

# Mt. Parke and St. John Point Regional Parks Management Planning Process

## Initial Public Participation Report

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Capital Regional District December 2018

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**Mt. Parke Regional Park**



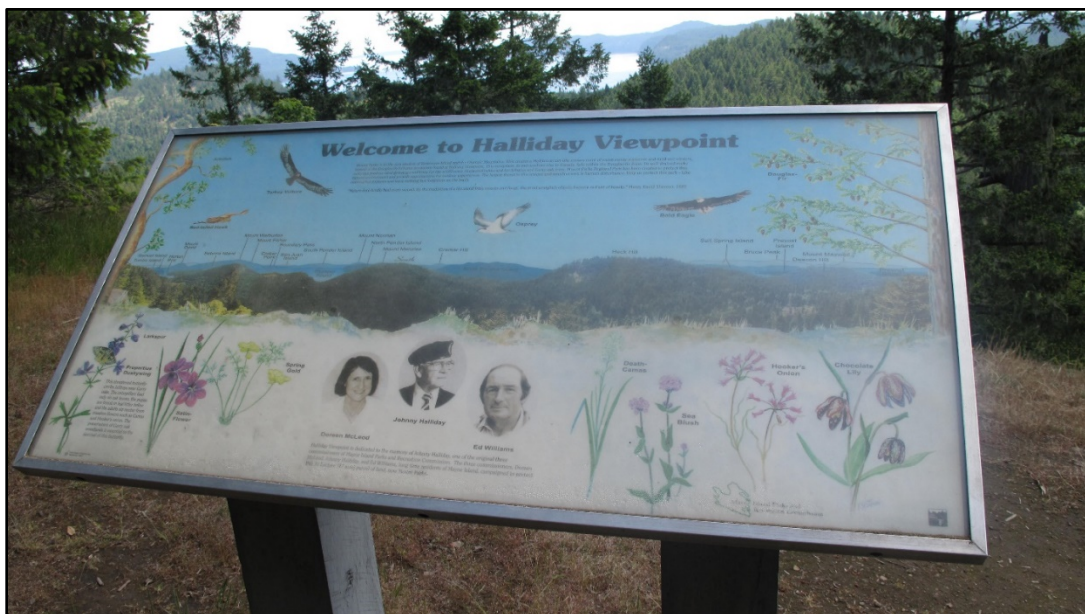
**St. John Point Regional Park Reserve**

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Mt. Parke

## Executive Summary

The Mount Parke and Saint John Point (Mt. Parke and St. John Point) regional parks management planning project was initiated by the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board in September 2018. Since both parks are located on Mayne Island, engagement for each was conducted simultaneously. The initial round of public engagement was held in October and November 2018 to gather information and ideas to help develop the draft plans. The following report summarizes this initial engagement process and the input received.

The public engagement process included opportunities for involvement from First Nations, key stakeholders and the public. The four W̱SÁNEĆ Nations (Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum and Pauquachin) were each invited to participate in this project. Meetings were held with representatives of the Mayne Island Parks and Recreation Commission, which manages a community park adjacent to Mt. Parke, and the Mayne Island Conservancy Society, which undertakes restoration activities at both parks through Partners in Parks Agreements and which holds a conservation covenant on St. John Point lands. Letters were sent to the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee (Island Trust) which is responsible for local land use planning, and to Environment and Climate Change Canada which has certified the park lands as ecologically sensitive through the Ecological Gifts Program as part of the land acquisition.

The public were invited to provide input through an online comment form for each park. Letters were sent to park neighbours and an email was sent to BC Marine Trails, based on a previously expressed interest in St. John Point Regional Park, notifying them of the project and the opportunity to provide input. Eighty-two (82) respondents provided initial input online—47 regarding St. John Point and 35 regarding Mt. Parke.

Some general messages heard through this initial round of engagement included:

- Keep the parks natural. A key goal should be protecting the environment.
- Mount Parke is fine as it is.
- Hiking was the activity noted by most as desired at both sites.

## Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to summarize the initial public participation process used and the responses received.

## The Public Engagement Process

A media release, announcing that the CRD was initiating planning for Mt. Parke and St. John Point, was issued following the September 2018 CRD Board meeting.

A project webpage was posted on the CRD website in September 2018. It provides information about the two parks and about the planning process. An initial input form for each park was added on the project webpage October 1, 2018 seeking public input and local knowledge on a variety of questions. In particular, opinions were requested about what the main management goals should be and what issues needed to be addressed through the management plan. The comment forms were available on the CRD website between October 1 and November 13, 2018.

Signs were installed at entrances to both parks and posters were put up at various island bulletin boards and at the Regional Parks office in October to alert park users and the public about the project, how they could get more information and how to provide input.

An ad was placed in the October and November issues of The Mayneliner publication on Mayne Island.

Letters were sent to four First Nations in October, providing information about the project, inviting their involvement in the planning process and offering a presentation/meeting if desired. **Letters** were sent to key government agencies based on their interests relating to the parks. The Mayne Island Local Trust Committee was notified of both park management planning processes while Environment and Climate Change Canada was informed of the St. John Point project, based on the fact that a portion of the St. John Point acquisition was recognized as an Ecological Gift through the federal program of the same name. Lastly, **letters** were also sent to neighbours in close proximity to the two parks to alert them to the park planning projects.

Meetings were held with representatives of Mayne Island Conservancy Society, which holds a conservation covenant on St. John Point lands and undertakes restoration programs at both Mt. Parke and St. John Point through Partners in Parks Agreements, and with representatives of the Mayne



Island Parks and Recreation Commission, which manages Plumper Pass Community Park adjacent to Mt. Parke.



St. John Point

# Summary of What We Heard

## First Nations

To-date, the four First Nations have not provided input through the initial phase of the management planning process. The draft management plans will be provided to them for review and comment when they are developed and staff will continue to follow up with First Nations representatives.

## Public

Eighty-two (82) respondents provided initial input online—47 regarding St. John Point and 35 regarding Mt. Parke. In general, the majority of people noted that the parks should be kept natural and a key goal should be protecting the environment.

### St. John Point

For St. John Point, the 47 individuals were very engaged and provided over 200 comments.

With respect to management goals, the top suggestions related to:

- Protecting the environmental and natural features (20 comments)
- Developing an official trail system (19 comments)
- Developing basic facilities, such as adequate parking (16 comments) and
- Signing the park (10 comments)

A recurring suggestion was to keep it simple by providing a few well marked designated trails with strategic viewpoint stops and facilities. A smaller number of respondents suggested goals relating to addressing invasive species (5 comments), and the need to provide access/use for diverse groups (4 comments).

When asked what activities were appropriate for St. John Point Regional Park, the top responses were:

- Walking/hiking (44 comments)
- Accessing the beach (41 comments)
- Picnicking (39 comments)



A few people suggested camping (5 comments), walking a dog (3 comments), horseback riding (2 comments), mountain biking or cycling (2 comments), and bird watching and flying a kite (1 each). Note, four (4) respondents specifically opposed camping being provided at the park.

Fifty-two (52) comments were provided regarding issues to be addressed in the St. John Point management plan. Many previously mentioned themes arose, such as:

- Lack of signage (11 comments)
- Impact of invasive species (6 comments)
- Limited parking (5 comments)
- Waste and damage to arbutus trees (4 comments each)
- Lack of facilities (3 comments)
- Fire hazards (3 comments) and
- Lack of clear boundary markings (3 comments)

General comments provided ranged from information regarding the beauty of the park and its importance to the respondent (19 comments), the need for good access road conditions and parking (11 comments), good trail design and availability (10 comments), the desire to keep the park in its current state with minimal changes (9 comments), and the need for signage (7 comments), to offering potable water (2 comments) and concerns regarding fires (1 comment).



St. John Point

## Mt. Parke

With respect to Mt. Parke, the 35 individuals contributed approximately 140 comments. The greatest number of comments relating to management goals suggested the management plan should include goals relating to:

- Protecting the environment and natural features of the park (12 comments)
- Maintaining the existing trail system (11 comments)
- Minimal intervention and keeping the park the way it is (11 comments)

Smaller numbers suggested goals relating to more operational aspects: signage (4 comments), walkways and trails (4 comments), providing garbage bins (4 comments), reducing erosion (3 comments), providing educational opportunities (3 comments), dog management (2 comments), and developing mountain biking opportunities (1 comment).

Many people felt that there were no issues at Mt. Park and nothing needed to be changed. The issues identified as needing to be addressed in Mt. Parke's management plan included:

- Damage to the trails, tree roots and the environment (6 comments)
- Trail maintenance, including water drainage and erosion (5 comments)
- Signage - either too much, not enough, or concerns with how signs were installed (4 comments)
- Inadequate parking (3 comments)
- Safety (3 comments)
- Off-leash dogs (3 comments)
- Need to develop mountain biking opportunities (1 comment)



Mt. Parke

General comments relating to Mt. Parke often related to the beauty and uniqueness of the park and its importance to respondents (13 comments). Others noted the need for formal signage about direction, ecological value of the park, safety and education (4 comments) and the need for places to sit to enjoy the forest and the viewpoint (3 comments).



## Key Stakeholders

The Mayne Island Conservancy Society (the conservancy) has a close working relationship with the CRD through a Partners in Parks Agreement for restoration at both parks and through the acquisition of St. John Point. The Mayne Island Parks & Recreation Commission, another CRD entity, manages Plumper Pass Community Park adjacent to Mt. Parke and a small park near St. John Point. Staff met with three Conservancy representatives and with two Commission representatives about the management needs for both parks. Key comments are noted below.

### St. John Point

- The wildflower area along the east side of the point needs protection – keep the trail up on the rocks for least disturbance. CRD may want to use barriers (e.g., cedar fencing) to demarcate the trail in this area. The conservancy representatives will identify other particularly sensitive sites in the field with CRD staff and will help identify ways to reduce impacts.
- Setting up a park steward program, as in other regional parks, would be good for monitoring and reporting to the CRD.
- Most of the park could be a Natural Area zone with the Environmental Protection zone being used on key areas.
- Follow up with federal Ecological Gifts Program representative for key wording for the context section and expectations relating to the park.
- Identify the Partners in Parks Agreement in the management plan.
- The loop trail should be the main opportunity. A short loop should be developed to the first viewpoint/chair location. A short loop was used by the Conservancy and community members when fundraising for the park acquisition was on-going.
- Kadonaga Bay is the official name of the south facing bay.
- Orchard trees from the Japanese agricultural time exist on-site (cherry, pear and three to four apple). The conservancy representatives would like to see these, or some of them, kept as part of the Japanese heritage.
- Points for the vision might include: conservation, low impact walking, day-use stop for boats at both/either bay, the park is a microcosm of human and ecosystem history of the Gulf Islands.
- The conservancy and others may be interested in providing interpretive programs.
- There may be issues around traffic – be sure people know not to park on the adjacent strata road.

- Hyper abundant deer, both black tail and fallow, are an issue – consider contacting the deer management committee and/or developing strategies for reducing deer.
- Lots of locals with dogs use the park – some issues exist with dogs off leash.
- The viewpoint is a key destination. Do not remove chairs unless they are replaced with new chairs or a bench.
- Picnic tables at Kadonaga Bay beach area would be OK idea.
- Need to determine what the plan is for the former agricultural area – re-naturalize, maintain a portion open for picnic tables, or fully open for active use.
- Former house and woodshed area could provide parking lot area.
- A marina is being built at Anson Road (about ½ km from park) in spring 2019. It will have a picnic site and washroom. It may draw more use to the park.

## Mt. Parke

- The interpretive sign by Kim Road and on the ridge could be updated.
- Developing a consolidated access/trailhead with information kiosk and park signage would be good idea, particularly at Kim Road access.
- Parking on road allowances seems fine.
- Erosion/water drainage is an issue along a portion of the Halliday Ridge Trail (on the east side, up from the junction). Some trail maintenance work is needed but the trail system is ok as is.
- A ‘shortcut’ trail on ridge should be shut down because it is very close to a steep drop off.
- Mention the Partners in Parks Agreement in the management plan.
- Possible vision points might be: heavily used by visitors and residents; best access trail for low mobility users (Lowland Nature Trail); accessible to all (even school and day care use it); viewpoint; central location/easily accessible from village; it’s a gem on island; low-impact park; protecting environment/allowing walking; breathtaking view; highest point on island; longest trail system on island.
- Consider land acquisition – properties linking the two parks. This could be a goal.
- Deer management is an issue.
- An archaeological assessment should be undertaken.
- The conservancy and others may want to provide nature walks/interpretive programs.
- Community groups want to develop a cross-island trail, which would connect to Halliday Ridge Trail by Horton Bay Road/Gallagher Road and continue on to the village.

## Conclusion

Eighty-seven people were directly engaged and provided suggestions and ideas through this initial participation process. All comments received have been reviewed and considered as staff have been drafting the management plans for St. John Point and Mt. Parke regional parks. When draft plans are completed, a second round of public engagement will occur to gauge support for the plans and gather further comments before finalizing them for approval.



Mt. Parke