

24 July, 2023

To the ACRD Directors:

I would like to add this updated petition to the July 26 Agenda in response to the Request for Decision on page 125. It contains a total of 38 names, representing 18 households that front on Willow Road, and 8 fronting on Compton.

It shows the extent of the opposition of the residents who live in this area, from Willow Road and along Compton as far west as the junction with Maple Street, to the idea of creating additional parking at the end of Willow Road.

The original complaints about parking date back to three years ago during the first year of Covid when trail usage suddenly increased and more people started accessing the trail network at the end of Willow Road. I think the complaints about this problem were made to the former director from Beaver Creek, and may have been one of the reasons that consultations for a Maplehurst Park Management Plan were initiated. However, the parking problem was soon solved at the local level by the placement of signs, which car drivers have respected. The number of cars that are present at any one time has also decreased and there is currently no shortage of room for them to park.

Everyone I approached, including those who made the original complaints, would prefer the situation to remain as it is rather than having a new parking lot created, although there were a couple of residents who felt that personal/profession discretion obliged them to stay noncommittal.

The public relations plan, outlined on the page 125 Request for Decision, of showing people the size and location of the planned new parking lot is not likely to reassure the local residents. Building it would require extending a gravel road over 115 feet beyond the end of the pavement, through a wet brushy area with crabapples and small cedars, and then expanding it on the dryer ground beyond to more than twice its width to create the parking lot. This also requires cutting down the mature Douglas-firs and Balsam firs in the area and obliterating the beginning of the trail to beyond the first junction, which will not please the hikers either.

But the biggest concern about creating a semi-secluded parking lot which can only be partially seen from the paved road is the problems that come with the night time parking it will invite, including littering, drinking, smoking, and the increased chance of forest fires being started. This is a risk we do not want to take. Public parking lots should be located in public places,

The Willow Road parking lot was promoted as a short-term measure until additional parking at other locations could be provided. This would be very helpful to reduce the amount of traffic on Compton and Willow Roads. On page 131 there is a list of areas that were considered. However, the chosen alternative, a parking lot on Best/Cowley

Road, will not do much to help the traffic problem, since only 13% of the hikers live in Cherry Creek, according to the data collected for the Maplehurst Park Management Plan. The majority of the hikers (nearly 80%,) live in Port Alberni or Beaver Creek and probably would not chose to drive farther to a parking lot on Cowley Road.

However, the nearest access for most people (even nearer than Willow Road) is the one on Kitsuksis Road. It is also the cheapest. The land adjacent to the road is dry and firm and it would be easy to construct a fully visible parking area. It is surprising to see that this option was rejected as being of low public benefit, since most people come for the whole trail network, not just the trails in Maplehurst Park.

This area is one of the few parcels of public (or “Crown”) land left in the Alberni Valley. It is a valuable public asset, treasured by many for its variety of native ecosystems. A motion was passed at the Aug 24, 2022 BOD to “pursue Maplehurst trail expansion on adjacent Crown Lands in Beaver Creek...” I would like to see further consideration given to this possibility, and to extending protection to the surrounding natural landscape.

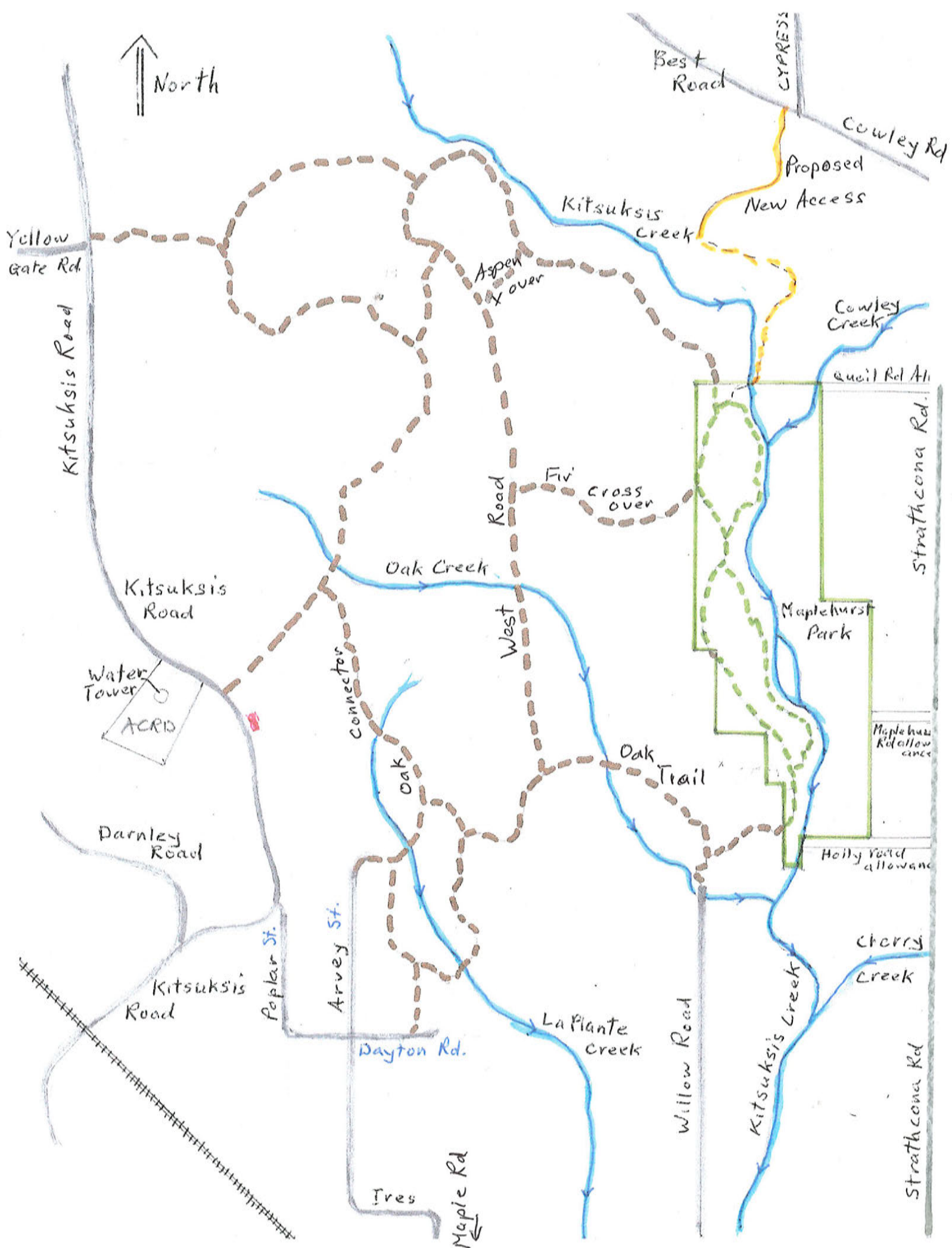
One of the goals stated in the ACRD Parks Services 2022 Annual Report was “Community Engagement—to provide an opportunity for full participation to guide the development of parks and trails, build connection and volunteerism, and increase awareness.”

This would be an excellent opportunity to see how this works.

Yours respectfully,

Judy Carlson


Port Alberni, BC



Name	Address	contact info.
31 RENATA GRUMBACH	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
AL HAWSER	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
BRENT ANDERSON	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Barbara Ostad	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Katie Hopwood	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Carm Mawser	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Susan Cross	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Barry Cross	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Robin Redman	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Redmark Ventures	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]