

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

Draft Management Plans – Public Participation Report

Capital Regional District | June 2019



Mt. Parke Regional Park



St. John Point Regional Park Reserve

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Purpose of this Report.....	3
The Public Engagement Process	4
Summary of What We Heard	5
First Nations	5
Public.....	5
Key Stakeholders	9
Conclusion	9



St. John Point

Executive Summary

The 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 engagement process included opportunities for involvement from First Nations, key stakeholders and the public.

The initial round of public engagement was held in October and November 2018 to gather information and ideas to help develop the draft management plans. A public participation report on the first round of engagement was provided for information to the Parks & Environment Committee in February and to the CRD Board in March 2019.

Following the release of the draft management plans, a second round of engagement was held in May and June 2019 to provide additional opportunities for First Nations and public review and comment. This report summarizes the second round of engagement and the input received.

The four W̱SÁNEĆ Nations (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout and Tseycum) were each provided copies of the draft management plans and invited to meet with CRD staff to discuss them. Follow up in person and by phone was undertaken. To date, no responses have been received from any of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations.

The draft management plans were sent to the Mayne Island Parks and Recreation Commission (which manages a community park adjacent to Mt. Parke), 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) and the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee (Island Trust) (which is responsible for local land use planning). The St. John Point draft management plan was sent to Environment and Climate Change Canada, which certified St. John Point lands as ecologically sensitive through the Ecological Gifts Program as part of the land acquisition, and to the Agricultural Land Commission because two hectares of the park reserve is designated as Agricultural Land Reserve. Comments were received from three stakeholder organizations.

The CRD hosted a public information booth at the Mayne Island Saturday Market that attracted approximately 70 people and an open house at the Mayne Island Community Centre that had 18 people attend. The public were invited to provide input through an online comment form for each park. Letters were sent to park neighbours to apprise them of opportunities for input. Thirty-four comment forms were completed online.

There was a high level of support for the management plans (60-80% on different sections). Some general messages heard from the public through the second round of engagement included:

St. John Point

- The conservation focus is the most important aspect
- Concern exists regarding providing picnic tables and the potential to draw fires, camping and large groups to the park
- Concern exists regarding enforcement (potential for inadequate enforcement)
- Some interest in developing the beach access at Kadonaga Bay for easy kayak launching
- Some desire for stronger fallow deer management wording to be included

Mt. Parke

- Support for keeping the park natural and permitting low impact uses
- Desire for sustainable trails and the management plan to include trail specifications
- Desire for continued land acquisition around the park
- Concern about park-private land boundaries and desire for boundaries to be marked, so public does not use private land
- Concern about climate change and tree die back and desire for tree replacement

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to summarize the public participation process used, particularly for the second round of engagement, and the responses received relating to the draft management plans.

The Public Engagement Process

Notifications

A media release announcing that the CRD was seeking input on the draft management plans for Mt. Parke and St. John Point was issued following the May 2019 CRD Board meeting.

The project webpage was updated on the CRD website in May 2019. It provided information about the two parks, about the planning process, and included the draft plans and a comment form for each of the parks. The comment forms included questions on the level of support for the various sections of the management plans, as well as opportunities to provide additional information through an open-ended question. The comment forms were available on the CRD website between May 9 and June 9, 2019.

Updated project signs were installed at the entrances to both parks and posters advertising the public engagement opportunities were put up at various island locations and at the Regional Parks office.

Ads were placed in the *Mayneliner* publication on Mayne Island and in Black Press publications in greater Victoria in May and June alerting the public to the opportunity to review and comment on the draft management plans.

Letters, providing an update about the project and offering to meet with them, and the draft management plans were hand delivered to four First Nations in May. Follow up in person and by email was undertaken by the CRD First Nations Relations Division.

Letters and draft plans were sent to key government agencies based on their interests relating to the parks. The Mayne Island Local Trust Committee, Mayne Island Parks and Recreation Commission, and Mayne Island Conservancy Society were notified of both park management planning processes. In addition, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the BC Agricultural Land Commission were informed of the St. John Point planning process, since St. John Point was recognized as an Ecological Gift at the time of acquisition through a federal program and a portion of the property is designated provincially as Agricultural Land Reserve.

Lastly, letters were sent to neighbours in close proximity to the two parks to alert them of the draft management plans and the various opportunities to provide input.

Engagement Opportunities

An information booth was hosted at the May 18, 2019 opening day of the Mayne Island Saturday market. Approximately 70 people visited the booth and spoke with Regional Parks staff. Take-away reminder cards, with the webpage address and comment period noted, were handed out to approximately 50 people.

An evening open house was hosted at the Mayne Island community centre on May 28, 2019. Eighteen people attended between 6:00 and 8:30 pm and in-depth conversations were had between staff and many of the attendees.

The online comment form was available through the project webpage on the CRD website for one month (May 9-June 9, 2019). In addition to the comments received at the market booth and open house, 34 respondents provided comments online.

Additionally, three written submissions were received by mail/email and one phone conversation between staff and a representative from an interested organization was held.

It is estimated that 90-95 people participated in this round of engagement in some fashion.

Summary of What We Heard

First Nations

No responses to the request for meetings and no comments were received from any of the four W̱SÁNEĆ Nations that were provided copies of the draft management plans and invited to meet with CRD staff to discuss the draft management plans. Regional Parks Division remains open to working with any of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations on park planning and management as and when there is interest expressed by the Nations. The CRD will continue their efforts to strengthen relationships with and seek involvement from First Nations.

Public

Online Comments

Thirty-four respondents provided comments online: 20 regarding St. John Point and 14 regarding Mt. Parke. In general, in response to the St. John Point draft management plan the majority of people supported the proposed vision (75%), management goals (80%), park zoning (65%), park

development concept (60%) and management actions (60%). Similarly, in response to the Mt. Parke draft management plan, the majority of people supported the proposed vision (71%), management goals (71%), park zoning (71%), park development concept (64%) and management actions (64%).

Individual comments received to an open-ended question seeking specific comments about the draft management plans are summarized as follows:

St. John Point

- Support for the conservation classification, recognition of the ecological importance and sensitivity of the property (four individuals)
- Desire to keep park as primitive as possible with minimal facilities (two individuals)
- Support for bike racks at parking area (three individuals) and desire for year-round parking for at least 20 vehicles (two individuals)
- Desire for easy kayak launching being created at Kadonaga Bay (two individuals)
- Desire for mobility-impaired adaptations on north trail leg to easterly beach
- Desire for signage to alleviate concerns regarding unwanted public access to adjacent private lands
- Desire for agricultural land reserve area to be recognized as a meadow, agricultural use to be interpreted and not to allow this area to become reforested
- Desire for a toilet by the easterly bay and closer to Kadonaga Bay than at parking lot (two individuals)
- Concerns regarding providing picnic tables/picnic site and group functions potentially increasing risk of fire, camping, garbage, and partying (four individuals)
- Concerns regarding increasing numbers of fallow (non-native) deer and the need for clear deer management direction in the management plan (three individuals)
- Concerns regarding climate change and impacts on trees
- Concern regarding potential marine damage from boats anchoring in the bays
- Concerns regarding access road width

Mt. Parke

- Support for keeping the park natural and use low impact
- Clarification of forest type and use of radar station/helipad as lookout (note: outside of regional park).
- Desire for additional land acquisition

- Desire for park boundaries by private lands to be marked to dissuade visitors from walking/camping on private lands
- Desire for sustainable trail specifications and ensuring trails are maintained in sustainable manner (e.g., steepness, trail surfacing, water runoff)
- Concerns about climate change causing tree die back and desire for replacement trees

Market Booth and Open House Comments

Approximately 70 people attended the May 18 market booth and 18 people attended the May 28 open house. Most of the individuals indicated they would provide official comments through the online comment form. In general, the following types of comments were received at these two in-person sessions:

St. John Point

- Appreciation was expressed that archaeological research would be undertaken.
- More detailed information was provided on the Japanese family that owned the property.
- Desire for bike racks at the park entrances (be sure they are noted in the plans).
- Desire for kayak accessibility at Kadonaga Bay, in particular for launching from the park.
- Recognize the former agricultural landscape as a meadow. It is well used as a wildlife corridor (mink, otter use it). Need meadows, as well as forest, in the island environment.
- Next-door neighbours will be impacted by all the use.
- Wildlife, such as heron, are being impacted by visitors and dogs. Dogs are chasing wildlife in and into the water. Ensure dogs are on-leash.
- The proposed picnic tables will attract camping, fires and stoves, garbage and constant noise and will diminish the conservancy aspect of the protected area. Take these out of the plan – they are not provided in other conservation parks managed by CRD.
- Leave the picnicking to social parks rather than conservation parks.
- Don't allow large groups at this park. They should be going to more appropriate island parks (Dinner Bay, Georgina Point).
- Need to protect the area more as a conservancy than a park.
- What is process if someone is camping illegally? – there is no RCMP or CRD enforcement on island. We are worried about after hours use.
- Put property boundary signs up so public doesn't access the adjacent strata development, particularly by/from the east-facing beach.

Mt. Parke

- Root heave/trail compaction is a problem along the trail from Montrose Road and is particularly a problem for seniors using the park. This should be fixed. Extend/build more boardwalk all the way to the toilet building.

Other Comments

- Concerns were expressed regarding the width of the public road and the volume of traffic expected on the public road. Concerns regarding the use of the property as a park rather than for individual residential use. Concern that busloads of visitors will be coming to the park along a narrow road.
- Dogs under control is favourable to dogs on-leash (shows requirement for owner to take responsibility and manage their dogs). Some people will not adhere to dogs on-leash requirement.
- Information was provided regarding the Kadonaga and Sasaki families and the Eddy family's acquisition of the property and use of the land to provide more accurate context for the St. John Point management plan.
- Concern about parking on-site, given a 1990s court case relating to the Channel View strata development that precluded further development at the east end of Horton Bay Road. Concern relating to on-street parking along Horton Bay Road.
- Concern regarding increased traffic on Horton Bay Road, a narrow, single lane roadway.
- We are excited about the CRD's proposed approach to managing the St. John's Regional Park, as outlined in the Draft Management Plan.
- Put signage indicating which way the trails go (so hikers do not go on adjacent private lands), especially at the proposed east facing beach where we already experience numerous occasions of hikers continuing to walk along the beach and cut up through our property toward Channel View Way.
- Concern about over population of deer, especially non-natives, and the impact on vegetation.
- St. John Point is well situated as a site from which to base some ocean canoeing courses. It would be good to allow paddlers to camp at St John Point. The bay is suitable for landings and the field above would be suitable to small tents that paddlers use. The only requirement would be a toilet. Running water would be desirable but not essential.

- The BC Marine Trails Association would like camping to be provided at St. John Point to alleviate marine safety concerns with existing distances between camping areas along their marine trails in the southern Gulf Islands.

Key Stakeholders

Key comments received from the stakeholders are noted below.

- The Mayne Island Local Trust Committee had no concerns about the management plans in general. One trustee voiced concern regarding the issue of fallow deer not being adequately addressed and questioned the lack of First Nations input.
- The Mayne Island Conservancy Society discussed the draft management plans on June 14 at a board meeting and staff will provide a written submission before June 30.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada staff have confirmed they intend to provide comments by June 30.

Conclusion

A number of key stakeholders and approximately 90-95 people were engaged through this second round of participation, and many provided comments on the draft management plans. The majority of respondents supported the draft management plans as presented, with some noting concerns and/or providing comments and suggestions for improvements. All comments received will be reviewed and considered as Regional Parks staff finalize the management plans for St. John Point and Mt. Parke Regional Parks.