

## Cama Beach Comments

October 4 – 16, 2024

I may be late in addressing the controversy surrounding the possible closing of the Cama Beach cabins, but feel compelled to add my unwavering support for maintaining the operation into the future. I've reviewed previous comments supporting the restoration project and don't feel like there's much new information I can offer. The historical, cultural, and unique aspects of this site cannot be replaced or relocated. I acknowledge the complexity of maintaining the resort for future generations to enjoy but feel that the value is worth the expense and efforts. Thank you for your dedication to serving our parks and for your thoughtful consideration of Cama Beach. <sup>1</sup>

I know I'm late to comment, but I do so in hopes of showing more support for making a plan to reopen the cabins. There are so few low cost opportunities for families to "camp" without camping gear that it would be a shame to lose the cabins at Cama Beach.

We started coming in 2010 at a group of parents with our toddlers, and the kids are now finishing high school. A weekend at Cama Beach was a huge part of their summers, and the reason why our kids consider themselves Cama cousins. I had hope for at least one Cama wedding to happen eventually! It makes me sad to not be able to see other families have a future of spending time in the cabins at Cama. I hope a plan can be developed to help make that happen. <sup>2</sup>

Dear Commission Members,

I find it utterly confounding that you would shut down an affordable, wildly popular site, loved by generations of park patrons due to 'cultural considerations,' which, apparently, only now merit action.

You are charged with representing the public interest, not the interest of one narrow slice of it. Tens of thousands of people who would've grown to love this place now won't have that chance. Park visitation will plummet and your budget will go with it. It is public support that allows our great park system to exist in the first place.

Clearly you have determined it's more important to be politically correct, than to do your jobs correctly as public servants. This is very unfortunate. I can only ask myself what you will take away next. As a voter and a tax payer, I'd expect more a lot more sense from our leadership. I wouldn't want my name on this decision. Neither should you.

Please reconsider.

Sincerely, <sup>3</sup>

Good afternoon, Snohomish County Parks staff saw the recent [article in the Everett Herald](#) about the permanent closure of Cama Beach's cabins and I was wondering if your team would consider the possibility of relocating them to Kayak Point Park, where we're currently about to start a campground expansion project. We are still in the early phase of conceptual design and we're interested in developing new cabins in the upland areas. I'm curious if this could potentially be a feasible idea. I'd love to be connected to someone in the construction side of things that might

be considering the demolition or renovation/relocation of the cabins. Thanks in advance for your help!

Sincerely, <sup>4</sup>

Goodmorning, my name is Chad Eppig and I am the owner of Eppig Bros llc we are a small construction contractor in monroe wa. I've recently noticed the closing of the cama beach cabins and it's saddening. Myself and many others have fond memories growing up there. The reason I'm reaching out to whoever it concerns is I would like an opportunity to format a business plan for my company to do necessary updating the cabins need, repair the sea wall and septic. Eppig bros has the experience, tooling,machinery to accomplish this. I'm prepared to do a good portion of this as a donation to ensure many more children and families can continue to build the same memories I did. I'm very certain that I can give a proposal that will be within the states budget. As I mentioned we will be donating a good portion of our time and resources to achieve this goal. I look forward to hearing from whoever it concerns and I'm hoping someone to show what I have to offer. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully, <sup>5</sup>

My husband and I were married at Cama Beach in 2020. We were among those who had weddings planned in 2020, but had to alter plans (a few times) due to changing Covid conditions. Through all the changes and evolutions of our planned celebration, the Cama Beach staff and the team at the cafe were so lovely. They were flexible and understanding, and during some dark times helped make our celebrations truly joyful!

In the end we had a small ceremony in 2020 and then a larger celebration in 2021 where we had family and friends staying at the cabins, boating with the Center for Wooden Boats, and eating at the cafe. Everyone LOVED the park and could experience first hand what a special place it was. We even saw orcas offshore on the eve of our party!

Please save the cama beach cabins. This is a unique and special place that so many people love. I hope we can come back and stay for our five year anniversary! <sup>6</sup>

Dear Director and Commissioners:

I was traveling abroad last week when I first learned of the decision you reached on October 10 to not reopen the beach cabins at Cama Beach. While I was aware that the cabins had been closed following a failure of the septic system in February, and damage to the sea wall, and I wish I had gotten involved earlier, I am still stunned by this decision and most anxious about how this amazing park can be rejuvenated and reopened with full public access and use.

Prior to enjoying a judicial career on the King County Superior Court from 2000-2013, I served almost 2 full terms on the WSPRC from 1991-2000. I was on the very first visit of the Commission to Cama Beach, and I was actively involved in its acquisition and the plan to develop the new park in a different way by replicating the historical experience at one of Puget Sound's last beach and fishing resorts. I recall what an incredible opportunity and how much excitement there was to preserve this waterfront and uplands and develop cabins to reflect the site's history and complement the more traditional Camano Island State Park next door.

After my service on the Commission was interrupted by my judicial appointment, I attended the opening ceremony (2008, as I recall). Since then, I bought a house about a mile from Cama Beach and I have hiked its trails and beaches more than a hundred times. Which is now ironic, because I will still be able to make my use of the park as I stay so close by, but the loss to the public if there are no overnight accommodations is tragic and beyond calculation.

While I wish I had been more proactive in the planning process up to now, after over 30 years of

earlier involvement and park use, I need to become better informed about the challenges at Cama Beach and where we go from here to rejuvenate and reopen this magnificent jewel. Since October 10, I have been reviewing everything I can find on your website about the problems at CB. As a next step, I would like to meet with appropriate staff most knowledgeable about the infrastructure problems and tribal heritage issues. I am willing to drive to your offices in Olympia, or to the regional office or meet at Cama Beach. Prior to doing so, I would like to review the staff reports that were done since the February septic failure and the reports on the sea wall. Of course, I will gladly pay any copying or mailing costs. I am also interested in finding out what will be in State Parks capitol budget submittal to the legislature for Cama Beach in 2025-26.

I am hopeful that you will be receptive to my involvement, and need to get educated so that I can constructively participate in where Cama Beach goes from here.

Very Truly Yours,<sup>7</sup>

My family recently moved to Camano Island after falling in love with it from bringing our family to Cama Beach State Park for years. I've read the many comments of support from people all over the state, and the many good ideas on how to meet the needs to keep the park. In particular, I like the ones of the person who works on sea rise challenges in Florida. As much as I adore the cabins and setting as is, it is probably necessary to make changes due to sea rise and septic issues. It will require lots of money, and there have been terrific ideas on how to raise it. Short term, it sounds like there could be composting toilets for now, disconnect the water from the cabins and the main bathrooms and shower building, and make it more like a campground in the woods, but with cabins. Long term, move the cabins and the general store in phases to a more sustainable site, keeping it a place children can play and roam free and keeping the rustic charm that currently exists. That may require moving them to where the parking lots are now, and putting parking elsewhere. Use water reclamation to lessen the impact of water use by so any people, and if possible, solar for energy. There could be old fashioned pumps for communal water supply, which would lessen water impact as well. (There could be ADA cabins with running water). Make the park a park of the future while keeping the intimate, rustic charm. The original design of the park was done beautifully- thank you to all who worked so hard to make it successful. The same ingenuity, but with more emphasis on the effects of climate change, is needed to keep the cabins and special nature of this park - it is unlike any others and must be saved - it won't be 'as is', but it can still be magical.

I would also like to see the history of the Tribes reflected more at the site, integrating tribal culture in ways the Tribes approve. The history of the site goes back further than the 1930s, yet there is no mention of the burial site or middens that I can recall. I was recently at the Stillaguamish cultural center for shoreline protection educational event, and I could see making climate change education, education on tribal and settler culture and history of the area, shoreline protection, etc. part of the new version of the park. Putting signage in that includes names in the indigenous languages and Chinook wa wa, for example. Examples of the amazing, beautiful art, clothing, fishing methods, food, boat building etc. of the Tribes, with education on the meaning of the art and culture, including Potlatch, how the Tribes lost control of the land, how Potlatch was outlawed, and residential schools, and how those impacted the families and people as a whole. It would be amazing to have stories about Raven, Coyote and other important figures in Tribal religion and culture, and recordings of people speaking native tongues and how language and culture are being preserved. The park could be a place where European and indigenous cultural history meet, not as a museum, but as an educational opportunity. (And not lump all the Tribes together, of course). Keep the quilts, include information about fishing and logging.

The Center for Wooden Boats must also be kept. I would be willing to work with a group on future planning for the cabins and park.<sup>8</sup>