

STRATHCONA PARK PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(May 10, 2019 – BC Parks Office, Miracle Beach)

SPPAC MEMBERS: Philip Stone (Chair), Darren Saare, Hardolph Wasteneys, Bill Phipps, Jennifer Pass, Ryan Wanner

Absent: Catrin Brown, Ryan Stuart

Public: Juanita Wells, Bob Bock, Allen Wells, Ken Rodonets

Recorder: John Milne

BC Parks: Andy Smith

AGENDA

Approve Agenda

Topics

1. Mandate of Committee

Jennifer distributed SPPAC's mandate as a reminder to all members the intent of SPPAC. The mandate will be considered at the beginning of each meeting as discussed and agreed to at the November 2018 meeting.

2. Strathcona Update

Andy - The update is appended to the end of these minutes.

Additional update information:

- The Canadian Armed Forces volunteer is no longer available to help this season.
- The current water level at Buttle Lake is approximate 214 m. The target minimum water level during summer months is 217 m. BC Hydro's forecast for this summer is approximately 215.5 m. due to low snowpack and anticipated low precipitation.
- If SPPAC members are interested, Andy would like input about what to put on the new sign to be erected at the Comox Glacier trail head.
- Nyrstar has announced that a new company, "Traffigura" has acquired controlling shares to refinance Nyrstar in order to provide more capital for recent and ongoing work. They now control 98% of Nyrstar.

Action - Andy will ensure provincial government lawyers are aware of these changes and ask whether there is any need for concern or impact to existing permits and associated conditions.

Bill Phipps provided an update on the new Heber River campsite being developed by Ministry of Forests, Recreation Sites & Trails agency. The primitive campsite is located outside the park boundary (approximately 1.5km) and hoped to be connected by a trail back to Crest Creek Crags day-use area.

3. Park Usage Concerns

Mount Albert Edward Route Marking - This was discussed at the previous meeting, but no decision was made. SPPAC supports some kind of marking on the first ridge (Jutland) to indicate the route down. Some hikers find it difficult to locate the trail down when returning and providing markers could reduce need for potential rescues in the future.

Action - Andy will look at some options considering the aesthetics of the area.

King's Peak - A similar action may be required for King's Peak trail coming down the ridge from Queen's Ridge, however, this is a much less used trail. While trail marking is still a questionable need, SPPAC does recommend a primitive pit toilet (open air Z-Best type) be installed in this area (suggested location for a toilet would be on King's Peak on the hill just north of the popular camp area in the lower bowl where hikers first enter the meadows).

Cream Lake Camping - The Master Plan zoning does allow facilities to be developed in this area. As camping happens here already, some type of toilet should be considered, however, this would increase costs. Another option is to not allow camping at Cream Lake. Most SPPAC members are in favour of exploring the idea of providing some kind of toilet at Cream Lake. SPPAC recommends BC Parks consider the pros and cons and make a decision that will address the human waste issue at Cream Lake.

Mt Burman North Ridge Camp - This area is within the Wilderness Conservation zone which doesn't allow any facilities to be developed, i.e. toilet and/or signage. It may be possible to consider installing a "green throne" here as it isn't a permanent facility. More thought needs to be given to this issue. SPPAC asked about the possibility of changing the Master Plan zoning to provide a recreational zone corridor to the Golden Hinde, however, there was also concern an amendment process could potentially have unintended consequences. SPPAC will need to consult the regional BC Parks planner.

Action - The park planner will be invited to the next SPPAC meeting to discuss this issue and the process for targeted amendments generally.

4. Dogs off-leash

Andy is considering a sign at Paradise Meadows stating dogs may be prohibited in the future if people continue to not comply to the dog on leash regulation. The intent is that this action may result in peer pressure against those causing the problem.

5. Jutland area trespass cabin(s)

This was discussed previously. One cabin was removed in the fall of 2018 and one remaining cabin on the boundary of the park (but still on TimberWest Land) is to be taken down by TimberWest in the spring or summer of 2019. There is an outhouse on park property in this same location which BC Parks will address at the same time as

TimberWest deals with the cabin. This cabin facilitates illegal snowmobile use, both on TimberWest lands as well as Strathcona Park.

6. Vandalism at Trailheads

This is occurring in several areas and specifically within the Buttle Lake corridor and at the Bedwell trail head. Five to ten vehicles have been known to be broken into at a time. Perhaps a trail cam could be set up to attempt to catch the culprits and maybe put signs up warning people and stating video surveillance is set up. Maybe the mine could volunteer to do this. Jennifer Pass will ask Nicole from Nyrstar on May 22, 2019 when she visits the mine to see if they would be interested in helping out.

7. Other areas (Landslide Lake?)

No issues identified here.

8. Circlet Lake – possible hut?

Philip described ongoing public interest in a potential hut at Circlet Lake. This is mentioned in the Master Plan. Andy has broached the subject to their Parks' design team who are currently planning the capital upgrade for this area. While a hut would not be considered at this time, the design team should consider the potential for this in the future. If a request was made by a third party, i.e. the Alpine Club, a whole assessment process would be followed, including discussions with SPPAC.

9. Repealing Horse Use in Master Plan/any Master Plan amendment process

Andy's opinion is that this activity was probably the most researched in the Master Plan and a decision was made in the last Management Plan Amendment to clarify this use. It is therefore unlikely that BC Parks would consider repealing such a well thought out amendment.

The committee understood the potential opportunity but concern was voiced about the scale and consequences of a Master Plan amendment process.

10. Bouldering at Jim Mitchell Lake (<http://www.vanisleboulder.ca/k2-topo-.html>)

Scrubbing and cleaning routes are not allowed in this area without permission. Andy will consider following up with the people who posted information about this activity.

Discussion was also had regarding climbing bolting within the park. It was confirmed that bolting is impactful and therefore requires authorization to be legal and as well, bolts are considered infrastructure and therefore would not be allowed within the Wilderness Conservation Zone. BC Parks had already reviewed this matter in 2016 and a clarification from Regional Director Don Cadden was issued to the climbing community confirming that fixed climbing hardware was not permissible within the Wilderness Conservation areas.

11. Chairship

Philip has stepped down as chair. However, Phil has confirmed he is willing to continue as a committee member for the time being. Andy thanked Philip for his many years of service. Hardolph is interested in taking over. Darren may also be interested. There is a possibility of rotating the chair over time.

Andy advised that the Regional Director, Don Cadden has confirmed he doesn't support carrying on with a format of regular scheduled meetings and wants SPPAC to have meetings only when necessary. Don is willing to come and speak to SPPAC about this at the next meeting. Some members feel spring and fall meetings are good with perhaps one of these including an annual mine meeting with Nyrstar.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments at this time.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will most likely be in the fall in November. A date will be decided by email between members.

Strathcona Update for SPPAC Meeting May 10, 2019 **(Last update November 16, 2018)**

Strathcona Staffing

Seasonal staff – Senior Ranger, Jamie Godfrey, has returned and will be assisting with Strathcona projects from April 23rd to November 16, 2019. Seasonal Ranger Harry Reddin will also be returning and work from May 13th to October 13, 2019.

While we again didn't manage to secure a third backcountry Ranger for 2019, we have been fortunate to acquire another Canadian Armed Forces volunteer to provide assistance to Rangers between May 13th through July 2019 (an extension may be possible if it works out). This CAF program provides opportunities for retiring CAF personnel to temporarily check out civilian positions for up to 6 months in order to help them with new career path choices. The "volunteer" receives regular wages from CAF while working with our Ranger staff. Certainly a win-win situation for everyone and is allowing us to do far more projects than we would have been able to do otherwise.

1) Backcountry Maintenance Contract

Park Operator – "43K Wilderness Solutions" have started their fifth season of a 10 year contract.

2) Frontcountry Maintenance Contract

"43K Wilderness Solutions", are starting their third season of a 10 year contract, as the Strathcona Frontcountry Park Operator in the Buttle Lake corridor area.

3) Student Ranger Projects

The Student Ranger crew program, first initiated in 2018, will continue for 2019 and although the North Island crew has been reduced from 6 people to 4, they will be assisting each Area for up to 3 weeks to complete key projects. In Strathcona the crew will first help repair some winter storm damage to the Lower Myra Falls trail. Other projects will include; trail repair/ enhancement to the new universal access trail that was also damaged by winter storms; installation of signage at new universal access day-use trail at Buttle Lake campground; trail restoration at Circllet lake in conjunction with the new capital enhancement project planned for Fall this year.

4) Capital Projects

The Capital Program has committed to the following projects this season:

- Circllet Lake campground upgrade/enhancement - Replaced old wooden camp pads and add new ones to bring capacity up to approximately 60 units. The total number of camp pads to be finalized in design stage (Spring/ based on field assessments, use of existing impacted areas and statistical numbers of current overflow use as well as anticipated future use, we have concluded this to be a reasonable maximum number. It is our objective to establish the maximum number of sites appropriate for this area. In the future, should numbers continue to increase past capacity, we will need to consider reservations and not allow further overflow into new areas. As part of the design, two new UD toilets will be installed to match user needs and also to reduce fly-outs of traditional barrel design.
- The Circllet Lake project is the first stage of a multi-year backcountry upgrade. The second phase will be to upgrade Kwai Lake campground. The third phase, to either be done simultaneously, or as a separate independent project depending on timing and available funds, is to replace all aging fly-out toilets on the plateau and a Baby Bedwell Lake with new UD toilets. The toilet project will not only reduce carbon emissions associated with current fly-out toilets, but also reduce maintenance costs.

- Karst Creek Campground Upgrade – Depending on timing and resources, the assessment and design of the upgrade may or may not happen in 2019 and if not, will be postponed until 2020. Regardless, it is our intent to target upgrade construction for Fall of 2020.
- Ralph River - Due to other pressing Regional priorities this project has been deferred to Fiscal year 2021 & F2022 (next year and the year after). The scope of work will be to complete the campground upgrade begun last year. The bulk of this work will be accomplished in F21(Fall, next year).

5) Croteau Lake Group Site

The Croteau Lake group site will open again for the season in June (first booking is June 3rd & 4th). The inaugural 2018 season went well and while not fully booked, met the first year expectations with approximately 8 weekend bookings.

This season the focus will be on marketing – trying to spread the word that this new site exists and open for business. A new brochure and business card has been developed for distribution and information will also be added to the Strathcona website. The use of on-line social media is also being utilized. Everyone who has stayed at the site is impressed, so as numbers increase, it is expected word of mouth will also increase the bookings. Also this season, we will be implementing a site host program, offering volunteers a free opportunity to stay at Croteau for minimum 1-week stays. Hosts will meet and greet groups, monitor site and provide some basic maintenance as needed.

6) RALPH RIVER/LOWER MYRA FALLS Upgrades

Lower Myra Falls– The main access trail down to the falls that was enhanced greatly with the addition of blue chip gravel and small modifications last season, has been damaged by winter storm events causing some erosion issues. Our student ranger crew will be making repairs and enhancing trail ditching in early June.

Ralph River Campground New Wheelchair accessible Trail – this new trail developed by the film production company last year at the request of BC Parks, was damaged due to winter storm events and a higher than normal reservoir level. The student ranger crew will help to repair damages (mostly displacement of the logs used as trail curbs) in early June. While the curbs and some trail tread patching is required, the trail is currently accessible by all. Also, this year we will do one or two invasive plant assessments of all areas the film production crew utilized to ensure no invasive species were brought in and establishing. These assessments will be done each year for 3 years. The assessments and any treatments that may be required will be paid for through funds already provided by the film company and deposited into a designated Park Enhancement Fund account. Other things that will be funded through this account will be any additional planting required and also the development of new interpretive signage for the new trail and picnic site.

7) BC HYDRO WATER USE PLAN – RECREATIONAL UPGRADES

For the last few years much planning and discussions have taken place regarding mandated recreational upgrades to be done by BC Hydro as part of their mitigation for ongoing impacts associated with the Campbell River Reservoir System. Over the winter and spring many things were completed.

Buttle Lake Boat Launch – the old broken cement ribs were replaced with new modern cement ribs making the ramp much more accessible and safer. Rock berms were also established along the sides of the ramp. While this work was completed in November, due to public complaints

concerning boat access during the extreme low water in the reservoir, BC Hydro agreed to make some minor modifications (adding additional clean 2"-3" gravel) to the toe of the ramp, allowing 4x4 vehicles to still launch boats.

Buttle Lake Campground Day-use trail – This trail leading from the edge of the campground and extending out to the point on the north shore of the bay, was completed in April 2019. The new trail has as compacted blue chip gravel tread making it suitable for wheelchairs and strollers. Two picnic sites were also established at the far end providing views of the lake and during the summer when lake levels are higher, accessible to the water for swimming. Unfortunately, while we tried our best to provide access to the water level for wheelchairs, it ended up not being possible due to constant and probable impacts within the flood zone. If a solution prevents itself in the future, BC Parks will continue considering potential options. Trailhead signage will also be added this season.

Karst Creek Boat Launch – upgrades to this boat launch were started in April and should now be complete. New concrete ribs (the same type used at the Buttle Lake boat launch) have been added with the toe area finished off the same as the Buttle launch. The ramp was extended as far as feasible (close to toe of ramp, the elevation drops right off).

Littoral Zone Planting – Various pilot sites were identified around Buttle Lake (based high visibility or high use) where various appropriate species were planted using a variety of techniques. These sites will be monitored over the next couple of years to confirm what works best and with that information other sites will then be planted as well.

8) BACKCOUNTRY

Della Falls – No update for this season yet. We hope to get some help brushing and removing windfalls through the wildfire crews prior to the busy season starting. We also hope to tidy up trailhead area, perhaps removing most of the unused tent pads and any other failing facility. The dock has been listed as needing replacement, but this won't happen until the need matches regional priorities and sufficient resources. We suspect, if/when the dock project moves ahead, we will try to replace it with something simple and smaller.

Gold Lake Trail – No change since last update. Ranger staff have it their list to try and visit this location this season. However, it is a low priority.

Elk River Trail – The Park Operator (43K) has been given approval and instructions to complete this upgrade this Spring and they have confirmed work should begin in May.

Bedwell Lakes Trail – No upgrades were completed in 2018. The trail and facilities will continue to be monitored for safety issues which will be addressed as needed (temporary or complete repair).

Bedwell River Trail – No changes since last update. While the Ahousaht First Nation is still interested in upgrading this trail from Bedwell Lake down to Bedwell Sound, they have delayed any further plans until they have confirmed plans for the development of their IR at Bedwell Sound.

The Comox District Mountaineering Club – this group continues to help BC Parks maintain some of the less popular, lesser priority areas of Strathcona. The club will be providing a plan of what work, if any, they would like to try and complete this season. BC Parks is always appreciative of any projects they are able to complete.

Comox Glacier – While TW has agreed to support a proposed new sign shelter at or near the trailhead, we have been unable to schedule a joint field trip to confirm location. We hope to finalize things this Spring so that we can move this project forward. CDMC has confirmed their support in helping to install the new sign shelter and sign when things are finalized.

Yellow Chair Program – Two new chairs have been added to the program and located at Croteau Lake to compliment the Battleship Lake chairs. Two additional chairs will be added in 2019, location yet to be decided. One consideration is placement at the opposite end of Croteau Lake on the rock bluffs. With the popularity of the group site increasing and therefore the camp site less accessible to day-users, encouraging day-users to use the rock bluffs may be a potential option.

9) Crest Creek Climbing Area & West Boundary Camping Proposal

While BC Parks is still enforcing the no camping regulation in the Crest Creek Lake day-use area, no issues were reported in 2018. Meanwhile, we continue to work with Ministry of FLNRO, Recreation Sites and Trails (RS&T) to support the development of the nearby new campsite just outside the west boundary of the park. Bill Phipps of SPPAC has volunteered to be the lead on this and liaising between Graham Cameron of RS&T and the climbing community to decide what is needed and how to develop the site. Graham Cameron has provided this update as of May 3rd:

“FN referrals are all complete and we made a site visit with a FN arch expert to look at the location. We are good to go on all fronts. We are currently lining up an operator to dig the outhouse pit and have decided that people can camp basically anywhere they can pitch a tent. In the future we may choose to more clearly define camp sites and install tables/fire pits, but don’t see a need at this point given the current use. The trail along the old penstock corridor seems fairly established already. The only outstanding decision was the routing once inside Strathcona park (after crossing under the highway bridge). BC Parks did assess options in fall of 2018 and have 2 options to consider; 1) minimal forest walk after leaving underpass, directing pedestrians back up onto wide road right-of-way; 2) forest walk paralleling highway following a route with the least amount of tree/vegetation removal, up to a point where trail comes back onto road right-of-way very close to access road to Crest Creek Crags day-use area.

Photo of Location of FLNRO Proposed Recreation Site/Campground on West Boundary



10) Wood Mountain Provincial Park

The Community clean-up effort is continuing through the “Forbidden Plateau Reclamation Society”. No new update since the last one in November. Depending on funding and the availability of society equipment and volunteers, work will continue this year. Potential work may include partial or full removal of old ski lift towers.

Nyrstar Mine Update
(Provided by Nicole Pesonen Environmental Advisor May 6, 2019)

Jim Mitchell Lake Rd - Hauling will be Sunday overnight through Thursday overnight from 7 pm to 7 am. 30 km / hour speed limit in the area we are hauling so there is low dust and ample time to stop if someone comes the other direction. We will have a flag person & / or pilot vehicle on site to announce or escort folks through without a radio to prevent surprises for the haul truck drivers. Hauling is expected to commence in May and due to start-up delays is expected to continue until end of 2020.

Current work:

- Minor air permit application – adding back in the Lynx Crusher, the new paste-plant cement silo (replaces old backfill plant), and updating the assay lab ventilation, passed preliminary screening, starting detailed application phase
- Converting the Price Mine Claims into a Lease – under review
- Quarry application:
 - Waiting on First Nation Consultation comments for EMPR,
 - 2 deliverables for BC Parks
 - Wind & danger tree assessment field work completed,
 - waiting for ground vegetation to open for vegetation assessment work
 - Application for water license by end of May
- Just submitted construction application for Phase One of the Old TDF Closure Cover and Lynx Spillway Phase One to EMPR, you may see it come to you as a referral. These are consistent with what was submitted in the 2016 designs - they are just more detailed for construction.
- Starting construction of the Lynx TDF lift (approved in 2018) in May, using waste rock dumps 2 and 3 as source material
- Started bringing ore from HW mine via the hoist this month, milling has recommenced. We expect trucks to start heading to town shortly
- Lynx Ore chute is being removed from Dump 3 as planned.
- Future application to BC Parks for a permanent security station with a card reader for mine personnel, extension to the expanded camp facility to allow for delays in construction, and an extension of the ore haul will be submitted before the end of May.
- Work is starting on the Phillips Reach surface Ramp extension – will allow clean waste rock to surface for use in closure works and other construction needs.
- Paste plant is now online for deposition of the tailings beach in the Lynx TDF – required for construction. We will be using this for backfill following the completion of the required beach in the tdf

Note regarding mine sale rumour: Myra Falls is not for sale – Nyrstar however will become a Traffigura Company. I have copied a link to the information that is publically available below.

<https://otp.tools.investis.com/clients/fi/nyrstar1/omx/omx-story.aspx?newsid=67145&cid=250&culture=en-US>