

Friends of Strathcona Park Newsletter - Winter 2022 -2023

Box 3404, Courtenay, B.C. V9N 5N5

www.friendsofstrathconapark.org



**Nine Peaks and Cream Lake
Saved in 1988 by FOSP**

Friends of Strathcona Park (FOSP): *To Be or Not To Be?*

The Friends of Strathcona Park was started in 1987 -- its inception prompted by some serious mismanagement of the park by the BC Government and some concerning plans for our BC Parks system that could have had negative and long term consequences for Strathcona Park and all BC Parks. Groups like the Friends often do arise out of compassion for the environment and deep appreciation for the unique and pristine landscapes protected under the Park Act. At any time a political whim can change all of that by the stroke of a pen (electronically or physically!) It takes a small group of dedicated

**Annual General Meeting
January 28, 2023**

**Vancouver Island Regional Library
Courtenay Location
300 6th St, Courtenay, BC V9N 9V9
1 - 3 pm.**

In person or via Zoom.

**Please attend and consider joining
the board of directors.**

**email the Friends at
info@friendsofstrathconapark.org
for a zoom link to the AGM**

and strong willed people to take the lead and many people following to give it the momentum, speed and power to succeed.

The question now arises amongst FOSP board members (some of them have been on the board for 30+ years), whether the time has come to “hand over the baton” or “to bury the baton”? Whether the board and the organization should carry on into the future (and many more generations to come), is up to you - park lovers, you who care about our protected wilderness and park, and enjoy its pristine wilderness, its unspoiled lakes, forests, mountain ridges, subalpine and alpine terrain. It is up to you to make this happen!

This is what your commitment to the environment and to Strathcona Park would look like, as part of Friends of Strathcona Park:

1. **Treasurer:** take care of the financial transactions, keep the bank statements and accounts safe and thriving, send tax receipts. (Yes the Friends of Strathcona is a federally registered, non-profit charitable society).
2. **Secretary:** Take and circulate minutes of the meetings, deal with all correspondence, organize and publish (with help from the board) newsletters and communications amongst the board members.
3. **Parks and SPPAC liaison:** attend and report on SPPAC meetings, communicate and keep open lines of communication with Parks management.
4. **Liaison with other outdoor groups:** for example CPAWS, CDMC, SWI, Federation of Mountain Clubs, the Heathens, etc.
5. **Mine committee head:** Oddly enough, even though Strathcona is the largest and first park on Vancouver Island, it still has an active mine right in the middle of it causing an ongoing threat to the Park, environment and the entire Campbell River Watershed. FOSP has been involved in ongoing monitoring of the mine's activities, closure plans and their environmental impact. This is a big one and definitely needs help!
6. **On the ground monitoring:** board members who have eyes on the ground and pay attention to what is happening, everywhere in the park, from the East coast of the Island to the West coast.
7. **Public education Liaison:** a person on the board who focuses on FOSP

relationship with schools and with the college; and also on how we educate the public living on Vancouver Island and in other areas, about ongoing park issues.

8. **Website manager:** managing and keeping the website up to date. This is currently been done by a professional company at a cost.
9. **Board members who are interested in trail building and maintenance** (for example Bedwell Ocean to Alpine route?) closely working with Parks management and parks maintenance contractors.

Here is your Board's question to you: **do you feel FOSP should continue?** And if yes, how deep does your commitment to protect our Park go; can you step up to the plate and join the board now, while the "Old Folks" are still there to mentor you?

Or, **Do you feel it is time to wrap up FOSP and put it to bed forever?** And if yes, why? and do you have the trust and faith that the BC Government will safely take care of your Parks and Strathcona Park in particular, for the next decades and centuries – for your children and grandchildren.

The best donation you can make this year to the Friends of Strathcona Park is to get involved. Money does not buy us a future for safe guarding our parks and wilderness. Submitted by Marlene Smith

Strathcona Park Public Advisory update

Our recent SPPAC meeting, October 12th, 2022, was the first meeting since Jessie Moore took over Andy Smith's job as Strathcona Area Supervisor.

We had a presentation by Nicole Personen of Myra Falls Mine, about a project to replace the

hydro line that goes through Price 13 portal. The new line will be above ground for the most part except where it runs near to bodies of water where it will be imbedded in the roadbed. The proposal has had a biological assessment to look at species at risk and how to minimize impacts. Continuing power will be needed for post closure water cleaning, when the mine is finally closed.

There was also a discussion about plans to increase the level of Thelwood dam. This project was approved several years ago, but did not go ahead at that time. It is needed now to provide power and water for the mine through the dry season.

Jessie explained the increased capacity of having a full-time senior ranger and extended ranger term, which will allow more to be done during the winter season.

Crest Creek Crags had a day of trail work, this summer with 2 BCP rangers, and 8 volunteers. Areas of the main access trail from the parking lot were upgraded/replaced, as well as the key area/platforms where new climbers learn to climb.

There was an interesting discussion about park policy to leave wild fires in the park even when they are in old growth forests. With our dry season continuing from August through the end of October this year, several fires were burning in the park and were in old growth areas. As our climate changes, and as we realize the many important aspects of having old growth forests, it was suggested that parks take a new look at their position: 'if it is not near human infrastructure', let it burn. Clearly fires in the park seem to be way down the list of items that needs to be addressed, but it is good to start having these conversations. Jessie's minutes of the meeting will be posted on the BC Parks website.

Notes by Jennifer Pass (based on my notes and Jessie's minutes)

Anne Fiddick

The Friends were sad to hear that Anne Fiddick passed away on June 17, 2022. Anne had a long history with Strathcona Park as well as many other commitments to public service.

Anne was mayor of Gold River for 18 years and served her community well. The swimming pool in Gold River is named after her. Anne served on the Strathcona Park Steering Committee in 1989 along with Peggy Carswell, rural director in the Comox Valley, and Jim Rutter, executive director with the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C. This committee was a recommendation of the report called Restoring the Balance which was done after the blockades and arrests in the Park in 1988. This report is commonly referred to as the Larkin Report.

This report called for improved public consultation with the public by B.C. Parks. The steering committee created the Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee which is still active today. SPPAC is supposed to represent public opinion and is formed by people from a variety of backgrounds with a common interest around Strathcona Park and its management. This process also created master plans for both Strathcona Park and Strathcona Westmin Park. SPPAC makes recommendations for both parks.

Anne served on SPPAC from 1997 to 2007 and served as its chair for the latter part of those years. She has many, many other accomplishments which are too lengthy for this newsletter. Thanks Anne for all you've done for the Park.

