

## **Singing Pass Parking Proposal**

September 20, 2017

Approved by Southwest B.C. Recreation and Conservation Committee, Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C. We will incorporate more detailed information as it becomes available.

A number of factors show that action on the Singing Pass access issue is urgently needed.

- Huge increases in park visitation in Sea to Sky region. Inadequate parking and trail head infrastructure to accommodate that use.
- Lack of public parking and overnight parking in Whistler. Recent parking bylaws enacted by Resort Municipality of Whistler in July 2017 exacerbate the parking problem for park visitors.
- Construction of three Spearhead huts means increased overnight parking capacity is required. The first new hut at Russet Lake, above Singing Pass, is scheduled to open in 2019. Construction began in summer 2017. Park users need a secure place to park overnight.
- Existing access road is geologically unstable and access is blocked at Whistler village with a gate. Repairs are reported to be costly.
- Mountain bike terrain park over public road causes safety concerns with hikers.
- Long approach on relatively boring logging road means many park users are unable to enjoy the natural beauty of Garibaldi Park.

### **Our proposal**

- Work with Whistler Sliding Centre, Whistler Blackcomb and Innergex to obtain private vehicle access to their right-of-ways on the north side of Fitzsimmons Creek.
- Upgrade the industrial road on the north side of Fitzsimmons Creek between the Whistler Sliding Centre and the Innergex independent power project (IPP) intake to allow for private vehicle use.
- Construction of car parking lot at the IPP intake. This is 5 kilometers up Fitzsimmons Creek from Whistler village and adjacent to the park boundary. Actual number of stalls has an upper limit determined by the physical site characteristics. Suggested minimum number of stalls for first year is to be the same as other Garibaldi Park trailheads at Garibaldi Lake, Diamond Head and Cheakamus. Recommended number of stalls should be larger due to current trends in backcountry usage, Whistler's success as a destination

resort for outdoor pursuits and construction of the Spearhead huts.

- Build trail head facilities such as washroom, outhouse, lighting, information kiosk, garbage facility.
- Free parking.
- Improved signage from Highway 99.
- New footbridge across Fitzsimmons Creek to connect with existing Singing Pass trail on the south side.
- Clearing the existing, overgrown road between the proposed footbridge and the existing Singing Pass trail.
- Landscaping of parking lot using native species to make it more attractive to visitors and to improve the view from the Peak 2 Peak gondola.
- Fencing of the scrap yard known as the Boneyard to provide security and public safety.
- Regular municipal bus service every hour between 7 AM and 9 PM with 30 minute frequency 9 AM to 5 PM during high summer and during daylight hours for the remaining year May through October.
- Bike storage and/or locking facilities at the trailhead.
- Regular maintenance and patrolling by a facility operator.
- Design work begins in winter 2018. Construction completes summer 2018.
- Updated BC Parks web page.

**Additional options to consider**

- Widening and paving of the four to five kilometer access road which is currently gravel surface, one lane with pullouts.
- Vehicle bridge at the IPP upstream facility to provide additional parking spaces on the south side of Fitzsimmons Creek.
- Winter snow removal to extend operating season from May through October to year round.
- As the existing IPP road uses the right of way of the Whistler Sliding Centre, due to

operational concerns during sliding centre events, the building of a public bypass road around the sliding centre right of way.

- Paid parking (e.g. \$5 or \$10/day) to be used for maintenance of trailhead services etc.
- Annual pass similar to Northwest Forest Pass in Washington state.
- Reinstate road access through the south side slump area to the original parking lot or create a new parking lot before the slump.
- Relocate the Singing Pass trail to follow Fitzsimmons Creek until Harmony Creek is crossed then ascend to the existing trail east of Harmony Creek. (The existing crossing of Harmony Creek has seriously deteriorated and is now possibly dangerous to use.)
- Brush clearing and stand thinning to reduce fire risk noting the Mountain Ash conservation zone between the road and Fitzsimmons Creek.

### **Benefits of the proposal**

- Enormously improved hiking experience as more time is spent in Garibaldi Park. It would allow seniors, families with children and the less physically fit to enjoy the beauty of Garibaldi Park instead of trudging up a boring logging road.
- Physically fit people can disperse further into the park.
- Secure day use and overnight parking for park visitors. Costs are potentially offset by a modest day use or overnight parking fee.
- Responsible management of waste and sanitation.
- Opportunity to provide backcountry education and guidelines for visitors by using information kiosks or park attendant.
- Improved public safety as the access road bypasses the unstable landslip on the south side of Fitzsimmons Creek. No conflict with ATV tours and the mountain bike terrain park.
- Consistent with the management direction approved in the 2014 Spearhead Amendment to the Garibaldi Park 1990 Master Plan to improve public access to Garibaldi Park by constructing a public parking facility at the upstream IPP facility.
- The parking lot would serve three trails: (1) Singing Pass trail described here. (2) New connector trail to park trails on the Blackcomb side (Disease Ridge). This trail is mentioned in the park management plan amendment. (3) New Fitzsimmons Creek

valley bottom trail.