

**Strathcona Provincial Park Master Plan Review
Stakeholder Meeting
Re: Horse Use in the Park
Courtenay, BC**

29 May 2008

Summary

Attendance: Invited members of the following groups
Friends of Strathcona Park (2 members)
Strathcona Provincial Park Advisory Committee (3 members)
1 member each from:
Wilderness Tourism Association
Strathcona Park Lodge
Backcountry Horse Riders Association
Horse Council of BC
Clayoquot Wilderness Resort
Comox District Mountaineering Club
Federation of Mountain Clubs
Parks Staff, Consultants and Environmental Biologist

The goal for the meeting was introduced as a check-in with some of the people who have a great knowledge of the park, of different users, and who have a pulse on the users and communities around the park. The first half of the meeting was spent discussing if there was a need for an amendment to the master plan. After prolonged discussion, a majority of the participants felt that an amendment to review and clarify the master plan was appropriate. The second half of the meeting focused on potential criteria and provided a lively debate on the merits of some criteria, and substantial agreement on a respectable number of criteria. Some participants requested time to submit additional or more refined criteria. This is welcomed.

Welcome (Facilitator)

Thank you for coming, it is much appreciated.

We are not going to try to change hearts and minds here, we are trying to come to an agreement with regards to amending the Master Plan for Strathcona Provincial Park with a set of criteria and guidelines that will aid in the decision-making process with regards to horse use in the park.

We tried to invite a good, diverse group of stakeholders to this meeting. I see that almost everyone was at the meeting last night and a few of you were at the meeting in Tofino. To get this started I would like to begin the first exercise tonight.

First Exercise

Please begin by telling us who you are and what organization you are representing here tonight then I would like you to tell us what was the biggest thing you saw and your impression? What struck you the most and what surprised you?

BC Parks:

I thought both meetings were excellent. I appreciated how everyone was very respectful of everyone else. People were there to deal with the issue. There weren't any real surprises.

Speaker:

I have been unable to attend any of the meetings.

Speaker:

I was struck that we were not talking about horses in the park, but wanted to talk about stopping the CWR application. Not really surprised about anything.

Speaker:

I was impressed by the passion of the people there. My only surprise was the short lead up notice for the meeting. Only heard about the meeting 3 days before.

Speaker:

Nothing surprised me. The PUP (park use permit) was going to be a lightning rod in this park and the coast in general. I had anticipated more context to the meeting and felt that was missing from the process.

Speaker:

I was struck by the incredible passion people have about the park. I was surprised about the lack of clarity about the meeting and the misleading information that was sent out to the public. It became clear about what meeting was all about, and then not clear again. There is a lack of process.

Speaker:

I was struck by the passion and anger about this thing and that it is back again. We have been trying to protect the park for years and years and people are mad about it going through this process again.

BC Parks:

I thought both meetings went well. The Tofino meeting had a different feel and was a lot calmer compared to the passion and emotion of last night. It was good to hear the emotion. I was surprised by the lack of questions; instead people were only stating opinions.

Speaker:

I was surprised by passion and anger and not that people are confused about the process. There has been misleading information in paper and the handouts. People were unable to prepare which led to some of the anger last night.

Speaker:

What I noticed most was anger and passion. I was surprised by the apparent lack of understanding about the whole process, which has been around for a long time. We are sitting here, we know what the process is and need work it out.

The way the meeting was approached was not good and needed an explanation up front to explain what was going on and the CWR application explained.

Speaker:

I was not surprised by the meeting, I felt it was totally disorganized. I thought we were here to talk about an amendment in the Master Plan that clarifies horse use in the park or not. I came to the meeting for, and have been trying to have this clarified from the start of this process. According to the 2001 Master Plan, it allows horse in two areas, then how do we deal with another area for horses and criteria set as to why there and what would constitute somewhere else being available. I am disappointed by how the meeting was held and the information sent out. The focus in Tofino was less about CWR and more about process. This one here was about CWR and I resent that.

Speaker:

I was at both meetings and that Tofino meeting stayed on topic about horse use in the park. I expected an emotional meeting, but was surprised by the tone and the speakers who were presenting. From a personal knowledge aspect, lived in Port Alberni as a logger and built a number of the roads into and around the park. It has always been an area that horse riders have always looked at as ideal country to ride in with links to lakes and potential opportunity. You can stay on the roads and not go cross-country. With the CWR proposal, it talks about using abandoned roads – what better use to keep a horse contained?

Speaker:

I have no observation about the meeting. I appreciated the comments about the position CWR is in and that people understand the process was flawed from the beginning. We have similar minds and the process has made us enemies. There is something really wrong here. I'm now unclear about this meeting and what the goal is for tonight. You have some problems about how this is organized and structured.

Speaker:

There were no surprises per se, but my observation is that there was no structure. I'm not sure about giving people the opportunity to talk. I thought that the purpose and objective were clear but lacked direction.

Environmental Biologist:

Tomorrow we are going in to the Bedwell to start our study. I am attending the meetings as an observer to gather ideas from people for criteria. I noticed emotion especially at last night's meeting, and was surprised by the difference between the two meetings.

BC Parks:

I was impressed by the meetings by the time effort and concern that people made and thoughts they brought forward to the table to provide input. And the passion and concern by all groups. I had no real surprises, but think that people were looking for what common ground was there.

Facilitator:

We have to plead guilty for confusing people. We have been tied into a tight corner to achieve our goals. There have been internal challenges as well. Information sent out on short notice and, not as it should be, identical. I tried to explain a number of times what the reason was and it was clear that people were there to speak primarily about the CWR proposal and how much the number of times "don't change the master plan" cam up surprised me. They are supposed to be living documents and not supposed to stay stagnant, but be able to adapt as changes in the environment and the pressures upon it change. There is a need to explore and see what kind of review in place. There are often subtle differences between big and small reviews.

Amendment Discussion

Facilitator:

This is a mid-way check-in with the organizations and associations to get your comments and thoughts about improving the process for amending this Master Plan. That's why we are here. The final amendment decision will be made by the statutory decision maker; all we can do is provide clear recommendations for how that should happen. We have to work in a world of legal terms and need help with those as well. One of the reasons we need help, I fear, is that I do not have any experience in Strathcona Park. I would have thought the groups would talk about what could go into the Master Plan that would let the agency say yea and/or nay to changes and proposed activities; but that does not seem the case. For example: there are no issues with mountain biking in the park,

because the Master Plan clearly states no mountain biking is permitted in the park. That's why we're here – there is no clear statement with regards to horse use in the park.

What Parks want is a solution for all proposals, not a single proposal, and provide the guidance for whatever that decision is whether no horses, or if there is then what is the criteria for considering the proposal. It is not beneficial to write an amendment for one proposal because it does not make good management sense.

This Master Plan needs an amendment to clarify horse use. We've had people pointing and saying, "don't change the Master Plan," where does it say "no horses", it doesn't. I think people thought that two sites were clearly stated, but they aren't. We need to work with real words on paper that are defensible, not "what we meant by that" – the people who wrote those words may not always be able to answer the question "what did you mean by that" or may forget what they were thinking at the time.

I feel for the CWR in this process. We can use criteria as a tool for management. Some criteria has come out. We want the passion, but we also need the details. I tried to introduce that into the meeting but no one was buying, but I also recognized where people wanted to go. I had to allow words that wanted to be said, said.

I want to talk about the Master Plan, not a proposal. We don't have the criteria and information in order to make any decisions with regards to horse use in the park.

I would like to know: Where are we wrong?

Please comment on whether you think there should be an amendment or no amendment to the Master Plan.

Speaker:

My understanding is that last year we went through this. Now parks have made the decision and it is that we are talking about the Master Plan and opening it up for this subject only. What happens next after we go through all of this? I realize there is a Master Plan and it was decided and amended 5 years ago. But now developers are coming along about all sorts of questions about the use in the park? How will this be decided? If it decides that horses are good, then will they look at the Master Plan and make assessments as to whether the proposal is a go?

Facilitator:

It will start the process

Speaker:

Now I need clarification – is it a meeting about the Master Plan amendment? Or the horse proposal?

Facilitator:

This is about amending the Master Plan to clarify horse use, what conditions have to be met. These will also be of value to the person putting in the proposal so that they know. The criteria provide the scaffolding for the amendment. We need more detail to help us do that and build a stronger document.

Speaker:

Lets put CWRs proposal aside for a second – if the criteria said they weren't allowed anywhere else than where they already are?

Facilitator:

The criteria should be put to any future proposal as well as the current areas.

Speaker:

Are you saying that there is not possibility for those areas to be the only ones?

BC Parks:

An example from last night was a comment about the roads – the issue is that if the roads are not maintained then it will fall off due to the criteria.

Speaker:

I think we should also include pack animals in this discussion, as they would be more encompassing for llamas, mules and goats. About the two areas that horse allowed in the park already – they were meant to be experiments – so we can't use them as criteria?

Facilitator:

We are not using them as criteria, but the criteria would be used against them for their suitability and for why not being used. It still has to be reviewed and whether or not it is being used. The essence is that all horse use should meet that criteria or not be used in the park.

Speaker 1:

I'm hearing about areas that aren't in use right now as horse available areas, correct me if I'm wrong in assuming that a park is preserved for all people of BC. Just because it is not being used, it shouldn't be put aside or discouraged for the ability to be used. Discussion about the Oshinow area is saying not to do anything.

BC Parks:

If someone would come in and wanted to try it out for a couple years then the current plan would be okay with it.

Speaker 2:

The Oshinow Lake area – if I wanted to take my own horse in there I couldn't unless I asked you first? If I go in and don't tell anyone am I in violation of the Park Act?

BC Parks:

It is not currently signed open, so you could be in violation because the signs aren't up

Speaker 2:

It also says to develop as necessary so if you called parks they might or might not say yes?

Speaker:

I'm also a little concerned that parks are there for people. They are also there to protect ecology and environment. If the area is a wilderness conservation area then can that activity take place?

Facilitator:

The zoning doesn't help in this case as it says, "could".

Speaker:

So you could say not at all in wilderness conservation area and that would be one of the criteria?

Facilitator:

Yes – specificity in the phrase is needed – which is an issue in all park systems.

Speaker:

I was under the impression that horse use was not allowed in the wilderness conservation zone but is allowed in the wilderness recreation zone.

BC Parks:

Yes it is allowed in the wilderness conservation zone, as a matter of fact all zones in Strathcona could permit horse riding.

Speaker:

There is a trail corridor that stretches all along and currently into Strathcona –it has had a lot of support as an historic route and this is an existing route that is not identified.

Facilitator:

I can say what the goal is and that is to ensure what is allowed is clearly defined. I am biased by working a lot in the US, where they are a very litigious group and have to work through things very carefully so that they can defend their position. Am not suggesting going to the extreme as what they do, but I am suggesting that this process is very important. Without thorough criteria the decision could be argued as being arbitrary.

Speaker:

You talk about legal challenges and amending a Master Plan. We are volunteering our time and have spent half a lifetime defending this park. How much value is this exercise going to be if the Master Plan is not a legal document and only a guideline.

Facilitator:

A Master Plan with enough detail will stand up if taken to court. A Master Plan is not a legal document but with the clarity it will help stand up any decisions that are made. If someone wanted to make a decision on this thing and couldn't find the answers they needed to make a decision how useful of a document is it.

Speaker:

To give you an example: if at the end of this process it is stated that horse use is not permitted in certain areas, can't it be argued that the zoning matrix says different? Which has the power?

Facilitator:

The zoning matrix is built on a broader scale and is worded as maybe.

BC Parks:

The Master Plan and the zoning matrix are both park planning documents.

Facilitator:

BC Parks Mission Statement is quoted

Speaker 1:

I have a couple of questions. I am new to this process. I have done nothing in Strathcona. It seems to me, in doing my research to come to this meeting, I was on the web for about 24 hours looking at parks from all over the world. The general zoning describes generally what

can happen. Where is the criteria that says what can happen in those zones – can that be used in this process as well? What criteria are there for hikers and dogs in these zones? Are there other parks within BC and outside BC that currently have horse use? What are their criteria? No one knows where to start or has started? Why are we re-inventing the wheel?

BC Parks 1:

In the zones we have some guidance – in each level of zone it gets tighter and tighter for what activities can be done. For hiking if it is signed then that guides use in the parks. If you want to restrict activity all we currently have is signage.

Speaker 1:

So you have no criteria?

BC Parks 1:

We have some, but no, what we do have is in the Master Plan, there are some criteria already in place that will not allow horses in the wilderness areas.

Facilitator:

And the EIA. There are no extensive criteria that you can apply to horse use.

Speaker 2:

We either need criteria or we don't. Are we allowing use in a park wherever we don't know what the impact is?

BC Parks 2:

Because zoning may allow use and there may be criteria that defines it. We still have to assess what can happen, as every situation is different. That's why what we have is so broad so that we have to look at it. Even if a spot is may allow an activity, we still have to assess it for other impact factors i.e. number and concentration of people.

Speaker 1:

As a hiker do I need a permit to go in the park?

BC Parks 1:

If areas are open for horses then they can go in without a permit.

Speaker 1:

So a hiker doesn't need a permit and criteria, and horses do? I'm trying to understand this and it seems that we're starting from scratch and I'm not sure why.

Facilitator:

There are horses in a lot of the grassland provincial and national parks but you can only use some of the criteria, as there are site differences that won't apply to this.

Speaker 1:

This discussion of criteria is making me think how complicated we make things some times. It is becoming a very complicated and prohibitive process. I think that what we could do is consolidate all the differences re horse use in the park into one place in the Master Plan. Having been part of the original team that developed the Master Plan and in charge of going through every piece of paper that was handed in I'm very familiar with what was said. There were very few individuals in favour of horse use in the park. The two places put aside no one was going to argue with. To me that was pretty clear. That area has specific things about it. It occurs to me that we're making a huge process that isn't that complicated. We're not on different pages at all. What people are concerned about is creating public access into areas, which are not all that accessible.

Facilitator:

Are you saying that that is the ...

Speaker 1:

It says the profile of those two areas was to be studied and the performance of that assessment was to set the criteria for horse use.

Facilitator:

My reading of the Master Plan was for a specific site, it didn't tell me if this was the criteria for any other site.

Speaker 2:

Was it the case that people had just identified those areas?

Speaker 1:

There were very, very few people who came forward. The only reason that it was mentioned was because a SPPAC member was a horse person, was mayor of Gold River and had constituents who wanted an area to ride horses in the park. She asked for those two areas and we agreed.

Speaker 2:

So the reason you discussed those areas was because someone brought it up. If someone had brought up the Bedwell would you have gone through the same process

Speaker 1:

Absolutely not. It was a wilderness area, no one had even thought of it as a possibility. Parks said the Bedwell had very low recreation value. It wasn't until people went in there that they saw how special it was. So to say that would have is not the case at all.

Speaker 3:

I again need clarification of the Bedwell. I asked the same question as to why it was not considered and was told for two reasons as the only access was through the alpine and interior of the park; and thought it was not a suitable place for horses. Access from the ocean was not thought all that accessible for the general public so not general access use for horses.

Speaker 1:

I would like to bring up the point that this is regressing back to the application and I resent that.

Facilitator:

I have to agree. The important thing is that others can read it and have an understanding of it and what was meant or said as well.

Speaker 2:

I don't argue. But you have to use what was put into the Master Plan. I get really angry when it is said that the Bedwell was not put in there only because of access. It was never part of the discussion.

Speaker:

I would like to stay on this concept of where horse use is applicable in the park. The areas are too far away and there is nowhere to park rigs and we couldn't get off the road. The criteria shouldn't be whether or not it is close enough. You have to work with the values of the park and recreation needs of the people of BC. If you can ride on the rock road in this area, then should be able to ride in the criteria of the zone.

Facilitator:

Yes

Speaker 1:

Maybe we can attack this from a different viewpoint: where can't they go – alpine, no; watercourses, no.

BC Parks:

I am starting to hear a partial buy in that need criteria. I didn't go through the original process of the Master Plan. And when read it I was unclear as well as to what the criteria was for horse use in the park.

Speaker 2:

A lot of time is spent going back to the Master Plan. I thought that we were here to discuss criteria, not this. I don't think need to keep going where we were. Lets get this done.

Facilitator:

Yes, you are absolutely right.

Criteria Discussion:

Facilitator:

The first thing we that wanted answered was the resistance to the amendment to the Master Plan. Who thinks it doesn't need any amendment? We feel it does not and needs that clarity to work. Who agrees for the need to amend the Master Plan? (most hands are raised)

Speaker 1:

Are we going back to the Master Plan and its sanctity? One thing I see with the Master Plan of the park is that there are a lot of communities that border the park and all have their own opinion of what should happen there and thoughts about what the park is to them.

Facilitator:

The Master Plan has a great deal of guidance, but it can and should be changed when clarity is required on subjects. So yes Brian we need to start these questions from the Master Plan and want to clarify ...

Speaker 2:

And you are raising a point. I will help you remember is there is this statement: "horses are allowed use on the park in areas ...which allows connection for horse trails outside the park..." This is identified by the Kunlin assessment. It talks about specific routes and a study done in three other areas. In the summary: "two areas... and other areas will be reviewed ..." that's why I'm saying to you that all this info appears but is not consolidated into one place and would provide some criteria. If an amendment and some criteria are developed, it bothers me, after the Master Plan that there has been very little representative cross section of users. If talking about amending it or reviewing it that is good, but this current process is not the good one.

Speaker 1:

One of the difficulties about the park is that it doesn't have a singular entity or portal. It is surrounded by many different communities, which aren't represented here. For example the Ahousesant. One of the difficulties is that the park has been in existence for so long that it has become isolated from traditional uses. Given the fact that many of their activities have been excluded from the park for a100 years (on the ground stuff). It is becoming an issue. Structurally with the communities around the park it is very difficult to ...

Speaker 2:

If we're talking about missing stakeholders and First Nations, then sure they would have a say. If we are talking about the Master Plan then the other missing groups should be included as well.

Facilitator:

This process has its flaws, we know, and I've already addressed why you all have been asked here tonight. We felt this gave the best cross-section of users and stakeholders for the park. The Ahousant had planned to be here tonight but were unable to come. We realize there are other First Nations and stakeholders that have interests here, but that would require further meetings that we do not have the opportunity to have for this process.

Environmental Biologist:

Do you want to talk about anything that has been brought to date? There has been quite a bit of research collected from the US and Australia. A lot is applicable to horse use. But not all of it is applicable for coastal systems. One of the big ones is stream crossings. A lot of what comes out of these studies is width of trail, substrate, steepness and bank stability and slope. The Bedwell will be a very low gradient. The issues will be a stream crossing – steepness of banks, substrate and mitigation of how to lower the impact of crossings ...

Speaker 1:

This time of year there is substantial amounts of snowmelt and this year is higher than usual. Does your scope of work extend to the management parameters for the users as opposed to looking at that stability? How users behave and rules of engagement? I am talking about how people are going to be required to behave to minimize the impacts. Does the scope work extend to that?

Environmental Biologist:

If that includes written information, yes all of that will be assessed and recommendations made for the park as a whole. We will also will look at seasonal duration, number of horses, etc. possibility of abandonment (if after 10 years this is abandoned for horse use then what happens to the system after?) What are the present condition, environmental status and impacts made by upgrading and future potential impacts with usage and what are the impacts if abandoned? We have geotechnical specialists, all the specialists we need for this project.

Speaker 2:

Has an assessment of the trail condition been done, are you doing that same thing?

Environmental Biologist:

Yes it will be and what type of upgrading is required.

Speaker 1:

There is a lot of contradictory information out there and I am concerned how you handle not cherry picking what criteria you use, for example dealing with manure removal

Environmental Biologist:

We will be mentioning different uses and ways to handle it here in the report.

Speaker 1:

I am concerned over which one you will use. I am concerned over which one will be used.

BC Parks:

What we want them to come back with is not just for the Bedwell, but a set of choices of information that can be used as the situation dictates – not all places will be applicable for the same criteria, but all will require a certain baseline criteria. What David was saying was permit type conditions, and they will tie into that, but a literature review will be done and may or may not be used as criteria but will be used to help make decisions.

Speaker 2:

You have to start somewhere and I disagree with you. You have to define use for construction. It is part of the criteria process, not the permit, as it should be defined so that you can decide on the appropriateness of the area for use.

Facilitator:

There is a code of conduct that needs to be determined and examined for most appropriate use for this situation.

Speaker 1:

With regards to safety. I am wondering about skill levels and riders ability to control their animals in any situation. Is there any way you can expect certain standards for horsemanship. An uncontrolled horse can cause great amounts of damage and be dangerous to hikers they may run into.

Speaker 2:

I was certified as a CHA packing guide instructor. Part of that process is centered around safety and environment as they go together. There is lots of material out there – stock management is very important especially for dude strings.

Speaker 1:

How would that be monitored in the park?

Speaker 2:

I guess it would be the same for other users. If it is general use in the park then monitored as general use and if it is permit then it should be part of the criteria for the permit.

Speaker 3:

The insurance companies make sure you are up to safety standards.

Speaker 1:

But not all riders will be operators. There will be private users. How is that controlled?

Speaker 4:

A lot of horse users have liability insurance for public use.

BC Parks:

Part of the criteria that want to look at is whether want random use or not, or just in certain areas.

Speaker 1:

So if you are implying that if there is a guided party and there are two wranglers and 10 riders that these two riders would make the others safer? How?

BC Parks:

We can't establish the skill level of the rider, but we can try to control where they go that would be safer.

Speaker 5:

You can apply same thing to hiking for ability, etc.

Facilitator:

Do you think separation is required?

Speaker 6:

We have thought of this.

Speaker 5:

You could set days or put up an information sign saying what is going on and when so everyone is informed.

Speaker 6:

That is a good idea that on certain days of the week, people will be expecting to see horses and riders and can make a choice whether or not going there. If the criteria are old roadbeds and second and third growth areas then the people who want to go to these areas will be minimal.

Speaker 2:

You get very little help with literature about separate trail systems.

Speaker 1:

Ecological values and ecological assessment. There are species that are quite important and site specific that might not be known in the public realm.

Facilitator:

SAR species is a high hurdle.

Speaker 1:

A little higher than I would go, but okay.

BC Parks:

A big concern is manure management.

Speaker 1:

Camping management and shelters.

BC Parks:

Don't see that as criteria.

Speaker 2:

See as a possible need for horses as they will go farther.

Speaker 3:

People who are wanting to go will go for a longer time will need something – so will need camps and facilities to mitigate impact and footprint

Facilitator:

Signs are a lower impact on the land

Speaker 3:

There are some areas that are natural camps – that will be easy to use

Facilitator:

I will read out what we have so far for criteria:

- Signs
- Protection of water quality
- Avoiding watercourses in riparian zones
- Use of Existing trails and roads

- Stock watering
- Leave no trace principles modified for horses
- Trail elevation
- Avoiding existing wildlife corridors – know trails will become wildlife corridors

Speaker:

I have an animal observation – horses are prey animals so have a concern about horses being in a narrow area where they can't run away if being stalked by an animal.

Speaker:

Gradient soil – does that capture surfacing and alignment? If you are using existing roads and trail then have a standard already in place

Speaker 1:

Wherever horses are permitted should also be available to the public – non-exclusive use.

Speaker 2:

There are many examples of exclusive use in parks for activities.

Speaker 3:

What does exclusive use mean?

Speaker 2:

For example, a horse party (by permit) can only go into certain areas in Mt. Robson that hikers are not permitted to go.

Speaker 4:

Might have to decide that there will be a limit due to environmental conditions.

Speaker 5:

We are again going off topic. We have hit some general topics. If the criteria is for trail substrate. Can we take this list and hand it to the environmental biologist? Can they work with it?

Speaker 4:

Are you saying that these other values don't have a place on the criteria?

Speaker 5:

I think they have place as to whether you accept the permit or not.

Facilitator:

At what point is this criteria that first level is there, but when getting into exclusive use this is getting into permit conditions

BC Parks:

The non-exclusive, exclusive use will come from monitoring over the next couple of years

Speaker 4:

There could be some or many users that you will be dealing with.

Speaker 2:

In BC it is illegal to raft a river unless with a commercial license, so this is not an unusual precedence

Speaker 1:

Social benefits, right now there are many areas in the park where only the very fit can go, horses could offer that opportunity for those who have health issues, etc.

Speaker 2:

Someone who could walk, but no use a backpack could use a pack animal

BC Parks:

What are the incident levels of cougars and wolves going after horses?

Speaker 1:

That is a relevant concern, have stitched up horses from interactions with wildlife

Speaker 2:

How many people are attacked on Vancouver Island each year by a cougar or a bear?

Speaker 3:

My experience is that there has been very few incidences of bear interaction

Speaker 1:

Have you gone through the areas identified for horse use and scoped them out?

Speaker 2:

Not recently. You could do a 2-day trip, but can stretch into three and there is a loop, but that is about it.

Speaker 1:

It is only in the last 10 to 15 minutes that you've been writing on paper and why you are writing down now what is being said now as opposed to before that it is not as important?

Facilitator:

This is a list to stimulate conversation about criteria for horse use in the park.

Speaker 1:

Then I need clarification, should I assume that we have decided to change the Master Plan?

Facilitator:

No, not change, amend the Master Plan.

Speaker 1:

Change means you are going to make a change, clarification and giving direction is different than changing.

Facilitator:

The goal is clarification and an amendment.

Speaker 1:

I agree with clarification.

Speaker 2:

I find what is in the Master Plan and the amendment too vague. I would like to see the two changes so that they are clear.

Speaker 1:

It is all about semantics.

Facilitator:

We are not changing the intent of the Master Plan, only the words to make the Master Plan clearer in its direction.

Speaker 3:

We've already put some words to this, lets continue.

Speaker 2:

Clarification will lead to change for some people, we have gone around this and had disagreements for 15 years due to lack of clarity.

Speaker 1:

I need clarification because first talking in general terms about Master Plan then went into the Bedwell. We have not even decided whether or not this is the process for amending the Master Plan.

Environmental Biologist:

I'm also looking outside of the park for examples. Like the 100-mile ride around Cowichan Lake last weekend to assess what impacts took place.

Speaker 3:

I find that the criteria is helpful that we have up there is going towards clarifying the Master Plan and developing the amendment.

Speaker 4:

This criteria is to help establish whether and where horse use is in the park.

Facilitator:

Again, I am very sorry for the confusion of this project, but I have already explained this and what our goals are. I will not give you all the reasons for the confusion as they will just be giving you excuses and not help us move forward with developing the criteria we need to amend the Master Plan. We have to move on.

Speaker 1:

I want to clarify exclusivity. We didn't mean only guided, but that every single person could use the trail and that only those areas accessible by road and trailer access easily would provide non-exclusive use and should be considered.

Speaker 2:

If talking about exclusivity for the general public then can't just assess how it is accessed, just whether or not there is access

Speaker 3:

I have real trouble with that too as there are places in the park that those roads are in place for other pieces of use. It needs to be that if the public wants to go there they can whether or not it is easily accessible by road. It has to be open to all of the public, not necessarily fully accessible.

Speaker 4:

You are putting a price tag on accessibility

Speaker 5:

I think I have an example of what we're hearing from the Friends: if there is a lake, a high alpine lake, that there is no trail to, but if you can go in by plane so that there is no impact on the environment it is not accessible. Don't create access points that are not accessible to the average person.

Facilitator:

It is late, well after 10pm and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for coming and your input. I think we have made great headway here tonight ...

Speaker 1:

These meetings are to put forward information?

Facilitator:

Yes. This meeting was a chance to meet with some of the people who have a great knowledge of the park, different users and stakeholders who have a pulse on the users and communities around the park. This was our only chance to meet everyone here.

Speaker 2:

So now this information will be sent out to everyone and out to BC Parks by the 20th of June? I want to clarify what comes after the public process?

Facilitator:

We will incorporate the EIA and other information we research along with the public input into a draft summary and recommendations document after the 20th of June (by mid-July I think) and put forward for review by Ministry staff.

Speaker 2:

Will this be up on the website for the public to review as well?

Facilitator:

We hadn't thought of that, but will take it up with MOE and see if we can put this up and the draft amendment for public review as we will not be doing any further public meetings or open houses for this project. This was our only opportunity for this.

Criteria list resulting from this meeting:

- Code of conduct
- Stream crossings
- Trail width, gradient, soil
- Mitigation
- Wildlife impact – wildlife corridors, predator interactions (herd animals)
- Trail impacts
- Invasive plant introductions
- Season
- Trail building/abandonment
- Guideline range
- Safety (e.g. inexperienced riders)
- Multipurpose trails
- Ecosystem impacts – SAR species
- Existing trail/road
- Manure management
- Camps / facilities / corrals / shelters
- Water quality / water courses / riparian
- Signs
- Stock watering
- “No Trace”
- Elevation
- Non-exclusive
- Social benefits – access of mobility limited
- Existing exclusive use in parks