

Kim Parsons

From: Dennis Perry [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 28, 2022 7:09 AM
To: corporate
Cc: Arthur De Jong; Cathy Jewett; John Grills; Ralph Forsyth; Jen Ford; Duane Jackson
Subject: BC Parks in Violation of Park Mgt Plan & Park Act
Attachments: Letter to Premier-BC Parks in Violation.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the RMOW. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify that the sender is legitimate and know the content is safe.

Mayor and Council,

The attached letter makes a plea to our Premier.

Dennis
Friends of Spruce Lake

From: Dennis Perry [REDACTED]
Sent: April 26, 2022 12:16 PM
To: 'corporate@whistler.ca' <corporate@whistler.ca>
Cc: 'adejong@whistler.ca' <adejong@whistler.ca>; 'cjewett@whistler.ca' <cjewett@whistler.ca>; 'jgrills@whistler.ca' <jgrills@whistler.ca>; 'rforsyth@whistler.ca' <rforsyth@whistler.ca>; 'jford@whistler.ca' <jford@whistler.ca>; 'djackson@whistler.ca' <djackson@whistler.ca>
Subject: Spruce Lake-Treasure it/not Ruin it

To Whistler Mayor and Council,

The wilderness values of Spruce Lake and South Chilcotin Mountains Park are at great risk from BC Park's ranger station development plans. For those of you who are unaware, South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park and the adjacent Big Creek Park (100 km N of Whistler as the crow flies) are Whistler's number one "go to" places for wilderness mountain biking, back packing and horse packing. Along with Utah it offers possibly the best single track wilderness mountain biking in NA. Spruce Lake is the jewel of SCM Park. From the nearest forestry road it's a 4-5 hour hike or horseback ride, or a 2 hour plus bike ride.

I am asking you to add "BC Parks development plans at Spruce Lake in South Chilcotin Mountains Park" to the agenda of your next Council/Board meeting. Please note the message below and the attachments. A big part of Whistler's great success is its proximity to some of the most spectacular wilderness on our planet, allowing people to recreate not only in a managed resort setting but also to experience the more extreme aspects of mother nature. Wilderness tourism is extremely important to Whistler's economy. However we must protect these natural values and not allow them to deteriorate. Assuming you feel the same way I am asking Council to make a strong no response to our provincial government regarding BC Parks very ill-advised location for the Park ranger station they plan on building on the NE shore of Spruce Lake this coming June. There are far better sites.

It seems the work of protecting our environment is never done. Anything you can do in this situation would be very helpful and I would greatly appreciate a copy of what you might send to the BC Government in this regard. Whistler needs to protect its wilderness tourism and our Premier and Minister of Environment need to hear that. Please read the following essential message.

Thank you for your support,

Dennis Perry [REDACTED]
Friends of Spruce Lake
6129 Bonnie Bay Place
West Vancouver, BC V7W 2V8

Spruce Lake and South Chilcotin Mountains/Big Creek Parks under Siege by BC Parks
We need your help!

This June BC Parks plans on building a ranger station on the NE shore of remote Spruce Lake, the jewel of South Chilcotin Mountains Park and a 4 ½ hour hike from the nearest forestry road. Until now the east side of the Lake has been untouched, like the south and virtually all of the west side. This building would be the canary in the coal mine for not just Spruce Lake but also for SCM Park. There are three dealbreaker reasons why this should not be allowed to happen. Any one of the three is more than enough reason to change the site but to date the many letters and phone calls to BC Parks have not been enough for Parks to reconsider. This is in spite of the unanimous support for a new location from everyone who knows of the situation:

1. A building at this site will be defacing one of BC's most beautiful wilderness lakes. Call it BC Parks sprawl, infrastructure creep and complete disregard for wildlife (all in violation of the South Chilcotin Mountains/Big Creek Parks Management Plan's commitments and promises). With this initiative Parks would do more to erode the wilderness values of Spruce Lake and its surroundings than any action since the 1950s. In the 1950s there were three cabins on the lake and if you don't count Chilcotin Holiday's outfitter camp there are still only three cabins on the Lake.....that is until now. Making a clearing large enough to accommodate BC Park's plan for the second largest building on the Lake and a helipad is a ruinous decision and would destroy the Spruce Lake I have known since my first time into the Lake in 1962 (and every year since). At the moment its pretty much in that same unchanged state from the 1950s. Page 41 of the Plan ironically states that "park management will not introduce any developments that will take away from the scenic backdrop of the Lake". This pending travesty should be discussed right at the top of the Ministry of Environment to make sure this type of government imposed erosion of our wilderness lakes does not become a de facto BC Park's practice in BC's other wilderness parks.
2. BC Parks has completely failed to abide by its promises and obligations to consult with the stakeholders on virtually all material Park matters as stated in the SCMP Management Plan (attached). This is a breach of public trust. Page 24 of the Plan states Park's commitment to "meet collectively with stakeholders on a regular basis (at least annually)" so that "this group would be active participants in the stewardship of the park and in providing advice on park management". BC Parks has not called even one stakeholder meeting. If there had been we would have collectively decided on an optimal off the Lake location for the structure, rather than Parks making a poorly conceived decision in 2009 to create a shocking clearcut (in process of healing), now to be enlarged significantly and developed, which is against the public interest and against the Plan. Page 28 and other pages state more of the same regarding BC Park's

promise to consult stakeholders and public interest groups and emails from Parks as far back as 2009 state the same.

Ironically Volker Michelfelder, the Regional Director of BC Parks who we are trying to communicate with, is making all the decisions and he is also the person who signed the Management Plan.

BC Parks is also contravening the Park Act as the only explanation we have had from Parks as to why they chose this site are verbal statements that it is away from the public campsite which will provide privacy and less pressure to be involved with the public. This is completely at odds with the duty of Park rangers as per the Park Act.

3. The third dealbreaker is that from every practical viewpoint this location is absolutely the last place you would want to locate a ranger station. The logistics make no sense. There are far better locations. Note the attached Site Diagram and Site Comparison. Both show how truly illogical Park's proposed site is. It's a long way from the public campsite, the bear bins, the firewood, the BC Park's dock, the public outhouses etc. As you can see the only short route to Park's proposed building site is by walking along the water and across private property, Lot 8061, which is where two of the three cabins on the lake are. Parks is creating a private property buffer because they have stated they want privacy. The other route from Park's big new dock, which you see on the diagram, is to boat over but they have told us very strongly that they would not be putting in a dock at the new site. We don't believe this..... and the public does not have boats.

I have attached the Management Plan and have highlighted the many key points to make it easy to follow. If a column of comments appears to the right, I would simply maximize the Plan and every time you want to see our comments regarding a highlight just click on the hamburger box that shows beside the highlight. Use the same approach for the highlights from the Park Act website as it states that the responsibility of a Park ranger is to liaise with and help the public.

There is also another big issue here. Blackcomb Helicopters has just recently bought out Tyax Adventures, the dominant wilderness tourism operator in SCM/Big Creek Parks'. This seems to be a conflict of interests given BC Park's number one obligation is to protect our Parks' natural values. At the very least this takeover should be subject to consultation with the public (mandatory if this were happening on crown land) and should only be approved based on the current status quo use of helicopters in the Parks and no new heli concessions. Again the lack of consultation is in violation of the Plan. The government biologists do not even have a say. What is at risk are the Spruce Lake grizzly and one of the largest and most important mountain goat herds in SW BC. It is about 100 strong and is one of the few herds which is growing. At times the herd can be seen in just a one hour hike from Spruce Lake. California bighorn sheep also inhabit the ridge just above Spruce Lake.

BC Parks is running amok in SCM/Big Creek Parks and this needs to come to light. Its very much a provincial issue and our government needs to be held to account.

If you support the wilderness values and beauty of Spruce Lake and South Chilcotin Mountains Park then please write to our Premier and Minister of Environment and express your opinion that BC Parks must heed the many promises and commitments it makes in the SCM/Big Creek Parks Management Plan to consult with stakeholders. This would allow the public a voice regarding a helicopter company becoming the dominant wilderness tourism operator in the Parks' and a big re-think of the location of a new Park ranger station at Spruce Lake.

Dennis Perry [REDACTED]
Friends of Spruce Lake