

Strathcona Provincial Park Master Plan Review RE: Horse Use in the Park

The following are general comments received at BC Parks Website from the public. They have been edited for spelling and privacy only.

	Comments
W1	<p>Dear Madam or Sir.</p> <p>Wish to comment on the subject of changes to the Strathcona Park Master Plan to allow horses in the park as requested by Clayoquot wilderness resort.</p> <p>The Master Plan was written after a lot of thinking, planning and discussions by intelligent people, so why change it every time some commercial operator wants to make a few bucks in the park?????</p> <p>Mount Washington Ski Resort wanted to cut ski trails in the park, they got a permit.</p> <p>Mount Washington Ski Resort wanted to funnel the summer hiking crowd to their Raven Lodge, the parks people co operated with them and relocated the trail.</p> <p>I am sure that the open house and public meeting on "Horses in Strathcona Park" is just window dressing and Clayoquot Wilderness Resort will get what they want.</p> <p>To put it bluntly I DON'T TRUST YOU GUYS.</p> <p>Why don't you listen to the Park advisory Board? They are against horses in the park.</p> <p>I and my friends think that the advisory board is just window dressing.</p> <p>Horses don't belong in Strathcona Park! This was established in the so-called Master Plan. Not only do they turn trails into ditches they stink, piss and shit on the trails. I saw it in the Banff Park, it is ugly.</p> <p>My question is; what is next? All terrain vehicles? Snowmobiles?</p> <p>This is my comment.</p> <p>21 May 2008</p>
W2	<p>I write today to express my concern about the upcoming decision about whether or not to grant a lease to a tourism operator to use horses in the Bedwell Valley. I am strongly opposed to this idea. Strathcona Park was established so many years ago in order to keep that piece of land in its original and unaltered natural state. That was the wish of the people of British Columbia then and continues to be today. The more recent master plan for the park just underlines that renewed intention and does not allow for the use of horses. While I understand that one operator wishes to do so that does not justify altering the public purpose for Strathcona Park.</p> <p>Moreover, it is well understood now that over time granting long-term use permits to public land almost inevitably results in removal of that land from public use and increasingly to the outright privatization of it. This is almost certainly the intent of the proposing operator in this case, but is definitely not in the public interest nor favored by the public.</p> <p>Please do not approve any application to use horses nor any other livestock in provincial Class A parks!</p> <p>Sincerely</p>

<p>W3</p>	<p>Please take note that I am very much opposed to the granting of any license or permit to use horses commercially in any part of Strathcona Park.</p> <p>As a park user for over 30 years I have watched the ongoing struggle to keep commercial and industrial activities out of the park and to retain the integrity of its territory. There is very little public interest in allowing such operations in any provincial parks and great opposition to such plans. There are many valid ecological and land-use reasons for turning down such proposals.</p> <p>Watching over the years what has become of Tree Farm Licenses, it becomes very obvious that granting long-term use-permits to commercial or industrial use will result in the alienation of that parkland from the crown. I and most people in BC are very much opposed to that.</p> <p>Please register my opposition to this proposal.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>W4</p>	<p>Dear Sir/ Madam,</p> <p>As a long standing member of the Comox District Mountaineering Club, I would just like to let you know my feelings on the idea of allowing horses in The Park. I think it would be a retroactive move. It is a known fact that horses seriously degrade trails of any kind and wilderness trails are particularly vulnerable. I understand the economic opportunity that horse trails in the Park will provide but I fear that once we open the mountain paths to one such group the precedent is set then for further applications of this nature. I believe we should tread a lightly as we can and keep the Park as close to the natural as possible.</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity for input.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>W5</p>	<p>TO: Public Consultation re: Strathcona Master Plan Review</p> <p>RE: Horse use in Strathcona Park and the Bedwell River Corridor, and related issues.</p> <p>In commenting on this matter, I am working from the following knowledge base:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I was a member of the Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee for a number of years. I am familiar with the principle of “limits of acceptable change” as it applies to park use. 2. I lived in the Courtenay area for 10 years. The Forbidden Plateau area of the Park was my recreational backyard, both summer and winter. I know the trails from the Mount Becher area to Mount Albert Edward and beyond intimately. (I used to run some portion of them at least once or twice a week.) 3. For several years, I looked after “Sid’s Cabin” at the base of Strata Mountain, and learned the history of uses and abuses of the Forbidden Plateau area. 4. I worked for a number years to inspire the creation of a Visitors’ Centre at the Paradise Meadows entrance to Strathcona Park, as a way of educating the public about the sensitivity of the area and the need to respect the park experience. 5. I represented Outdoor Recreation in a planning process for Ursus Creek. I am familiar with the topography, weather, and ecology of the Ursus Creek-Lower Bedwell River area. 6. As an Outward Bound instructor, I led students in Strathcona Park, and in the Bedwell Valley (as well as elsewhere in the Clayoquot Sound region). I have observed horse use and its effects in the lower Bedwell River area. <p>A general comment: The Strathcona Park Master Plan is a very positive tool for good stewardship of the Park. The way it has been developed and maintained over the years, as</p>

well as the way it is used to provide a sound policy basis for the Park's Annual Management Plans, should be a model for all parks. I am glad this present review of the Master Plan is being undertaken, and look forward to a good result.

Comments about horse use within Strathcona Park:

1. There are three main problems to be managed if horses are allowed in the Park: a) conflict with other trail users, b) the interplay between the Park's wet weather (specially in the winter) and the soil disturbance caused by use of trails by horses, and c) the impact that horses may have on the Park's ecology.

2. The area of Forbidden Plateau from Paradise Meadows to Circlet, Moat and Amphitheatre Lakes should be off-limits to horses because it is already bearing all the use it can tolerate from hikers. In fact, it is probably over-used considering the budget available to keep it up. Trails in this area were used by horses before it became part of the Park, and the erosion they caused is still evident (and much compounded by hiking traffic). As well as the problem of keeping the trails intact, the sheer volume of foot traffic in this area would create a real safety problem if horses were present.

3. The area of Forbidden Plateau from Johnston Lake to Mount Becher and the old Forbidden Plateau ski area contains the historic horse access routes to Forbidden Plateau. Except for the trail to Mount Becher, it receives far less foot traffic than the Paradise Meadows-Circlet Lake end of the Plateau, and might be acceptable for horse use if the problem of trail erosion can be solved. Much of the old horse trail has survived fairly well, but there are some places where horse use eroded the trail to a depth of at least half a meter. In several places, the trail is literally a new route for a local creek in times of heavy runoff. This issue can be solved by application of sufficient resources, but if it is not solved, then horses should not be allowed. In their present state, the trails would not bear horse use and continue to meet Parks values.

4. I understand that there may be some potential for horse use in the Oshinow Lake area. I have no knowledge of that area, and can't comment.

5. The presence of horses may have impacts on sensitive ecologies. First, horses may graze in ways that alter the ratio of plant species, or that impact rare species. Their effect in this regard could easily be at least as significant as the effect of picking wildflowers, berries or mushrooms, all of which are not allowed in the Park. A strict "no grazing" rule should be enforced. Second, horses could bring invasive weeds into the Park, most likely in mud on their hooves, or in their droppings. This issue needs to be carefully researched. Invasive weeds are becoming major destroyers of biological diversity in the province. It should not be assumed that there is not a problem here.

Comments about horses in the Bedwell River corridor:

1. In general, it seems very peculiar to bring horses into a place with the climate and ecology of the Bedwell River. Horses are animals of dry, open country, and fare poorly in the wet and mud. I suggest it would create a much superior horse experience for visitors to our wilderness if a dedicated horse-access park were created in the Chilcotin region, and the Bedwell valley were left for experiences more appropriate to a coastal rain forest.

2. The old mining/logging road in the lower Bedwell valley is sufficiently hardened to support horse traffic. Other trails are more problematic. Some are on outwash gravels and rocks, and may survive reasonably well (subject to the safety issues created by bad footing for the horses). Others traverse clay or silt deposits, and create obvious problems. These problems can be managed with sufficient resources, but it should not be assumed that they will be. A performance-based management plan should be in place before proliferation of

	<p>horse trails in the lower Bedwell is allowed.</p> <p>3. The lower Bedwell valley (up to approximately the Park boundary) is a very different place from the upper valley. The lower valley has large areas of outwash plain, and is not excessively steep. The upper valley presents serious issues that should preclude horse use. First, the terrain is steep. It creates routing challenges that are difficult to overcome when locating a hiking trail. The needs of horses make the problem very much more serious. The steepness, combined with the problem of finding good footing, raises serious safety issues. It also makes erosion management very expensive. Second, the upper valley has many creeks entering it that intermittently carry huge volumes of runoff. Crossing them safely, and maintaining appropriate horse crossings, would in my opinion require vastly more resources and invasive infrastructure than is appropriate in a park. Third, there are major areas of poorly drained wetlands in the upper valley. Even minimal hiking traffic through them has caused damage. Intact wetlands are at a premium, and should not be further invaded. (They also invite serious incidents with stuck horses.) For these reasons, I would emphasize that horses should not be allowed to access Strathcona Park up the Bedwell valley.</p> <p>Related issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BC Parks has the power to manage recreational corridors outside of park boundaries. I am glad to see that this is being taken seriously in the Bedwell valley. The Bedwell valley offers a unique opportunity for public access to an east-west traverse of Vancouver Island. The huge range of terrain and natural systems that can be seen on this traverse make it a wonderful experience. It should be recognized, protected, and maintained. 2. The old road up the lower reaches of the Bedwell valley is a public road, build with public funds. (This was researched in the Ursus Creek planning process.) In the past, the political will to challenge the resort operator on this was lacking. Government should take this up, and declare a public route up the lower Bedwell. 3. The old bridge over a major canyon of the Bedwell, within the Park, is unsafe. It consists of two huge logs overgrown with hemlocks. An assessment by an engineer indicated that it could fail catastrophically at any time. I know that BC Parks is aware of this, but don't know if the bridge has been taken out. If not, it should be removed as soon as possible. <p>I hope these comments are useful in your considerations. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.</p> <p>Although I live at a distance from Strathcona Park, I continue to feel considerable "ownership" of the Park and its problems, and would appreciate being kept in the loop.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
W6	<p>After I wrote by e-mail to Friends of Strathcona Park with my views on whether horses should be allowed in the Park, they suggested in their reply that I should contact you to express my views on this matter.</p> <p>I am now too old (at 92) to go backpacking myself, but I used to know Strathcona Park quite well, and collaborated with Syd Watts in writing the first edition of "Hiking trails 3", and helped a bit with the drafting of the Master Plan for the Park, which should not now be watered down to accommodate commercial development. As you doubtless know, the trails and hiking routes in the Bedwell Valley, and other areas in the Park, are subject to heavy rain, snow, and windfalls, and this does, in my opinion make them unsuitable for horses. I no longer go to Meetings, so shall not be at any of the meetings discussing this issue, but I hope the planners will consider the views here expressed and not allow the master plan for the</p>

	<p>Park to be modified to allow horses in the park or further commercial development.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p>
W7	<p>To Whom it May Concern:</p> <p>I am very concerned with plans to open the Bedwell Valley to horse traffic. It seems evident that the Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee has looked carefully at the evidence and has recommended: 1) a Park Use Permit can not be issued to the Clayoquot Wilderness Resort based on the Park Master Plan and, 2) against having public meetings to amend the Park Master Plan to clarify the horse issue. Despite these recommendations, by a very well informed Committee, BC Parks has chosen to issue RFP's contradicting the guidance provided by the Committee.</p> <p>It seems very clear based on information collected over the last few years that the Bedwell Valley is not an appropriate place for horses. The environmental destruction that they can cause is considerable as can be seen in other areas where they have been allowed - notably, Forbidden Plateau.</p> <p>It is not appropriate for a Wilderness Recreation area to become a stomping ground for a private concern that already has horse access in other areas. Nor, is not acceptable to lease out a part of the park for 20 years. The Ministry should reconsider their efforts to commercialize the parks and take responsibility for ensuring that they are utilized and maintained properly by trained Parks staff.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
W7	<p>I have become aware of a proposed amendment to the Strathcona Park Master Plan to issue a Parks Use Permit (PUP) to Clayoquot Wilderness Resort (CWR) to allow it to guide its clients on horseback up the Bedwell River Valley and into Strathcona Park as far as You Creek, to construct facilities at You Creek to accommodate its clients and horses and to repair and maintain the trail to horse use standards.</p> <p>I have reviewed this corridor in the Strathcona Park and do not believe that this would be in the best interest of the maintenance of the integrity of the wilderness presently protected by the boundaries and master plan. Too often private interests override the well-considered plans to preserve our limited wilderness for future generations. Della Falls is the highest waterfall in Canada, presently accessible by hiking trails that serve the mission of the Strathcona Park Master Plan. With constructed facilities at You Creek, the pristine beauty of these wilderness areas will be degraded. Horses have a high impact on any trail system and the construction of horse camps to accommodate private clients in a Provincial Park should be discouraged and, in fact, not permitted. I have been informed that this is also the opinion of the Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee (SPPAC)</p> <p>I will try to attend the Open House on Wednesday, May 28th, but unfortunately I have a previous engagement from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., so cannot attend the public meeting. I would like to have my opinion on this proposed amendment known, so I am sending you this email message for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
W8	<p>The situation, as I understand it, is as follows:</p> <p>The Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee (SPPAC) has recommended to BC Parks that a PUP should not be issued to CWR because its proposal is not congruent with the Master Plan, & that BC Parks should not attempt to amend a portion of the Master Plan in response to a single application. However, BC Parks has chosen to disregard the SPPAC recommendation, in the face of enormous public opposition.</p> <p>As a long-time user (hiker) of Strathcona Park, I wish to register, in the strongest possible</p>

	<p>terms, my opposition to the changing of the Master Plan, to permit the use of the park by commercial interests of any kind. Not only is such use contrary to the whole idea of real wilderness, but it also establishes a precedent for other unsuitable usage. Horses are not innocuous creatures---- their manure contains seeds of non-indigenous plants which may cause irreparable harm to the ecology of the Park. Also, horses' hooves swiftly reduce terrain to a churned -up mess, as can be seen on other trails in the Comox Valley. The presence of accommodation for the users of the equestrian facilities is contrary to the whole idea of a simple, natural environment which is sought by existing park users who are happy to camp out in portable tents.</p> <p>For all the above reasons, and the fact that our wilderness parks were established to enable ordinary people to enjoy our unique BC wilderness by their own efforts, and to retain it in the most natural state possible, I would ask you to reject the application of CWR or any other private business seeking to exploit Strathcona Park for their own ends.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p>
<p>W9</p>	<p>Why are we spending so much time and effort on the matter of horse suitability on the Coast? The evidence of past horse use is clear and we should learn from history.</p> <p>Neither horses or the Coast climate and terrain have changed that much in 100 years that we should assume a different outcome today.</p> <p>Example 1.</p> <p>The trail from Bamfield to Keeha Bay is an old coastal packhorse route. It was in use between the two World Wars. It is the muddiest, potholed and generally messed up piece of trail that I have encountered on the Coast. The damage was done by packhorses and the ground has never recovered. A quick visit and hike on the trail would explain the situation better than thousands of words.</p> <p>Example 2.</p> <p>The Mt. Beecher Trail is an excellent example of horse use in the more Alpine Areas of the Coast. The ground was destroyed in the earlier part of the last century. Erosion and uncovering of bedrock cannot be repaired and natural re-growth does not happen after this severe damage.</p> <p>The damage caused by horses is different in each example but the results disastrous in both cases.</p> <p>Let's use the lessons of history and a little common sense in protecting the Coast terrain and Strathcona Park from any more unnecessary damage.</p> <p>Horses are fine in the right conditions but let us stop trying to push the envelope into areas that have proved disastrous in the past.</p>
<p>W10</p>	<p>We need to all support ecologically friendly businesses that encourage enhancement of the natural world instead of destroying it. The Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, adjacent to Strathcona Park, is a positive contribution to not only Clayoquot Sound but to Strathcona Park as a whole. While logging, mining, fish farming and massive sewage to name a few of the problems in this UNESCO Biosphere Reserve are destroying this area, the Friends of Clayoquot seem to have their priorities on backwards in opposing the use of non-motorized, temporary use of previously graveled old logging and mining roads. People need to make a living in conjunction with the natural world rather than extraction of natural resources which adversely affect everything for eons. We will be there and do what we can. Although the FOSP and FOCS challenge me because my daughter works there, I know what goes on there and am familiar with it, having been in the Bedwell and Ursus Rivers for over 40 years, long before the Wilderness Resort was conceived. I have watched the Wilderness Resort, to</p>

	<p>my surprise and delight, create something so beautiful and remarkable and with enhancing the wildlife, salmon, etc. makes the Bedwell River valley truly a hope for the future of us all. Their efforts to create (at their own expense and time) salmon spawning channels, flyways for raptors to be reintroduced to the wild, etc. and to teach people who have influence over many decisions around this planet about how valuable something so powerfully beautiful can be is incredibly important. We know that the only reason that logging and mining, etc. aren't taking place in the Bedwell and Ursus is due to the presence of the Wilderness Resort at this time. If they are gone, one of the last places where human and wilderness experience is so special, we are lost. We all need to make a living and hopefully it is doing something good rather than destroying more of this precious planet. Right now the logging (high grading of old growth cedar for the most part) is taking place in the Bulson River adjacent to the Ursus and in the logging plans for this area (Clayoquot), the Ursus is included as part of the Bulson watershed, not the Bedwell, something underhanded in order to get in and take out the old growth forests of the Ursus River. About one or two giant barge loads of ancient forest are leaving this area of Clayoquot Sound every month, something to be really concerned about but neither of these groups mentions this or speaks out against it. For All Our Relations,</p>
<p>W11</p>	<p>Re: horse use in Strathcona Park</p> <p>I am opposed to private commercial horse use in Strathcona Park. As a volunteer in my community I spend a lot of time trying to protect sensitive habitat and the Bedwell Valley is extremely sensitive. Allowing horse use will have negative impacts on fish in the river, introduce invasive non-native plant species, and cause wash outs and trail degradation.</p> <p>Furthermore, I strongly object to the terms of reference being used in the consultation process, which favor the proponent Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge (CWR) by asking the public not whether we support horse use in the Bedwell Valley but under what conditions we would support horse use in the Bedwell Valley. This is not the way to conduct an open and neutral consultation process.</p> <p>The Bedwell Valley is zoned Wilderness Recreation. The Master Plan for Strathcona Park prohibits horse use in the Bedwell, the Megin Valley, Price Creek Valley, Della Creek Valley, Elk River Valley, Flower Ridge Trail, and Marble Meadows Trail. To allow an amendment of the Master Plan permitting horse use in the Bedwell could open the possibility of applications to use horses in these other Wilderness Recreation areas. I am not in favor of amending the Master Plan for this reason.</p> <p>I attended an open house on this issue in the Comox Valley last year to express these views and I am once again demanding to be heard on this issue. Don't let private enterprise tear the heart out of a precious public resource. Protect and preserve our parks by rejecting the CWR proposal.</p> <p>Sincerely</p>
<p>W12</p>	<p>I would like to add my voice to those who oppose the use of horses and expansion of private uses like this in our wild park areas. I have always subscribed to the idea summarized by the quote: "I love the mountains, that's why I never go there." To truly love and preserve wilderness, we should leave it alone. Some access is needed to bring the story back to those who, like me aren't up to out there backcountry trekking, but we don't have to intrude to enjoy. Bringing widened trails and people and horses into an area that is the home of cougars, black bears and other species is a recipe for trouble.</p> <p>Please add my name to those opposing such changes. If Gordon Campbell's government wants to be the environmental leader they say they are, then wilderness is a part of the picture, not just carbon emissions.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>

W13	<p>I am writing in regards to the issue of horses in Strathcona Park and specifically at this time on the Bedwell river trail. I don't think that there are any appropriate areas in the park for horse use. I think that the impact is too high on the trails and would only get worse as time went on. Having hiked in the Lake Louise area and been confronted by a line of horses whose riders are not competent, and being pushed off the trail by a horse and dealing with horse poo everywhere, I just don't want to see that kind of thing in our park here on the island. I will not be able to make one of the public meetings so this is my vote on the subject - no horses please!</p>
W14	<p>To whom it may concern:</p> <p>We are writing to demand that BC Parks follow the recommendations of the Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee, whose members are appointed by BC Parks, to not permit horses into the Bedwell Valley. We understand that the applicant, Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge, has lots of private land along the margin of the Park and that they already have access to the Ursus Valley. The applicant can take hikers into Strathcona Park. We support this usage, but not horses. Don't mess with the Master Plan. We will not tolerate any changes in the Plan to facilitate private enterprise access to the Bedwell Valley with horses.</p> <p>Yours truly,</p>
W15	<p>Please record the fact that I am strongly opposed to altering the current Master Plan for Strathcona Park to allow horses in the park. It is for sound reasons that the master plan currently does not permit horse use in the park as the environmental implications of horses in a fragile wilderness area are considerable.</p> <p>Please also uphold the recommendations of the Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee. Wise decisions now, based on knowledgeable input, will mean that this wilderness treasure will continue to exist intact for generations to come.</p> <p>Strathcona Park belongs to the people of BC. Heed our input and do not erode our legacy.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
W16	<p>to whom it may concern,</p> <p>I have been made aware of the efforts to bring the business of trail riding into the park. Business has no place in a park. Parks are for man and animals to be undisturbed in nature.</p> <p>Horse traffic demolishes a trail if there is any water / dampness present. Last summer I had the pleasure of hiking at Lake Louise. There was a few sections where trail riding was allowed. Where the trail was damp, the ground was un-walkable for a hiker. The horses hooves sank deeply into the mud. Luckily there was an alternate route for people at that section. The trail tends to get wider and wider as both horse and hiker tries to find firm footing.</p> <p>There is land outside of parks for riding. There is no place in a park for commercial endeavors.</p> <p>AND, I am a horse lover.</p> <p>sincerely,</p>
W17	<p>I have hiked the park. At age 60 my dream of wilderness riding is unlikely but I cannot think of a more spectacular venue or challenging experience. Put me in the pro horse column. I have community commitments that prevent me from attending the scheduled meetings. Horse activity in the park is not excessive. I doubt the impact could be negative on the ecology of the park. Please feel free to forward my support to the applicable governing bodies along with my gratitude for their stewardship to date.</p>
W18	<p>Dear Sir or Madam;</p>

	<p>I am writing to express my concern for the amending of the Strathcona Park Master Plan. My biggest concern is that this could open the door to other private, commercial uses of Strathcona and other parks. In this specific case I am also concerned about the environmental impact on such a wet area by regular horse use.</p> <p>Please let me know how this application proceeds.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and allowing for my public input.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>W19</p>	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>At this point on the planet which is in serious collapse, we need to all support ecologically friendly businesses that encourage enhancement of the natural world instead of destroying it. The Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, adjacent to Strathcona Park, is a positive contribution to not only Clayoquot Sound but to Strathcona Park as a whole. While logging, mining, fish farming and massive sewage to name a few of the problems in this UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, are destroying this area, the Friends of Clayoquot and the Friends of Strathcona Park seem to have their priorities askew in opposing the use of non-motorized, temporary use of previously graveled old logging and mining roads. People need to make a living in conjunction with the natural world rather than extraction of natural resources which adversely affect everything for eons. I know what goes on in the Strathcona Park areas of Clayoquot Sound, having lived here for over 40 years and spending time every year in both the Bedwell, Ursus and Moyeha Rivers.</p> <p>I have recently completed a 60 year review of the salmon counts from 1947 to 2007 in all the major watersheds of Clayoquot Sound, for the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve Marine Committee, which includes all salmon species as well as Atlantic salmon which are found quite regularly in the Bedwell and Ursus River, which clearly shows the serious decline of most wild salmon species in this area.</p> <p>I am familiar with these areas and have regularly traveled and camped in these rivers long before the Clayoquot Wilderness Resort was conceived, when Sammy Craig was first logging and mining in the valley and when Walter Guppy's mining cabin was still near the confluence of the Bedwell and Ursus Rivers.</p> <p>I have watched the Wilderness Resort, to my surprise and delight, create something that is beautiful and remarkable, enhancing the wildlife, salmon, etc., making the Bedwell River valley truly a hope and example for the future of us all. Their efforts to create (at their own expense and time) salmon spawning channels, flyways for raptors to be reintroduced to the wild, etc. and to teach people who have influence over many decisions around this planet about the value of wilderness is something that is incredibly important. These people are offering financing to enhance wildlife and wild salmon, something greatly needed at present.</p> <p>We know that the only reason that logging and mining, etc. aren't taking place in the Bedwell and Ursus is due to the presence of the Wilderness Resort at this time. If they are gone, one of the last places where humans can experience wilderness at its best, is so special, we will all lose. We all need to make a living and hopefully it is doing something good rather than destroying more of this precious planet. Right now, logging (high grading of old growth cedar for the most part) is taking place throughout Clayoquot Sound and especially in the Bulson River adjacent to the Ursus River. In the logging plans for Clayoquot Sound, the Ursus is included as part of the Bulson watershed, not the Bedwell, something underhanded in order to get in and take out the old growth forests of the Ursus River. About one or two giant barge loads of ancient forest are leaving this area of Clayoquot Sound every month, something to be really concerned about but neither of these groups mentions this or speaks out against it.</p> <p>While islands of integrity like the Bedwell, Ursus and Moyeha watersheds still stand, these</p>

areas are increasingly hemmed in by logging, mining, fish farming and pollution. Where are these environmental groups when this irreplaceable resource like old growth forests and wild salmon are being destroyed? Mining trucks and giant fans to provide oxygen to workers deep underground at Westmin Mine continue to rumble through the park, polluting the waters, soil and natural integrity of the park. Logging of thousands of year old forests is taking place nearby, 6 or more fish farms pollute the Bedwell Inlet and are negatively affecting wild salmon and other native fish and seafood in the area.

If people want to talk of "foreign" species in the Park, like horses, what of dogs which accompany many hikers? No one is rabidly saying no to these, yet, as First Nations from Ahousaht pointed out at the Strathcona Park Open House in Tofino in May, even non-native people are "foreigners" to these areas where hundreds of their ancestors are buried and once lived.

A park like Strathcona Park is enhanced by good neighbors like Strathcona Park Lodge, Mount Washington and The Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, all of which help financial and ecological monitoring, enhancement and protection of the natural resources and beauty of what remains of this first and oldest British Columbia Provincial Park. We need to appreciate the good options for the use of our parks and get together to put an end to the resource extraction and permanent destruction of all that remains....For All Our Relations,

Criteria for Horse Use in Strathcona Park:

1. Consider horse use and bicycle use on abandoned gravel logging and mining roads within the park.

-this helps to monitor poaching and destructive human use that would otherwise be difficult to keep an eye on

-this provides an option for people who are unable to hike long distances or experience the wilderness in ways that people who are young and able can and there are many people like this.

-there are so many areas away from gravel roads that this shouldn't be an impediment for those seeking sanctuary from others.

2. Horse use won't be a deterrent regarding feed or excrement any more than people already impact areas and this can be a positive contribution to the environment in the same way human waste can be applied to fertilize the forests and land if only people know how to dispose properly of their human waste.

-composting of horse manure is good for mushrooms, soil, etc. and can be maintained outside of the watersheds if on gravel trails.

-there are elk in the park which create trails with their hooves which are larger than horses hooves and if properly done, are not a detriment to the land.

3. Ahousaht first Nation have stated that they will monitor the use of horses in the park and where it is unacceptable, they have banned them such as on the flats at Cypre River. They have made it a requirement that any use of their territory, even Provincial Parks, must have their permission and they must be consulted. This is an obligation by all, including groups who are proponents of being "Friends of ..."

The Hereditary Chiefs who were present at the Open House meeting thanked the Clayoquot Wilderness Resort for consulting with them and for helping them find jobs and creating employment and providing accommodation and other amenities for spiritual retreats, etc. for the band.

4. Other trail users can share resources and there is a benefit to this as we have

	<p>experienced when having an accident within the area and the horse trail was a benefit. Humans helping humans is an important aspect of the use of natural areas, and having access to areas where help can be found is a good prospect.</p> <p>5. Use of horses and campsites is an opportunity that can be temporary and monitored for adverse impacts, it is non-threatening in the long term and can be reversed if found to be harmful.</p> <p>6. People need to always be careful of garbage and foodstuff that would attract wildlife as wildlife and human encounters are a natural experience not to be avoided but to be shared respectfully. Human and horse manure can be effectively composted into a benefit but food waste must be cautiously dealt with.</p> <p>7. Non-motorized use of our wilderness areas is a bonus just as motor boats can be replaced by canoes and kayaks that do not threaten the peace of others on our waterways and lakes, so likewise horses and bicycles need to be considered in areas where relatively low impact is beneficial for access to areas. Dogs and people can be a problem as well as any other non-native species and in all of these areas, we must be respectful of everything that is affected.</p> <p>These are my perspectives and I thank you for this opportunity to contribute these....For All Our Relations,</p>
W20	<p>I am writing because I was unable to attend the public meeting in Courtenay, B.C., May 28, 2008, regarding possible amendments to the Strathcona Park Master Plan to allow horse access to the Bedwell Valley.</p> <p>I am a local resident who has hiked in Strathcona Park for almost thirty years and highly value the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of time spent in this wilderness environment. Truly priceless.</p> <p>I have several concerns about extending horse access to the park beyond the two areas already designated for horses, in particular allowing horse traffic in the Bedwell Valley.</p> <p>There will undoubtedly be habitat loss/displacement and environmental destruction. The construction of horse trails and campsites will result in removal of trees and underbrush, and soil disturbance at the very least. Animal habitat will be destroyed and their movement patterns disrupted. This does not fit Strathcona Park's mission of conserving biodiversity and protecting ecosystems.</p> <p>There will be further impacts on the land as well as on animals and people. I have experienced these impacts first hand in other areas that I explore and horses use. The enjoyment of hiking is greatly reduced when shared with horses. In addition to the offensive stench of feces and urine, especially in the heat, trails become pitted and water collects. Horses chew up trails, especially in wet conditions, leaving areas susceptible to erosion and pollution. Run off, fouled with waste products of horses, eventually finds its way into local waterways. In the case of the current horse proposal for Strathcona Park, these waterways will be the local creeks and streams of the Bedwell Valley, a drinking source for animals and people. This degradation cannot be allowed in Strathcona Park where protection of the ecosystem has to be first priority.</p> <p>One of the cornerstones of Strathcona Park's Mission Statement is preservation of ecological integrity. To introduce horses with their feces, urine, food, and associated microorganisms will undoubtedly have effects on the many large mammals and smaller wildlife that survive and hopefully thrive in this wilderness area. It is of the utmost importance to protect their pristine ecosystem in its natural state. The biodiversity of Vancouver Island wildlife preserved and protected in Strathcona Park simply cannot be guaranteed with the intrusion of such a large non-traditional species as the horse.</p>

	<p>Finally I think philosophically it is wrong to allow a private for profit organization into our B.C. Parks. The parks are public and should remain so. Privatization does not fit within the boundaries of our B.C. Parks, no matter how financially attractive it might seem. Keep Strathcona Park, the first provincial park in British Columbia, with an international profile as a part of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, free from any private encroachment.</p> <p>In closing, I encourage you to hold firm to the current Master Plan for the park and not allow horse traffic into the Bedwell Valley or any other parts of Strathcona Park beyond the two areas already so designated.</p> <p>Maintain the integrity and preserve the ecology of Strathcona Park for present and future generations.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
W21	<p>This is to let you know that I am opposed to the use of horses and to privatization in Strathcona Park. The area of the park in question is WILDERNESS. The use of horses is NOT PERMITTED. Privatization of public resources sets a dangerous precedent.</p> <p>This park belongs to us as citizens. It is not there for profit-making schemes that will do irreparable harm to the wilderness environment.</p> <p>Yours,</p>
W22	<p>To Whom it May Concern:</p> <p>Please let it be known that I am a person and long time hiker that cannot accept horses/guides in Strathcona Park.</p> <p>I am opposed to the whole idea.</p> <p>First, I hike to escape our towns and cities. I do not want to see guides and tourists. I do not want to step on horse manure, and most of all, I do not want to sprain my ankle and more due to a horse print deep in the trail.</p> <p>Then there is the wild life...</p> <p>Why not keep horses and guides in Alberta?</p> <p>Thank you for my input.</p> <p>Sincerely and sternly,</p>
W23	<p>I strongly endorse the position of the Friends of Strathcona Park regarding Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge's proposal to have horses in the Bedwell Valley. Aside from the real environmental concerns that would result from such use; the concept of commercial exploitation of our provincial parks system is alarming.</p>
W24	<p>Hi all,</p> <p>Referring to what one email stated regarding keeping Strathcona Park 'wild', I ask for whom? All of us hikers are allowed and if one states we want the park to remain 'wild' then no human traffic should be allowed at all. A far more comprehensive and well thought out strategy is needed here in my opinion.</p> <p>So much of our parkland is so 'wild' few people can actually get out into to experience it because it's so remote. What has resulted is little to no real political pressure to save more land from development and logging devastation. If the public can't access the wild outdoors no politician is going to listen to a couple of hikers who will be perceived as being in small numbers and only special interests as hikers.</p> <p>Not allowing horses ?? Quiet, eco friendly, getting more people to discover all parks does all of us good in the end to raise awareness of the entire issue of protecting more land.</p>

	<p>The damage we hikers foot traffic paths do is very little less than what a horse trail looks like. I've read the listed reasons but these do not make a strong argument at all in my opinion. Yes, I agree that commercial business should stay out and if that is the reason then just state that as the strongest opposition, don't get muddled down with the rest of it.</p> <p>Hope to make it down to the June 4 - Victoria - Burnside Gorge Community Center - 471 Cecilia Rd., around 7.</p>
W25	<p>I had planned to attend today's meeting at the Burnside-Gorge Community Centre, but other commitments have made that doubtful. Accordingly I decided to voice my comments by email:</p> <p>I worked for the Parks Branch from 1949 to 1976 and finished my Public Service with the Heritage Conservation Branch from 1976 until retirement in April 1984. Prior to that, my family lived in the Campbell River area from 1937 until 1994 and I had worked with the Forest Service and Logging companies in the Strathcona-Salmon River area for many years, developing a strong attachment and appreciation for the natural resources of Strathcona Park. I visited Buttle Lake first in 1938 when one was able to see rocks on the lake bottom at astounding depths of 40 to 50 feet! No more. Some of the magic has diminished. Since then my wife and I have spent much time hiking and camping throughout a large part of the Park. It became part of our psyche. Indeed, in 1984 my wife was arrested during an environmental protest at the drill-site for the proposed Cream Lake Silver property, when she lay prostrate under the drilling rig.</p> <p>During my long career with Parks I learned that some Parks lend themselves to certain specific uses, others do not. Horses on foot-hiking trails are inimical to acceptable use. I am convinced that horses do not belong on the Bedwell Creek Valley hiking trails. In fact I would recommend that horse-riding concessions not be permitted in any part of Strathcona Park, so I would not be in favour of a review of the Strathcona Park Master Plan seeking an amendment to enable horses in the Park.</p> <p>If CWR is determined to pursue its objective of expanding its horse operations elsewhere it can surely turn its attention to numerous other Crown and Private land along the west coast north of Tofino. Keep horses out of Strathcona, please!</p>
W26	<p>Re: Amendment of the Master Park Plan for Strathcona Park</p> <p>I am writing to oppose amending the Master Park Plan to allow commercial use of horses in Strathcona Park. In my experience the use of trails by humans on foot and by horses on hooves is incompatible. In our wet climate, the horses dig up trails and create mud holes that make hiking by foot unpleasant and dangerous.</p> <p>I believe that allowing commercial horse riding groups through Bedwell and other valleys would also eventually result in demands for the building of more infrastructure (accommodation, restaurants, etc.) which would be inappropriate in a wilderness park.</p> <p>I wish the Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge success in their other efforts to help tourists enjoy the wilderness, but I do not think that commercial horse use within the park is an acceptable activity.</p> <p>Please listen to Strathcona Public Advisory Committee and the Friends of Strathcona Park, who together have deep knowledge about the park and have contributed so much labour toward its maintenance for the public good.</p> <p>Thank you very much for protecting what will become an ever more valuable nature preserve in the heart of Vancouver Island.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>

W27	<p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>I write to register my opposition to the government's current initiative to examine the conditions under which horses should be allowed in Strathcona Park, notably along the Bedwell Trail.</p> <p>There are many places where horse access is appropriate. Strathcona Park's Bedwell area is not one. Nor, I believe, is it in the Park's Master Plan.</p> <p>No to horses in Strathcona.</p>
W28	<p>I agree with the 'no trace' horse theory. At least push the droppings to the side as it may not fit in a doggy bag.</p>
W29	<p>You asked for a copy of my verbal presentation, these are the notes I spoke from and points I made at the meeting in Victoria.</p> <p>Strathcona Provincial Park Master Plan Review Public Consultation on Horse Use.</p> <p>I oppose any horse use in Strathcona Provincial Park. There are no criteria that would make it suitable for horse trails/use.</p> <p>The following is a copy of my oral presentation at Victoria 3rd June 08.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Strathcona Park is considered a low use park – the reason it comprises a very large conservancy area. 2 The “Wilderness Recreation Zone” does not cover business opportunities of regular trips with large groups of people with horses and wranglers, associated overnight corrals and infrastructures, etc. It is to “Protect remote and undisturbed natural landscape, provide backcountry recreation” and “ very low use to provide solitary experience”. Commercial horse use is Intensive Recreation, and not appropriate in Strathcona Park. 3 When access for horses is purely for business use, (where the public would unlikely ever take horses), because of the sea only access, crossing private property, and all for a relatively short trail for a huge expense. Exclusive use like this does not belong in any of BC parks including Strathcona Park. 4 The trail through the Bedwell has in the past been kept open by hikers and can be again. Friends of Strathcona Park recently asked for a permit to open up this trail and were denied. 5 Parks does not have a budget for monitoring the present regular activities in the park now, horse use would require frequent labour intensive monitoring. How would horse use in the far corners of the park be controlled? (Parks is not able to control illegal Snowmobile use inside the park which is an example of this). 6 More than 25% of the road bed of the original mining trail has been washed away and more will be as evidenced by all the major damage on the north island by two 200 yr storm events – possibly part of Global Climate Change. 7 Hikers don't require large bridges, engineered for horses. Horses do cause erosion as witnessed in many places. (Hikers do also but much less) 8 I have hiked in areas where horses are permitted such as Spruce Lakes Provincial Park in the Chilcotin. (Also Grand Tetons Park, Monkman Park, and more northern parks of BC). There, even with the three day restriction of using sterile horse feed before going into the park, invasive species have been introduced, just another reason to not have horses in an area where invasive plants can be spread very easily. 9 I am embarrassed now that I was part of the process in the development of the

	<p>Strathcona Park Master Plan to have horses use the Oshinow Toy lake area of the park. My reasoning at the time was it was ugly (having just been logged). If I were to make that decision today I would not be recommending horse use there or anywhere else in Strathcona Park as it has now healed over and is returning to a natural state, so this is not what I feel is a good activity in this area of the province.</p> <p>10 On land owned in the Bedwell area by a commercial company that has its own horse trails, I have been told they are totally “unwalkable” and “unusable” because of bog. “Vegetation is non existent for 1 1/2 metres across”</p> <p>11 Pressure on our parks will continue to increase as outside areas are impacted by man. We must protect our parks from use when there are better, and less impacting areas that could be used eg: Crown lands.</p> <p>12 Parks cannot be all things to everybody.</p> <p>13 Businesses can and do have Park Use Permits to take hikers into the park. We have a wheelchair trails at Paradise Meadows as an example that represents a very real opportunity for everyone to visit and use Strathcona Park.</p>
<p>W30</p>	<p>June 6, 2008.</p> <p>Dear Premier Campbell:</p> <p>Subject: Strathcona Park Master Plan: Public Process and Corporate Interests</p> <p>On May 28th I attended a public meeting in Courtenay, held by BC Parks to solicit input on criteria for horse-use in Strathcona Park. Some people spoke with passion about their long love for the oldest park in BC and some spoke with notes that showed an enormous effort in research that would help protect Strathcona Park. The vast majority spoke against allowing commercial horse use in the park but I and many others did not speak. I needed time to listen to people who knew the subject well and to then go home and ruminate on what I had heard. I needed the opportunity to go back to another meeting to enter into dialogue and help formulate a community consensus. That opportunity for meaningful public input into decisions was denied me by your government.</p> <p>And that Mr. Campell is my first concern. I am concerned, that under your government there has been a severe decline in opportunities for meaningful public participation and input into decisions that affect our lives. Your government seems committed to operating in secrecy as much as possible and to limiting public discussion to the bare minimum.</p> <p>The meeting in Courtenay was well attended despite the fact that BC Parks did an abysmal job of providing advance notice. I do not blame field staff for this problem rather I blame the systematic under-funding and under-staffing of BC Parks and other government agencies that is becoming a hall mark of your government. The meeting would have gone virtually unnoticed if it had not been for the dedication of the Friends of Strathcona Park who have supplanted BC Parks as the true stewards of Strathcona Park.</p> <p>The Strathcona Park Master Plan was developed over a course of years with extensive public dialogue and the establishment of a Public Advisory Committee. Your government has seen fit to ignore the recommendations of your own Advisory Committee and to hold just three meetings in three different communities to hear suggestions for criteria for horse use. This process is unacceptable. In a democracy, there must be time for citizens to deliberate and discuss issues. They need to express ideas and then go home, absorb the discussion, and return for more debate. In the process citizens and agency staff learn from one another and a consensus emerges.</p> <p>I am concerned that your government is deliberately reducing opportunities for citizen input to decisions that affect their communities. I am left wondering how long it will be before you</p>

pass a Parks equivalent of Bill 30 which has eliminated the ability of local governments to protect public values by reviewing electricity generation projects. While not as draconian as Bill 30, the Parks meetings were a far cry from true democracy. The Parks process used is simply not an acceptable way to amend a Master Plan.

I suggest that your government adopt and be guided by the principles established by the International Association for Public Participation. Their list of core values for the practice of public participation are:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Source: <http://www.iap2.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=4>

I am also concerned that you and BC Parks have put the needs of corporations, in this case, Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, ahead of the needs and wishes of the public. I noticed recently that you wrote praise for James Speth's new book, "The Bridge at the Edge of the World – Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability". Mr. Speth is very clear in his criticisms of the status quo. His statement on page 225 is a good example:

"But the environmental agenda should expand to embrace a profound challenge to consumerism and commercialism and the lifestyles they offer, a healthy skepticism of growth mania and a sharp focus on what society should actually be striving to grow, a challenge to corporate dominance and a redefinition of the corporation and its goals..."

Your lengthy praise (the longest in the list) is quoted in the front of the book and your name is listed as "Honourable Gordon Campbell, premier, Province of British Columbia". But your actions, Mr. Campbell, do not match your words. Your actions as premier show that you are committed to following the corporate agenda of growth and you have never challenged corporate dominance but rather sit in elected office as "corporate servant" instead of "public servant".

At the Strathcona Park meeting in Courtenay, the general perception of the audience was that government was using as little public consultation as possible in order to grant quick permission to Clayoquot Wilderness Resort to use horses for commercial purposes. A review of the Resort's website shows that they serve a clientele that can afford \$1600 to \$1800 per day. This is exactly the consumerism and commercialism that Speth says must be challenged and yet your government is facilitating its growth.

You can't have it both ways Mr. Campbell, if you truly praise the revolutionary ideas of James Speth then your actions need to follow suit. A first step would be to adopt AND FOLLOW the core values of the International Association for Public Participation. I look

	<p>forward to your response.</p> <p>Yours truly,</p> <p>PS. In case you haven't gathered, I am opposed to the use of horses anywhere in Strathcona Park.</p>
W40	<p>Sir,</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the use of horses in Strathcona Park. There are two reasons why I would prefer not to see horses in the park:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strathcona Park is the only large park on Vancouver Island and the only one extensive enough to sustain populations of large animals. For this reason it should be considered a wilderness reserve and be kept as pristine as possible. The recreational aspect of the park should be secondary and limited to self-propelled/non-mechanical activities. If we allow access by horses, especially on a commercial basis, we open the door for future profit-motivated abuses not compatible with a nature reserve. [there are and were already enough non-conforming uses in the park] 2. I have noticed in several parks in Canada and the USA that horses damage the best built trails, especially during the wet season, they mess up creeks at fords, they displace wildlife and they leave behind mounds of manure along the trails and at camps which obviously emit bad smells and attract multitudes of insects for the hikers to fight off. For these reasons many US parks have built separate trails for horse riders and do not allow them on hikers trails. Do we want to build parallel trails in the Bedwell Valley? <p>I vote for leaving the park as pristine as possible.</p> <p>With best regards,</p>
W41	<p>I attended the meeting in Victoria re: Strathcona Provincial Park Master Plan Review Public Consultation on Horse Use.</p> <p>I am opposed to opening the plan to add horse use and to any horse use inside Strathcona Provincial Park.</p> <p>I am a long time park user, not only hiking, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing in Strathcona Park but in many Parks through out the Province and North America. I started hiking in the park in 1971 so I have been a part of the many public consultations, and lack of, in order to keep this park pristine and out of the hands of private industry. I have also hiked in many parts of the world, having just returned from 3 months in Patagonian parks so I think my input should count.</p> <p>These were my comments at the meeting plus I am adding more, I hope you are listening to what the public park users say: not the commercial enterprise who does not personally use the park. I do not mind them guiding very small hiking groups into Parks as long as they do not impact the wilderness values and have no other special treatment, treating other park users as second class citizens.</p> <p>Horse use does not fall into this category, I am opposed to any horse use in the park.</p> <p>Horses create damage, create terrible boggy deep trails full of horse urine and manure (yes, I have been up to my knees in it on wilderness trails elsewhere in BC – Monkman, Spruce Lakes PP, Kakwa, Grand Tetons, etc) they erode trails, they do carry in invasive species such as dandelions, thistles (how this happens we don't know but it is probably impossible to monitor the horse feed), they destroy the tranquility of the parks, dominate the trails (we have been yelled at to get off the trail) and at night (in Monkman and Kakwa Provincial Parks) each horse wears little bells to keep the wildlife away so very annoying, their urine and manure pollute streams and rivers, our source of drinking water and the dust in the</p>

	<p>campsites that blows around is full of dried horse manure (experienced in Monkman PP, Spruce Lakes, etc), which creates allergies..</p> <p>There are vast areas on Vancouver Island that people can and do use horses; why pick on Strathcona Park???</p> <p>The SPPAC turned the CWR Application down; they are the spokes people for the public. The Strathcona Park Plan was developed with months of input and deliberation over horse use – I had input and also horse riders in our area had input which, because they are also hikers in this park, they were opposed to horse use. They added that it was not practical anyway in this area because of the problem of access with horse trailers etc, so really you are looking at exclusive use if you allow this.</p> <p>The Friends of Strathcona Park are adamantly opposed and they know the park better than anyone. If you take their membership they have the most years of Strathcona Park experience.</p> <p>We do not have the right to steal from our children. These are the last areas of wilderness left and we should leave them this as a legacy, as a peaceful place to go and preserve, with little impact from man.</p> <p>There is not only wheelchair access into the heart of the park but the trails from Mt Washington are in great condition for people who have trouble walking and room for their companions. I have taken students with special needs on these trails.</p> <p>These hearings were very confusing, first we had no notice of them and as most of us have to travel a distance we need some warning, so we can also inform other interested parties. The one in Victoria was very difficult to find and out of town. Then the object of these meetings was not clear, first the letter and website that clearly mentioned the Bedwell Valley and then the moderator who, with a long introduction told us it was nothing to do with the Bedwell Valley and that it wasn't a referendum (I agree but also public input is important to judge what the public wants) and then he proceeded to put Criteria on his board.</p> <p>When speakers spoke about not wanting horse use and why not then he would put Criteria that ought to be looked at so horses can be brought in – not what the speaker intended and his translation of that as well. The first speaker had talked to a Parks' staff member at this Open House who had given him positive reasons why horses should use the Bedwell Valley (such as it was just an old road) in spite of us being told this wasn't about the Bedwell, convincing him that there would be no harm (was this lobbying?)</p> <p>As to having to use the Park, the CWR has use of the Ursus Valley which is wilderness and other Crown Lands so they should keep to that.</p> <p>In conclusion, this is in violation of the intent of the Master Plan developed by the public, it is opening the door to other commercial operations to develop in the park and most importantly it is damaging the wilderness values of Strathcona Park as this area is healing from an industrial use and is a wildlife and natural zone. As a hiker I do not mind not using this part of the park if it is left as a prime wilderness area and if the trail is not repaired.</p> <p>No, to any horse use in Strathcona Park</p> <p>Cc Barry Penner, Minister of Parks</p> <p>Premier Campbell</p> <p>Friends of Strathcona Park</p>
W42	<p>HORSE USE IN STRATHCONA PARK</p> <p>The writers of the Park Master Plan, after considerable debate and research, excluded horses from the Park except for two trial areas. What has changed other than a resort on the</p>

	<p>west coast wanting permission to transport their guests through the park on horseback between their campsites?</p> <p>There are so many reasons why horse riding anywhere in the Park should never be allowed. Horses are very hard on the environment – trail degradation, nibbling on bushes, defecating on walking paths, introduction of seed from unwanted plants in fodder, confrontations with animals (bears) native to the Park; likely many more reasons excluded them in the first place.</p> <p>One of the motivations for creating the Park was to preserve a piece of Vancouver Island as untouched as possible as a legacy of what once was. To my knowledge, horses were never Park fauna and therefore their introduction would alter the natural state of the Park. Humans and their dogs do enough damage; why add to that?</p> <p>Over the years special interest groups have persuaded the powers in charge to allow activities at variance with the intent for the Park. We have a mine, several logged off areas, paved roads, hydro lines and dam-flooded lakes to name a few. Presently many other special interest groups want in. Owners of aircraft want permission to land on the lakes; bike and motorcycle riders have already left tracks as far in as McKenzie Meadows and snowmobile tracks crisscrossed every lake and most hillsides I visited in the Plateau this year. When will ATVs show up?</p> <p>If we keep setting precedents by yielding to pressure from special interest groups (such as permitting horse riding, and tacitly allowing illegal activities such as snowmobiling) the Park is at risk of becoming a playground for power-assisted visitors. This may, incidentally, endanger people on foot.</p> <p>Last February on a ski trip to Lake Beautiful, we had a potentially close call with three snowmobiles. Luckily we stopped on the north shore of Croteau Lake for lunch, needing a rest from breaking trail. Shortly after unpacking our sandwiches, three snowmobiles came swooping up the slope from Murray Meadows, continuing literally airborne through the narrow gap leading from the Meadows to Croteau Lake and landing in a flurry of snow on the lake’s frozen surface. Had we not needed a break, we would have been in or near that gap. Snowmobiles on the other side of a hill are not easily heard!</p> <p>Presently we have no rangers regularly patrolling the Park. Who is going to enforce regulations if horse riding is permitted? Will anyone police the other activities that are creeping into the Park?</p> <p>The answer to Horse Use in Strathcona Park must be an emphatic NO.</p>
<p>W43</p>	<p>Submission Regarding Amending the Strathcona Park Master Plan Courtenay, B.C., May 28, 2008</p> <p>The Friends of Strathcona Park are opposed to amending the Strathcona Park Master Plan to allow the expansion of horse use in the park. There are a number of reasons for this which we would like to explain.</p> <p>1. The Privatization Argument</p> <p>The Friends have been criticized for bringing up the privatization argument. The way it works is like this. It is impractical for anyone other than CWR to take horses to the mouth of the Bedwell River. John Caton last year told us it costs \$3,000 to barge horses from Tofino. Last fall it cost the Friends \$500 to rent a water taxi to make a round trip from Tofino to the Bedwell. The cost of transporting horses to the Bedwell Valley is prohibitive for the public. Not only that, but Mr. Caton has stated that while he will allow hikers to traverse the Resort’s private property to access the park, he will not allow horses across their land. So, by amending the Master Plan to allow horses in the Bedwell, BC Parks would confer an exclusive right to CWR to use the Bedwell for their own horses for the life of the park use</p>

permit which we understand could be as long as 20 – 30 years.

By building tent platforms and a horse corral at You Creek, 14 km into the Park at the edge of the Wilderness Conservation Zone, this permit will provide a private “outpost” and jumping off spot for guided tours further into Bedwell Lake, Cream Lake and other beauty spots. This would be an unofficial private right because CWR would have priority over the use of most of the tent platforms. We think future pressure will be brought to bear to make these horse trips, not hiking trips. This destination within the Park would become the exclusive preserve of CWR.

Another possibility we foresee is that of a desire to expand the facilities at You Creek sometime in the future. The wild “wet” coast is a rainy climate, and the exclusive clientele of CWR probably would like a roof over their heads in the rain. We expect a future application for more substantial accommodations, maybe even a cook shelter or dining facility. When we mentioned this to BC Parks’s staff some time ago, they admitted it was a possibility that would be entertained if CWR was meeting the conditions of its park use permit.

Locally, our Regional District looks for public benefit when permitting a subdivision or rezoning. Many other governing bodies, both Provincial and Local, use similar criteria. We suggest parks do likewise. In this case there is no benefit to the public from allowing this use, only a private benefit to CWR.

2. The Precedent Factor

We have been criticized for stating this represents the thin edge of the wedge, that it will encourage further applications of the same nature. We feel that this is a real danger. The zoning for the Bedwell Valley is Wilderness Recreation. Other trails in the park zoned the same are the Megin Valley, Della Creek Valley, Price Creek Valley, Elk River Valley, Flower Ridge Trail and Marble Meadows Trail. Parks have said they would not allow horses in the alpine areas, but that still leaves 4 valleys with the same zoning as the Bedwell, and virtually the same valley bottom conditions. The argument that the Bedwell has an old road is weak because much of it has eroded away. The river is unstable due to old logging, and is meandering back and forth eating away at its banks. In future more of the road will disappear and be replaced by trail. A trail can not stand up to horse use as well as a road bed.

Again, we have photographs of the horse damage in the area adjacent to the park which we have given to the people conducting the level 2 assessment.

3. An Alternative

As stated by Parks’ staff the attraction of allowing horses in the Bedwell Valley is that by allowing CWR’s proposal, they would see the liability of deteriorating bridges removed and the trail upgraded. However, the trail does not need upgrading to the capacity for horse use. Last fall the Federation of BC Mountain Clubs and the Friends of Strathcona Park offered to partner with CWR to work on upgrading the trail to hiking standards, i.e., for foot traffic, not horse traffic. This would have solved the problems of the bridges and trail, but CWR and BC Parks rejected our offer.

4. Not Necessary

CWR does not need horse access in order to run a successful business. They already have a network of trails outside the park they use including the pristine Ursus Valley which is far more beautiful than the Bedwell. Again, we have photos to show. They have been very successful over the last decade or so, operating outside the park. If they wanted to take hiking groups into the park, FOSP have no objection. This is already a permitted use, and others operate such guiding services now.

One argument put forth by CWR for allowing expanded horse use in the Park is that it would provide employment for the local first nations population. We support employing first nations

<p>people, but doing so is not connected to using horses. First nations people could be used on upgrading the trail to hiking standards, and as guides to hiking parties. This would be more in keeping with first nations traditions, than conducting horse trips.</p> <p>5. The Environmental Impact of Horses in the Park is Unacceptable.</p> <p>a) Introduction of Foreign Species</p> <p>The proposal from Clayoquot Wilderness Resort (CWR), which triggered this amendment process, states they will feed sterilized feed to the horses for several days before entering the park. Research done on the internet shows that sterilized feed needs to be used for two weeks prior to a trip. For example, "Studies have shown horses can retain weed seeds in their gut for up to 14 days and these can then germinate in manure in national parks." (from http://www.australianalps.deh.gov.au/publications/codes/horsecode.html) Thus the introduction of non native species of plants into the park is a distinct possibility. It is impractical to collect manure from the horses along a 14 km route, so removing it from the park is not a reasonable solution. Similarly, the same problem would be encountered anywhere else horses could be used in the park.</p> <p>Horse use resulting in manure in areas in other parks result in a very unpleasant experience for hikers. The smell, flies attracted by manure and overall negative aesthetics severely reduce the quality of the experience for park visitors. Manure, even without viable seeds in it, acts as a fertilizer changing the ecology of the area around its deposit.</p> <p>Wildlife Interaction</p> <p>The Strathcona Park and the Bedwell Valley is a wilderness area, home to bear, cougar and wolves. The potential for conflict between horses and these animals is real. The killing of a wolf a few years ago, although not the fault of CWR's management, is an example of the possibility of another unfortunate incident happening.</p> <p>According to CWR, bears and elk are grazing peacefully at the resort, surprising unexpected clients when they approach them. Is this what we want to see in the wilderness areas of our Park?</p> <p>c) Trail Damage Due to Horse Impact</p> <p>Much of the old road bed that used to extend up the valley bottom as far as You Creek has been washed away. The remainder is now covered in dirt and moss. The damaged areas will need to be replaced by a trail. Last fall on our trip up the Bedwell Valley and into the Ursus, we observed significant horse damage in areas where horses were riding off the old road. We have photographs of this damage which we have given to the firm doing the Level 2 Assessment of the valley. It is a well established fact that in areas where horses go, even on gravel roadbeds, their feet loosen the gravel and dirt resulting in the washing out of areas, creating potholes and mud channels. Many hikers have experienced these problems in parks where horses are allowed (for example Banff National Park).</p> <p>An ex national park staff member has told us that the National Park service is now working to remove horse use from their parks because of the impacts.</p> <p>Horses on trails results in major mudholes in some places and divots in others. Hikers must keep their eyes on the ground in front of them at all times in order to avoid stumbling over the horse damage.</p> <p>In any area where horses were not confined to a corral, there would be damage to vegetation when horses nibble on it. Along any trail horses travel there would also be impacts on vegetation where horses took a bite on their way by.</p> <p>d) Horses in the River</p> <p>The horses ridden by CWR outside the park often use the river bed and gravel bars as a</p>

	<p>route. We are concerned about impact on the fish in the Bedwell River, as well as the quality of drinking water with the added horse manure in the river.</p> <p>6. Conclusion</p> <p>By opposing this amendment, the Friends in no way are opposing CWR or the Wilderness Tourism Association. Both are doing good work in other areas, and we support their accomplishments. This is simply opposition to a bad idea. We think we have raised valid concerns here, and hope that BC Parks will agree with our position in this matter.</p> <p>In summary, the Friends of Strathcona Park oppose amending the Master Plan to allow horse use outside of the two areas where they are currently permitted. As a matter of fact, to the best of our knowledge, nobody uses the areas now where horse use is allowed, and a case can be made for cancelling horse access to the Donner and Kunlin Lake areas. This would simplify the issue by not allowing any horse use anywhere in Strathcona Park.</p>
<p>W44</p>	<p>June 12, 2008</p> <p>Honourable Barry Penner PO Box 9047 STN PROV GOVT Victoria BC V8W 9E2 mailto:env.minister@gov.bc.ca</p> <p>Re: Horse Use in Strathcona Park</p> <p>I am writing you today because I am very much concerned that the issue of horse use in Strathcona Park will be decided based on who has the loudest voice and the most emotion and not based on science, facts, environmental impact and recreational values of the park.</p> <p>If the independent environmental assessment indicates that horses can be used in parts of the park with no appreciable impact then horse use should be permitted in those areas.</p> <p>The Park Master Plan contemplates horse use in the park and, in fact, allows horse use in a very limited area. The Plan also contemplates recreational use of the park while maintaining environmental and other standards.</p> <p>Current park user groups who appear to have an agenda other than horse use have derailed the current public process around horse use and criteria in the park. Although the current process my have been initiated as a result of a Park Use Permit (PUP) application by Clayoquot Wilderness Resort (CWR) that is not what the process is about now. There are groups and individuals speaking out against this PUP by CWR because it is a “high end, exclusive commercial operation” that they will not allow in “their park”.</p> <p>It appears that these people have access to the park for their interests and do not want to allow other users the opportunity to experience what the park has to offer. If horse use is disallowed as a result of this process an injustice will have been committed.</p> <p>My wife and I are members of Back Country Horsemen of BC (BCHBC) and we both wrangle for the Great Cariboo Ride Association. I have also been trained as Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) trail guide instructor. This past week we spent 2 days in the Bedwell Valley investigating current horse use by CWR and their proposal for horse use on the trail to You Creek and what they plan to do to minimize the impact and enhance the recreational value of the trail if the PUP is approved.</p> <p>I have done some fairly in-depth research on the subject of horse use and the environment and</p>

	<p>have forward much of this information to Parks and the consultants working on the project. I have also expressed an interest and willingness to not only help with this decision process but also to help monitor future horse use in the park to ensure it is done in a sustainable way so future generations can also enjoy the park (and other public lands) on horseback.</p> <p>In summary I would like to emphasize the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The park is for everyone.2) Horse use should be allowed in areas if environmental study indicates.3) PUP's should be considered on their recreational and environmental merits not on who is applying or how much they earn.4) Opposition to a proposal should be measured on it's facts and science not on emotion and threats.5) Any use of the park should be monitored to ensure Park values are being maintained and action should be taken to maintain these values. <p>I would like to thank you for reading this submission and I look forward to a just and equitable conclusion to this process.</p> <p>Yours truly,</p> <p>Cc: Honourable Stan Hagen TSA.Minister@gov.bc.ca</p>