



Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

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28 November 2014

Vicki Haberl,
Planning Section Head,
B.C. Parks,
South Coast Region.

Via Email: Vicki.Haberl@gov.bc.ca

Re: Pinecone Burke Park Management Planning

Dear Ms. Haberl,

As you know, the FMCBC represents the interests of 33 non-motorized outdoor recreation clubs which have a combined membership of approximately 5000 individual members. For over 40 years we have been promoting non-motorized back country recreation, particularly to improve trails and access, and have participated in many land use decision-making processes.

From our members' perspective, Pinecone Burke Park is less popular now than in the past due to access difficulties and lack of facilities in the park. If park access and facilities were improved this park could become more popular as it is closer to the eastwards shifting of the population centre of Metro Vancouver, and could relieve some of the crowding problems which occur in the North Shore mountain parks and Golden Ears Park. When compared with other parks of southwest BC, this park does not feature as a regular destination on most of our member club trip schedules and we feel this is due to some of the practical park management issues that require addressing. These are summarized immediately below, and discussed in more detail later.

- a) Trailhead access, trailhead facilities and parking
- b) Trail maintenance neglect, and poor signage and markers
- c) Sea-to-Sky LRMP Winter Recreation Backcountry Map
- d) Existing cabins
- e) Motorized recreation
- f) Mountain Biking Trails
- g) Float planes landing on lakes

Park access and trail quality are major concerns. As most trailheads are at low elevation, trails to high points are quite long, often steep, poorly maintained and lacking markers and signage. At the south end of the park, the trailheads on Harper Road and Quarry Road have no toilet facilities and very little parking space. Crossing Grant Narrows to access Widgeon Creek and the trails beyond requires a boat, but at least there is an outhouse and good parking at this location. The north end of the park, which has higher and more scenic terrain, is usually accessed via the relatively low elevation Mamquam Forest Service Road. Trails from this road are very limited and not well marked or maintained. The so-called Fools Gold Trail is a 1990's route (not a trail)



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running between north and south ends of the park through relatively unspoiled terrain. While this trail could become a more popular extended multi-day backpacking trip, it would require a lot of signage, trail work, building wilderness campsites and installing bridges to make it more user-friendly.

It should be emphasized that the Sea-to-Sky LRMP winter backcountry recreation map recognizes two major backcountry ski routes from the Mamquam valley into the park, but no major snowmobile routes. Consequently, the park zoning should recognize this and establish and enforce non-motorized use only, so as to protect these and other backcountry ski opportunities in the park.

We understand that the old cabins in the park pre-date the creation of the park and are accessed year round by rough roads which are commonly used by trucks, motorized trail bikes and snowmobiles. We feel very strongly that this motorized access to the cabin areas should be strictly controlled, and that there should be no motorized recreation beyond the immediate cabin areas. Also, we understand that the cabins have existing limited tenures and that they are removed if they fall into disuse and/or require extensive renovations. It is important that no more private cabins be built and this policy should eventually reduce or eliminate motorized activity in the park. In addition, the cabin area and other areas of the park have many mountain bike trails which are acceptable to most hikers, and we feel there should be careful consideration given to building new mountain biking trails to prevent damage to wilderness areas and to limit conflicts with hiker user groups.

Float planes sometime land on the lakes and some restrictions on air access should be imposed if this becomes a problem for wildlife such as mountain goats, or if it frequently disturbs fishing. Traditional aboriginal hunting is allowed in the park, but we feel that non-aboriginal hunting should be banned. While the noise from the gun club can be heard from within the park near the Harper road entrance, we feel the new residents in the nearby houses will probably deal with the noise issue.

We thank you for providing us with this opportunity to present our views on this matter, and look forward to being informed of further developments in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Brian Wood,

Co-Chair, Recreation and Conservation Committee,
Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC