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Partner Organizations

Comox Valley Land Trust
C.V. Environmental Council
Comox Valley Nature (CVNS)
Mack Laing Heritage Society
Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society
Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards
Morrison Creek Streamkeepers
Project Watershed Society
Tsolum River Restoration Society

Supporter Organizations

Arden Area Residents Association
Black Creek Streamkeepers
Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society
Comox Town Residents Association
C.V. Water Watch Coalition
Cumberland Community Forest Society
Forbidden Plateau Road Residents Association
Friends of Comox Lazo Forest Reserve
Friends of Strathcona Park
Macdonald Wood Park Society
Oyster River Management Committee
Perseverance Creek Streamkeepers
Merville Area Resident's & Ratepayers Association
Saratoga and Miracle Beach Residents Association

Funding Partners

Real Estate Foundation of B.C.
Community Gaming Grant
RBC Blue Water Fund
Comox Valley Regional District

www.cvconservationstrategy.org

August 29, 2015

Dear Mayor and Council:

In October of 2014, Comox Council received a letter from the Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Steering Committee, urging the Town of Comox to work with all groups and residents to include a facility for natural history education at Mack Laing Park. It is enclosed for review.

Locally, provincially and nationally Mack Laing is recognized as a significant 20th century conservationist. Recently, Heritage BC and the National Trust of Canada confirmed the importance of Baybrook House and offered to help in preserving it. The site and the legacy of Mack Laing have become a matter of nation-wide interest.

A concerted effort was made by local citizens to preserve the Baybrook House. We are disappointed to learn that the Town of Comox has taken action on this issue without engaging in public consultation. Despite the challenges of doing so, consultation with residents and groups is critical to find resolutions that can be broadly supported.

Going forward we strongly urge the Town to reconsider the current approach. We request that:

- There is an opportunity for all members of the community to have input.
- Mack Laing's legacy is honoured with a facility for nature and heritage education.
- The interests of residents in nearby neighborhoods are respected; and
- The environmental values of Mack Laing Park are protected and maintained.

As the Town considers the fate of the Shakeside property and how Mack Laing's legacy will be recognized in Mack Laing Park, please do not overlook the role that environmental education, celebrating heritage and collaboration can play in building a healthy environment and community for future generations.

Regards,

David Stapley

Project Manager,

On behalf of the Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Steering Committee



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October 17, 2014

Re: Mack Laing and proposal for Baybrook

To Town of Comox Council:

The steering committee for the Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Community Partnership urges the Town of Comox to work with Mack Laing Heritage Society, K'ómoks First Nations, residents of the town and other groups such as Project Watershed, Comox Valley Nature, Macdonald Wood Park Society and Brooklyn Creek Stewards to honour the life and work of Mack Laing, in a manner that best addresses the interests of the various stakeholders.

Hamilton Mack Laing was a pioneer, orchardist, naturalist, author, artist and photographer, living on the estuary from 1922 until his death in 1982 at the age of 99. He and his former residence at Baybrook are of significance to the environmental and ecological history of Canada. The residence was visited by well-known naturalists and biologists of the day, and was the inspiration for many books, drawings and scientific observations.

Mack Laing generously left his property and a financial legacy to the Town for the purposes of having a publicly accessible natural history museum. The Mack Laing Society has put forward a proposal to restore the Baybrook house to fulfill the intent of Mack Laing's will.

The park site is well used and loved by Town and Valley residents alike. At this time, a number of substantive issues around use, costs and community impact remain outstanding. Resolution of these issues will require public consultation. We believe that through careful park planning and consultation, a solution can be found that establishes an appropriately scaled and managed facility that can address the interests of all stakeholders including Town residents.

The CVCS steering committee supports the concept and the importance of honouring Mac Laing's legacy and encourages the Town of Comox to work with all groups and residents to include a facility for natural history education on this site.

David Stapley
Project Manager,
On behalf of the Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Steering Committee

LETTER
RECEIVED BY
COUNCIL IN
OCTOBER 2014