows described. Will be funded by accessibility money and will permit disabled access.
- Andy showed map and general location of route (must still be defined through field assessments).
- Discussion and opinions offered about type and level of wilderness experience.
- Gary polled the committee for their support or rejection. Majority supported the concept with a few conditions.
- **SPPAC generally supports this proposal with the condition that the trail be located as high as possible above meadows, realizing that impacts, gradient, views, experience and to a lesser degree, costs, are all factors that will be considered when confirming final trail corridor.**
- **SPPAC also recommends that more funds should be allocated to infrastructure elsewhere in the Park.**

5. SWI Strathcona Park Wilderness Center - Andy

- \$50,000 has been allocated from BC Parks to assist with the completion of the building
- more money may also become available - \$50,000 from CST (2nd proposal submitted)
- electrical work is current top priority, followed by construction of access ramps and sidewalks leading into building and then interior finishing. Should funding permit, the basement will also be finished including a disabled access flush toilet.
- Andy gave credit to Steve Smith and Rotary Clubs of Campbell River

6. Master Plan Update

- No update available. Master Plan Amendment concerning horse use is still in Minister's hands.

7. NVI Update (Power Options, Permit, Plans) - Andy

Due to economic conditions NVI have not pursued any further research on cost saving plans. The next NVI mine meeting probably next year.

Action: Put NVI on agenda for next SPPAC meeting.

SPPAC wants to discuss the mine's closure plan. What are the criteria for closure?

A new closure plan is to be submitted on July 15th this year. Park Use Permit renewal process has been started with NVI requesting renewal. Ministry will be reviewing permit with NVI to confirm wording and conditions, leading up to 2012 renewal year.

Tennant Lake bridge is being worked on and will be re-opened by Summer.

8. Centennial Update - Phil/Andy

The Ministry is generating ideas for Parks' centennial, but there is no funding. Phillip outlined his plan to recreate the Price Ellison expedition as a centennial celebration. SPPAC members interested in participating should contact Phillip.

Discussion suggested including native bands. Phillip is looking for funding and will create a budget.

SPPAC endorses Gary's letter on this topic.

9. Master Plan Process Review by SPPAC - (Nick, Tawnie, Warrick, Philip and David V.)

There is no report as last meeting's minutes were sent out late. Sharon Erickson is willing to be part of this subcommittee. Peggy is interested in being involved as well. Philip will leave committee and be replaced by Peggy. Initial discussion will be by email.

10. Marmot Release (Info from Don Doyle) - Andy

Results of last year's release are positive. Four groups are being released this year, into Park. Pads have been placed same as last year, team's presence in the Park is being scaled back.

11. Job Opportunity Program - Andy

Government funding program targeting unemployed forestry workers. Two submissions are being made by third parties in cooperation with BC Parks. The first is to do work on the Bedwell, Elk River and Plateau trail areas. The second, being submitted by the Hupacasath First Nation is for Della Falls trail upgrades. Other NGO's could also apply for these funds and sponsor a project.

12. Della Falls Campground Issue - Andy

Upper campsite is closed due to danger tree risk. Andy wishes to pursue a very detailed hazard tree assessment to better determine risks and look for possible solutions. One suggestion was to spiral prune the trees.

13. Miscellaneous Strathcona Topics - All

- John Caton has advised that the Gayle McGee bridge is falling apart and that he would pay for Dave Vincent, DGV Engineering, to assess its condition.
- Windy Park Operations has had their operations permit renewed for backcountry maintenance for another three (3) years.
- Bedwell Trail west of Bedwell Lake and Crest Creek trail are closed.
- Wood Mountain – illegal cabin is being investigated, is probably outside of Park on Crown Land. Parks will notify Integrated Land Management Branch
- Coastal Trek Adventures will donate and help erect a gate at Strathcona/Wood Mountain Park Boundary en route to Mount Becher to help keep mudboggers out.

Public Question Period

Peter Rothermel – Suggests BC Parks look into the Occupiers Liability Act which states onus is on user re liability as long as they haven't paid. This may apply for the Della campsite situation.

-Suggests a centennial project may be the partnership between CWR, FOSP, FMCBC and Parks to work on Bedwell Trail. Could be \$1 million in Federal grant money available for self propelled recreation.

-SPPAC minutes – concern over multiple minutes and inconsistencies between what might be heard by attending public and what is written down.

-Is it illegal for snowmobiles and ATV's to be in Wood Mountain Park?

All motorized use is restricted by signage.

Karl Stevenson – written criteria for process is needed for any future Master Plan Amendments. FOSP is working on some criteria. Gary invited FOSP to next SPPAC meeting to present.

John Milne – announced FOSP AGM.

Next Meeting: Oct 2, 2009