

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2017
7:10 PM**

(RDN Board Chambers)
This meeting will be recorded

A D D E N D U M

PAGES

- 5. DELEGATIONS**
- 2-7 **5.2 Barbara Smith, Silver Spur Riding Club**, re Motion #12 to ban horses from the Coombs to Parksville Trail and accompanying Staff Report.
- 6. CORRESPONDENCE**
- 8-11 **6.4 Correspondence** re Delegation by Friends of Rails to Trails Vancouver Island.

Delegation: **Barbara Smith, Silver Spur Riding Club, re Motion #12 to ban horses from the Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail and accompanying Staff Report.**

Summary: The Silver Spur Riding Club opposes the immediate imposition of a prohibition of horses on the Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail and requests that further enquiries and consultations be made by Staff.

See enclosed.

(a) SSpur Motion #12 Objection dated April 10, 2017

(b) Poop Notice posted by the Silver Spur Riding Club

Action Requested:

1. That the Motion #12 to ban horses be set aside for 90 days pending further review.
2. That Staff arrange a meeting within the next 90 days with the representatives of the Silver Spur Riding Club, Back Country Horsemen of BC and Horse Council of BC to discuss the issues that have been raised and provide recommendations towards realistic solutions that accommodate all user groups.
3. That Staff be directed to conduct a user study, including a user count.
4. That Staff be directed to consult with the Cowichan Valley RD, Capital Regional District, Comox Strathcona Regional District and Maple Ridge, to discuss how they addressed similar multi use issues on the trail system.
5. That signage including equestrians as trail users be positioned on the trail as soon as possible.
6. That the Staff report be sent back to Staff for reconsideration of options on how to include the equestrian community as partners and stakeholders, and to address the issues raised in consideration of the additional information provided from items 2, 3, 4 and 5 above.

Thank you for allowing the Silver Spur Riding Club to address the Board tonight;

Who we are – An Equestrian B.C. Society (S-0029694) and Club having a continual existence since 1950 in the Oceanside Area and with between 80 to 90 members.

SUBJECT OF PRESENTATION:

Motion #12 Horses on the Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail. That horses be prohibited from the Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail and staff continue to pursue equestrian parking in relation to equestrian use of Highway 4A Crown Woodlot.

Staff Report made by Joan Michel to prohibit horses from the Parksville Rail Trail.

This motion is of extreme concern to the equestrian community.

ACTION, WHICH IS BEING REQUESTED:

1. That this motion be set aside for 90 days, pending further review.
2. That staff arrange a meeting within the next 90 days with representatives of Silver Spur Riding Club, Back Country Horsemen of BC and Horse Council of BC to discuss the issues that have been raised and provide recommendations towards realistic solutions that accommodate all user groups.
3. Staff be directed to conduct a user study, including a user count.
4. Signage specifically including equestrians as trail users be positioned on the trail as soon as possible.
5. That staff be directed to consult with the Cowichan Valley RD, Capital Regional District, Comox Strathcona Regional District and Maple Ridge, to discuss how they addressed similar multi use issues on their trail systems.
6. The staff report be sent back to staff for reconsideration of options on how to include the equestrian community as partners and stakeholders, and to address the issues raised in consideration of the additional information provided from items 2, 3, 4 and 5 above.

BACKGROUND:

We had been eagerly awaiting the completion of this trail on the understanding that a “multi use” trail included equestrian use and are very disappointed now, only a few months after it has opened, to find that the RDN is considering banning horses from the trail. We believe that given the few trails, lack of Crown land, and relatively low population density of the area it is critical that we make every effort to accommodate as many user groups as possible on this and other public trails. We suggest that this can be done by emphasizing consultation with user groups and education on interaction between different users.

The Area F Official Community Plan Bylaw provides the following direction regarding trail development:

Section 6: Parks Trails and Recreation: Encourage the preservation and construction of multi use trails to connect parks and green spaces. Formal and informal trails (used for hiking, **horseback riding** and cycling).

Section 7: Transportation: Given the dispersed residential development pattern, the rural nature of the Plan Area ... Provisions should also be made for non-automobile alternatives such as pedestrian, **equestrian** and cycling links through the Plan Area.

B. The Complaint Issues are threefold:

- Horses in general
- Poop
- Divots

1. Horses

“Reluctance to share this trail with large and possibly unpredictable animals.”

Horses are domesticated prey animals, and any conflict between recreational groups is rare, almost always resulting in the horse running away from the threat. We do understand that not everyone is comfortable in close proximity to horses since they are large animals. However the same can be said for other trail users such as large, poorly controlled dogs and speeding cyclists. We suggest that the solution involves educating users on how to have positive interactions with one another rather than banning one user group.

When the education component to all users is properly put in place, horses have traversed trail systems within urban communities for decades, i.e. Maple Ridge. Hence, the signage referred to at the end of this proposal is now being endorsed and used widely throughout the communities;

The fact that this trail is multi-use is mentioned very softly and signage refers to Pedestrian and Bicyclists ONLY.

Intentionally attempting to exclude equestrians – “Although designed as multi-use, it was assumed that the large volume of non-equestrian users, including many dog walkers, would effectively discourage equestrians from the rail trail.” We believe this is a serious mistake by attempting to discourage a public user group, including residents of the community, from a public funded, publicly intended multi-use trail system. And, it contravenes the Community Plan that was enacted as a result of extensive public survey. There are many horse farms nearby and there is an excellent equestrian facility at the Coombs Fairgrounds. Adjoining the Rail Trail is Crown Woodlot #31, a favourite riding area. The Silver Spur Riding Club has contacted the family who has managed this Woodlot for the past 30 years and who are prepared to work with us on that trail system. Walker Addison noted that his family had never been contacted by the RDN about the Rail Trail.

Currently, the following neighbouring communities endorse, encourage, partner with and support the equestrian community as an integral and inclusive stakeholder;

Port Alberni – equestrians encouraged and supported in access and use of the Log Trail

Cowichan Valley Regional District – equestrians encouraged and supported in access and use of 122 Kilometres of Cowichan Valley Trail, including access into Ladysmith along side the urban park of Stocking Creek

Capital Regional District – extensive equestrian use of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, Lochside.

Courtenay – One Spot Trail

Reference to the 50 plus complaints is anecdotal. The report appears to be lacking in accountable data. Was there a “user count done on the trail system”. How many recreationalists are using the trail system? Out of the 50 complaints, what percentage of users does that represent? Has the RDN solicited the equestrian community feedback? We suggest that an action as severe as banning a user group from the trail should be based on either a user survey conducted by the RDN (where there is control over the sample) or on consultation with user groups rather than on a number of complaints. Complaints are an unreliable sample of users; they could be a campaign organized by one or two people, or prompted by the lack of any notice of permitted equestrian use.

2. Horse Droppings – yes, as with all animals, this will occur. The equestrians are committed to diligently clean droppings and have placed signage up to educate Riders. There are very few instances of horse poop now on the trail. And, none along the entire length on Sunday, April 9th.

3. Divots:

Gravel surfaces, such as the Cowichan Valley Trail should easily be able to accommodate footing for horses. Our trail was created in one of our nastiest winters and it will take time for the surface to compact. It is a raised roadway, with extremely steep sides, and no shoulder in many areas along its length. The perimeter edge of the trail is exceedingly soft so that travel within 1 foot of the edge is problematic. There are many instances of horses, people and dogs eroding the edge and this will be a continual problem. The interior of the trail is holding up to horse traffic.

ALL OF WHICH IS RESPECTIFULLY SUBMITTED.

Standard Signage for multi-use trails



Signage on the Rail Trail



Notice to Equestrians

PLEASE

Remove your horse's poop
off the RDN Rail trail
immediately AND be
sensitive of any concerns
of the people you meet.

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Thanks!

The Silver Spur Riding Club

From: Glenn Migneault
Sent: Saturday, April 08, 2017 6:44 AM
To: corpsrv
Subject: Re: Rails to Trails

To: Regional District Chairman and Directors

I would like to be on record as being in opposition to the presentation by the group; Friends of Rails to Trails.

The E&N railway is a very important Transportation Corridor, and lifting rails to make a trail is not the way to proceed. The costs to rebuild the railway would be less than removing the ties and rail and turning it into a trail. Any talk of a trail should be constructed beside the railway to protect the railway for future use.

Freight rail service could once again deliver goods to customers once the railway is rebuilt, but until that happens, the railway needs to be protected.

In the future as the Island population increases the Railway has a very important role to move people more efficiently, through Commuter services and also Excursion Trains for tourists.

In closing I would ask the Regional District to reject this Rails to Trails presentation.

Respectfully,
Glenn Migneault,

Victoria, BC
250-514-6497

From: Wayne Oliver
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 5:55 PM
To: corpsrv
Subject: E&N Railway right-of-way

To whom it may concern

I would like to be on record as being in opposition to the presentation by the group; Friends of Rails to Trails.

I believe the E&N railway has the potential of being an important part of Vancouver Island's overall Transportation Infrastructure.

The ability of the Railway to reduce the volume of Heavy Truck Traffic on the Highways and Roadways is compelling on it's own.

As the Island population increases the Railway has the potential to move people more efficiently. If the movement of people is achieved in an organized manner it will also have the ability to guide and control residential and industrial development.

In closing I would ask the RDN to reject this presentation.

Respectfully

Wayne B. Oliver
Port Alberni BC
250 723 9602
250 735 3584

From: Chris Caswell
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 12:57 PM
To: corpsrv
Subject: E&N Railway

Good Afternoon,

I am not sure this is the correct address to send this to but I have been made aware that the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC will be meeting with the RDN to discuss removing the E&N railway from Vancouver Island and replace it with a trail. I would like to make it firmly known as a resident and property owner in the RDN, that no one in my household supports this idea. Special interest groups should not be able to muscle out transportation corridors for personal use. The island's population is growing at a very rapid rate, and with that we need to ensure we have an alternative mode of transportation. The railway built this island, it was deliberately run into the ground by the previous owners, and handed over to us in a terrible state. We should be investing in refurbishing this rail line to a standard that allows it to be used for tourist rail from the Nanaimo cruise ship terminal and in the Coombs region, move freight more efficiently, and allow for the rapidly aging population to move about without constraint to the personal automobile. Removal of the rail line, while following all required environmental protocols, would be far more expensive than refurbishing the rail line to a useable standard and would only benefit a s small, but very vocal, special interest group. Please do what is best for the mid island and continue to support the renewal of rail infrastructure for future prosperity. There is plenty of room next to the rails for trails, as has been adequately demonstrated with the Parksville to Coombs project.

Chris Caswell

2741 Horth Road
Nanaimo BC, Canada

From: Alex Caswell
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 12:45 PM
To: premier@gov.bc.ca; corpsrv
Subject: removal of the E&N railway

I do not support the idea put forward by the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC to remove the E&N railway from Vancouver Island and replace it with a trail. This special interest group does not have the province's or the island's best interests in mind, only their own hobby. We need to keep this alternative form of transportation intact and invest in bringing back to a useable standard for Passenger, Freight, and Commuter Rail services.

Thanks!
Alex Caswell
2327 Rosstown Road Nanaimo BC