

Dear Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to present last week on behalf of the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia and for your follow-up question regarding deferred maintenance examples. Please find in this document some specific examples of deferred maintenance in the BC Parks system.

In a permanent institution such as BC Parks, deferring maintenance is not financially responsible for a number of reasons:

- 1) Often, the cost of the repair grows if the maintenance is deferred. As an example, a clogged culvert can be fixed in a short amount of time by a Park Ranger. However, if the culvert remains clogged throughout the rainy season, the trail may wash out. At that point, new material may need to be brought in or that section of trail may need to be closed and a detour constructed.
- 2) When the park system is in a damaged state, it can create additional costs or result in lost revenue. As examples, poor signage can result in an increase in SAR operations and trail damage can result in fewer tourist visits.

The FMCBC has been running a photo campaign in 2016 to ask our members to send in photos of damage that they see in BC Parks. Many of the examples in this document were from that campaign and you can visit our Facebook page to see a larger collection.

This document is not a comprehensive library of deferred maintenance in the BC Parks system. Instead, it provides a glimpse into conditions that are becoming increasingly typical.

Our concern is that BC Parks appears to be getting further and further behind on maintenance and the resulting financial liability is growing larger each year. This does not appear to be accounted for.

We urge the committee to recommend that strong action is taken in the 2017 budget to properly address these growing maintenance concerns.

Thank you sincerely for taking the time to consider these concerns.

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FMCBC Volunteer

## **Categories of Maintenance**

The following is a list of common maintenance needs in BC Parks. It is not comprehensive.

### **Trails:**

- Drainage ditches and culverts often get clogged or filled and need to be cleared to prevent trail washouts.
- Park visitation numbers have been increasing and when a trail experiences increased use, some sections may need to be hardened to prevent erosion. As an example, short sections of stairs or boardwalks may need to be added.
- Deadfall needs to be routinely cleared and brush needs to be routinely trimmed.
- Any structures on the trail such as bridges, boardwalks and stairs need to be inspected and repaired or they can be dangerous for visitors.

### **Signage:**

- When signs fall over and trail markers fall off, they need to be re-erected. This may not seem like a big deal at first until you arrive at an intersection in the middle of the forest and can't figure out which way the arrows were supposed to point before the sign fell down.
- Sign surfaces often degrade with weather and time and need to be replaced.
- Signs need to be updated to reflect changes.

### **Facilities:**

- Roofs suffer damage from weather events and age and need to be repaired or the facility they cover will be severely damaged. When the roofs over outhouses are damaged, it can result in flooding of the outhouse which is a serious problem.
- Painting/staining is required to protect wood and to cover up vandalism.
- There are many other types of standard facility maintenance.

### **Access:**

- Roads need basic maintenance. When that maintenance is deferred, it means that some vehicles will no longer be able to travel on the road. Some areas of BC Parks are no longer accessible to families that do not own more expensive high clearance 4WD vehicles.

### **Online assets:**

- Online maps must be kept up to date to reflect actual trail locations, rules, etc.

**Sample photos of maintenance issues in BC Parks**

Footbed on Bedwell Trail in Strathcona Park



Cathedral Provincial Park. One of over 130 uncleared trees on the trail.



## Cypress Provincial Park

The Friends of Cypress Provincial Park volunteer group are very active in making ongoing trail improvements in this park and will be continuing their work next year. It is a challenge for a volunteer organization to stay ahead of the very high levels of use; especially in a park with such an extensive network of trails.



Inadequate and unsafe trail structure in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park



E.C. Manning Provincial Park Lightning Trail



A broken metal step on the Bedwell Trail



The metal staircase on the Bedwell Trail has a broken step from the welds breaking. It has been temporarily band-aided with a piece of wood used to brace the step and g-clamps holding it into place. It is structurally unsafe.



A bridge over Volcano Creek on the Elk River Trail that has been neglected for several years after a tree came down across it



Collapsing boardwalk at Arnica Lake



Broken signage near Arnica Lake (photo by Karl Stevenson)



Facedown information kiosk at a BC Parks Protected Area called Lacoma Lake, between Peachland and West Kelowna. (photo by Westbank Chainsaw Crew via the South Okanagan Trail Alliance)



Lacoma Lake (photo by Westbank Chainsaw Crew via the South Okanagan Trail Alliance)



Strathcona Park (photo by Karl Stevenson)



One of many campfires due to lack of public education on the very long-lasting, ugly, and destructive effects of campfires in Strathcona Park. (photo by Karl Stevenson)



Don't adjust your specs! This is the sign for a feature trail within Strathcona Park: Flower Ridge Trail. The sign has been fading for years and is now almost entirely illegible. Other signs in the park are in similar condition. (Photo by Mandy Vaughan)



Extreme erosion on steep trails in Golden Ears. (photo by Andy Gibb)



Braiding on the Heather Trail in Manning Provincial Park. The main trail is rough and can be wet, so many hikers simply step off onto the meadows. (photo by Andy Gibb)



Dodgy boardwalk at the end of Lindeman Lake In Chilliwack Lake Provincial Park. This trail also has some bridgeless creek crossings, which can be tricky in high water. (photo by Andy Gibb)



Decrepit infrastructure on the Upper Shannon Falls/Sea to Summit trail. This trail needs a lot of work. (photo by Andy Gibb)



The 'open concept' loo at Mowich Camp, Manning Park



Garibaldi Park website warns visitors of the dangers of attempting the Singing Pass Trail. The Singing Pass Trail is a very important trail for accessing Garibaldi Provincial Park and should be maintained to a high standard.

**CAUTION – The Singing Pass Trail is hazardous in many sections. Use caution when crossing Harmony Creek (as there is no bridge) and at the old road slump**

A hiker attempts to navigate a particularly dangerous part of the Singing Pass trail. When the creek is higher, this section becomes impassable and access is cut off.



The road for accessing Valhalla Provincial Park is almost blocked by a boulder. Larger vehicles will have a challenging time navigating around the boulder without falling off the soft shoulder.



Vandalism on an outhouse on the Singing Pass Trail means that it is no longer a family friendly destination.



Trails that used to be accessible by horses in E.C Manning Park can no longer be used as a result of a lack of maintenance.

### Horse Use

- **As of November 2015:** Horses are **not recommended on trails previously designated for horse use** within the park as bridges, boardwalks and other structures **are not in a condition to support the weight of a horse.**
- **As of May 6, 2015:** Please be aware, due to unstable terrain, the **Skagit Bluffs trail is closed to horses.**
- **As of October 31, 2015:** Please be aware, due to bridge instability, the **Monument 83 trail is closed to horses at 5km.**

The online Cypress Provincial Park map has errors; including an indication that snowmobiles can be used in an area where they actually can not be used.

The Friends of Cypress Provincial Park have created a printed map for the summer months that corrects some of these errors and this was done largely at their own expense.



Cheakamus Lake Trail – Road requires high clearance vehicle due to a lack of grading.

CHEAKAMUS LAKE TRAIL						
Garibaldi Park is a user-maintained park. Garbage is a problem. Garbage removal service is not available. Please help by packing out all your garbage and any garbage left by others. Please use the outhouses provided. Toilet paper is not supplied.						
Dogs and fires are prohibited in Garibaldi Park						
Trail	Estimated Distance one-way(KM)	Estimated time one-way (hours)	Estimated Elevation gained (meters)	Trail Difficulty	Trail safety Information	Trail Condition
Hwy 99 to the parking lot 7 km	7 km			Rough gravel road with potholes	<p><b>CAUTION: Road has rutted sections. Vehicle with clearance is recommended</b></p> <p>Camping fees must be paid before entering the Park.</p> <p>Pre-pay via;  <a href="https://secure.camis.com/Discovercamping/">https://secure.camis.com/Discovercamping/</a></p> <p>NOTE: There are no cash payment options</p>	OPEN