



2235 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X7

August 10th, 2009

Honourable Barry Penner
Minister of Environment
Parliament Buildings
PO Box 9047, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Via e-mail

Dear Minister Penner,

On behalf of the board of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT), I am writing to bring to your attention the unacceptable state of Drumbeg Provincial Park. Situated on Gabriola Island, the park is home to a beautiful gary oak and camas lily meadow which is now almost completely overrun with Scotch broom. We have been in constant contact with BC Parks officials about the problem and recently submitted a modest proposal to manage and eventually eradicate Scotch broom from the park. The proposal was developed in consultation with two biologists from the Coastal Invasive Plants Committee who were shocked at the state of the infestation at Drumbeg. We were advised that there is no money in the budget to undertake the work this year. I have attached a copy of the proposal for your information.

The Scotch broom is one of three major infestations in the park, the other two being giant hogweed (an extremely hazardous plant which can cause severe skin burns and blindness if the plant matter gets on skin or into the eyes) and periwinkle. There is also a minor infestation of daphne laurel. The impact of these infestations on the natural flora is significant. We are at risk of losing the gary oak meadow completely if we cannot remove the broom. In the past, BC Parks contracted to have the broom mowed down with the result that the root systems became stronger and the mature plants are now much harder to remove. GaLTT and individual volunteers have tried to keep abreast of the problem and have devoted hundreds of volunteer hours to keep the problem from getting worse.

The most recent management plan I was able to find for Drumbeg and Gabriola Sands Parks is dated August 1987. It states as an objective "to retain the natural woodlands and grasslands in this park as evolving ecosystems". Clearly you have failed to meet this objective. This situation is untenable, and will result in the loss of a unique ecosystem as Drumbeg continues to be overrun by invasive plants. At the All Candidates meeting on Gabriola, the Liberal candidate, when asked about the situation, indicated that the Liberal government had in fact expanded the number of provincial parks. That is cold comfort



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when the existing parks are not maintained to any discernible standard and your ministry is willing to offload management of invasives to a non-profit, volunteer community organization.

I would appreciate a response outlining a clear course of action to immediately eradicate the Scotch broom and giant hogweed. As we have indicated in the past, we are more than willing to assist but cannot continue to do so on a volunteer basis. We would be happy to meet with you and give you a tour of the park at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley
President
Gabriola Land and Trails Trust
ddf@shaw.ca
Tel. 250 247-9779

cc. Ranger Wade Calder, BC Parks
Doug Routley, MLA,
Gisele Rudischer, Director, Regional District of Nanaimo
Sheila Malcolmson, Trustee, Islands Trust
Deborah Ferens, Trustee, Islands Trust
Gabriola Sounder
Gabriola Shingle
Nanaimo Daily News

attachment