

## STRATHCONA PARK PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – Virtual meeting 7:00PM)

**SPPAC MEMBERS present:** (Chair) Hardolph Wasteneys, Jessie Moore, Ryan Wanner, Ryan Stuart, Catrin Brown

**REGRETS:** Phil Stone

**Guests:** Nicole Pesonen (Myra Falls Mine), Murray Helmer (public)

**Recorder:** Ryan Yardley (BC Parks)

*This meeting was rescheduled from October 22 due to interregnum and held as a virtual meeting as agreed to by members.*

### Agenda

1. Myra Falls Mine Annual update
2. Conservation and Recreation Division Realignment
3. Abbreviated Strathcona Area Update

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### *Annual Mine Update*

Nicole provided an update on the current state of Myra Fall Mine and a summary of environmental monitoring including incidents reported. Mine is still in care and maintenance with approximately 43 staff at the site. All water quality and environmental monitoring continue as per permit requirements and Nicole provided a summary of reported incidents of non-compliance. There was a general discussion, and questions asked about water quality monitoring sites. Nicole confirmed for members there are 2 monitoring locations downstream from the mine and three sites in the lake. Dam monitoring and maintenance continues through care and maintenance and 2025 dam safety plans to be reviewed.

#### *Conservation and Recreation Division Realignment*

Jessie provided an update that new cabinet and a new minister was announced last month. BC Parks is now in the Ministry of Environment and Parks. The Conservation and Recreation Division within the ministry is undertaking an organizational realignment to more closely integrate the BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC programs. Program mandates and service objectives for two programs are not changing. Some shifts in management personnel but reorganization is not expected to include substantial changes to operational staff. Closer integration of BC Parks and RST BC provides an opportunity to holistically manage a spectrum of recreational experiences of public lands.

## *Strathcona Update*

Jessie provided a powerpoint overview of the highlights and projects that operational staff completed this season.

Two Capital Projects are underway in the park this season.

- The Della Falls trailhead dock on Great Central Lake has been replaced and is operational. The old trailhead facilities have been removed and relocated with new facilities inside the park boundary. The number of tent pads has been reduced to 10 from 20 and 2 pits toilets to 1 large above ground mouldering toilet. The only outstanding work here is the removal of the old dock which will be completed in the spring when the water levels are higher.
- Buttle Lake Campground upgrade of pit toilets and service centers is well underway with anticipated completion at the end of February. This will be a welcome improvement at the Buttle Lake Campground. We are currently looking at phase 2 for this site which will likely be focused on road and site surfaces and right sizing sites

The Croteau Lake group site will open June 27th to September 30th this year. With hosts anticipated to be on site June 26 – September 30. A new 'kitchen pad' has been constructed by Park Rangers with the support of CDMC members. Applications for next season's hosting program will go live in the next few days.

## 2024/25 Projects

Elk River Trail – Camp 1 Toilet Replacement became a priority this season. It has been replaced with an above ground mouldering toilet.

Arnica Lake – Toilet has been replaced with a moldering style base and a z-best throne.

Crest Mountain Trail – No significant work or changes planned. Monitoring of the Long Term Ecological Monitoring plot (Forest Productivity) occurred in August and September.

Kings Peak Trail – Park Rangers cleared this trail to the meadows site in late July.

Marble Meadows – Windfall was cleared from the trail by BC Wildfire Service crew in late October. We are hoping there is not a lot of windfall from November storms. BCWS is interested to assist where and when they can in the spring.

Hwy 28 Corridor Bridge Work – upgrade of the Cervus Creek bridge (Lady Falls Parking lot/trailhead) is complete. Newly upgraded parking lot has been opened since early August. No further bridge work planned within the RoW in the park in the near future.

Elk River Trailhead – Chronic over capacity in parking area. BC Hydro re-established Elk Main under Act to access critical infrastructure. Provided opportunity to create overflow

parking area and get vehicles off the highway. This solution is much safer for hikers parking at the Elk River Trailhead. Sign package will be installed in the area to direct where to park so that capacity can be maximized.

Crest Crags – Volunteer Trail days planned for this coordinated by Bill Phipps and volunteers. BC Parks will supply materials and supplies and Park Ranger staff.

Asset Management System – BC Parks staff will be prioritizing condition assessments on high risk assets (e.g. Bridges, viewing platforms).

Ongoing administrative projects – Jessie provided context for ongoing administrative priorities for the area including managing the Croteau Host program, Authorizations backlog, hiring new staff to fill currently vacant positions, managing park operator agreements and managing trail counter data collection and monitoring outside of operating areas.

Partner/Volunteer Projects – Jessie provide update that Partners and volunteers continue to be active in the park. SWI – continue to source funding for operations. Climbers – Bill Phipps leading Trail Days (BC Parks Rangers support as much as we can). Friends of Strathcona Park undertook a recce and work on the lower Bedwell trail. There is an interest in exploring the options for crossings at K2 bridge on the trail. CDMC – projects for upcoming season are to be determined. 100 year anniversary in 2028.

General Discussion on attendance trends in the park. Members would like to see what data is available from counters and how trends are changing and emerging. Jessie will compile what is available for next meeting.

#### Next Meetings:

Continue with 2 meetings per year (first Tuesday in June & November). Plan for in person at Miracle Beach.

Spring: Tuesday, June 3

Fall: Tuesday, November 4

Jessie to send calendar invites out

Meeting adjourned 8:55.