



**William Simmons Memorial Community Park
Site Management Plan Update**

Consultation Summary Report

(Public Consultation November 27 – December 12, 2014)

Notices of Consultation

The following venues were utilized to inform the public of the William Simmons Site Management Plan update, Open House (November 27, 2014) and Questionnaire:

- Draft Site Management Plan and Questionnaire posted to the Parks website on October 30
- Unaddressed mail drop issued to 1680 residents
- Advertised in the November 19 Sooke News Mirror
- Highlighted in the OPSRRA November Newsletter
- Posted on the two park bulletin boards and the Local Area Services building bulletin board
- Promoted at Planning counter
- Word of mouth

Consultation Statistics

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Approximate Number of Attendees at Open House | 42 |
| Total Number of Respondents on Questionnaire: | 125 |
| Total Number of Respondents (Petition): | <u>38</u> |
| Total Respondents: | 163 |

Residency of Respondents

Of the 163 participants in the consultation process, 142 who indicated their area of residency were as follows:

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Otter Point: | 100 |
| Sooke: | 30 |
| Shirley: | 4 |
| Other: | 8 |

Responses to Consultation Questionnaire

QUESTION 1

Do you currently use William Simmons Memorial Park for any of the following?

- *Walking*
- *Cycling*
- *Equestrian*
- *Fishing*
- *Picnicking*
- *Other*

Response

For those that completed this section of the Questionnaire, the following activities were indicated:

| <u>Activity</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| • Walking: | 100 | 44% |
| • Cycling: | 22 | 10% |
| • Equestrian: | 7 | 3% |
| • Fishing: | 29 | 13% |
| • Picnicking: | 54 | 23% |
| • Other: | | |
| Swimming: | 5 | 2% |
| Boating/Boarding: | 2 | 1% |
| Nature Watching: | 10 | 4% |

Comments

Walking (this included dog walkers) and picnicking represented the most common uses of the park. It is recognized that the latter was most likely representative of those that use the park facilities (picnic tables, benches and picnic shelter) as well as the park for its natural attributes. It is unclear if all of the respondents to the fishing activity actually fished on Poirier Lake or were interpreting this as an activity they would like to do. From the response to other sections of the Questionnaire, it seems likely that this may have been the case; and further, current access to the lake for fishing is difficult.

QUESTION 2

What new developments and improvements would you like to see in the park? Which ones should be given priority?

Response

Based on those who responded to this question, subject areas were developed that represent the most common types of responses. This question was designed to have respondents list what they considered to be the priorities presented in the plan development proposal; however, others not indicated in the plan have also been included.

Priorities Identified in Plan **No. of Respondents**

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| • Develop Access to Poirier Lake | 87 |
| • Fishing/Stocking of Lake | 56 |
| • Toilets | 20 |
| • Improve Trails | 18 |
| • New Parking Area | 17 |
| • Picnic Area (near lake) | 13 |
| • Non-Motorized Boating | 11 |
| • Leave Equestrian Field as Is | 2 |
| • Signs/Interpretive Signs | 2 |
| • Restore/Maintain Orchard | 2 |
| • Remove Invasive Plants | 2 |

Priorities Not Included In Plan **No. of Respondents**

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| • Swimming | 19 |
| • Playground | 10 |
| • Garbage Bins/Dog Bag Disposal | 6 |
| • Educational Site for Fly Fishing | 4 |
| • Remove Hazards from Lake | 3 |
| • Improve Handicap Access | 3 |
| • Create a Beach Area | 3 |
| • Bike Racks | 2 |
| • Bike Pump Track | 1 |

Comments

There were 20 various priorities that respondents identified (where more than one response was received). A significant number of respondent comments (51%) saw development of access to Poirier Lake and the opportunity to fish as the top two priorities for the plan. In association with the development area to access the lake, others were more specific in identifying such priorities as adding toilet facilities, the new parking area, improved trails, non-motorized boating and a picnic area near the lake.

Additional priorities indicated by respondents (not specifically mentioned in the plan) included: swimming, playground equipment, waste bins, educational facility, cleaning up the lake, improving accessibility, creating a beach and adding bike infrastructure.

QUESTION 3

Do you support improving access to Poirier Lake? If yes, for what activities? If no, why not?

Response

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Yes | 117 |
| Fishing dock only | 2 |
| No | 3 |
| <u>Undecided</u> | <u>2</u> |
| Total | 124 |



For those that indicated what activities they might carry out on Poirier Lake, these included:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Kayak skills | Nature education |
| Fishing, and with kids specifically | Photography |
| Recreation | Geocaching |
| Kayaking and canoeing | Swimming |
| Stand Up Paddle-boarding | Skating |
| Family outings | Eco-tourism |

Other responses related to accessing Poirier Lake included:

| | |
|---|---|
| Shoreline protection | Spawning channel for Coho from DeMamiel Creek |
| Separated uses (boating vs. hiking) | Loop trail around lake |
| Safer shoreline; clean up lake; fix lake hazards | Sand beach for swimming |
| Parking | Make dock extend to deep water |
| Picnic tables | Swimming platform |
| Signage | Bike facilities |
| Interpretive information | Playground; kids area |
| Parking lot would ruin view of lake; dangerous corner | |

Comments

94% of respondents to Question #3 indicated support for improving access to Poirier Lake generally. The activities listed by respondents are consistent with the Natural Area Recreation Park designation supporting multipurpose recreational activities. Other responses related more to infrastructure than activities, but reiterate the suggested improvements outlined in the responses to Question #2. A few responses indicated that having parking closer to the picnic area would be nice but the proposed new parking area is a dangerous location. Two supported recreational fishing access but not the boat launch as people will be tempted to bring motorized boats and swim where it isn't safe. One undecided respondent was concerned about the close proximity of the fishing dock to existing residences.

QUESTION 4

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Resource Operations Recreational Sports Fishing program, will fund the purchase and installation of two 10' x 20' docks for boating and fishing opportunities on Poirier Lake. To enhance fishing, MFLRO will also continue stocking the lake, and be promoting catch and release.

Do you support this infrastructure for non-motorized boating and fishing on Poirier Lake?

- Yes
- No (if no, what are your concerns)

Response

There were 123 respondents to this question. ***In addition, a petition was received with 38 signatures supporting that only one dock be installed at the location of the proposed boat launch dock.*** The results of all respondents are as follows:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Those responding Yes (fishing and boat launch docks): | 118 |
| Those responding No (no docks): | 2 |
| Those responding One Dock Only | 3 |
| Those not responding to the question: | (2) |
| <u>Those responding One Dock Only (Petition):</u> | <u>38</u> |
| Total Respondents: | 161 |

Comments


From those that responded on the Questionnaire (123) and the petition (38), 96.8% of the respondents supported the provision of having dock(s) access Poirier Lake. Of this number, 73.2% were in favour of the Site Management Plan's proposal to provide both a 10' x 20' dock for boat launching and a second 10' x 20' dock for fishing.

QUESTION 5

Please provide any additional comments.

Response

- Similar proposal was denied at Kemp Lake as it would have negative impact, Poirier Lake is 1/3 size and having these changes implemented would upset the natural beauty that Mr. Simmons wanted so much to protect
- Love the horse pasture area, having a quiet area to dismount, graze and rest horse away from lots of people/dogs is greatly appreciated
- Proposal would promote awareness of fish and wildlife, have an information board telling visitors types of species in lake, also fun to use non-motorized boats to explore lake while not disturbing wildlife and harming ecosystem, I see nothing but great opportunities and results in this project, I hope there is enough support to make this happen
- Make a dock for swimming
- Parking is needed, but a shame to use waterfront area for this purpose
- Impressed with trail maintenance
- Equestrian area is well-used
- Don't add structures to equestrian area but could be used for special events
- Lake is small and natural and wouldn't want to see metal or cement docks
- Park has great potential for families/individuals to enjoy within our community
- Everything that has been done to this park is wonderful
- Love trail and sitting at benches and picnic tables
- Beautiful little park
- A gorgeous spot
- Make it happen
- Horse and dog excrements?
- A beautiful park, adding access to lake and docks will make it a special place
- Still considerable metal garbage in bushes, cleanup effort needed and invasive species removal
- A beach area
- This facility would be great addition to introduce kids to fishing
- Will there be parking for a boat trailer?
- Will there be a trail around to walk dogs?
- Non-motorized – does this mean electric /battery powered?

- Beautiful spot, perfect recreational picnic and rest area
 - We enjoy summer days on the benches enjoying sun, quiet and nature, perfect little hideaway
 - Allowing easy access for families to Poirier Lake would encourage people to enjoy the outdoors
 - This would be a great asset to general tourism
 - It is in best interest of community to promote opportunities for youth to get involved in fishing
 - Thrilled to have opportunity to introduce grandchildren to fishing and boating close to home
 - Would love to see park access from Poirier Lake improved and connection to Butler trail
 - Lake lovely but small, quiet and peaceful the way it is, people enjoy dog walking
 - Please and thank you
 - Connection to other trails is desirable, could ask for public donations of land
 - Great asset, could do more to promote gatherings, outdoor classrooms, chess board
 - Enjoyable facility, quiet solitude of pathways should be preserved
 - Keep up the good work, please drain large puddle in trail
 - Equestrian incompatible with other users, horses churn up trails, cyclists scare horses, too wide trails spoil environment, keep them narrow, mostly for walking, integrated into terrain
 - Would picnic area be available by reservation?
 - Pleased this lake is being looked at for improved access, have wished for this for many years
 - Main attraction is to swim in lake, but appreciate it is problematic for Parks & Rec, whatever can be done to remove hazardous debris would be helpful
 - Thanks for this opportunity, I am very excited
 - Very nice park, these changes just make it that much better
 - Within The Woods development there are areas that have been designated as green space, make more trails to small marsh off Butler Road
 - I like the plan, non-motorized boats is only way on small lake, I'd like it improved for amphibians
 - More safer trails to access park along Otter Point Road to Butler Road, it is not safe to get to from the south
 - We look forward to using the lake and park in the coming seasons
 - Does fisheries stock Poirier Lake?
 - Why two docks for such a small lake?
 - This is a good enhancement to an already lovely environment
 - Please continue to develop parks and trails in the area
 - We have so many lakes in this area but no public access, it would be great for kids to spend time at lake doing things kids are supposed to do
 - A great opportunity to create a great park
 - Lake must not allow gasoline or diesel motors, electric or human powered only, if lake has breeding areas for wild salmon then no fishing should be allowed on this lake
 - I really enjoy the wonderful park
 - The park is great, docks would make it that much better
 - It is super easy to create a fillable form that people can submit electronically
 - Would it be possible to have a road to the lake to drop off a car topper row boat? You did a great job at Fishboat Bay
 - As someone without car access living in Otter Point it would be amazing to have park access for me and my family
 - Public access is important, I live close to the lake off Otter Point
 - Please don't put in the boat launch, it is a minor improvement and would add unsafe congestion at that end of the park, maybe a couple of spots for vehicles near the picnic area
- 

DISCUSSION ON RESULTS

The Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission is very pleased with the level of interest and response to the consultation process with a total of 163 participants. For those that identified their community of residency, 70% of the respondents were from Otter Point.

The Consultation Summary clearly illustrated very strong public support for the development of further recreational opportunities in the park, and in particular, 94% of respondents supported improving access to Poirier Lake.

On the question of current activities most often carried out by park visitors, 77% primarily use the park for walking, cycling or picnicking. The remaining 23% currently use the park for horse riding, nature walking, swimming and fishing.

Priority Improvements:

On the question of what respondents considered the top priorities identified in the plan, 51% of respondents identified access to Poirier Lake and fishing (which included support for stocking) as the top two priorities. Although the plan promoted “catch and release” as part of the fishing experience, for clarity, fishers are also welcome to retain their catches if they so wish. By policy, the MFLNRO will stock only non-breeding fish populations.

The next highest plan priorities included providing a toilet facility, improving/expanding trails, develop the new parking area and create a new picnic area near the lake. These latter comments also showed a good correlation between the current primary user groups of the park.

The plan identified non-motorized boating access on the lake. Several respondents also identified this as a priority in the plan. Some respondents to the Questionnaire asked if electric motors would be permissible. In other non-motorized lakes within southern Vancouver Island, use of electric motors has been permitted. Future monitoring of recreational uses on the lake is recommended to determine whether conflicts arise between human-powered boaters and those with electric motors.

Several respondents identified the need for interpretive and regulatory signs for the new development area. The Site Management Plan proposes a sign strategy be put in place as development proceeds which will address location/directional, regulatory and information needs.

There were a number of respondents to priorities that were not specifically identified in the plan. The most common included swimming, establishment of a playground and provision of garbage facilities. Because of the shallow and hazardous nature of the park shoreline (soft bottom and debris) near the boat launch area, swimming is unsafe and will be discouraged. However, given Poirier Lake is a public lake outside of the park, this does not preclude what visitors may choose to do from a boat when in deeper, safer water. Playgrounds can be expensive and have proven problematic for many jurisdictions due to risk and liability issues. However, such a playground area utilizing lower cost “natural design” elements could be a future consideration for the park. Juan de Fuca Parks and Recreation has a policy of “pack-in and pack-out” for the community parks, which has proven to be quite successful to date. As well, given the small staff and budget, it is not feasible to provide for a garbage removal service when there are other higher budget priorities.



Access to Poirier Lake:

The Consultation Summary clearly illustrated very strong public support for the development of further recreational opportunities in the park of which 117 respondents indicated support for improving access to Poirier Lake. The most-noted activities included fishing and non-motorized boating.

On the question of support for the two 10'x20' docks (one for docking and one for fishing), there was 96.8% support for one or two docks, with 73% of respondents supporting both a boat launch and fishing dock, 25% supporting only one dock (most of this support was received from a petition) and 2% of respondents who supported no docks, or had no comment to the question. As stated in the Questionnaire, Site Management Plan and during the Open House, in order to acquire funding for docks from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) Recreational Sports Fishing Program, a dock had to support both boat launch and fishing activities. Given the bathymetry of the lake, the primary access point to the lake was too shallow to accommodate fishing. In order to maintain as low a profile as possible for the docks, and meet the Ministry requirements, MFLNRO agreed to a plan to provide a boat launch dock and a separate walk-in fishing dock located adjacent to the deeper waters of Poirier Lake.

Although a petition from 38 residents was received (as well as 2 respondents on the Questionnaire) that supported a single dock only at the primary access point to the lake, this was not feasible for a number of reasons. Because the depth is so gradual at this end of the lake, such a dock would have had to extend a 100 meters towards the deeper part of the lake in order to achieve a minimum casting depth of 15 feet (MFLNRO suggests that optimum depth is 20-25 feet given participating age groups). The cost for floats alone (not including installation) would be approximately \$300/ft or \$90,000 – considerably higher than the \$27,000 MFLNRO has available for the two small docks and installation. As well, a single dock extending far into Poirier Lake would not only be a significantly higher visual intrusion, but boat launch and fishing activities would be further hampered by the number of anchor blocks and cables required to stabilize such a dock, not to mention being more attractable to unwanted types of users. The second fishing dock will be walk-in only (off the Panama Rail Trail), of much lower profile, enable easy casting into deeper water, and not be visible to other land-based user groups.

Efforts will be made to situate the fishing dock away from adjacent residential uses as best as possible while taking into consideration the terrain and lake depth. Both proposed docks will be accessed via crushed gravel Type 2 trails. The boat launch dock will be easily accessible from the new parking area on a short, flat trail whereas the fishing dock will require a longer walk on earthen and gravel trail surfaces from either the east or west park access.

New Parking Area:

Some respondents were concerned about the safety of establishing a new parking area at the eastern park boundary (former access to life tenant area). The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) was approached in the spring of 2014 about using the existing driveway into the former life tenant area as a public road access off Otter Point Road. The Ministry determined there were sufficient sight-lines to permit this. It is recognized that this area along Otter Point Road has limited sight-lines and is prone to speeders, which will require signage to inform drivers of turning vehicles ahead. Safe access to parking areas for this park has always been a problem. Given the new development area and specific access needs for recreational activities on Poirier Lake, the proposed parking area is the only

option short of having everyone walk from the existing parking lot adjacent to the Sooke Business Park. The new parking area will also afford easier access to the day-use area facilities and trails, particularly for the physically challenged.

Additional Comments:

Most of the specific comments received on the Questionnaire have been addressed in the discussion above.

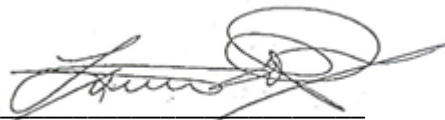
The Commission would also like to thank those who took the time to provide the additional comments and supportive statements – much appreciated!

RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the level of support and recommendations received from the William Simmons Memorial Community Park Draft Site Management Plan, the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission has made the following decisions:

- Proceed with the new development proposals outlined in Section 4.1.4 of the Site Management Plan;
- Based on consultation results, finalize the 2014 Site Management Plan;
- Collaborate with the MFLNRO Recreational Sports Fishing Program to install a boat dock and fishing dock as per plan specifications, and proceed with a fish stocking program for Poirier Lake;
- Commence implementation of priority projects in 2015 including:
 - Construct new trails to the fishing dock and boat launch locations;
 - Construct new trail from new development area to the day-use area;
 - Develop an 8 car parking area and connecting trails to the lake and day use area;
 - Remove log debris and other hazards along the park shoreline in the vicinity of boat launch dock;
 - Create a new picnic area near the lake;
 - Promote non-motorized boat use on the lake;
 - Develop and implement a sign plan that address information, regulatory and safety needs;
 - Initially install a seasonal toilet in the day-use area until such time as a year-round facility is affordable;
 - Improve existing trails where new surfacing is required;
 - Provide a bike rack in the day-use area;

Note: Implementation and timing of the plan objectives are budget dependent



Louise Paterson, Chair
Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Parks and
Recreation Advisory Commission
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