

Comments from BC Parks Website and Emails sent to Parks July to September 2007

The following correspondence is in order of receipt and has been edited to protect the identity of those who took the time to submit notes and letters to the BC Parks Website, the Consulting Team and BC Parks staff.

TOPIC: EQUESTRIAN ACCESS

Regarding the issue of keeping horses welcome in the parks on Salt Spring Island – losing a very significant reason so many of us came to live here so many years ago: a rural life style

Increasingly over the years horses have been squeezed out of places they had previously been welcome. I am deeply disturbed that what was once rural is disappearing as urbanization is spreading on our beautiful island. There are many, many horse related clubs on this island that benefit young and old alike and are a part of rural communities everywhere (Pony Club, Therapeutic Riding, Back County Horseman, 4H). We MUST provide a place for them when we make decisions about our parks or we may be destroying a large part of what has made this community so special over the decades.

I was one of the many dedicated people who saved Burgoyne from decimation through logging. We fought long and hard for Burgoyne and now I am to accept I cannot take my horse on its trails. No! I do not accept that!

I sincerely hope the Parks can see beyond bureaucratic policies that do not capture the community in any way and consequently attempt to make unique decisions that reflect unique communities. Salt Spring Island is RURAL and horses are a part of that RURAL flavour. Say yes to rural by saying yes to horses in our parks. There are many places folks can go where there are no horses. There are very, very few places that horses are welcome. Let our island parks be one of those unique places!

I am writing in support of the email that you received from others regarding horses in Salt spring parks. I hope that you can understand the frustration and anger that we horse owners are feeling. There are so few places that horses are welcome on this island and they get smaller all the time. Now we are to lose almost every place on the island that could provide trails for horses. I also refuse to accept this. We do not all have the luxury of trailering our horses off the island each time we want to go for a trail ride. This is the only option that we will be left with should you forbid horses from our parks. Putting a truck and 2 horse trailer on the ferry to Vancouver Island costs \$80-100. My husband and I also moved to this island specifically for its rural lifestyle and our recreational lives center around our horses. I think that it is up to BC Parks to asses each individual community and its uniqueness when determining what will be allowed in its parks. Horses are a major part of the island flavour. Every year at Ruckle Park there is a horse-ploughing match and at the Fall Fair each September there is a large horse show that the local horse owners participate in and share community spirit. Not to mention all the horse clubs such as Salt Spring Equestrian Club, 4H, the Western trail riding club, Therapeutic riding, that exist on the island and benefit from access to trails. I think that you should seriously reconsider this issue. There are now more than 50 horse owners on an email list that are sharing information about this parks issue. I can assure that that we will not give up easily. Why not compromise and at least allow horses in some areas.

Burgoyne Bay, for example, has a long history of farming and until it became a park was actually a horse riding camp. It seems like a logical place to allow horses.

Regarding Salt Spring Island Parks (Burgoyne & Ruckle) use:

My family has lived on Salt Spring Island for almost 25 years and it is alarming to hear we may lose a very significant reason so many of us came to live here so many years ago. I am speaking specifically of a rural life style.

Horses were originally used to clear and farm both Burgoyne and Ruckle Parks. Horses have and continue to be an attraction used yearly at Ruckle (plowing of fields). However increasingly over the years horses have been squeezed out of places they had previously been welcome. I am deeply disturbed that what was once rural is disappearing as urbanization is spreading on our beautiful island. There are many, many horse related clubs on this island that benefit both young and old alike and are a part of rural communities everywhere (Pony Club, Therapeutic Riding, Back County Horseman, 4H). In addition there are many, many parks that offer varied activities throughout B.C. but very few that welcome horse/farming activities. Surely there is no better place to preserve this part of our heritage than on Salt Spring Island.

We MUST provide a place in our parks for activities (farming, horses) that can be enjoyed in rural settings close to urban centres (Vancouver and Victoria). Clearly we are quickly losing our connection to our rural heritage. Therefore when we make decisions about how our Salt Spring Island parks will be used in the future we must be cognizant that we do not destroy a large part of what has made this rural community so special over the decades.

I sincerely hope those making decision about our Salt Spring Island Parks will attempt to make unique decisions that reflect our unique and rural community. Salt Spring Island is RURAL and horses are a part of that RURAL flavour. Let us preserve some semblance of rural in our parks by saying yes to horses in some of them. There are many places folks can go where there are no horses. There are very, very few places horses are welcome. Let our island parks be one of those unique places!

I received meeting notes from a recent TAC meeting, and was wondering why you are not asking people who were invited to be "Stakeholders" to attend these meetings also.

I am hoping for a much better outcome for horse riders and for trail users in general than was suggested by reading these notes. Saltspring is too small a place to have all these areas closed to public recreational use.

A lot of us (recreational users) did a great deal to help secure these lands for the Community, so I hope we can also be considered in the planning for them, and be invited to be included in the process.

I hope that my perception from reading these notes is wrong, and that "recreational use" is not out of the question in the planning for Saltspring Parks.

Thank you.

The parks on SSI I can't do more than to reiterate what has been said in this letter. On SS we do not have ANY OTHER PLACE to ride than the parks and the possibility of doing so is what prompted us to get involved in the process. If the plans were already made

what is the point of wasting our time coming to meetings. This is a rural community. Horses have always been a part of the lifestyle here and indeed was why many of us came here. The parks were mostly cleared by horsepower. There was a large contingent of riders at the meeting and I feel our points were valid. Horses stay on trails which is more than many hikers do. I feel at this point that the "democratic" process was a sham. By the way who are these "stakeholders" I thought the parks belonged to the people of Canada, we all donated money and, it seems, a lot of wasted time,

Re: Mount Erskin Trails

I am writing to request that you allow horse riding on the trails on Mt. Erskin. There are few opportunities for people to take their horses on the trails on Salt Spring and Mt. Erskin trails are a needed part of the horse trail system.

I look forward to your support on this important issue.

RE: Equestrian Use in Mt, Erskine Area

Possibly, by making a list of all the groups restricting horses from this area folks will understand why equestrian access will not be permitted in Mt. Erskine:

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) since 2004

SSI Conservancy as landowner of MRNR, Martin Williams as private landowner granting easement, and TLC The Land Conservancy of BC and Islands Trust Fund as covenant holders on MRNR.

Lower Mount Erskine Nature Reserve since 2000

Islands Trust Fund as landowner, and Habitat Acquisition Trust and Nature Conservancy of Canada as covenant holders on Lower Mount Erskine NR.

Then adding MEPP in 2006:

BC Parks, SSIC and NCC all in agreement

Just because an activity hasn't been enforced, doesn't mean it has been permitted, and it has not been permitted for over 3 years from either side.

Thank you.

SSI Conservancy

We agree that horses are not permitted on the property. Managing the impact of hiking boots is enough of a concern without adding hooves to the equation.

There is no specific mention of horses in the management plan, but there is clear direction to manage it as a nature reserve, and to minimize the impact of hikers and to exclude mountain bikes.

The covenant is clear about the intent of nature protection and excluding **domestic animals**.

Hope that covers the horse issue.

Horses are not allowed on the easement through Martin William's property off Toynbee Road or on the Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve, as per the *Management Plan for the Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (2004)*.

I am checking with the Islands Trust Fund to see if horses are allowed in the Lower Mount Erskine Nature Reserve off Collins Road, and will get back to you.

I live on Saltspring Island and am concerned that horse riders are about to lose access to the trails in the parks over here. There have been a couple of meetings on Saltspring about trail use that I was not aware of and did not attend. However, it has been made clear to me that equestrians are soon to be given the boot out of the trails in our parks and I am trying to make my voice heard. I sent an email to the consultants for the Mt. Erskine Management Plan who I was told were in charge of the Mt Erskine trail system that I ride my horse through often. I have had no reply. I would greatly appreciate any response to this email. I must admit that I am confused as to why horses should not be allowed on existing trails.

What are the big concerns? There are really only a small number of riders over here and horse impact on the trails will be small. Horse riders tend to stay on the trails as it is not safe for our horses to be forging new paths in the forest. Holes, fallen trees, branches etc are all dangers to horses so riders want to keep their horses on safe trails. I have names and email addresses of other horse owners who currently use the Mt Erskine trails.

This is part of the email that I sent to the consultants:

My husband and I have lived here just over 3 years. We own 2 horses and regularly ride them up Juniper Rd from Rainbow and into the Mt Erskine area. The trail from Collins Rd is really too steep for horses but we do ride up to the top of Erskine from the Toynbee Rd trail and around the Tree Farm. We really enjoy these trails and I know of several other people that ride on these trails also. I thought it would be worth mentioning to you that there are horse riders who use Mt Erskine and would like, and greatly appreciate, to see some trails designated for multi-usage including horses. I think that overall you will find horse people to be very sensitive to the environment in which they ride. Most of us riding out on the trails do so because we enjoy visiting with nature from the backs of our equine friends at a leisurely pace. There is a small but dedicated group of horse owners on Saltspring who have very limited areas where they can trail ride. Horses are very much a part of the rural community on the island. Riding in island parks will be one of the nicest ways for horse owners to enjoy their equine companions.

Please let me know if I can help you in any way regarding Mt Erskine. I would be happy to speak with you if you would like any more information about horse usage on Mt Erskine or any other areas on the island.

For my husband and I, the Mt Erskine trails are a pleasant ride from our house and allow us to connect with the trails and quiet rounds in the Mt Maxwell area. We would be very sorry to lose access to these trails.

Thank you for consideration on this matter

I am writing in support of the trails on Mt. Erskine and that they continue to be used for horses. Salt Spring Therapeutic Riding has benefited from trail riding fundraisers in the past which included riding from Toynbee Road down to Baeder's Beach.

Parks should be made to be used in conjunction with conservation.

I live at the base of Mt. Erskine on Booth Inlet. I've been riding up Mount Erskine for over 18 years. I used to access the Park via private properties on Rainbow road and now use Juniper drive. Occasionally I walked my horse down the path on the other side of the park to Collins Rd. but more often made a short trip up to the park and down again, or a longer trip to ride with my friends on Toynbee and perhaps have a picnic on Lake Maxwell. I think the trail horse community strives to have safe horses that are compatible with other peaceful members of the community, their pets, and preferences in getting around.

I sent you an email a few days ago about the Mt Erskine trails. There have been a number of emails circulating among the horse riding community about the trail use on Mt Erskine and I see that you have sent out a map so that we can clarify the trail that we are using. I think that most horse riders that know the area have been using the trails around and on Mt Erskine for years. There is a trail from the end of Pallot Way that climbs up under the power lines and meets up with the roads that are part of the new development at the top of Juniper Rd.

Many of us (when it is safe from Power Line installation and helicopters) use the trail under the power lines, otherwise we ride up Juniper Rd. From the top of Juniper there is a short trail that leads into what is called the Tree Farm which is private land and onto Toynbee Rd. From there we riders can get over to Mt Maxwell and all the trails and old logging roads over that way making a great circuit ride. Some people take horses up the trail to the summit of Mt Erskine from the Toynbee Rd/Tree Farm access. The trail is quite steep but a fit horse can climb up no problem. On occasion my husband and I have taken the trail to the summit and then walked our horses down the trail from the top to Collins Rd. This IS the trail system that is shown on your map. Please let me know if I can clarify this any further.

Thank you for listening to our concerns and input about these trails

I do understand that there are not many horse riders on Salt Spring and that the horse community would like to have some trails designated for their use in the provincial parks and this is something we are considering through this planning process for all the parks on Salt Spring Island. It is important to know that the Park Act clearly states that horses are prohibited in parks and recreation areas unless they are designated as horse areas and this would be determined during this planning process.

This park has been designated as a Category 1 giving conservation of the natural ecosystem as its main priority and provides for limited or no recreational activities and development. Since there is one trail, already existing in the park this will remain and the recommendation is to allow for hiking to continue but not to advertise this. In addition, access to this area is through private lands and one of the neighbouring properties is land owned by the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, Manzanita Ridge. The trail to Mount Erskine from Toynbee Road goes through this piece of property and you may not be aware that they do not allow horse on their trails. We must respect and abide by our neighbours rules. In this case, the only access to Mount Erskine Provincial Park is up the steep trail from Collins Road and the impacts on the trail from horses would be a concern.

I am continuing to determine the main trails that are used in the area and who uses the actual Mount Erskine Provincial Park trail. From the information, I have received so far the use of the Mount Erskine Provincial Park trail is minimal. As there is interest in allowing horseback riding in provincial parks on Salt Spring, we have to look at what areas would provide the best opportunity for this activity throughout the whole system.

I am collecting all the information that I am receiving regarding this topic and this will be considered for the final draft of the management plan. I appreciate everyone who has called or sent me information, as it is important that we hear from the people in the area. It is also important that the people in the area have all the information about the park location, designation and the rules that we are governed under.

Thank you for offering to provide me with more information and will contact you if I require further clarification.

My understanding is that you are concerned about preservation of the ecosystem on Mt Erskine and damage sustained to the trails by horses. I have a keen awareness and understanding of the importance of preserving special ecological areas.

Perhaps you are not a horse owner or rider so I thought I could clarify some things about trail riding horses in park areas. Horse riders stay on trails. It is dangerous to our horses to be forging new trails through the woods due to the unsafe footing and obstacles. I think that hikers are more likely to depart from designated trails and cause damage to vegetation. The number of horses likely to use the trails on Mt Erskine or in any other park on Salt Spring Island is small. The population of horses here is not huge and there is only a small number of riders who use the trails. I know most of the horse owners here and the numbers are tiny in comparison to the numbers of hikers who would use the trails.

Horses have been using the trails on and around Mt Erskine for years and I do not think the trails have suffered as a consequence. I see no reason that the number of horse riders using the trails will suddenly sky-rocket. This applies to all the park trails on the island.

Thank you again for listening and considering these thoughts. I hope I am constructive in giving you this information.

TOPIC: AGRICULTURAL USE IN PROVINCIAL PARKS AND ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

A SUMMARY OF A LAND USE REPORT SENT BY OUR COAST ISLANDS REGION FARMERS INSTITUTE:

DEBORAH CURRAN, THE LAWYER NOTED HERE WAS FORMERLY WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER AT U VIC
Regarding the issue of lands excluded from the ALR:

After reading many documents (including the 45 page legal opinion done for SmartGrowthBC) the best I can come up with is this:

[Excerpts from Legal Report by Deborah Curran, April 4th, 2007](#)

"The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) program and the Agricultural Land Commission's (The Commission) role is for the *principle purpose* of preserving the non-renewable farmland base." 1

The finding of this report is that "*the Commission's consideration of community need is contrary to its legislated authority.*" 2

Further to this purpose, Section 6 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act (The Act) charges the Commission with

"(a) to preserve agricultural land;

(b) to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest;

(c) to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws, and policies." 3

"Section 8 of the *Interpretation Act of BC* endorses this approach that a statute is to be read as remedial, and be given a fair, large and liberal interpretation to best attain its objectives." 4

"The concepts of farmland preservation and community need are fundamentally incompatible. Farmland preservation, itself, can be regarded as the cornerstone of community need and sustainability. It is non-renewable agricultural land (the ALR in B.C.) that ensures that there will be land available to provide for the most basic of community needs – a secure food supply – as communities continue to grow. This is a long-term objective. Community need typically responds to shorter-term land use deficiencies, often based on historical, often exceedingly inefficient, development patterns that do not accord with longer-term regional goals. True cases of community need, for example applications for exclusion of land from the ALR for regional or provincial infrastructure, are exceptions that warrant detailed regional review and debate.

In conclusion, the incompatibility of preserving agricultural land and attending to community needs leaves British Columbia's with two choices: (1) reaffirm the provincial priority to preserve farmland by removing from the Service Plan statements about decisions based on community need; or (2) amend section 6 of the Act to expand the purposes of the Commission and ALR in recognition that there is no longer a provincial priority for preserving agricultural land. The former choice will see the continuation of the province's effective farmland preservation program. The latter choice will convert the ALR to an urban reserve and farmland to non-farm uses in many local jurisdictions in the near future. This choice will have fundamental implications for regional sustainability – economic, environmental and social – and in particular food security.

As Maura Quayle concluded in her landmark report that clarified the 'provincial interest' question in 1998, 59

'Without the courage to hold firm, with stakes in the ground, there will be no incentive to better manage our land base in the face of competing uses. We must halt the slow but steady erosion of our agriculture and food resources, and support our varied agricultural industries. As a forward thinking society, we must dig in, take responsibility, and make sure that future generations have a vibrant agricultural land base.' " 5

1 "[British Columbia's Agricultural Land Reserve: A Legal Review of the Question of Community Need](#)" (Prepared for SmartGrowthBC by Deborah Curran, Lawyer), April 4th, 2007; Report Summary, Pg i.

2 *ibid.*; Report Summary, Pg ii

3 *ibid.*; 2.2 Section 6: Purpose of Preserving Farmland, Pg 9

4 *ibid.* ; 2.3 Judicial Comment, Pg 12

5 *ibid.* ; 4 Conclusion. Pgs 21, 22

In the light of these directives it is clear to me that the Agricultural Land Commission Act is the guiding principle of right action as it applies to the ALR.

"Community Need" is not a reason to exclude land from the ALR as that action runs contrary to the function and purpose of the ALR which serves long term, not short term Community Need.

The quality of the land in question is irrelevant!

I interpret this as a covenant on this BC land which is held in future trust for all the generations of this province against the certain need of food security now and in the future.

This covenant must take precedence over the decisions of any body of government about land use of ALR land, for any purpose other than that of agricultural.

If the land is to be used as part of a settlement for First Nations Land Claims, the use of that ALR land must not be changed. The principles of ALR should hold that land as agricultural and only agricultural.

The fact of this covenanted land use should be taken into account in any further evaluation of payments for First Nations claims for land and amenities or monies and can be negotiated on that basis.

With this understanding that the land in ALR is covenanted to this use, then the necessary water for agriculture must also be secured along with the ALR land use rights.

Here is the full paper Lawrence Alexander did for us when he headed up the 'Growing Green Study' to identify the barriers to producing local food here in southern BC in 2002 & 2003. Lawrence, then with the Environmental Law Foundation of BC is now with the Attorney Generals Department with the present Provincial Government.

I will not be able to attend the stakeholder part of the current hearings but will be glad to participate in future consultations about the disposition of the agricultural land reserve and Islands Trusted farmland which has now been brought under parks administration.

Hope these models of conservation farm park stewardship of food lands prove of use to the discussions at hand. (attached in background document)

Here is an edit of the other note I mentioned in our discussions on Saturday. It contains background to the mandates which show how working landscapes within some parklands merit our serious consideration.

Points of additional note for consideration are:

- An agricultural use hearing for this park land will best be heard as an independent parkland use hearing and not as part of the general hearing.
- The Islands Trust Agricultural Advisory Committee also needs to be brought into the consultations about the deployment of this important Island Trust area farm property.
- The Steering Committee for the Area Farm Plan also need to be consulted about this land disposition.
- Salt Spring Seed Sanctuary members also need to be consulted about Burgoyne Farm Park use.
- There have already been 6 large farms and many other smaller farm properties turned into different sorts of parks here on Salt Spring. This is not in keeping with what is supposed to be happening to farm property, nor is it in keeping with the terms of our OCP.
- As our CRD Director noted in the presentation he made to the recent food forum you hosted, many of those smaller park parcels with an agricultural capability which have been dedicated to CRD as Park property (as a condition of subdivisions development) could be considered for use in abating the shortfall in food production for Salt Spring.
- Not using the farmland in the Burgoyne Park (much of it ALR) for a farm purpose is in contravention of the "Encourage Agriculture" and "Provincial Interest" mandates of both the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and the Agricultural Land Commission Act (though the Commission does allow farmland to go to park designation).
- It is also out of compliance with the objectives of the Provincial Farmers and Womens Institute Act (most ING people are Institute members). Our Institute mandate is to:
 - * Improve conditions of rural life, so settlement may be permanent and prosperous.
 - * Promote the practice and theory of agriculture.
 - * Arrange on behalf of its members for the purchase, distribution or sale of commodities, supplies or product.
 - * Act generally on behalf of its members in all matters incidental to agricultural pursuits and rural development.
 - * Promote home economics, public health, child welfare education and better schools.
- Not using the working landscape for a food and agriculture production purposes is not in keeping with BC's new Green objectives enshrined in the Kyoto Accord.
- Preserving the historical cultural amenity of AgriCulture (as noted in your draft) is an important historical attribute of this working landscape and is in keeping with the "Preserve and Protect the Amenity" Mandate of the Island Trust. Preventing farm use of this property and converting it to any other non farm use is in contravention of the Islands Trust Act.
- If the Province - through Parks made the farm portion of the Park landscape into a "C" Class Park (rather than leaving it an "A" Class Park) then the responsibility of operating would lie with the local government. The local government could then contract the working landscape operation of this part of the Park to the Community Farmland Trust body, to be created soon through the work of our Area Farm Plan (AFP).
- Changes to Provincial legislation made on May 30 this year now provide for the registration of leases over the ALR. It appears that the Registered Lease by Explanatory Plan" option which was formerly a farm right through application to the Land Commission will now once again be an option for farmers on property they don't own. This could be an important aspect of managing this land for a land trusted farm purpose.

I am attaching a paper here which may prove useful in relation to achieving the legally mandated and continued proper use of the Burgoyne farmlands. Please see the reference to the French Parks system which sets an excellent precedent for such a Park use of these lands. The National Trust of Britain also shows us how such land is best managed. (PEGGY, THESE ARE THE EXCERPTS CONTAINED IN THE OTHER MAIL SENT YOU TODAY.)

Four years ago it was noted that there was only one Parks employee available for the management of each 7 of BC's extensive number of Parks. The point can be made that without local community help such as that associated with the management of these lands through the formation of a community farmland trust the land may not be properly stewarded. It is also of note that while Parks comprise more than 12% of BC's landscape, viable ALR farm property comprises less than 3% of the Province. We need this working landscape kept in farm use in order to grow beyond our current shortfall of producing only 4% of our own food. Not managing this property for farming would be an abrogation of Provincial responsibility.

Parks must be asked to make the ALR and other farm portions of this working landscape into a "C" Class Park for a Trust like form of management by the local community.

Dan Jason's Seed Sanctuary needs a permanent, formalized and dedicated land tenure. Such a home for the Sanctuary along with a rare breeds conservancy would be an optimal use of the ALR parts of the Burgoyne Park lands. The Land Conservancy of BC and the Coast Islands Conservancy can be brought on board to help with such an initiative as needed.

Please feel free to share this information as needed. Please advise me who else you may circulate this information to or make recommendations about who else needs to see it.

TOPIC: GENERAL PLANNING COMMENTS

- I would urge BC Parks to **cooperate with and use the many willing and capable volunteers on SSI** for ideas and maintenance. If they feel ownership of the parks, they will protect and maintain them. This is specially important with the extreme and unreasonable limitations of the Parks budget.
- **Parking for residents should be either at no charge or for the season**, perhaps controlled by window decals. (This also relates to the point above.)
- **Parks limited budget.** For example, are improvements to Burgoyne Bay Park going to become a reality within my lifetime? Will there ever be enough funding to adequately maintain the parks. (I realize this is a political decision.)

Here are my thoughts/recommendations regarding the future of our island parks:

Parks are not only for protection of the ecology but also for sharing with people who value the outdoors and respect the environment. They are for walkers and hikers and picnickers and kayakers and campers, not for urban activities or those best done in community recreational areas (such as playing fields for soccer and baseball). They should respect the heritage of the various properties (thus farming, where farming has been done for decades). They should delight, educate, and entertain.

Ruckle PP

Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain all current facilities (parking, camping, hiking trails, picnic area, benches, toilets, etc.) • retain the farm area as a working farm • retain the farm houses and buildings if at all possible • ensure that cattle and sheep are retained within fenced areas • add a easy kayak-launch area close to the parking lot • add an area for kayak campers closer to the new Cusheon Cove end of the park • include a possible ecological learning centre if one is not located at Burgoyne Bay
<p>Regarding Salt Spring Island Parks (Burgoyne & Ruckle) use:</p> <p>My family has lived on Salt Spring Island for almost 25 years and it is alarming to hear we may lose a very significant reason so many of us came to live here so many years ago. I am speaking specifically of a rural life style.</p> <p>Horses were originally used to clear and farm both Burgoyne and Ruckle Parks. Horses have and continue to be an attraction used yearly at Ruckle (plowing of fields). However increasingly over the years horses have been squeezed out of places they had previously been welcome. I am deeply disturbed that what was once rural is disappearing as urbanization is spreading on our beautiful island. There are many, many horse related clubs on this island that benefit both young and old alike and are a part of rural communities everywhere (Pony Club, Therapeutic Riding, Back County Horseman, 4H). In addition there are many, many parks that offer varied activities throughout B.C. but very few that welcome horse/farming activities. Surely there is no better place to preserve this part of our heritage than on Salt Spring Island.</p> <p>We MUST provide a place in our parks for activities (farming, horses) that can be enjoyed in rural settings close to urban centres (Vancouver and Victoria). Clearly we are quickly losing our connection to our rural heritage. Therefore when we make decisions about how our Salt Spring Island parks will be used in the future we must be cognizant that we do not destroy a large part of what has made this rural community so special over the decades.</p> <p>I sincerely hope those making decision about our Salt Spring Island Parks will attempt to make unique decisions that reflect our unique and rural community. Salt Spring Island is RURAL and horses are a part of that RURAL flavour. Let us preserve some semblance of rural in our parks by saying yes to horses in some of them. There are many places folks can go where there are no horses. There are very, very few places horses are welcome. Let our island parks be one of those unique places!</p> <p>Sincerely yours,</p>
<p>We have lived on Salt Spring Island for 17 years, and were among those deeply engaged in the process of stopping clear-cut logging on Texada property, and ultimately the purchase of Texada land by the Province as parkland. The confluence of Parks and the "Tourism Industry" is a very disturbing one inasmuch as it increasingly turns protected areas into "attractions" with large parking areas, fees for parking, camping and/or picnicking. This is now the case with Ruckle Park, which was for many years a favorite family gathering place and hiking area. We now tend to avoid it due to high use in summer (which does of course fulfill a worthwhile provincial function), the presence of recreational vehicles, and parking fees (which should be waived for residents).</p> <p>As the development of private property continues on Salt Spring Island, with losses of accessibility to wild lands for island residents, it becomes increasingly important to maintain undeveloped parks for local day-use. In consideration of this, as well as the critical need for undisturbed ecological sanctuaries, we strongly encourage Parks to leave Burgoyne (as well as Mount Maxwell and Mount Tuam Ecological Reserves, and Mount Erskine Provincial Park) with minimal signage, minimal parking, no fires, no overnight camping and no new facilities. However, partly in view of the Islands Trust Act "preserve and protect" mandate, which we take to extend to old farming areas, we think that organic farming should be permitted in the valley portion of Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, and that farming and orchards should be permitted to thrive in Ruckle Provincial Park.</p> <p>Further, in general we do not object to sensitive trail maintenance and improvement in the Parks and Reserves. Finally, we do not object to horseback riding at Burgoyne Bay provided no area within the park is developed for parking of horse trailers.</p>
<p>I would like to see the parks protected for the creatures and the environment with minimal human activity, especially recreational activities. Perhaps some narrow walking trails but no more than that for facilities for people. Try to save what remains of nature for the birds, the animals, the trees and all the species.</p>

Mt Maxwell PP

Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain current trails, picnic area, parking area, and toilets • add another trail extending down to Burgoyne Bay (see suggestion under that park) • make no other significant changes

Mt. Erskine PP

Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ create well-maintained hiking trails only ○ add a limited parking area ○ possibly add benches and pit toilets

Mt. Tuam ER

Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add one simple trail through the park and limited parking, but no other facilities (as with Burgoyne Bay, people are going to hike there anyway, so are best kept to a trail)

Burgoyne Bay PP

Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build good hiking trails, specially around the shore, and extending up thru the Garry Oak Meadow reserve up to Mt Maxwell (people are going to hike up there anyway, so they are best kept to one designated trail) • create a family picnic area • add toilets in perhaps three locations (pit or solar toilets would be fine) • add a kayak- and canoe-launch area • parking away from the shore, reclaiming the old log dump area for public access and reclaiming the beauty of the end of the bay • allow equestrians on a limited number of trails, but no bicycles • allow organic farming and/or gardening on existing fields • possibly include drive-in camping away from the shore area, which should be solely for public use (Ruckle has walk-in camping only, so there should be another area for those who aren't able to do this more-strenuous kind of camping) • possibly include an ecological learning centre • no float homes or on-shore residences (the existing ones should be removed) • no boat launch for power boats (to preserve the fragile marine ecosystem) • no playing fields or disk golf • any commercial aspects should be limited to a simple cafe and/or kayak rental
<p>I am a long time resident of Salt Spring Island and have lived in the Fulford Valley area since my family moved here in 1967. As a child I enjoyed very many days on the shores and the waters of Burgoyne Bay. I would very strongly suggest that you consider a boat launching ramp be planned for the park so that people can have access to the ocean. I believe this has been a long-standing recommendation in the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan. Water access on the West side of Salt Spring Island is practically non-existent and has until recent years been historically available to some degree at Burgoyne Bay.</p>
<p>Please consider including a boat launch ramp when planning the new Burgoyne Bay Park, Thank you,</p>
<p>I would like to strongly suggest that you include a boat launch ramp when planning for the Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park. This amenity at Burgoyne Bay is referenced in our local OCP. Thank you,</p>
<p>I am writing specifically about Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park and its management plan.</p> <p>I am a naturalist with a depth of knowledge in ornithology. I have been doing an immense amount of fieldwork observing and recording the natural life in Burgoyne Park for over 2 years, in all weather, in every season. This time represents 100's of hours of field time and the same pouring over reference material. I can say with some authority that this park is significant in terms of richness of habitats and wildlife. I am welcoming of anyone at any level of this management plan process to contact me for any of the information I have gathered.</p> <p>The richness of Burgoyne lies in the diversity of habitats all converging in one relatively small area. The threatened Gulf Islands ecosystems of Douglas fir and Garry oak surround the fields that have been maintained in a seral grassland state through the ongoing haying. These fields contain a web of riparian thickets and year round streams that drain into the bay. I have been rewarded and astounded to discover the density of wildlife that live here. For instance, the creeks running through the fields that are thickly grown over with numerous species of shrubs and trees are a vibrant nursery for migratory and non-migratory songbirds. The fields and thickets are teeming with insects that feed swallows, warblers, flycatchers, thrushes, vireos and bats. The fields are also good butterfly habitat. Certain fields have high populations of voles which in turn support Barn Owls, Great Horned Owls and hawks. The forests are home to many keystone bird species five of them woodpeckers. There are six species of owls. Mount Maxwell has Peregrine falcons nesting on its face. The estuary and bay are essential to many seabird species as a wintering place. The bay is home to many year around residents: heron's, eagles, seabirds, seals, otters and visiting whales. These many animals are a few examples of what I been so grateful to have had revealed to me.</p> <p>The natural environment is the most important value to me and many islanders. The other value that I care about is the silence. There are few areas on this island where you can go without significant intrusion on ones experience by noise of various kinds. Burgoyne is quiet. This is a significant value. I go there for the deep rejuvenation that the peace of this place provides. I want others to have this experience. It is essential to our health and the health of all beings.</p> <p>There is no doubt that Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park is an ecological treasure of significance. We know now that many of the species that live here are in decline. The nesting songbirds, wintering seabirds, owls and raptors need this area to remain as it is and as free of human disturbance as possible if we are to truly meet the goal of BC Parks mandate to protect the natural environment. If protection is to be accomplished then the kinds of recreational activities to be allowed in this park need to be considered extremely carefully.</p> <p>Due to the sensitivity of habitats and the wildlife living here this park lends itself only to day use and light recreational activities. Even within this I think that certain key areas within the park warrant being off limits to human activity. Especially in the vulnerable nesting season a bird sanctuary makes sense. This is the only way to truly protect it and the wildlife that depend on it.</p>

Human activities that I am in support of:

- 1- Hiking on existing trails and roads.
- 2- Kayaking with a well signed single landing spot at the head of the bay to prevent extensive damage to the estuary and intertidal zone. Research whether landing in the intertidal is wise at all.
- 3- Biking only on roads/logging roads.
- 4- Educational groups on the environment.
- 5- Photography, birdwatching, general enjoyment of nature.
- 6- Picnicking.
- 7- Continued haying of the fields to maintain seral grassland and reduce fire hazard and invasives done with the timing of ground nesting birds taken into account.
- 8- Possibly horse riding but only on main roads.

Human activities that I feel will damage the environment.

- 1- Disc Golf course. This is a very damaging activity and is totally inappropriate to this park. One only needs to go to Mouat Park and see the immense damage that this beautiful park has had over the last 8 years of use to understand why I completely oppose disc golf. There is literally no understorey plants left in the course area at Mouat Park.
- 2- Baseball diamond very inappropriate as this is a natural environment park not a rec. centre.
- 3- Camping- As soon as you open a park up for camping there is so much more damage from heavy use and the need for more infrastructure. This park has no spot that lends itself to camping that is appealing or not damaging. People have suggested the camp Narnia location in the field. Camping in a field is not appealing to many North Americans and there is no shelter from the sun or rain in this location. All of the fields except the one closest to the head of the Bay are sodden in the wet months. These fields are one big drainage area. The forest around the north side of the bay is far too sensitive with many rare wildflowers. It is best suited for a gentle nature trail as it is now.
- 4- Off-leash Dog run area- Dogs are a major problem in any park. It is not appropriate to allow them free run at anytime as the impact to wildlife and sensitive plants is great.
- 5- Motor board launch. More motorized boats is not something that I would want to see here. The boats that do come now in the summer are many. More than enough traffic for this small bay.

In conclusion I would like to say that I sincerely hope that this park will remain a day use park. We need to protect what is here and leaving it largely the way it is is by far the best way to do that. I am working hard to establish what wildlife are presently here. There needs to be much more done. The amount of field time that was put in to produce the TEM maps and the rare plant survey was very limited and only at one time of year. This is not enough information to base a management plan on. I will say again that I am available to meet with people during any level of the management plan process and onward to the maintaining of the plan.

I think that there needs to be a park warden on Salt Spring Island to be a presence and have authority to take action when people are disobeying the park rules and laws.

I ask that you please err on the side of caution and manage this park to truly protect its significant natural values. Move slowly. Lets not take another jewel of natural diversity and through our own desires, alter it irreversibly.

Note for Ruckle Park: I was in Ruckle helping Madrone Environmental Services in their fieldwork. My concern is related to the farming practices in this park, which I am in support of. The fencing is in disrepair especially in the area where the Highland cattle are. I lived on a farm in the Highlands, on the Sannich Peninsula and was witness to the extensive damage that their small herd of Highland cattle had on an environment similar to Ruckle. When I saw it repeated at Ruckle I was shocked. The animals were not properly fenced and the surrounding forest was trashed. The bull of the herd is aggressive as well, which is potential problem of another scale as the hiking trail intersects with this area. There needs to be extensive work done on the fencing or a choice made to not keep highland cattle at all.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my views. I appreciate the time you have given to this.

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express some concerns regarding the future of Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park on Saltspring Island. There seems to be some behind the scenes planning taking place, what with a lot of pressures from various interest groups, and that has resulted in some rumours developing and spreading. Could you please dispel any such talk, and please reply with updates as to the status of Burgoyne Bay. As far as we are concerned, the park should be left in the natural state, that it is now in. Why? Because of the rich and diverse habitat that it affords the birds and wildlife. We have been visiting the park for the last 5 years, and as professional birders, have had many enriching sightings and encounters with rare species. All the habitats are covered here and each is special. We have the Garry Oak forest, a unique ecosystem, with wild flowers and amazing Flycatcher species. We've got the mixed Douglas Fir forest and swamp area, the salt water bay, and most importantly the large open fields with long hedge rows where many an hour spent watching all representations of the Warblers have been spent. The raptors of Mt. Maxwell, and the owls which abound need this large area protected. Campgrounds, ball diamonds, and frisbee golf are all too invasive on this very peaceful and serene place. The trampling of the fields and understory in the forests would forever remove the many species of birds and small prey, not to mention the wild flowers. We look forward to a reply,

As the former (volunteer) fundraising coordinator for TLC's Salt Spring Appeal, I was closely involved in the protection of the former Texada lands. I am also a member of Island Natural Growers and a former president of Canadian Organic Growers. My comments relate to past and future agricultural land use in the Burgoyne Valley.

The Background Report failed to adequately describe the important agricultural history of the Burgoyne valley lands. This agricultural history is documented in the Salt Spring archives and in video footage prepared by Peter Prince. It is significant that descendants of the original settlers still live in the area and that one continues to hay the land. It is also significant that the first nations, through marriage, were involved in the clearing of the land and the subsequent farming operations. The land supported

productive mixed farming.

It has already been pointed out that BC Parks now holds more agricultural land on Salt Spring than any other single landowner. I support the recommendations of Island Natural Growers that this farmland be managed organically under a farm management plan, which should be prepared as a part of the park management plan. The recent example of the disruption of the haying schedule due to the discovery of a nesting Savanna Sparrow in a hedgerow is an example of how important it is to integrate ecological and agricultural management. Without the maintenance of the hay fields, there will be no habitat for the sparrow, but by delaying the cutting of the hay, we are destroying its value as livestock feed.

Public trails across and around working fields are commonplace in Europe, demonstrating that passive recreation and agriculture are very compatible. There are also associated interpretive and educational values, as already demonstrated at Ruckle Park. Walk-in campsites are also compatible with farm operations.

It may be appropriate to lease one of the existing Burgoyne houses to a farm manager, using the model already employed at Ruckle, and bring the arable land at both Burgoyne and Ruckle under integrated organic management plans. In fact Henry Ruckle at the focus group meeting expressed interest in that possibility for Ruckle Farm.

There is interest in the organic community, both locally and beyond, in assisting BC Parks with the development of an ecologically-sound organic farm management plan for the arable land in the Burgoyne Valley. Please let us know if you would like us to facilitate this process in any way.

Thanks

Dear BC Parks,

I recommend that you obtain copy of Peter Prince's recent video titled 'Salt Spring Island Discovery – The Cultural Heritage and Natural Beauty of the Burgoyne Valley' (www.peterprince.com) and review the Land Conservancy of BC website (www.conservancy.bc.ca) and Nature Trust of BC website (www.naturetrust.bc.ca) as guiding lights to the development of the Burgoyne Valley Park.

Further, I recommend that you discuss with local foresters the incendiary nature of the higher elevations of the park and assess the potential of a major fire on the mountains from the activities of careless hikers.

Further to our submission regarding the development of the Burgoyne Valley Provincial Park at the town hall meeting and our recent email, please note this link to Environment Canada's Species at Risk.

There are apparently 13 species in the Burgoyne Valley listed under the Species at Risk Act.

Shortcut to:

http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/search/speciesDetails_e.cfm?SpeciesID=261

Sincerely,

Further to a previous email regarding the development of the Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, and the incendiary nature of the forested areas, in recent conversation with the Capital Regional District and Search & Rescue, it is highly recommended that BC Parks provide an emergency vehicle (fire truck, ambulance, search and rescue) access to the mountainous south side of the park at the most easterly portion of the park off Burgoyne Bay Road.

Sincerely,

Hi to CCGA Ganges –

I am a member and in communication with FOSSP (Friends of SS Parks) via Nora Layard (nlayard@telus.net).

As you can see below the BC Parks is “planning” for Burgoyne Bay – this is a pretty big deal for SSI. There may well be an opportunity to push for a launching ramp (it already is roughed in by the way), which would be the only good (all tide) one on the west side of the island.

Does the CCGA-P unit 25 wish to support such a facility, for SAR or any other reason? If so, we should draft a note to that effect to m/s Burfield. Let me know what you all feel on this.

We are in support of a launching ramp at Burgoyne Bay, we haven't looked at it in detail, but the availability of such a resource would be a valuable asset to the SAR and PEP resources on the island.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.