

Why would Allison and Round Lake residents want a community park?

May 18, 2014

History: In 2007 Allison and Borgeson Lake residents were faced with the prospect of having a motor-cross track developed at the property just south of Allison Lake Provincial Park. Over 100 residents attended a meeting at the site with the overwhelming majority opposed. After successfully preventing the permit for the motocross track it was suggested we form a Ratepayer's Association. Citizens wanted to ensure they had a voice in any future development proposals.

Ratepayer's Association: The Allison Borgeson Ratepayers Association has been working on behalf of valley residents since 2007. As residents will remember lake levels were at historic lows in 2006 (21 feet below high water marks). Aside from issues around permits being granted without community input, concern about water became one of the major focuses of the association.

Official Community Plan for Area H: After seven years of participation by the president of the Allison Borgeson Ratepayers Association as one of the area H representatives on the RDOS area H committee the Official Community Plan was adopted in November 2012. Residents can view the complete plan at the RDOS website by searching for the "Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan Bylaw 2497, 2012". On page 57 Policy 6 is stated as follows " Supports designating the whole of the Allison Creek watershed as a community watershed under the relevant Provincial legislation, as well as zoning the watershed as Watershed Resource Area (WRA) under the Zoning Bylaw". The RDOS planner suggested this was a way we could protect our watershed. It turns out this is not true.

Logging in Allison Lake Improvement District Watershed-Stringer Lake-Anderson Creek and Hackett Creek: Even though this area is a designated provincial watershed Tolko was able to clear-cut up to 10 meters from Stringer Lake (provincial regulations usually 200 meters) due to exemptions granted to forest companies because of beetle kill. Letters to the Forestry Minister, local MLA, Tolko, etc. did not prevent this from happening. Residents realize that lake levels are dependent on snow melt in a relatively small watershed. It was disheartening to realize that any provincial

watershed designation would not protect our area. We did learn however that a park designation would protect our watershed.

Mining Claims: As residents will remember from past meetings Highpointe Exploration (Oxford Resources) has mining claims that extend over the entire Allison Borgeson lake watershed and as well a Chinese Coal company- has claims that extend from Princeton to past Allison Lake. Nothing can prevent the development of mining claims except park status.

Allison Lake Provincial Park: During the application for the motor-cross park it was discovered that the provincial parks department had contemplated contracting out the provincial park land to a commercial operator. As well recreational use on the lake during peak weekends is increasing. Local residents currently have no say over how many people access the lake from the park or even what happens to the park. However, we do have a letter stating agreement in principal for the regional district to take over the park.

Summary:

Why a park? 1. To preserve our water supply (maintain watersheds!!!)

2. To gain control over and use for our community of the provincial park land. (E.g. we need space for a fire hall/ community hall and would like a say in what happens in the park).

3. To keep noise levels to no more than what we currently experience.

4. To develop trails that will provide recreational opportunities with a focus on non-motorized use on the hillsides (hiking, horse back riding, mountain bike riding) and to also support locals in accessing (on off road vehicles) the network of roads in the area.

5. To encourage visitors that will stay in the park contributing therefore to the costs of a park while at the same time being able to regulate the number of visitors (to the extent possible). We are not interested in exorbitant increases in our taxes. We also believe that with careful planning we can preserve our environment, our vistas and our current lake lifestyles.

6. To concentrate public access of valley park land from the south end of the lake. Although residents recognize the public access roads throughout the subdivisions are highway property and the public has a right

to use these areas, our purpose is not to encourage tourist use of these areas. Parking, picnicking, trailheads, etc. would start at the current provincial park.

What is next?

2014

1. Establishment of a parks committee
2. Creation of a power-point presentation to explain to highways why we want the road changed.
3. Establish a park map and submit a notification of intent to BC government.
4. Establish a plan that formalizes turnover of provincial park to regional district in the next five years (when we are ready).

2015-2020

5. Establish a park plan to submit to regional district including possible trail routes, future research including environmental assessments, geology studies, archaeological studies
6. Compile history of the area.
7. Create a park business plan
8. Receive permission from provincial government and regional government to establish park as outlined.
9. Establish trails

What can you do to help?

Join Park committee

Put your name on a Friends of the Park email list so that you can keep up to date on progress

Help with trail building/cleanup/ etc.

Record bird and animal sightings

Become involved in our volunteer fire man group

Research history of area

Take pictures of our area and give to park committee

Volunteer for specific tasks when they arise

Help with communications in our valleys

Help with technical expertise-mapping, computer presentations, etc.