

SARGEANT BAY PARK HISTORY

1977 In the fall of that year the owner, Evergreen Properties, started dredging the wetland behind the beach and diverted the mouth of Colvin Creek to create a marina. The authorities stopped him for lack of the necessary permits.

1978 In January the Area "B" Ratepayers' Association called a meeting to protest against the marina plan. It was a stormy meeting, where no vote was taken, because some of the people present were not paid-up members. At a second meeting, in March, this was corrected and 42 voted against the marina and 9 voted in favour.

The Sargeant Bay Society was founded, started to promote the idea of a public park for the area and began to look actively for agencies that might provide the necessary funds. The owner had previously offered the area for sale to the Provincial Government for a Provincial Park and in 1975 Sargeant Bay was on a list of potential park sites for the Sunshine Coast. However, no agreement could be reached on price.

1979 In May the owner applied for rezoning the area to half-acre lots. The Sargeant Bay Society submitted a brief to the SCR D Board in opposition of the application.

In June the owner unveiled his "Comprehensive Development Plan" for Sargeant Bay: a 3-story, 73-unit condominium with a 175-boat marina, breakwater, tennis court and single-family housing on the upland side of Redrooffs Road.

The diversity of the area - potential for wetland rehabilitation for waterfowl, fish and wildlife as well as beach-associated outdoor activities - turned out to be a drawback in finding interested funding agencies. They were reluctant to fund assets that were not within their mandate. The best chance appeared to be the Regional Parks Program, under which the Province would provide one-third of the funding, with the remainder to be found from other sources. The SCR D was fully supportive and obtained an appraisal of the area between the bay and the road, the area that would stand to lose most from commercial development.

The Second Century Fund, now the Nature Trust of British Columbia, was prepared to buy the marsh, if others would buy the surrounding land. Ducks Unlimited would undertake wetland rehabilitation with the owner's approval, but had no mandate for buying land. Agencies like the Devonian Foundation of Calgary and the Nature Conservancy of Canada declined assistance because the Second Century Fund had already expressed an interest. The close to two-thirds that would have to be found by the SCR D was considered too heavy a burden for its small tax base.

Then there was the B.C. Lottery Fund. That source did come very close to fruition, until some-one found out that they were not supposed to provide funds for a project that was already eligible for funds from another Provincial Program.

In September the owner resumed dredging of the creek mouth. The Sargeant Bay Society complained to the Regional Land Manager, who ordered him to stop.

- 1980 The rezoning application went to public hearings in February and April, where opposition was voiced by The Sargeant Bay Society and several others. The Technical Planning Committee also advised against the rezoning, which was subsequently rejected.

The Ministry of Land, Parks and Housing prepared a proposal for acquisition of the land between the bay and the road, based on exchange of land of equal value.

- 1981 Early that year this plan received "approval in principle" from the Ministry's Executive Committee, allowing opening of negotiations with the owner.

The owner approached the Sargeant Bay Society to secure its support for an application for rezoning of the land between the bay and the road to allow the construction of townhouses. In return the Society would get a say in how the area would be developed... The Society declined.

The owner cleared the small southern part of the property upland from Redrooffs Road and applied for rezoning of that area. There was a public hearing in June, at which the Sargeant Bay Society submitted a brief, with several others also expressing concerns. The application was rejected. In August the negotiations between the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing and the owner collapsed, because no agreement could be reached on the price.

- 1983 In April the bank holding the mortgages on the property took action to foreclose the owner's interest in the property.

Subsequently, before foreclosure could take effect, the property was sold to the Vancouver-based "Sargeant Bay Marina Corporation". Their Offering Memorandum, dated November, 1983, describes a high-density subdivision for the property, offering tax-sheltered shares to "sophisticated investors".

- 1984 In April the Vancouver real estate firm Tourigny, Hall & Associates, started advertising and selling the shares.

- 1985 In October the corporation submitted its proposal for a 145-lot subdivision to the SCRD. The proposal, while intrinsically flawed in many aspects, was considerably more detailed than any by the previous owner, prepared as it was, by a firm of architects.

- 1986 The Sargeant Bay Society presented a brief to the SCRD Planning Committee, criticising the proposal and promoting the case for a park as the only sensible solution.

Subsequently, the SCRD Planning Department made an in-depth study of the area with respect to its suitability for the proposed subdivision, including a review of the proposal by its firm of engineers.

- 1987 In May a company representative and the architect met again with the SCRD Planning Department, who explained the multitude of problems that would have to be overcome before the proposed subdivision could be approved.

In October the previous owner, who still had a minor interest in the property, met with the Mayor of Sechelt and the local MLA at Sargeant Bay and let it be known that the corporation was prepared to negotiate selling the property to the Provincial Government.

- 1988 During the negotiations the Sargeant Bay Society kept a low profile. The Society continued to advertise the virtues of the area as a public beach and nature park, by way of its newsletters and tours of Sargeant Bay Beach for the public.

The Society took action on the matter of recreational vehicles, camping illegally at the beach and creating a pollution hazard. As a result the SCRD took the owners to court, a fine was imposed and the camping was discontinued.

- 1989 The B.C. Government had the property appraised. The Sargeant Bay Society added an annual beach clean-up to its regular program.

At last, in October, two years after the start of this last round of negotiations, and eleven years after the Sargeant Bay Society started to promote the idea of a park, the 57 hectare site was acquired by the Ministry of Parks.

- 1990 In March the Sargeant Bay wetland and upland forest area was officially dedicated as a CLASS "A" PROVINCIAL PARK by the Minister of Lands, Parks and Housing in a modest ceremony at Sargeant Bay beach.

In June the Society published the **SARGEANT BAY PROVINCIAL PARK - Master Plan Background Report** at the request of B.C.Parks management. Subsequently, B.C.Parks issued its *Draft Master Plan* for the park.

In October the Society published the **SARGEANT BAY WETLAND - Status Report and Proposal**, with grants from the Habitat Conservation Fund and Imperial Oil Ltd., which was subsequently approved by B.C.Parks management.

In November B.C.Parks held an Open House in Sechelt to invite public input for the *Master Plan*.

- 1991 In February the *Master Plan* was officially approved by the B.C.Parks Regional Director. The Society completed the specifications and drawings for the **SARGEANT BAY WETLAND - Rehabilitation Project**. These were subsequently approved by B.C.Parks management.

In August rehabilitation of the wetland commenced with grants from the Environmental Partners Fund, the Habitat Conservation Fund and the Salmonid Enhancement Program. The spoiled part of the wetland was changed into a freshwater lake with an island, a fish ladder was installed at the original mouth of Colvin Creek and the channel that was dredged in 1977 for the purpose of a marina, was filled in. The project took 5 weeks to complete.

- 1992 In January the Society published **SARGEANT BAY WETLAND - Report 1991**, reporting on the rehabilitation project and initial effect plant and wildlife in the area.

The Sechelt Rotary Club installed nest boxes around the wetland. 7 were designed for small birds such as swallows and 6 are for cavity breeding ducks.

1993 In January the Society published **SARGEANT BAY WETLAND - Report 1992**, reporting on the progression of plant and wildlife as a result of the rehabilitation project. In February the Society built a footpath on the public right-of-way between the park and Kenyon Road, to create an easy walk around the wetland.

The Society explored a hiking trail route along Colvin Creek within the park and a trail route from Trout Lake to the park within the Sechelt Forest, with a branch trail to Triangle Lake. The trail from Trout Lake has already been started by the Forest Service and the trail along Colvin Lake will be done by the Society in November.

1994 In January and February the Society completed a 650 m Nature Trail along Colvin Creek, within the Provincial Park boundary. Human Resources Development Canada provided a crew of four persons on U.I.C. benefits and the Society hired, and paid for, the supervisor. The project took 9 weeks to complete.

In May the Society applied for protection of Triangle Lake, under the Protected Areas Strategy.

1995 In January the Society published **SARGEANT BAY WETLAND - Report 1993 and 1994**, reporting on the progression of plant and wildlife since the rehabilitation project and summarizing the results over the last four years.

In February the Society completed the construction of a 2.7 km trail from the Provincial Park boundary to Triangle Lake. The trail is located within the Sechelt Provincial Forest and connects to the Colvin Creek Nature Trail. The Society hired a crew of 6 persons and a manager, funded by a grant from Human Resources Development Canada under the Job Development Program. The project took 22 weeks to complete.

Subsequently, the application for protection of Triangle Lake was amended to include the Triangle Lake Trail.

1996 In October Triangle Lake and the trail that provides access from Sargeant Bay Provincial Park were protected under the Protected Areas Strategy. The 83 ha area will be added to the Sargeant Bay Park, increasing its size to 140 ha.

1997 Scotch Broom was eliminated from the berm by a member of the society. Control of Himalayan Blackberries was started with the help of UFAWU crew.

1998 Himalayan Blackberry control was continued by 2 students under a Student Works '98 grant.

1999 Himalayan Blackberry control was continued by 3 students under a Student Works '99 grant.

2000 In March the Society submitted a 75 page updated **Master Plan Background Report** for **SARGEANT BAY PROVINCIAL PARK** to BC Parks management. BC Parks printed and distributed the report in October.

Himalayan Blackberry control was continued by a crew of 4 people, supported by an EcoAction 2000 grant from Environment Canada.

2001 Himalayan Blackberry control was continued under a contract with Kye Goodwin, supported by an EcoAction grant from Environment Canada.

A 26 page report; *“Invasive Plant Control at Sargeant Bay Provincial Park”* was written by Kye Goodwin and Joop Burgerjon.

2002 Himalayan Blackberry control was continued under a contract with Kye Goodwin. The park is now essentially free of Himalayan Blackberry, Evergreen Blackberry, Scotch Broom and Yellow Flag.

BC Parks placed interpretive signage on the Sargeant Bay berm, with due credit to the Sargeant Bay Society for its contribution to the park.

The Society launched its own website: www.sargbay.ca .