

Friends of Island View Beach

May 20, 2016

CRD staff will be at Island View Beach on Saturday, May 21st from 10-3pm to get feed back to the CRD draft plan to replace the existing park bylaw.

Over 4,000 people have signed the petition telling the CRD to leave the park alone. If you are opposed to the CRD's proposals, it is very important you find and speak with these CRD staff tomorrow – probably around the Gazebo area – and insist they record your objections.

Following are our notes on the draft proposals by the CRD:

The process began last year with an environmental assessment by the CRD of what is in the park. That was supposed to be *"factual, technical and scientific"*, but was comprised instead of elements that were fabricated, exaggerated, misleading, and half truths. Two key reports were suppressed by the CRD, and even after the CRD was shown the errors they did not change their public presentations or web site.

We wrote to the CRD all through 2015 warning that their presentation was misleading the public and that they should pause and check their facts before proceeding. The CRD refused.

<http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/letters-to-the-crd-in-2015.html>

We compiled a list of the 6 known "at risk" species in the park from the published literature. 5 are sand based and are mostly in the narrow sandy area of the north east, and with one exception are not threatened in the park. The 6th is a bog spider found in a wet area in the west and not threatened. See <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/environment.html> The CRD claim there are 33 species at risk at Island View Beach was a gross exaggeration.

This is a summary of some of the CRD's proposals

1. To reduce the public recreation area to 1.6% of the park. The CRD says it is 6.6% but that includes the campground and two unuseable areas on Island View Road. The useable public area would be only 1.6%
2. To force the public to stay on the paved trails, and not go on the beaten trails that have been used for generations, including the north east trail to the beach.
3. To ban horses
4. To force dogs to be on leash and on trail everywhere in the park except for a fenced dog pound
5. They intend to lobby the province to restrict ("regulate") dogs on the beach
6. To do a massive "coastal sand dune restoration" from the campground to the Tsawout boundary – no scientific evidence given to show the need for this, or the cost.
7. To close off 69% of the park as an "Environmental Protection Zone" " including most of the grasslands and the forested hillside. **No valid scientific evidence has been given to support this. No evidence has been shown that the public use of these areas for the last 50 years has damaged the environment.**

The CRD has been making this claim about their proposals:

"Visitors would be allowed in the same areas they are now, such as the trails, the campground and day-use areas. In fact, the draft plan proposes extending the trail system."

This is untrue.

Island View Beach Regional Park currently has its own bylaw, specific to just this park.

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/parks-pdf/management-plan-1989-.pdf?sfvrsn=0> Under this existing bylaw, visitors may go anywhere in the park, and off trail. Dogs may be off leash and off trail anywhere in the west.

Under the new CRD proposals, visitors would be restricted to just the few CRD paved trails, and dogs would have to be on leash and on trail. The impact of the CRD proposals can be seen from this map – look how much of the park the public would be excluded from by being forced to stay only on the CRD paved trails.

The so called “new trail” they propose in green mostly exists already as a beaten trail.

What the CRD don’t disclose is they propose to close trails the public use, in particular the one at the north end leading to the beach.



The mosquito drainage ditches, mosquito control program and the berm

Any user of the park before 2012 will remember the terrible mosquitoes. These arose because the CRD had failed for years to do their duty under the park bylaw and keep the mosquito drainage ditches clean. 800 people signed a petition in 2011 calling on the CRD to clean these ditches, but CRD staff did not. Eventually in October 2011, Central Saanich cleaned the CRD’s ditches, and the mosquito problem was solved immediately.

Some of the most outrageous statements made by the CRD in the public presentations have been about the mosquito drainage ditches and the berm. They say in their proposal that these will be maintained, but they included weasel clauses to say they would be monitored to assess their impact on the hydrology etc – despite the fact the ditches have been there for 80 years. These weasel clauses mean the CRD staff can claim in the future that the drainage ditches, mosquito control program and the berm are terrible and must be removed to save the environment. There must be an unconditional commitment to maintain the mosquito drainage ditches, the mosquito control program, and the berm.

Rising sea level. In 2009, the Ministry of Environment told CRD staff

“Sea level rise due to global warming may threaten the ecosystems It is important to integrate climate change into management considerations ...”

And in January 2015, the CRD received and then suppressed, a report that predicts Island View Beach will be under sea water in 35 years. <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/sea-level-rise-2050.html>

The threat of the park being flooded by the sea in the near future is very real. In December 2015 waves were breaking over top of the sea wall to the south of Island View Road, which is more than 2m higher than the land behind. <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/flooding-potential-winter-2015-16.html>

Rising sea levels will wipe out the park, yet the CRD has no plan to save it. Instead they suppressed that report and are proposing to ban the public from the majority of the park; to spend massive amounts of money on an undocumented sand restoration project, installing boardwalks – all for a park they don't seem interested in saving. That money should be spent elsewhere in the parks system, not thrown into the sea at Island View Beach.

This is a draft interim plan just like 2013 – the main stuff comes after the consultation is over

In 2013 the CRD released what they called a “draft interim plan” in which the major items were to be done after the public consultation was over. This 2016 CRD plan is the same – they propose to do the key elements after the public consultation is over – just like 2013, this is only a partial plan.

These are extracts from the CRD material:

“The draft plan proposes to assess implications of climate change/sea level rise on visitor facilities at the park and determine long-term actions.”

“The draft plan proposes to review operational practices for waste management, consider recycling bins in the day-use area, develop and implement a sign plan for the park, and develop an integrated bylaw compliance strategy with other levels of government.”

“The draft plan proposes to develop an education and communications strategy, and seek interest and involvement of the Tsawout First Nation community in education and interpretive activities.”

“The draft Park Development Concept summarizes the general direction for how the park will be managed and developed.

- *Study and collaborate on a dog management strategy”*

All these are important and should be brought forward for public review now, yet they are being proposed to be done after the public consultation is over. When you remove these, what is left in the plan other than to restrict people, dogs and horses, and spend massive amounts of money on staffs sand box?

We are asked repeatedly what is the motive of the CRD, yet after 6 years we still have no idea. They speak loudly of environmental conservation, yet anyone familiar with the park will see there has been no attempt to control the rampant invasive species. In July 2014 a report commissioned by the CRD on the one threatened plant in the park, the contorted-pod evening-primrose, made a series of recommendations to save this plant – yet none of the recommendations were carried out by the CRD. They speak of the need for a new plan for environmental conservation, yet the existing park bylaw has strong environmental powers, including the power to close off areas that contain “*unique, rare or endangered plant species*”. As mentioned above, the CRD has done nothing about rising sea level, yet when the park is flooded with sea water that will kill all the endangered species. Looking to actions instead of words, it is clear the CRD has no genuine care for endangered species in the park. So what is their motivation in pushing this new plan? We don't know.

There is no substance or science to the CRD proposals, and nothing to justify the plan to restrict people, dogs and horses.

The CRD is throwing everything they have to force their plan through. **If you value the park and your right to use it, you need to speak out and encourage others to as well. Find the CRD staff at the park on Saturday between 10-3pm and tell them you objections and insist they record them.**

If you have not signed the petition telling the CRD to leave the park alone, please do so.

The online petition: <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/>

The paper petition: **Michells Market & Firbank Farm on Island View Road.**