

Subject: Fwd: Municipal proposals better suited for Disneyland, not our parks and forests
From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>
Date: Tue, 19 Apr 2011 11:44:29 -0700
To: Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Municipal proposals better suited for Disneyland, not our parks and forests
Date: Tue, 19 Apr 2011 11:32:44 -0700
From: Monica Craver <mecraver@shaw.ca>
To: council@dnv.org, stuartd@dnv.org, jdioszeghy@dnv.org
CC: rogerss@dnv.org, rboulton@dnv.org, fonvca@fonvca.org

*Dear Mayor and Council:

*

*Wise words come from a retired Canada Parks Warden from BC. DNV should heed them. There is a growing wave of dissent over the misuse and abuse of our natural places -- not just inside our National Parks:

*

*Federal proposals better suited for Disneyland, not national parks *

Mar 31, 2011

Editor, Rocky Mountain Outlook:

I recently read a passage in a book that involved discussion among three wise women who were sharing their innermost thoughts on the human element in terms of how we react to important issues.

One woman explained how we usually express our feelings in layers. The first emotion we most often feel is anger, which gives way to sadness, then eventually we experience fear. Finally, we decide to do the right thing and voice our concern.

My commitment to the national parks ideal began on my first visit to Banff and Jasper as a teen in 1958. On that visit, I had the good fortune to spend time with several park wardens in Jasper and the seed was planted by the best national parks ambassadors that I could have encountered.

Four years later, I was hired for the beginning of a long career with national parks until retirement in 1998. Most of my service with Parks was as a warden in the field and a good portion of that was in the backcountry.

Most wardens I know tend to become idealists and we all form our biased opinions on the direction Parks should take and we come by those opinions through pure, honest dedication to the cause. From the beginning, the Warden Service was given the task of protecting and managing the park ecosystem with minimal impairment as a heritage to be enjoyed by our children of the future.

The majority of us took this very seriously, often to the detriment and hardship of family and personal life. The tradeoff was the opportunity to experience and absorb the essence of our great Canadian wilderness in the course of our duties in the field.

No other function in the national parks had the opportunity to manage the resources of the park like the Warden Service as it once existed. No person can understand the connection with the landscape that grew within each of us until you have spent extended periods of solitary time soaking up the wilderness of which you have been tasked to protect.

Now the reason retired wardens are so riled up is that for the last decade or so we have been mad about the direction we see Parks going. After years of observing anger and frustration among my colleagues and associates, including dissent in all functions still working in Parks, I saw the feelings turn to sadness.

Finally, I am beginning to see and feel fear. We are scared the mandarins in Ottawa are actually considering outlandish proposals better suited for Disneyland.

Many of us have chosen to do something about it and end our silence. We no longer “ride for the brand” but we will always ride for the Parks values. Hence the recent or impending flood of letters expressing disapproval of the Tangle Ridge proposal for a “Skywalk”!!

We and tens of thousands of sane supporters of parks in the purest form are scared of where the authoritarians in government are taking our parks when tampering with the sacred ground of our world heritage sites.

What is their definition of heritage? Give me a sensible answer in what skywalks, ziplines or any other mechanical gadget has to do with world heritage or unimpairment to our unsurpassed natural wonders we are so blessed to protect for infinity so the rest of our crazy world can come and admire with envy.

I realize that the intent of this proposal is for a “partner” to generate some revenue. After all, it is evident to astute observers of natural phenomena that the Athabasca Icefield is slowly losing the battle and appears destined to melt away into history.

We should not surmise that our good friends with Brewster Transport just wish to continue to exploit our national parks to fill the pockets of their shareholders from who knows where and who have not a milliliter of concern for the mission of our national parks.

Please explain how Parks will benefit when considering all the potential headaches that will result from a development at that site. Just what does the citizen of Canada and the world stand to gain from such an atrocity to the integrity of our splendid wilderness? You want to further desecrate the splendours of the world’s most scenic drive?

Our neighbours outside of national parks suffer because of exploitation of resources and the decline of the economy and look for new means of keeping their communities alive. Let national parks be good stewards and lend support for skywalks and ziplines to be established away from the ‘cathedrals of our sacred parks’.

Have we not learned our lesson in trying minimize damage to parks values when dealing with development of ski hills, skytrams, pipelines, etc? Society outside of our world heritage preserves continues to chew up our resources, create man-caused disasters and cause the frightening disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species, all for the almighty dollar.

Our modern national parks have fallen into that trap with this idea of operating as a business. Now is the time for Parks to take the lead for the rest of the world around us in finding a way to reverse the process of galloping consumption and return to the mandate of protection and preservation in the purest form.

Business does not meld well with preservation. We have known that since the invention of the wheel.

We have long abandoned the old axiom we used to preach to our visiting public – “...take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints...”. We all long for the day when we can shed our emotions of anger, sadness and fear for one of optimism and the comfort of knowing our parks are receiving due care and attention in the spirit of the mandate.

Oh, those were the days when we rode for the brand (...and were proud to do so).

Gord Anderson,

retired park warden

Valemount, B.C.

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society of Northern Alberta (CPAWS NAB)

Comments:

Alvin Shier said:

THIS LETTER NEEDS TO BE COPIED IN RED AND USED AS THE MANIFESTO FOR ANYONE CONCERNED ABOUT THE NATURAL FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM. I'D PERSONALLY LIKE TO PIN A COPY TO THE FOREHEAD OF EVERYONE FAVORING THE BUGGERING OF SAME, IN THE NAME OF GENERATING PROFITS. THANK YOU MR. ANDERSON NO ONE WILL EVER STATE THE CASE FOR PARKS PRESERVATION BETTER THAN YOU JUST DID.

April 1, 2011 @ 12:22 am Report Abuse

<http://www.rmoutlook.com/article/20110331/RMO0904/303319982/-1/rmo0904/federal-proposals-better-suited-for-disneyland-not-national-parks>

I could not have put this more eloquently, Mayor and Council. What DNV has done to a park dedicated for protection, while disregarding its critical environmental assessments in order to turn the entire Mt. Fromme area into a Mountain Biking Disneyland is plain ecological abuse. It lacks any common sense, fairness and balance. Encouraging mountain bike sprawl across Mt. Fromme and Seymour is just irresponsible planning.

Please reconsider the Mount Fromme Trails Plan to include proper and due protection for Mountain View Park wetland and upland area, banning mountain biking from this area. This is a critical Species at Risk habitat, not a Disneyland for extreme off-road thrillsports. The majority of the people asked for conservation, not wreckreation! Please honour this, today. I will be happy to help restore the trails back to nature, and so will many conservation-based groups. Thank you.

--Monica Craver--



In other recent news:

Crews Battle Rogue Trails: http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci_17857552

The story is somewhat misleading as "most of the evidence for rogue trail building has pointed the eyes of the courts and forest managers at

illegal mountain bike trail builders."<http://tinyurl.com/3tsja8h>