

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT
TRAIL NETWORK TASK FORCE
GAMBIER ISLAND SOUTH WEST PENINSULA

June 17, 2017

MINUTES FROM THE TRAIL NETWORK TASK FORCE GAMBIER ISLAND SOUTH WEST PENINSULA MEETING HELD AT GAMBIER ISLAND COMMUNITY CENTRE, ANDY'S ROAD, NEW BRIGHTON, BC

PRESENT:	Members	Boris Gorgitza Carol Barlow Emily Pickett Kevin Grodesky Natasha Tousaw Todd Gordon
ALSO PRESENT:	Parks Planning Coordinator (Chair) West Howe Sound/Area F Alt. Director and Gambier Island Local Trustee Recorder Public	Sam Adams Kate-Louise Stamford Diane Corbett 1

CALL TO ORDER 9:37 a.m.

AGENDA Adopted as presented.

MINUTES

3.1 Trail Network Task Force Gambier Island South West Peninsula, May 20, 2017

The Trail Network Task Force Gambier Island South West Peninsula minutes of May 20, 2017 were adopted as amended as follows:

- Page 1: Correct spelling of "Natasha"

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DELEGATION

5.1 Graeme Wickham regarding trail impacts

Graeme Wickham, property owner, addressed the Trails Network Task Force regarding previous community discussions on the impact of trails. Mr. Wickham read aloud several "impact statements" from residents on the possibility of trails at Lower Mountain Road, the community hall connector and Austin trails, gathered for a Gambier trails meeting held on September 5, 2015. Concerns mentioned included: construction of trail on disputed road allowance; impact of pollution by hikers and dogs on the water system; consultation with owners

prior to trail construction, and follow-up communications; costs of trails; impacts on watershed; noise, dust and mud from hikers, ATVs and motorbikes; impacts on resident wildlife; possible impacts on property values; higher taxes; fear of strangers on property, break-ins, trespassing, burglary; impact on security and financial position; impacts on privacy and quiet remote location.

REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

6.1 Trail and Water Quality

Questions for consideration were distributed by staff prior to the meeting.

Comments from discussion on trails and water quality included:

- Signage could be bigger. Dogs often are not on leashes, and run all over the place.
- Example of UBC Endowment Lands: is well used; dogs off-leash; trails fenced off near water; quite large signage, has pictures of wildlife and habitat; split rail fences, with mesh attached so dogs cannot go through; fencing looks tasteful. Proactive approach.
- Task force should be concerned about what is stated in the OCP when developing trails near water areas. Environmentally Sensitive Areas should be protected (p. 38, OCP). Also, *Riparian Areas Regulation* (RAR) impacts on property owners. Requires minimum setback and restricted use, including regarding altering land.
- Alt. Director noted Gambier has gone further than RAR and has a development variance permit (DVP) across the whole island that applies to any watercourse, protecting water as a whole. This means the owner requires a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) report to be granted permission to operate within the riparian zone.
- Most people don't respect signs; have seen this time and time again.
- Doing nothing can be problematic.
- Some people who come for adventure often ignore or don't read signs. This often leads to trespassing, or not knowing where they are. Drivers are occasionally intoxicated.
- Would be good to see a map of where riparian areas are. How do you go about balancing trails and these riparian needs? QEP? Boardwalks? Think there is a desire for some connector trails.
- See environmental checklist manual: could go deeper into that.
- The QEP is one way that could be taken.
- Feel the survey was skewed; do not feel that it was accurate; statistically invalid.
- Survey didn't drill down into some of the concerns of respondents. Feel strongly that concerns of immediate neighbouring residents regarding impacts of trails on water be mitigated. Mitigation is partly responsibility of the SCRDC; when the trail is being proposed, SCRDC should ensure that a QEP assess it and neighbours in the area be informed the trail has been vetted and approved environmentally.
- Perhaps gather a written response from residents to the QEP report, to have a record that they have received the information.
- There are two water issues: the riparian environmental aspect, and people getting their water from water sources. Environmental mitigation would be a different than addressing where people get their water.
- Water licenses aren't granted on rights of way. Boris has the water license list and all the maps. It is under the provincial Water Act; a person who requires water formalizes legally where they take the water from; can be standing water.
- Sedimentation and pollution are two things that can affect water quality. Both can be mitigated. Build trails to a standard such that they aren't emitting sediment into the water system.

6.2 Fire Hazards

Staff referred to the SCRD fire study. It was noted the southwest peninsula area of Gambier is south facing, a bit of a fire zone, and outside the Fire Protection District. The province would take care of fires on Crown lands; or, if they felt there would be issue of a fire spreading to Crown land, they would assist with that. That is besides the informal fire system. Clearing the fine fuels from two metres on either side of the trail would take the initial ignition away. (Clear the trail to mineral soil; trail .5-1.0 metres wide, with 2 metres cleared on either side).

Comments on trails and fire hazards included:

- There are places where this wouldn't be realistic. There are a lot of conditions where that would not happen.
- The issue here regarding fires is the response time, which is higher; there needs to be a higher standard here.
- Because we are out of the fire protection zone, there are no hazard ratings for Gambier. Keats got a rating. We don't have a rating. Is there a way of getting that done?
- Fires are human-caused mainly; this is a concern in opening up to the public. How many people would that bring?
- Think they gave rating for Lipton Park "low risk" because of low usage. Of the parks listed, several of the "low risk" was because of low usage. Our trails have way less usage than any park in the SCRD.
- Trail development has been up and down for years. It will be happening in five or six years. There is also talk about a national park; people will filter to beaches. Need to consider it may change in the future. Need to look at potential fire risk. It could bring thousands to Gambier Island. It will be people walking on roads, beaches, exploring the island.
- Gambier.org database is often used by GFAG to transmit information about the level of fire hazard on Gambier (Stuart Watson); maybe tap into that to warn people about fire considerations on trails. GFAG is intended to address interface fires, not house fires as intent. They are volunteers and would have a big liability risk in fighting a house fire. Concern about a house fire being transferred to the forest. Their role would be limited on trails; the equipment couldn't access.
- Discussion of a company hike to the lake where a campfire had been built and extinguished, even though signage said "no campfires"; it was an indication they did not care.
- Called Stuart Watson to inquire if the GFAG could get some trails shut down in a drought; they cannot do this because they are volunteers. It has to be a fire chief, and there is none on Gambier. Who do we call to get the trails shut down due to fire risk?
- Heard that there are bylaws drafted that permit regional districts to close trails due to high fire risk. Since Gambier is outside of fire protection, what can we do to obtain that? If we can't, I would consider Gambier high risk.
- Remember, in the balance, there is high risk just by being here.
- Do clearing on each side of trail, education, signage.
- Could do some strategic education for a young person who is having a party – that is where the real risk exists.
- There is a fire hazard sign inside the glass case at New Brighton. There should be a big sign as you exit the dock.
- There is a sign on New Brighton dock, put in a weird location.
- Stu or Billy puts up signs saying "No campfires". There is always one at the end of Grove

Road.

- Billy is still the fire warden. Call the forest fire number first, and they will work with Billy.
- There should be signage on all the government docks.
- Signage on the Stormaway.
- Have Gibsons fire chief come to the hall for a public meeting with a focus on how to mitigate and deal with house fires. Something like this happened as a precursor to GFAG; the fire chief came twice over a few years. Informative discussion.
- A way to address stupid people coming here: don't have information about trails that is easily accessible to people coming from off island. Don't put maps or guides at the docks – just for people who live here and guests.
- As far as I know, connector trails are for the community. They sometimes will be used by others, but these are about travel for people here.
- This may change in 5 or 10 years; for developing things now, think 5 to 10 years down the road. There may not be the reality that it is just a community connector trail. Carefully progress about how we develop.
- We can't worry too much about an explosion of development in the future. If so, would advocate for our own fire hall, etc. A federal park would include fire-fighting ability.
- Stu is looking to leave the island.
- A lot of people who volunteer are older people; a lot of younger people aren't volunteering.
- The capacity issue touches on some of the themes mentioned.

Actions:

- Staff will look into the fire rating for Gambier and how this is done.
- Staff will check for further details on closing trails on Gambier due to fire or drought, and how this would be done.
- Staff will write up notes, continue to try to consolidate these issues, and vet over email.

Break 10:40-10:50 a.m.

6.3 Limited Amenities and Facilities

Comments on the limited amenities and facilities on Gambier Island included:

- Current locations of public toilets:
 - "Thunder boxes" at the lake
 - Outhouse at Lipton Park
 - Outhouses at community hall site
- What is wrong with packing it out? They do it in Europe.
- Include emergency services. Have information coming off the ferry, or get informed online. People have been observed on the island wandering through aimlessly; part of that relates to information about what is over here.
- Idea of targeting when coming off dock.
- Education about what is or isn't available on Gambier is really critical. A group of hikers came over on first sailing; wanted to go hiking up Killam. It would have taken a long time. Sounds like they came totally unprepared. Another group was unprepared in terms of their equipment. We will never have any degree of facilities here in terms of toilets and garbage or waste disposal. Maybe give people more information about what is available here through the Regional District website, more information at the ferry terminal on the

other side, information about lack of waste disposal.

- Apps are where it's at regarding capturing where people are at, and could be way to help augment (dissemination of information), such as through a Gambier app.
- Stormaway staff would recognize people coming here. Maybe they could start a conversation to see if people know where they are going, with contact information, fire information. When we see hikers, I give my phone number. People get lost.
- Example from Europe: way markers, maintained by volunteers, were very helpful. Had three stripes, to indicate "on the right road".
- SCR community trails are marked, mostly beach accesses, a way to get down to the lower side.
- What would it cost to put in an outhouse or portapotty? Barge \$300/hour; could back haul/coordinate; \$125 for first portapotty per month, \$62 for second per month; truck \$60/hour; or have them built. There is a higher standard outhouse that is ecofriendly, and would get pumped out once or twice a year.
- Think trails are so small they don't need outhouses. With connector trails for the community, everyone has their own house.
- Outhouses at the community hall aren't legal. Regarding a portapotty, approach GICA to put two outhouses here; also water is an issue. People on Austin trails have been bothered by hikers for water. Have a faucet along the road allowance; have a sign saying water is available. Between the dock up to the lake, there is no water; don't think anyone understands that unless they came hiking before.
- Water fountain would be a great place to put information.
- If having hikers coming onto community centre, would need approval.
- There are perhaps two areas, New Brighton and the community centre, where there could be water.
- Reality of water tap: there are other considerations, such as timer, filtration system etc.
- There is Vancouver Coastal Health; once you get into water there is a spectrum (of requirements) for providing water to the public.
- Emergency response would be under Sunshine Coast Search and Rescue. There would be a response gap.
- For an educational purpose, ask: do you know you are packing it in and out, but there is no emergency response/emergency response would be delayed?
- Discussion of needed links between emergency services and the community. Who do emergency services call when they get to the island? Kevin has had a lot of trouble trying to volunteer for search and rescue. They want to find out from the community how to work with the community; want a phone tree system.
- There has been an informal system here over years; people would go and rescue people.
- GICA is getting road signs made by MOTI. For services that come to the island, there will be road signs.
- Maybe GICA could purchase a vehicle that is designated and has its own slot down there (dock), a pick up truck with a cover and seat belts.
- Vehicle could access first aid supplies at hall.
- It makes total sense to have an AED at docks, where most people are congregating. Comes back to capacity issues.
- Would have to talk to Squamish Nation.

Actions:

- Sam will approach Search and Rescue to see if they could coordinate a practice on Gambier.
- Carol will bring forward at next GICA meeting the idea of GICA purchasing a

vehicle.

- Natasha will talk to paramedic; Kevin and Natasha will continue to work with Sunshine Coast Search and Rescue.

6.4 Maintenance

Comments from discussion about responsibility for trail maintenance included:

- Trails in Europe are all volunteer-maintained. Villages take sections. Are well looked after.
- Todd just signed a new contract with SCRD, maintaining branches, debris, and deadfall, and building new trails. There have been volunteers who have maintained trails. Suggestion to pay someone to try to coordinate volunteers.
- Recommend professionally done trail system; would be better off having at least one person who is paid, with no excuse of vacation or sickness. There is room for volunteers; could be formalized in a simple way, with check sheets to maintain the trail.
- Remember capacity issues of SCRD. They have to take care of the entire coast with tax dollars.

Action: Staff will start to put the ideas together and bring in the perspective of SCRD. Will email out some of the ideas.

NEXT MEETING Saturday, **July 1**, 9:30 a.m. at Gambier Island Community Centre

Emily reported that GICA wants to hold an AGM on August 12. They are waiting to hear from this group regarding confirmation of a booking on that date. It was suggested the Task Force should piggyback with them.

ADJOURNMENT 11:37 a.m.