

PARK PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

85900-20/SPPAC

DATE: June 11, 2005

TIME: 10 AM

LOCATION: Port Alberni Lawn Bowling Clubhouse

LAST MEETING: February 11, 2005

ATTENDANCE: RON QUILTER, BC PARKS
ANNE FIDDICK, SPPAC
RICK ROLLINS, SPPAC
WARRICK WHITEHEAD, SPPAC
JOHN WILSON, SPPAC
GARY SCHAAN, SPPAC
FRANK HOVENDEN, SPPAC
ROD WIEBE SPPAC

PUBLIC: JOHN MILNE, FRIENDS OF STRATHCONA
BARBARA BAKER (UNTIL NOON)
JIM FIDDICK
ROBERT GUNN (PM ONLY)
RON LEPINE (PM ONLY)

GUESTS: NONE

ABSENT: PAUL ERICKSON, SPPAC
SANDY BRIGGS, SPPAC
DAVID VINCENT, SPPAC

CHAIR: ANNE FIDDICK, SPPAC

RECORDER: RON QUILTER

1. Opening Remarks – Anne Fiddick

Introduction of SPPAC members and public attendees. Anne introduced Rick Rollins our newest member in his first meeting. Rick told the group about his background in Park Management and teaching Tourism related courses at Malaspina and UVIC.

2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Port Alberni Access to park
Park Facility Operator Association
Boliden/NVI Reports

3. Review Previous Minutes

February 11, 2005 – No comments on previous minutes. Can be posted to BC Parks website.

3.1 Boliden Name Change

At the last meeting after a discussion regarding the change of the name of the mine, Warrick suggested that we have a look at the name of the Class B Park. Currently the name of the park is Strathcona Westmin. Westmin has not been around for two different changes to the mine owners.

The discussion centered on the value in changing the name of the park verse the time and effort it would take to change it. People seem to know the name of the class ‘B’ portion of the park now and it is a bit of a tradition.

Agreement between the group that although there may be a desire to change the name, it does not warrant the effort involved at this time.

3.2 Paradise Meadows Trailhead

Things seem to be continuing on positively on the Paradise Meadows project.

There are a couple of updates regarding the project. The Campbell River Rotary club have put in a funding application to the Coast sustainability Trust Fund for \$100,000. This will match funds already raised or secured. If successful, we will pull a standards agreement together for the construction of the trail, hopefully this summer. This will ensure that all construction will be built to BC Parks standards.

BC Parks is also looking into using some “on grade” trail construction for this project as opposed to strictly raised boardwalk. The original plans call for a raised 6’ wide boardwalk the entire length of the trail except for the first 100 meters or so. BC Parks

has expressed concern that the price of cedar will make this onerous to complete the project with the allotted funds. Parks feel that the funding could go a lot further if graveled trails were built in the portions of the trail on higher ground. Andy is looking into trail design work with an engineering company to see what can be done. **SPPAC supported Parks looking into alternatives for the construction of the trail.** SPPAC expressed concern about stairways on the boardwalk and treating the surface of the boardwalk with a non slip surface. Ron was clear that the trail has been designed so there will be no stairs on any of the new trail construction.

When/if funding comes through in the next few weeks or even months, BC Parks need to update their plans to be ready to get a contractor in place. The current plans while still valid, need updating, the alignment needs to be verified in the field and the plans have to be put into a shelf ready package for contractors to bid on. The revised plans will also provide us up-to-date estimated costs for both the raised boardwalk and on grade trails. Lanarc consultants, who did the original design can do this work for us. The funding for this would have to come out of the project funding. The work however, needs to be done prior to initiating the project so **SPPAC supported using some existing funding to get the project to shelf ready status.**

Visitor Center

While the work on the trail progresses, the feasibility of a visitor center at the new trailhead is still being pursued. A group of people from the Friends of Strathcona and Strathcona Wilderness Institute have been looking at visitor centers in other areas and have had Rob Wood provide a draft design. BC Parks has made it clear that a plan needs to be worked out prior to the building being built that deals with the purchase costs and ongoing costs for maintenance and operation. A building committee can be set up to help steer the ship which will include Rotary, Parks and the Regional District of Comox Strathcona as the building will sit on their land.

3.3 Timberwest Tlools Creek

The negotiations for this property is ongoing and some of the negotiations are sensitive as they include other partners. **Ron will provide an update as soon as anything is made clear during the process.**

3.4 Wood Mountain Update

Since last meeting, BC Parks did some work to clean up the fire hazards and block vehicle access. Some of that work has since been compromised by quads and 4 wheel drives.

Parks is still working on liability issues such as the contaminated soil. The soil needs to be remediated prior to changing the land status as we understand that the liability does not leave the original land owner. Continued access to Strathcona is still the key for Parks in any land transaction.

SPPAC suggests that the Highway signs pointing people to Forbidden Plateau Recreation Area be removed to keep people away and put some public safety information/signage up the ski hill letting visitors know that there are safety issues.

Apparently there is a large hole from an old culvert on one of the ski hill roads that should be looked at.

3.5 Paradise Meadows Parking Issue

Clarification has been made with Mount Washington. There is no charge for overnight parking in their parking lot at Raven Lodge in winter or summer. There is a charge for overnight camping in the parking lot. In the winter if you leave your vehicle in the parking lot, Mount Washington has asked that visitors let them know or leave a note in their car. Much of the lower parking lot will be included in the land donation for future parking.

3.6 Strathcona Website

Discussion regarding posting of minutes and information to website. Minutes must be approved prior to being posted on the website. Minutes to be posted after review at next meeting. Ron will set up a SPPAC link on the website and list things like the minutes, agendas, membership names, Terms of Reference. Warrick would like to see more access to information or have people able to contact parks through the website. Ron mentioned that this already is set up and occurs frequently.

New Business

4.1 Port Alberni Access

Barbara Baker of Port Alberni discussed some issues with park access from the Port Alberni area. Barbara was glad that BC Parks had met with her and her group, the Port Alberni Outdoor club to discuss ongoing access issues from the south side of the park. Barb is also part of the Alpine club who are also interested in access to the park. Lots of locals use the area, particularly the Oshinow Lake area where there seems to be a recent spike in interest. It seems that a positive relationship has been started with the Port Alberni Outdoor club since Andy's meeting and the club is keen to work towards mutual goals. Andy has approved the club to do some minor works clearing the road just past the boat launch area at Oshinow Lake. The Port Alberni Outdoor club's desire is to keep route status in the area to access Red Pillar. There was an indication that road access was not necessarily wanted and that canoe access down Oshinow Lake might be the best way to access the far end of the lake.

4.2 Gold Lake Permit

Ron circulated a park use permit application to SPPAC several weeks ago for advice. The permit is applying for access over a road that goes through the park in the Gold Lake area. The park boundary was placed over top of the existing road. The permit would be to use the existing road to remove wood products from lands beyond the boundary. There would be no impact to the park. There are several other similar road use permits in the park. Rick pointed out the risk of public perception in issuing the permit but agreed it was of little to no consequence to the park. Park staff will check out the access this road system provides to other recreational activities in the north end.

4.3 Access Problems through Timberwest Lands

Frank mentioned that the CDMC are having problems with Timberwest providing the club access to the park over their private forest roads due to liability issues. Anyone can use the road at night without a permit but must have a permit during the day. An annual access permit for the club would cost \$500. CDMC are sending a letter to the president of Timberwest complaining. Access through private lands is a big issue throughout the park and many parks in the province. Rod commented that legitimate organizations are being discriminated against. **Gary suggested that perhaps we could invite Timberwest representative to attend our next meeting to discuss.** Names suggested were Steve Lackey of Timberwest and a rep from Weyerhaeuser. **Ron to invite to next meeting.** Ron mentioned that Timberwest are active towards the boundary of the park in the Comox Glacier Area although at this point it doesn't seem to impact the park or trail to the Glacier or Century Sam Lake.

4.4 Bundle Management/PFO Society

Frank mentioned that Rick Carswell, the president of the PFO association (Park Facility Operators) gave a speech at the recent BC Naturalist gathering in Salmon Arm. Rick talked about the importance of interpretation/education and that he supported bringing those programs back into parks. Suggested that it be called education not interpretation. Frank suggested that perhaps Rick could come and give a similar talk to SPPAC and include information on how they are organized, at the next meeting. Ron explained the current set up of PFO's on the island. Rick Carswell (RLC Enterprise) holds the permit for South Vancouver Island while Osprey Park Operations holds the Mid and North Island bundle (Strathcona is in the North bundle). The bundle permits give PFO's exclusive rights to offer programs/ commercial activities in parks within the allowable and appropriate guidelines. Osprey also holds the backcountry contract but it is not included in the bundle. Suggested that we could invite Osprey as well to talk about their plans for the park within their bundle. **Recommend that these two PFO's be invited to the next meeting.**

4.5 Supreme Court Decision

A recent Supreme Court Decision overturned a ruling from the Minister regarding a road access issue in Grohman Narrow Park in the Kootenays. A ministry employee provided documents on the issue to the Supreme Court. Employee was dismissed on his last day of work prior to retirement. The Ministry has just recently received the ruling and the reasons for the judgement. The Ministry will be studying this closely before determining what action may be taken.

Ron to forward copy of ruling to SPPAC.

4.5 Future Meeting Locations

Discussion around location of future meetings. Warrick suggested other communities may benefit from having SPPAC hold a meeting. Ron mentioned that we have a limited budget for travel and meeting venues and that we have to be realistic. Suggested that once per year a meeting be held in a community other than the boardroom in Parksville. We need to create an attractant to get people out. Rick suggested that generally no one comes to the meetings unless there is a crisis. Friday night meetings are preferable to Saturday. Next meeting will be Friday, October 14 at 6 pm. Rick will invite some of his students from Malaspina University to sit in.

4.6 Rod Wiebe Last Meeting

This was Rod's last meeting as part of the committee. Ron and committee members wished him well and thanked him for his valuable contributions.

This opens up a position on the committee. Areas we are lacking include gender equity, First Nations, west coast geographic area.

5. Park Update

-Some positive news recently for parks. 1.8 FTE's added to park rangers in the region which put one more seasonal ranger in Strathcona. New Conservation core has a project assigned partially to Strathcona Park which will include creel census work on the Forbidden Plateau Lakes. Significant increase in capital maintenance spending this year with possible projects in Strathcona including funding towards connector trail at Paradise Meadows, and new toilets for several backcountry campsites. Other small project include replacing some bridges on the Plateau and boardwalk replacements and looking into relocating the old campsite near the base of Della Falls due to tree hazards at existing site.

-Parks recently were alerted about a trespass that occurred near the boundary on the Elsie Lake road. Several large trees, mostly cedar were cut. Shake bolts were taken from one tree. Suggested that perhaps we could utilize the downed wood for the paradise meadows trail project by using a portable mill on-site if cost effective to do so.

Ron to follow up

-Elk project continuing on in the Elk River this summer. Mostly monitoring at this stage. Elk River Restoration project has received another grant to do more planting on the gravel bars of the Elk River.

-NVI projects continue on with work on the Ramp Portal and Clean fill projects. A timber sale is being coordinated for the timber removed from the clean fill sites. Parks receive annual reclamation report form NVI – copy passed on to John Wilson for comment.

-Survivor Canada incident is now at Crown Council for review.

-Warrick suggest that the next meeting with NVI be held at the mine site in conjunction with the NVI annual meeting. Don't want to have overlap with October 14 meeting so look into November possibly – **Ron to contact mine**

6. Public Question Period

Frank asked about security bond at NVI with name change. Ron suggested that all is in place but that he would double check.

July 26th is 'Parks Day' and the Comox Valley Naturalists will be running some guided hikes in the park

John Milne asked about the possibility of the siphon issue resurfacing. Ron has heard nothing more on the issue.

Presentation from Alberni Outdoor club Members Ron Lepine and Robert Gunn

See attached presentation for all the details. Club is concerned about access to the park from the west side of the park. Would like to see the zoning in the park changed to allow a hiking route to Margaret Lake as in the original MP. Port Alberni is trying to add to the range of activities offered in the community. Ron responded that there was lack of interest generated at the MP review – no one came forward in support of the trail so it was dropped. Suggested that other members in the group didn't mind the "route" as opposed to a trail.

Other issue was the route up the lower Bedwell. There is an issue with a bridge crossing on old logging bridge over a gorge on the lower Bedwell. Fairly large trees are now growing out of the bridge making it a bit of a hazard. The bridge needs to be assessed. Ron says staff will assess bridge and place signs at either end of the trail indicating safety issues.

Next Meeting: Friday October 14, 2005 - Rath Trevor Park meeting room, Parksville