

## Regional Board Meeting, July 24, 2018

Good afternoon chair and Board of Directors

We are Ken and Gladys Schmidt at 2480 England Road, which abuts Duncan Bay Main, and is about a mile from the property at the Puntledge River under discussion today. We have lived here since 1971.

We understand that there are many advantages and also many opinions to developing this property. The process of how we got here today could be criticized. I would be happy to talk to anyone afterwards about why I am saying this. But, today is not about that, it is about the decision we have before us. After careful consideration of all the possible outcomes, both of us have agreed to be in favour of this development for the following reasons...

Over the years, we have used this river extensively as a place to cool off in the summer heat. Our two girls spent many happy hours at the river with friends and neighbours. In the early days, we didn't need to compete with people from the Comox Valley or from tourists; it was a well-kept secret. But as population increased, so did the river usage, making parking an issue. With increase of traffic came more garbage. Because there were no toilets, the trees near-by were decorated with toilet paper. It soon became a teen-age hangout.

Today, we have a wonderful opportunity to have this gem turned into a beautiful park, with facilities and improved trails. With the creation of this park, our grandchildren and great-grandchildren now have a promise of being able to swim in this pristine river, walk down to Stotan Falls, and ride the up-graded cycle trails for free. This is a win/win for families, tourists, cyclists, and hikers.

This past weekend, we were privileged to take our two grandsons to this location. The road was jammed with cars leaving no place to park except some far-distant walking spots. We drove on to a secluded spot above the bridge and found a perfect private swimming hole with a rope hanging from a tree. The boys, ages 16 and 14 had a blast. We can't stress enough that to vote against this park would be a drastic mistake.

We know this is not a perfect solution and it does involve compromise, but we feel strongly that by turning this down, we risk to lose more than we stand to gain. I

know there are some people who think we can turn this down and fight for the right to the river, but we feel that this strategy is too risky – we could lose all access. Yes, traffic will increase as always happens when land is developed, but this is a slight negative compared to having a first-class recreational park in our area.

This property is not included in ALR (Agriculture Land Reserve), is basically a gravel bed, and is perfect for subdivision use. Many people are looking at the Comox Valley for .25 or .5 acre parcels of land near amenities. Downtown Courtenay is only a 6 minute drive away. A family of four would have less of a carbon footprint living in this subdivision than either the Mt Washington or Saratoga settlement nodes.

In summary, we urge you to vote in favour of this subdivision which includes a promise of permanent protection of 260 acres of park land with free access to the Puntledge River, Stotan Falls, and trails for future generations.

K.A. Schmidt  
G. Schmidt