

# Cama Beach Public Comments

September 23 – 30, 2024

In planning for the future of Cama Beach State Park, please prioritize 1) ecological restoration and conservation, with attention to biodiversity and habitat restoration, and 2) indigenous cultural sensitivity, including preservation of culturally significant historic sites under tribal leadership and return of stewardship and decision-making authority to tribal representatives. <sup>1</sup>

Cama Beach is a unique, historic piece of Camano Island that must be preserved. It provides a wonderful opportunity for people from all backgrounds to enjoy the beauty of the Northwest. The park department has done a good job of preserving the atmosphere of the original resort and it would be a shame to lose that. I speak from experience. I stayed there with my family several times back in the sixties. I have fond memories of interacting with other families, learning about the environment and building my self confidence from the activities there. I was excited when I heard that Cama Beach was going to become a part of the park system. I volunteered during the development of the park, working on the trails, cabins and boathouse. It gave me a sense of pride to help create something that would benefit people for generations to come. I realize there are challenges in maintaining Cama Beach, but I think it should be a priority to work with all interested parties to create solutions that will be of benefit to all. Sincerely, <sup>2</sup>

Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. As a resident of Island County since 1999, I was witness to the opening of Cama Beach State Park and I have visited several times, though I have not stayed in the cabins.

I am writing to express my support for the preliminary staff recommendation (in the “Planning for the Future” slide presentation) to:

---Not reopen the cabins where they currently sit.

---Plan instead for a sustainable park that is in harmony with the site conditions.”

In addition I ask you to collaborate with the Tulalip Tribes in protecting sduhubš homeland, ensuring that their historic sites are not further disturbed. I hope this might include giving Indigenous people access to the land for ceremony and harvest.

I recognize that Cama Beach State Park is popular with visitors -- 48 weddings in 2023 is impressive! – and that the historic motor court is deep in the hearts of many locals.

Nevertheless, the cabins should not be reopened in their location on the beach.

Environmental reasons alone make it clear that having living spaces on the beach is no longer viable.

Climate change is bringing more big storms and rising sea levels. As shown in the map on page 15, all of the buildings at the bottom of the hill are highly vulnerable to inundation by 2050. In addition to the failing seawall there are sewage issues, waterline breaks, and repairs requiring ground disturbance.

We know so much more in 2024 about shoreline living and shoreline management than was understood in the 1950s, the 1970s, or even the 1990s. More research and more decades observing the inexorable power of water and weather and geology has appropriately led to the policy that the “preferred agency response to a threat by a natural land change process...shall be retreat” (p. 35)

In addition, I support the Tulalip Tribes and their longstanding opposition to disturbance and occupation of this area. As Chairwoman Teri Gobin said: “The people of the Tulalip Tribes — specifically one of its predecessors, sduhubš — occupied this area since time immemorial and the cultural significance of this area to the Tulalip Tribes cannot be overstated. The Tulalip Tribes shares the environmental concerns conveyed by Washington State Parks and opposes any ground disturbing activities in this culturally rich and sensitive area.” (Everett Herald, July 18, 2024).

As State Parks acknowledges in the presentation (page 11), it was known before the park was opened that human remains and other Native American artifacts unearthed are proof of tribal occupation for at least 1,600 years.

As stated in RCW 27.44 (page 29 of the presentation), Native Indian burial grounds have been treated with indifference – contemporary consumptive uses have too often been allowed to outweigh the cultural and spiritual importance of these sites.

Governor’s Executive Order 21-02 (p. 30) says, “State agencies shall take all reasonable action to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to archaeological and historic archaeological sites, historic buildings/structures, traditional cultural places, sacred sites or other cultural resources.”

I find it troubling that the National Register of Historic Places limits the area of “pre contact significance” to 13 acres, which conveniently omits the 38 acres where the beach resort was built in 1932. These areas are part of a single extended beach, and it is extremely likely that ground disturbance in the cabin area will also reveal Indigenous activity. The same reason that the beach was attractive for a resort is what would have made it an attractive and regular pullout and dwelling space prior to European settlement.

For all of these reasons, I urge you not to reopen the cabins on the beach. I also ask you to work with the Tulalip Tribes in welcoming them back to this homeland, whether by giving them land outright, or by making land accessible to tribal people for cultural and spiritual uses.

Sincerely, <sup>3</sup>

We support the tribes’ inalienable rights to access, protect and tend to the land where ancestors are buried and the history to which there is a 2000-year connection.

We are writing to implore the commission to be in right relationship in the following ways:  
-All planning going forward should be in collaboration with and under the leadership of the tribes.  
-Affirm support for the ancient village to be placed on the national register of historical places. It is especially upsetting to learn that the fishing resort, with a mere 20-year legacy, is already listed.

-The park should not be open to the public.

-Remove the cabins and associated structures/failed sewer. <sup>4</sup>

I very much appreciate the planning work which has been done to date and the earnest consideration of all options exploring the future of Cama Beach State Park. I am writing to encourage the commission to preserve the existing cabins and keeping them functional for generations to come. They are an irreplaceable and unique piece of our shared history and provide the public with an amazing opportunity to connect with the past and the area's beautiful natural surroundings. While I appreciate the unique challenges the site presents, the closure of the cabins would be a devastating loss to all Washingtonians. Thank you for your consideration of my comments. <sup>5</sup>

Hello,

It was recently shared with me that the Washington Parks department is weighing options concerning whether to close the cabins and facilities on Cama Beach or to renovate them. I'm also to understand that there will be consideration in this decision based on input from people who have visited and enjoyed the park amenities over the years, and I commend you for that decision.

My family and I have enjoyed stays at the cabins over the years. We have watched orcas migrate up the sound, awed at sunsets, stargazed into the evening and watched bald eagles nest. It is truly a special place to see wildlife, enjoy the nature trails, unplug and build memories. Further, the emphasis on education provided by staff and volunteers is such a unique experience directed at future generations. Indeed, such opportunities for family getaways are becoming more and more a rarity, and the chance to take children somewhere where a love of natural science, history, and conservation can be nurtured into a lifelong passion is a fleeting thing in the world we live in.

I understand there are many factors to consider when big decisions are being made. I appreciate the time and effort to take the perspective of the many people who have enjoyed Cama into consideration. I hope the responses of those who have loved this special place over the years weigh into the decision to keep Cama open to be enjoyed for generations to come.

Thank you so much for your time, <sup>6</sup>

I support the tribes' inalienable rights to access, protect and tend to the land where ancestors are buried.

All planning going forward should be in collaboration with and under the leadership of the tribes.

The ancient village should be placed on the national register of historical places.

The park should not be open to the public.

The cabins, other buildings, and failed sewer structures should be carefully removed. <sup>7</sup>

My wife and I are a white couple. We understand that very few white people are familiar with the 2000-year period of significance which preceded white settler contact with today's Cama Beach. In September 2023, we were one of 48 couples married in this most beautiful place. We feel a deep love for this land and so it may surprise you to hear us requesting you return the land to the stewardship of the tribes. We love this place, and our nostalgia for time shared there is in no way threatened by the opportunity to restore the integrity and sovereignty of the tribes.

We support the tribes' inalienable rights to access, protect and tend to the land where ancestors are buried and the history to which there is a 2000-year connection.

We are writing to implore the commission to be in right relationship in the following ways:  
All planning going forward should be in collaboration with and under the leadership of the tribes.  
Affirm support for the ancient village, upon which the resort was built, to be placed on the national register of historical places. It is especially upsetting to learn that the fishing resort, with a mere 20-year period of significance, is already listed.  
The ancient village and large shell midden (park) should not be open to the public at all.  
Remove the cabins and all associated structures which are subject to flooding.

Upon learning of this history, we feel deep grief about the ancestral burial sites of the tribes being disturbed for purposes of commerce. This is sacred land. My wife's grandfather served in the US Navy and is buried at Tahoma national cemetery; she says, continuing with the commercialization of Cama Beach is like using Tahoma as a golf course.

The images of king tides at Cama Beach are the reality of the times. Nature has shown us that this park cannot continue its relatively-brief history as a resort. Now is an invitation to honor Cama Beach's historical and cultural relevance, love the beings of this place, and set up an alliance of stewardship with those who are most capable of ensuring future ones will come to love this place, too - the communities whose caretaking of 2000+ years meant we were able to know Cama Beach, these are the ones who are best entrusted to continue planning for its long-term stewardship.<sup>8</sup>

The manner in which the decision to permanently close the cabins at Cama Beach is being handled is deplorable. The uniqueness of Cama Beach in the state's inventory, while an immense benefit to the public, does make managing this wonderful resource complicated and expensive. The question the Commission is faced with is: "Is it worth it?" The public has seen no numbers upon which we can make such a conclusion. Does the Commission have dollar-values that haven't been shared with the public? What alternate funding methods have been considered? How can they make a good decision without numbers?

Furthermore, that this is a false choice becomes even clearer as one reads Mr. Worthington's August 15, 2024 letter to the commissioners. It is understandable that the Commissioners feel they have to push hard to keep things moving. The temptation to make final decisions quietly and quickly is also understandable because it is human to try to forget past management's mistakes. The first mistake, apparently, was when the State accepted responsibility for maintaining Cama Beach. They clearly no longer seem to want to meet their responsibilities. It is also convenient to walk away from the mismanagement of the maintenance of the park's bulkhead and sewer system (and now even the buildings and electrical system), which the Park management team now uses as THE REASON for reducing public use of the beach all the while understanding that they are shirking their responsibility to the environment, the park and the public, not to mention the State's commitments to the Worthington family, who so generously kept this resource out of commercial development. It seems we need reminding that the state foreclosed the Worthington's option to sell to developers by accepting the their donation. I can't imagine anyone donating anything to the state in the future when they learn how poorly the state has treated the Worthingtons.

This decision to permanently close the cabins was faulty from the beginning and must be started all over again. The Park management clearly started from a position of abandoning the cabins, when, in fact, they should have started by making clear that the law even allows the State to walk away from these commitments to the Worthingtons. (The State may find litigating this question more costly than just fixing their past mistakes at Cama Beach, although those costs are always hidden in the vastness of the State's budget.) The Park management clearly never did do the sewer system properly. They said as much at the Spring public meeting. Pointing to global warming is a red herring regarding the cabins that should not have caught them by surprise, it was anticipated when the State accepted the Worthington's donation.

At that Public meeting, the Park management did not answer the very simple question from the audience: "How much money will it take to correct all these past mistakes?" because, they said they had no bids to fix anything because they had no plans at all as of that time. They did already say that it would be too expensive, but promised that, "of course" those numbers would be part of the final decision. Now, the final decision is coming up soon, yet there are still no numbers for the public to see. The public realizes that unique assets are expensive to maintain – that is exactly WHY the State administers the education, roads and legislative systems, not to mention the State Park's System. When else have important decisions like abandoning unique assets, exposing the state to litigation and REDUCING public access to a public facility been made without a budget? Never, I hope!

The Park management still has yet to explain what Cama Beach will look like without the income and public face provided by the cabins. Will they decide porta-potties are no longer "financially feasible"; maybe public access or state ownership is not in the taxpayer's best interest? They are making financially-based decisions purportedly to ease the tax-burden when closing all state parks/roads/legislation is the logical extension of their approach thus far.

This entire process needs to be restarted from the beginning, starting with the Worthington family's consensus. If the State can't get the Worthington's understanding and support, can it just ignore commitments like that? Speaking for myself, this question has lead me to cut an endowment I was contemplating to the UW by 2/3; it seems the State doesn't realize the public relations they are squandering elsewhere if they treat their benefactors this way. <sup>9</sup>

I would like to have the cabins kept open. The money brought in from the rentals is a significant amount for the Parks budget plus the money that is spent in the surrounding areas on Camano Island, especially Cama Beach Cafe. I know the risk of the failing sea wall but advances are being made in how the walls are constructed. Galveston, Texas is an excellent example. There must be Federal money available for use here.

I do not understand how the septic system was allowed to fail as it has. As a resident of Camano Island I am required to have septic inspections on a regular basis, mine is every year due to the type of system I have. How could the Park's system not been cared for properly? And if it is true that it was not properly designed and built why was that situation not remedied early in its existence?

Please care for this much visited and loved Park, may it remain as it is with its cabins intact. <sup>10</sup>

This land is sacred to the Lower Skagit peoples who lived here since time immemorial. As the executive director of the Island County Museum, I don't feel that we can sit idly by while the voices of the people who originally lived here are being ignored. Both common sense and respect for the culture of people who have had so much taken from them call out for this project to be

abandoned, and for the human remains that have been found there to also be respected. How can we ignore common decency? How would we feel if someone built a resort on the graves of our ancestors? <sup>11</sup>

To whom it may concern.

The Cama beach cabins is one of our family and friends favorite camping spots of the year!!! This is an annual trip for us. As a group of 8 cabins, 8 family's kids who might only get to see each other that 1 time during the year. We love and look forward to this every single year.

This would be so sad if the decision is to close the cabins permanently.

Thank you for your time. <sup>12</sup>

As a resident of Camano island since I was 13, having grown up in such a magical place full of discovery and art, I believe this would really shake the community and force Camano to lose some of the whimsy that it contains. These cabins are important and special. We must hold on to bits of our past and highlight the relics that have made the environment on Cama Beach a place islanders have been coming for years and years. Save cama beach! Celebrate our histories and maintain their memory for the future! <sup>13</sup>

As a resident of Camano who has dealt with the permitting process of replacing a bulkhead and septic at my home, I'm well aware of the challenges of doing both. That said, it's unconscionable to me that the State Parks Commission seems to be headed towards taking the avoidance route of doing nothing, instead of bucking up and doing the work needed to preserve this historic site. There is nothing like this living museum (and sadly \*past\* home for a Center for Wooden Boats location) that is also on the national historic register, and losing it will not only be a blow for our heritage as an island and a state, but the loss of countless hours of volunteer labor that brought the resort back to usable condition in 2008. This is in addition to the \$1-1.5M in revenues the cabins generated for the county annually. As with any old structure on the seashore, nature and time can take a toll...I know from personal experience in owning a 1930's cabin that was neglected for years as it was a summer cabin.

Having worked with the same archeology firm that worked at Cama Beach when replacing my bulkhead, I know first-hand how much time and care and coordination with the Tribes went into the initial renovation. To my mind, that work is done, but it seems the Parks Dept. may be hinting that it must be revisited. If indeed that's true, then let's put pen to paper and create a work plan and budget that will drive a true ROI evaluation of the cost/benefit of repairing what needs to be repaired. The State should be aware of the revenue returned to the county and the jobs created. Surely this information, along with the weight of the historical and natural scenic value of the place, should be placed in contrast with the short-term cost of caring for the property when we decide the path forward?

Finally, on a personal note, my dear mother took an active role in the volunteer effort to re-open the park. Her father revered Camano for its fishing, its beaches, and its scenic beauty and came here every summer from Adams County. It would be a huge loss in so many ways should the state decline to invest in this gem. <sup>14</sup>

Cama Beach Cabins

To whom it may concern, please do not close the cabins at cama beach, the history and everything that goes along with having these cabins for people to enjoy, we live not far from this beautiful place and we can't imagine it not being there for the next generations. Sincerely, <sup>15</sup>

It would be such a shame to lose this unique piece of the Washington State Park system. It makes beach front property available to all citizens, if only for a short duration. It's a fabulous resource for all people. I have personally spent many enjoyable days with friends and family making enduring memories. This should be available for our kids and generations to come. Please do not shut it down.  
Sincerely, <sup>16</sup>

To whom it may concern,

Our family recently discovered the cama beach cabins and spent our first visit there last summer. We are heartbroken to hear of its abrupt closure and the potential permanent closure.

I do not come with solutions to the problems you all will be facing to bring it open, but I do come with a heart of advocacy and hope for the space to be continued to be open to the public.

I do not feel like raising the prices is the right path as it would continue to limit the accessibility of the community. However I do think it would benefit the community to create for spaces in the same location for more people to enjoy the space.

I wonder if reaching out to the local Girls and Boy Scouts to support the up keep would be a beneficial community participation project.

Anyhow, I really hope a solution can be found as this a magical place that I hope many others will be able to enjoy for years to come.

Regards, <sup>17</sup>

In 2023, Cama Beach State Park had 272,888 visitors and brought in \$982,650 in revenue.1

#### ORIGINAL PURCHASE UNDERSTANDING

Karen Hamalainen and Sandra Worthington, granddaughters of original Cama Beach Resort owners, sold the property to the state at 60% less than commercial value with the express intent it would be a living museum and the land, cabins and buildings would be available to the public at affordable rates.2

"Our priorities were to keep it open to the public at low cost, to have it be an environmental learning center, and a place for quiet retreats," said Gary Worthington, the Risks' son-in-law and the author of a Cama Beach history. 3

"The owner's desire to retain some of that (historic) flavor and display it . . . to save the cabins, the boats and boathouse and build a museum and other things." 4

#### A LIVING MUSEUM

Cama Beach Resort is listed on the National Historic Register. "That no comparable examples of auto-era resort design remain in the State of Washington adds to the level of significance inherent in this remarkable property.... All aspects of integrity are present in the resort complex." The National Historic Register application is a compelling explanation as to why the land and buildings are truly a one of a kind living museum.5

One of the historical aspects is their beachfront location – moving the cabins means disrupting the historical significance.

## STATE BUDGET

Washington State's budget (revenue and spending) has increased significantly every year for the past 9 years. This reflects the continued steady revenue increase that the state has experienced during that time. The budget for 2024 (\$81.9 billion) is more than double the 2014 budget (\$38.6 billion). This year \$4.8 billion was added to the original budget to reflect the significant revenue increase.<sup>6</sup>

## CULTURAL CONCERNS

In 2007, prior to the park opening, \$2 million of archaeological survey work was completed to help identify and protect the culturally sensitive areas. Work requiring digging that has happened at the Park since the opening in 2008 has not found any significant discoveries. (Cama Beach Foundation information sheet)

"Before the park opened - State Parks officials say they changed their plans to address tribal concerns."<sup>7</sup>

Waterfront property owners all over Washington State regularly comply with the extensive archaeological and environmental regulations required for every repair, renovation and building project.

Will the Parks Commission please advise the citizens of Washington State regarding what laws or regulations have been changed since the extensive 2006 renovation which included renovating cabins and buildings, constructing multiple bathrooms, a restaurant and drop-off shelter. The state managed the huge project of building and renovating the park only 16 years ago but state is now saying regulations prevent repairs to infrastructure

– resulting in the closure of all cabins and bathrooms BUT

## CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERNS

All buildings were raised 2 feet in 2007. "The resort buildings sit up to 2 feet higher than they did before restoration (in 2007)."<sup>8</sup>

The Final Sea Rise and Vulnerability Analysis was created for "the community to understand the threat of climate-induced coastal hazards, such as sea level rise." This was issued by Monterey California and evaluated coastal vulnerabilities in 2030 based on maximum of 8.8 inches of sea level rise. 2060 vulnerabilities were evaluated based on a maximum of 20 additional inches of sea level rise.<sup>9</sup>

The Sound Shore Stewards newsletter wrote about the November 15, 2021 record-setting storm that hit the night of a king tide. Areas of the grounds received storm surge waters, and the water almost, but not quite, intruded into the store building. They did not report water inside any of the more than 30 buildings. The covered outdoor concrete area of Center for Wooden Boats, which sits directly adjacent to the seawall, did receive storm surge waters. <sup>10</sup>

1 (<https://parks.wa.gov/about/strategic-planning-projects-public-input/reports-studies/visitation-reports>).

2 ([historylink.org/File/8843](http://historylink.org/File/8843))

3 (<https://www.seattletimes.com/life/outdoors/launching-a-new-era-at-cama-beach-state-park/>)

4 (<https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=19931028&slug=1728404>)

5 ([https://s3.amazonaws.com/NARAprdstorage/lz/electronic-records/rg-079/NPS\\_WA/01000505.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/NARAprdstorage/lz/electronic-records/rg-079/NPS_WA/01000505.pdf))

6 ([www.Fiscal.wa.gov](http://www.Fiscal.wa.gov)) ([www.wsha.org/articles/governor-inslee-releases-proposed-2023-25-budget/](http://www.wsha.org/articles/governor-inslee-releases-proposed-2023-25-budget/))

7 (<https://www.seattletimes.com/life/outdoors/launching-a-new-era-at-cama-beach-state-park/>)



8 <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/outdoors/launching-a-new-era-at-cama-beach-state-park/>  
9 [https://files.monterey.org/Document%20Center/CommDev/Planning/Local%20Coastal%20Program%20Update/16\\_0316\\_FINAL\\_Monterey\\_ExistingConditions\\_wAppendixA\\_WEB.pdf](https://files.monterey.org/Document%20Center/CommDev/Planning/Local%20Coastal%20Program%20Update/16_0316_FINAL_Monterey_ExistingConditions_wAppendixA_WEB.pdf)  
10 (<https://soundwaterstewards.org/2021-11-15-storm-surge-at-cama/>)<sup>18</sup>

As the descendent of 4 generations of Washington state families I feel compelled to express the importance of the cabins at Cama Beach. My father's family began visiting the resort when it first opened as their only annual vacation. In those times (as it is today) Cama was a treasured location where multiple families (grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins) could gather and enjoy the shores and bounty of Puget Sound. The family stories from his generation of marshmallow roasting in the community hall, fishing in the rented boats, clam digging, and beach antics are still told today and contribute significantly to the close bonds which continue to hold the extended family together. The first photo of myself that I am aware of is in my mother's pregnant belly as she walks the bulkhead in front of the bungalows in summer of 1969. In the later days of the private resort our extended family still gathered every year at Cama Beach often renting every functioning bungalow to have enough beds for all of us. The leaky roofs, rationed toilet paper (Mrs. Risk was always paying attention), and Mr. Risk's truck deliveries of ice and firewood were part of our most treasured experiences at the beach. For one amazing week a year us kids were able to explore freely, learn hands-on about bioluminescence, the evasive habits of red rock crabs, bullheads, limpets, snakes and blackberries. This is the ONLY salt water fishing resort of its type remaining and as such it is critical that you as current citizens and stewards of Washington State seize this once in a lifetime opportunity to protect our communal history and connection to the precious Salish Sea. Changes in environmental climate and human culture threaten our population's connection with the natural environment that makes Washington State the special place that it is. You have a rare opportunity to protect of the cabins and history of Cama Beach, which in turn preserves tragically diminishing access to this sacred place and will continue to inspire future visitors to love, learn about, and fight to protect what we still can of this magical part of the globe we call home. Undoubtedly, changes will need to be made in future decades. For now, please do the responsible thing by reopening the cabins as they are for as long as we possibly can while simultaneously creating a plan for the future. Every season those beach cabins are open is one more chance to educate and inspire future generations to love and protect this precious place.<sup>19</sup>

Repair the cabins at Cama Beach. You waste \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ on C\*\*\*.  
This is unreplacable history.<sup>20</sup>

Hi, I saw the article on Kiro about the question of the Cama Beach Cabins potentially being closed. Our family found the Cama Beach Cabins a number of years ago and instantly fell in love with them. The cabins, the camp store, the whole area harken back to a time and a way of life that is increasingly hard to find. When we are there, my kids can be kids. Screens are forgotten and they run around, ride their bikes, hike through the woods, splash in the sound, pick blackberries, build driftwood forts and let their imaginations run wild. In short, for the time we are there, they have the kind of childhood every kid dreams of. They have independence and freedom, unlike anything they could ever have in the city.

Since discovering Cama Beach State Park and the cabins, I have organized groups of people to attend annually and it have become a favorite of everyone. We have even converted a few city dwelling "non-campers" into people who know, appreciate and love the state parks!

Our world needs the freedom and the lost nostalgia that comes with the Cama Beach cabins - the freedom for kids to be truly kids, for parents to walk out on the porch and chat with each other, to build that community that is so lacking these days. Please don't close the Cama Beach cabins!

Sincerely,<sup>21</sup>

I'd like to buy it keep it open to public after I fix it all back up we should not have to suffer this great loss<sup>22</sup>

1 million a year generated, It's pretty much a no brainer. Fix the cabins, they've ( The Cabins ) already paid ahead to be repaired over and over again. Just do it for the future generations and keep the simpler days alive. I'm sure there are plenty of people who would jump in with skills and equipment to pull it off. Use the money the Cabins gave you already!!<sup>23</sup>

Hello- I am writing in support of repainting and reopening cama beach cabins. This state park and the cabins has become an annual tradition for so many families I know. It's been an affordable way for stressed city families to come together and experience nature while also building community. The loss of these cabins and a week of vacation plans was devastating to our group in February when we got word of the closure. Please please please consider the historic and unique nature of this place and the value of community and find the money in the budget to fix the issues and reopen. Thank you<sup>24</sup>

Please prioritize, memorialize, and honor all tribal rights including co-management, closing areas where ancestors are buried to the public. Thank you.<sup>25</sup>

To Whom It May Concern,

Cama Beach holds a very special place in my family's hearts and I sincerely hope you choose to invest in preserving this unique and historic park. It's where my husband and I celebrated our first Valentine's Day, and then six years later, where we got married. We've been going there annually on our anniversary, staying in a cabin, including bringing along our young daughters and making countless memories with friends and family. We were very sad to not have been able to do that in 2024.

Cama Beach is unlike any other Washington State park with its historic waterfront cabins and the fact that there is very limited vehicle traffic in the main part of the park along the water. It's a place I envisioned our kids growing up and playing with their friends, as I've seen numerous other kids do throughout the years. We've enjoyed boating, hiking, grilling, roasting smores, and relaxing at the park and cannot think of a more quintessential Pacific Northwest location. We were really hoping to renew our vows there in a few years on our tenth wedding anniversary.

We hope that you will choose to invest in making the necessary infrastructure improvements/maintenance in order to preserve this valuable public asset and allow us and thousands of others to enjoy its beauty and charm for decades to come<sup>26</sup>

As a child, I was fortunate to stay with my family in the cabins at Cama Beach. This was in the 1950's. It was a magical place for parents and children. The Cama Beach cabins are well known to thousands of people in the area and to many from afar.

As an adult, living on Camano Island, I volunteered at Cama Beach and served there one to two days a week. Every person I spoke with was in awe of the setting and facilities. Vacationers

requested cabins months in advance and there were very few days when one of the cabins was available.

The gifting of Cama Beach Park to the State of Washington Parks Department was priceless. It enabled the public access to a pristine site for all to enjoy. I am writing in support of the letter submitted by W. Gary Worthington, Attorney at Law, and Trustee, Worthington Foundation Sandra R. Worthington, Trustee, Worthington Foundation.<sup>27</sup>

I am writing about the Camas Beach planning project. I want to do all I can to help the Commission and agency achieve preservation of this unique landmark while protecting the shoreline and finding ways to pay for the solutions needed. I have lots of experience with parks, flood shoreline issues and historic preservation and would like to be a resource to help as a volunteer to achieve a sustainable solution. It is such a unique resource and one we cannot abandon.

I would volunteer to serve on an advisory committee or task force and also to align volunteers with expertise on the issues needed to resolve the problems.<sup>28</sup>

Hi, my name is [x]. I'm 12 years old and I have been going to Cama Beach for most of my life. When my mom told me that they might close the cabins at Cama Beach, I was shocked and devastated because I love it so much there. I think you should keep Cama Beach open. People need the freedom they experience there! My favorite thing at Cama Beach is being able to run around and play with my friends. We pretend to be wolves in a forest which I love! We even call the tree fort "Gondor" after The Lord of The Rings! Going to the beach, running around the park, and just having a great time with everyone is so much fun. At the camp store we buy snacks and toys - I have bought some of my favorite stuffies there. I don't get to do any of those things at home!

Cama Beach also feels like an escape. At home it feels like we are stuck inside all day and are trapped in work, school and commitments. At Cama Beach, it feels like you are in a different world and it's so special and magical. I don't know of anywhere else like it. I like feeling like I'm connected to the outdoors and my friends at Cama. I look forward to coming back all year. We want to come back to the park we know and love. I know that fixing the problems in the park will be expensive, but if you open the park back up, people will pay to come back and you can refund the expenses!

Please don't close Cama Beach!  
Sincerely,<sup>29</sup>

Hi, my name is [x]. I am 12 years old, and I've been going to Cama Beach for most of my life. It's my favorite, annual, family vacation. Whenever we go, I can't wait to get there. I look forward to it ALL YEAR!

I think it's important to keep Cama Beach open, because, there is NO other place like Cama Beach anywhere in the world. I have so many fun memories of the cabins, the camp store, and having TONS of amazing adventures. My friends and I hang out at the beach, swim in the ocean, go kayaking, ride our bikes all over, play in the woods, go to the tree fort (which we call "Gondor" after Lord of the Rings because we all love the tree fort and the Lord of the Rings! 😊) and have a great time. Lots of kids, like me, benefit from being in nature, hanging out with their friends and getting to be independent.

Cama Beach is an amazing spot because it gives both parents and kids lots of freedom – the parents can relax while we, the kids, run free and play to our hearts' content and everyone is happy.

Cama Beach's magnificent scenery also gives you an excuse to escape the chaos of life, school and homework, and to learn how beautiful the forest and ocean are. It makes people want to come back and protect those wonderful places. (Also, I'll probably go insane with the amount of homework I have to do without Cama Beach!)

I don't think anyone should be robbed of Cama Beach's magic. I know it's very expensive to repair, but, people shouldn't miss out on Cama Beach! They will eagerly come back when Cama Beach opens again (I know my family will!) and that money will fund the repairs and help the state parks!

I, along with many others, will be CRUSHED and VERY distraught if Cama Beach closes. So please, please, please keep Cama Beach OPEN!

Sincerely,<sup>30</sup>

**Dear Washington State Park Commissioners,**

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud citizen of Camano Island, I am writing to express my deep concern and steadfast support for the preservation of Cama Beach State Park, particularly the historic Cama Center Building, the cabins, the Center for Wooden Boats, and all other park facilities and structures.

Cama Beach is not just a local treasure; it holds significant cultural and historical value for both the residents of Camano Island and the many visitors who come from across the state and beyond. Its unique standing as a preserved 1930s fishing resort, with its historic cabins and rich natural beauty, makes it an irreplaceable part of Washington's heritage.

**For Local Residents:** Cama Beach State Park is vital to the Camano Island community. It offers a space for recreation, connection, and education, where local families and groups can enjoy the cabins, trails, and waterfront year-round. The Center for Wooden Boats provides an important hands-on experience, connecting residents with maritime history and fostering a sense of pride in our region's traditions. The preservation of the park's structures and facilities supports both the economic and social well-being of the island, as local businesses benefit from the influx of visitors, and the park serves as a gathering place for community events and educational programs.

**For Statewide and Out-of-Town Visitors:** Cama Beach State Park is also a destination for countless out-of-town visitors who come to experience its peaceful setting and historic charm. The park offers affordable, accessible lodging in its cabins, which allows families to enjoy Washington's coastal beauty without the barrier of high costs. The park's proximity to Seattle and other urban areas makes it a popular getaway, but more than that, it is a rare and tangible link to Washington's past. The educational programs, including those supported by the Cama Center, provide meaningful learning opportunities that enrich both locals and tourists alike.

With the growing threats of climate change and rising sea levels, I understand that maintaining these historic buildings, especially those along the waterfront, presents challenges. However, I urge the Commission to exhaust all possible avenues before considering any decisions that might compromise the integrity of this historical site. As a community, we trust that the Commission will prioritize preservation, exploring options like reinforcing the seawall, raising cabins, or making necessary repairs to protect this cherished park for generations to come. In addition, reopening the cabins and improving park infrastructure, such as water and sewer systems, would significantly benefit both the local economy and visitors' experience. These

cabins represent a cornerstone of the park's identity and offer an intimate connection to nature and history that is increasingly rare in our modern world.

I respectfully ask that the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission commit to preserving Cama Beach's historic buildings and facilities, ensuring that both current and future generations can continue to enjoy this precious resource. I also encourage you to seek necessary funding through the state legislature and other potential sources to support these efforts.

Thank you for your dedication to Washington's natural and historical treasures, and for your careful consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,<sup>31</sup>

Hello,

My husband and I are deeply saddened to hear that the historic cabins might be removed from their beautiful site at Cama Beach State Park. We agree with all the statements and information that was provided in the letter from the former owners.

We recently had brunch at the Cama Beach Cafe and spoke to one of their employees. She explained that their business has tumbled since the cabins were closed and tourists, campers, extra company, etc. now have extremely few options for other places to stay. Additionally, she said there are usually around 30-40 weddings, family reunions, birthday/ anniversary parties per year that use the cabins for guests and the Cafe as their venue. Tourism on Camano is limited already due to lack of places to stay, so permanently losing or removing the cabins will be devastating.

It is difficult to name other places in the U.S. where families, friends, generations, work groups, fishermen, kayakers and more can stay in a gorgeous State Park in historic cabins with park rangers and frequent guest speakers providing information about the Park's history as well as about the birds, shellfish, whales, and forest animals that call the Park and surrounding beaches and Puget Sound home.

It would be a tragedy for Camano Island, its residents and visitors to lose such a gem that can never be duplicated. Please use all the human resources and experts available here and elsewhere to come up with a plan to save the cabins, the history, and this magical park that is like no other.<sup>32</sup>

My family has a cabin near Cama beach and has been visiting this beautiful place since 1940. I believe there is a solution to keep the park a viable option for it to continue to profit the State Parks of Washington. Move some of the cabins, install composting toilets. Move showers or bring in portable shower/ toilet trailers. I have gone to glamping resorts that use these. Solar panels to offset electric costs. We have a lot of options that would not cost millions. State parks are supposed to be rustic.

Cama beach is not a spa resort it is a historic scenic landscape, let it be a rustic beach front oasis. leave a few cabins and add tent sites. Put the money in bulkhead restoration.<sup>33</sup>

Save Cama resort!<sup>34</sup>

After attending two public meetings about the future of Cama and reflecting on the situation for almost a year now here are my suggestions. State Parks needs to be good and responsible stewards of our resources. This includes regular maintenance, such as removing debris from gutters (needs doing on Cama buildings) and caring for the park as it is. The summer has passed

without any use of the cabins, so much opportunity lost!!! Develop a TRANSITION PLAN. Fortify the floodwalls with rocks. Find out what has worked in other locations. Pompeii is preserved because they left a lot of it covered. Maybe raise the elevation several feet. Make our park a model for how to coexist with climate change. Make it a place to pioneer preservation techniques or use novel materials and methods as new cabins are introduced up the hill during a period of transition. Cama could be a model for other parks. Many families would have enjoyed having the cabins exist as "dry" cabins without amenities such as bathrooms and showers while work could have been done to fix the sewage situation. If you do this right Cama could be a model for how to keep history while respecting climate change. Continuing to tell us how hard the solution would be, and how expensive without even looking into actual costs tips us to what your probable decision will be. Putting a man on the moon wasn't easy, heart transplants are not easy. That doesn't mean it can't be done. Surprise us with actual solutions and real estimates of project costs. The tribes might even be happy to share the cost and facilitate things. Sadly, a lot of good will has been damaged in the handling of this entire affair and it did not need to be that way. STEWARDSHIP matters. I am glad I did not waste my legacy by having my family dairy farm turn into soccer fields because I see that parks don't necessarily stay the way intended. If I was a member of the family who gave the fishing resort I would be even more disappointed than I already am. <sup>35</sup>

The Parks have a commitment to protect all human remains, locations of graves, and grave sites. Because human remains of Indigenous people were found at the site of the cabins, the Commission should decide to close the cabins and not re-open them. Please prioritize your efforts to work in a meaningful way with the Tulalip Tribes. The Tulalip Tribes shares the environmental concerns conveyed by Washington State Parks and opposes any ground disturbing activities in this culturally rich and sensitive area. In addition, the very real issue of climate change and rising sea levels will put this area at increase risk. <sup>36</sup>

To State Parks Commissioners:

Thank you for your careful consideration of the future of Cama Beach State Park. My message to you is to listen to the tribal voices, the archeologists and the evidence presented by the state's own climate scientists, planners and auditors. The truth is this: the future of this park does not lie in restoration of the current resort facilities.

Having attended the July 15, 2023 hearing in Stanwood, I know you have heard many voices of those who live on Camano Island and visitors for whom the rentals and restaurant and beach represent cherished family memories over the past couple of generations. I saw and heard that their voices are loud and many. I write to you today to remind you and point you toward the indigenous voices that are also calling to you and to all of us to face our past, present and future with honesty, dignity, care and gratitude.

We can do hard things. We can imagine and build a new way forward together. You have a responsibility to tell the truth and do the right thing. We all do.

You need look no farther than the 2006 JLARC audit of the graving dock in Port Angeles to understand the financial and moral risks involved in any decision that perpetuates the use of a site that runs roughshod over the sacred remains of Native American people. Please do not repeat any of the errors in policy and political judgment documented in that study and explained even more compellingly in Lynda Mape's book, "Breaking Ground."

These lessons are merely the “tip of the iceberg” in an ocean of lessons learning: who are we are becoming, as “Washingtonians,” as a government of the people, by the people, for the people? My vision is for a future that includes dignity and thriving for all people and all our relations.

What are your interpretations of your responsibilities under the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act?

What is the priority and status of your commitment to tell the story of tribal relations to the lands and waters currently under your administration?

What are your current and future commitments to grant access to tribal people for whom lands under your care are also the usual and accustomed lands and water for fishing, for hunting, for ceremony? Have you read the Treaty of Point Elliott, do you understand your obligations there and under the Centennial Accords?

I appreciate this opportunity to provide public comment, and I want to know this: what are you doing about what you already know and have already heard? We will continue to pay attention and expect accountability.

Tell the truth when you tell the stories of this place in interpretive exhibits and ranger tours and interactions with tribal and non-native visitors. Continue to move at the pace of responsibility and relationship, as if the flourishing of all of our children and the lands and waters they belong to depends upon what you decide, as if you want our future generations to be proud of your decision.<sup>37</sup>

My family and I have been fortunate to experience the joy of this affordable unique beach cabin experience in beautiful Cama Beach State Park. Rising sea level is not a sudden surprise. Notwithstanding the septic and seawall issues, which should have been addressed as regular maintenance, this has to be the only WA State Park that mostly sustains itself with the vast revenue from the cabins. To close them permanently would have a cascading effect of lost revenue, lost educational and cultural experiences, loss of human capital in the form of your long time dedicated park volunteers and personnel. Take the reins and make the choice to move forward with a plan to reopen and revitalize! Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.<sup>38</sup>

As a marine biologist and an environmental attorney for most of my professional career, I appreciate the unique character of Cama Beach State Park. I chose to relocate from the Washington, DC metropolitan area to Camano Island in large part upon my discovery of the pristine marine environment of its state parks and in particular, the opportunities to volunteer at Cama Beach State Park in community education and to create quilts for visitors staying in its historic cabins. Introducing both children and adults to the wonders of this special habitat where the forest meets the sea has been a gift. Having stayed in the Cama cabins and walked the shore at low tide I liken the experience to traveling back in time . My experience has been shared by thousands of Cama visitors and their comments in the cabin journals reflect similar feelings. I share some of the writings from the journal of Cabin 19 below. I trust that the thoughts and drawings left by overnight cabin guests will move you to make the right decision to preserve the cabins and the rare life experience that they offer the public. Life is fleeting, the sea is rising and one must take advantage of opportunities to enjoy this piece of history before it is lost forever.

Excerpts from Cabin 19 Journal:

Cama Cabin 19.pdf

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:54cd5249-d488-4972-bcba-5d203be738b4> <sup>39</sup>

I'm writing in support of the state funding the needed repairs at Cama Beach State Park on Camano Island with the necessary protection of Native American artifacts.

This spot is a local treasure that would be a shame to not upkeep for current and future generations.

Please honor your agreements made by the trust granted you from the owners that offered this incredible gift to the state and fulfill your obligation to that sacred trust.

This piece of living history is what both locals, the original owners, and visitors wish and deserve to have preserved. It's a one of a kind gem that should continue to carry on for all to appreciate and enjoy!

Thanks for your consideration in honoring your previous agreements as well as our local heritage!

Sincerely, <sup>40</sup>

Thank you! I wanted to write in support of the tribes' inalienable rights to access, protect and tend to the land where ancestors are buried and the history to which there is a 2000-year connection. I want to implore the commission to consider the following:

- All planning going forward should be in collaboration with and under the leadership of the tribes.
- Affirm support for the ancient village to be placed on the national register of historical places.
- The park should not be open to the public.
- Remove the cabins and associated structures/failed sewer. <sup>41</sup>

Hello Commissioners & Director Dupuis,

We are writing to ask you to **save the Cama Beach Park and Cabins, which have been enjoyed by young, old, families, etc.**

We have read the information on the subject and feel there is no reason to not repair the septic system and do it right this time.

Save the Cama Beach Park & Cabins, this unique National Register treasure and living museum.

The tribes could be offered to have an interpretive long house or other facility in an appropriate location to honor their history there.

Thank you, <sup>42</sup>

I am a member of the Cama Beach Foundation (CBF) board, BUT these comments are my own thoughts, and they do not representing the opinion of the board.

I do not envy the decisions you have to make about the future of Cama Beach, but these decisions involve far more than keeping to a budget and seeking only the highest benefit per




dollar spent. You are also tasked with preserving and continuing the countless memories of the generations of visitors to Cama Beach since 1934, and those of the indigenous peoples who used it as a fishing and camping site for hundreds of years before that.

Short term decisions about Cama are not just about money spent to fix septic and plumbing systems, but about fixing those systems so that Camano residents and visitors may be taught about their environment, sustainability and what will continue to happen to them directly (i.e., loss of such beloved places) as a result of climate change without effort on their part to reverse climate change itself. All of this needs to happen while long-term solutions are sought; without continued community involvement, the chance for this important education will be lost.

As editor of the CBF newsletter, in in order to try to capture the feelings of awe, wonder and ownership of visitors, I have had access to some of the journals kept in each cabin for guests to leave messages and drawings (examples below). In the communications of all types received about the future of the cabins, I have seen nothing about tapping in to this community's sense of ownership and care to help with the park's future. You've already heard and will continue to hear how passionate people are about the park. Without your use of this community support and very direct and frequent communication from the commission and those charged with moving forward for the park ( e.g., a new and exciting art program for Cama was abandoned this year because no decision about porta-potties on the beach was ever communicated—for three months), we have all already lost something far more precious than money—trust for the public officials who are in place to help all to benefit from the state parks.

1) From Deven:

Tips:

- Watch sunset
- Eat at Cama Cafe
- Watch out for tides!
- Walk to the right and when you go around the bungalows, you might be able to find the  swing set
- Get books to borrow from the store - free!

2) Author unknown, August, 2012:

A gray, cold day  
Rowing on the water  
Walking on the beach  
Stars at night  
The sound of waves  
An eagle grabbing dinner off the beach  
Our dog swimming  
Getting pulled on a rubber raft by a motor boat—so fun!  
Beautiful warm day  
Gorgeous sunsets  
Good food  
Funny stories  
Singing around the campfire  
Friends and Family

THANK YOU CAMA BEACH!

3) ...A huge family reunion, relaxation, our gorgeous Salish Sea in view and children galore. Perhaps we've added to the history and spirit of this graceful place.

All are entries from visitors to Cama Beach. How will these reflections be reflected in your decision? <sup>43</sup>

Hi-

I understand today is the last day to give you comments/letters regarding the possible closure of Cama Beach Park & Cabins.

But how do we know that our letters and comments have actually been received and will be read? I have several kids wanting to know.

They are afraid, either through a mixup, wrong email or something for deliberate, their letters will not be read.

Is there a way to verify the committee have received letters about the park? Specifically kids whose names are[x], [x] or [x]?

Thanks for giving these kids some peace of mind, that their efforts and thoughts are being considered.

Many thanks <sup>44</sup>

I have now tried 3 times to submit my comments. I get now verification that they have been submitted and when I try to close the document it ways all of my changes will be lost. Needless to say I am a bit concerned since I have just spent 3 hours working on my comments.

I won't document tonight although I'm not sure it will be there in the morning. <sup>45</sup>

Please note: The following text was also submitted on the public comments form on the agency web site. We are also emailing it, for convenience and so it is clear that it was submitted before the deadline.

Re: Major Legal Issues -- Cama Beach Requested Action, Agenda Item E-2

Dear Commissioners and Director Dupuis:

We are again writing as former owners of Cama Beach, and as donors to Washington State Parks through our charitable trusts of approximately \$10 million in property and well over \$2 million in cash to fund the Master Plan and what eventually became the Cama Center building.

In reviewing the newly posted Agenda Item E-2, we are surprised and puzzled that nowhere in the background information is there any mention of our 2004 agreement with the Commission requiring protection of the historic resort buildings.

That agreement could usefully have been referenced:

On page 5, where the turnover of the ownership of the resort area is mentioned.

On page 6 under "Laws and Governor's Executive Order."

On page 8, second paragraph, when the protection of historic buildings and cultural landscapes is mentioned.

And in Appendix 5: "Laws or Other Influences on Decision Making."

As we said before, we believe that the Commission is legally obligated to protect the historic cabins and other resort buildings and to reopen them to the public in their current location as soon as feasible.

In the agreement dated April 12, 2004, and ratified June 1, 2004, between us and the Commission for the cash donations for what became the Cama Center Building, Section 14 states that “the parties understand that one of the most important reasons for the Trusts to make the donation of the buildings is that the activities conducted in the buildings are anticipated to enhance and help ensure the preservation of the adjacent historic resort buildings and related structures. The Commission undertakes to make bona fide and continuing significant efforts to preserve, in accordance with its own Cultural Resources Management Policy, and to interpret to the public, the historic structures and artifacts of Cama Beach.”

We consider that agreement to still be in effect and binding upon the Commission and the agency. Both the likelihood of future sea level rise and the condition of the sea wall were well known at the time of the agreement. Consequently, projected possible sea level rise and the sea wall condition would not be valid legal reasons to abandon the cabins and other historic resort buildings in their waterfront locations. Nor, of course, would any tribal concerns, which were also well known at the time.

A recent letter to the Governor signed by a number of park volunteers, including an attorney at law, in addition to ourselves, states:

“By its action of closing the cabins, effectively terminating all public activities associated with them, the State Parks and Recreation Commission violated the terms of the sale and gift agreements with the donors and the public and exposed the State and its taxpayers to substantial potential liability for the breach of the original gift agreement.”

“[That action] subjects the State to a costly breach of contract action that could require the purchase of the donated land at current market value (\$10 million in 1990) and the repayment of the \$2 million-plus cash donation plus interest.”

We sincerely hope that the Commission will keep these legal obligations foremost in mind in all deliberations concerning the future of Cama Beach.

Sincerely,

W. Gary Worthington, Attorney at Law, and Trustee, Worthington Foundation

Sandra R. Worthington, Trustee, Worthington Foundation<sup>46</sup>

This article from years past shows the importance of our park. Reread to understand the VALUE placed on it when the decision was made in years past to create it as a state park. It hold true for now!

<https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=20000924&slug=4044047><sup>47</sup>

My name is [x], and I’m co-owner of Cama Beach Café, a concessionaire inside Cama Beach Historical State Park.

First, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the commission for their continuous efforts in helping us stay open for business. With its few restaurants, Camano Island is a unique location, and we believe our symbiotic relationship with the park is significant. Our primary purpose is to serve as an amenity to the park-goers, and we take immense pride in being an integral part of the community. Cama Beach Café’s 12+ years of solid relationship with State Parks is a testament to our shared commitment.

It's a challenge for me to be critical, considering the livelihoods of some 20-25 employees at stake. I trust that our ability to write to the commission is to engage in a constructive dialogue, and I hope that my views will not negatively influence the park's decision to support us. I can confidently say that Park's words and actions have consistently demonstrated their commitment to keeping us operational and the community thriving. We at Cama Beach Café are equally committed to our role in the park and the community. We acknowledge the challenges and are fully dedicated to overcoming them for the betterment of the park and the community. Our dedication is unwavering, and we have taken numerous measures to alleviate the strain on the septic system and are continuously striving to improve our operations.

Regrettably, the cafe experienced a significant revenue downturn in 2024, potentially in the mid-5 figures or so, due to our reliance on wedding bookings, which in turn depended on the availability of the cabins. This downturn has directly impacted our operations and the livelihoods of our 20-25 employees, who are at risk due to the substantial loss. We had hoped for business as usual and maintained our summer staffing levels, but we found it challenging to provide work for everyone due to the absence of weddings. We hope the commission will understand our situation and continue supporting us during difficult times.

As a member of this community and an island resident, I have had the privilege of meeting many concerned citizens. The State Parks are a vital part of Camano, and the community is deeply invested in their well-being. I want to share some of their expressed concerns, as not everyone can voice their worries. These concerns, which range from the potential loss of the Cama Beach Cabins to the lack of a clear timeline, are essential for the commission to understand as they directly impact the local community and the overall health of the park.

I believe there is a "2-state" solution, for lack of a better term, here. There is existing infrastructure already in place that needs to be fixed. I understand the drain field situation, but as this is a 400+ acre park, there needs to be one acre extra so that a new drain field can be utilized. I believe it's possible to have the septic working the way it was before, but obviously without band-aid fixes but more permanent ones. This would allow for the opening of the cabins again, and therefore, the park can resume generating revenue. I understand that part of the battle is funding. I know there are many other obstacles. But the urgency of the situation cannot be overstated. We must act now to prevent further deterioration and loss of revenue to the Parks.

But that's where part 2 of this solution comes in. The Parks can still make a long-term plan for a total septic system overhaul and possible relocation of the cabins if needed. However, many customers, who are also park-goers, worry that no substantive action will be taken, not due to obstacles, but just because the government can respond slowly to these large-scale projects. I know that the projects cannot be rushed, but some worry that leaving the cabins vacant will only make them fall into disrepair worse than they are, which could very well lead to the end of the Cama Beach Cabins as we know it. Another concern people have expressed to me is the lack of a timeline. This scares people when they have no idea if this is a few months project or a few years.

Once a full-scale plan is in place and ready to be implemented, it would make sense to close the cabins until the project is completed. It just doesn't make sense that the cabins stay closed now, as it doesn't make sense that a long-term solution isn't thought out as proposed in the presentation we've seen (impacts to pre-contact site, climate change, public access, good use of

public dollars, etc.). We should be able to do both, not just one or the other. The cabins should be reopened at this time.

Finally, Island County has to issue an annual permit to Cama Beach Café each year based on a working septic system. The state parks have managed the L.O.S.S. (Large On-site Septic System) in the past years, and the county has been OK with this. I hope we have some assurance that the County will still approve our restaurant permit on December 1 for the 2025 year based on the current pumping situation. However, suppose the septic was repaired to accommodate the use of the Cama Center (the Great Hall) where the café is located. In that case, it seems that, at minimum, the Hall can be rented again, even if the cabins remain closed while figuring out what to do with these. For the sake of the café and the community, I ask that the septic system be restored back into operation.

We miss the children's laughter, the families, the memories made, the Center for Wooden Boats, the Cama Beach Foundation and store, the community's activities, the Quilters Annual Show to Nature shows, and so much more. People wed at Cama Beach and made memories to last a lifetime. Please make it right again.

I appreciate you all listening to me, and I want to thank you all for allowing us to continue. It means the world to not just the staff but, I know for sure, the community. Thank you. <sup>48</sup>

After reviewing this letter from the Worthingtons, I strongly feel that the cabins should be reopened. Perhaps not year round, as suggested here. There's not a lot of options for accommodation on Camano Island. It is also a very nice park and offers educational and employment opportunities.  
Please try to return the park to operation.  
Thank you,

----- Forwarded message -----

This is a letter sent to the park commissioners from the prior owner who donated the resort. Clearing up facts and rumors. Now, Please Help save Cama Beach State Park. Click on link, quick and easy. Share! Public comment [planning@parks.wa.gov](mailto:planning@parks.wa.gov) regarding the cabins is being accepted through Sept. 27.

August 15, 2024

The Commissioners & Director Diana Dupuis Washington State Parks and Recreation  
Commission P.O. Box 42650 Olympia, WA 98504-2650

Re: Cama Beach State Park Decisions and Future Planning

Dear Commissioners and Director Dupuis:

We are writing as former owners of Cama Beach, and as donors to Washington State Parks through our charitable trusts of approximately \$10 million in property value (in 1990s dollars), and well over \$2 million in cash to fund the Master Plan and what eventually became the Cama Center building. We would first like to say that we very much appreciate that you, the Commissioners, are generously serving with no compensation, other than knowing that you are offering your experience and judgment in the best interests of the people of Washington State,

present and future. When we turned over ownership of the Cama Beach waterfront to the Commission, we turned over a sacred trust – a trust involving the protection of the sole remaining large historic 1930s waterfront family saltwater fishing resort (and also, of course, the protection of the tribal artifacts and remains below the ground surface). We now fear that the Commission, although with the best of intentions, might soon make a decision based on incomplete information that sets aside that sacred trust and fails to provide this unique National Register treasure, and living museum, the protection it requires. We believe that the Commission is legally obligated, as well as having a duty to future generations, to protect the historic cabins and other resort buildings and to reopen them to the public in their current location as soon as feasible. In the agreement dated April 12, 2004, and ratified June 1, 2004, between us and the Commission for the cash donations for what became the Cama Center Building, the parties agreed in Section 13 that among the most important reasons for our Trusts to make the donation was the buildings' intended use in providing kitchen, dining, meeting, lodging, and restroom facilities for members of the public attending educational programs at Cama Beach State Park. That section also provides that "Educational programs will be a primary and significant purpose of Cama Beach State Park." Page 2 Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission August 15, 2024 Section 14 of that Agreement states that "the parties understand that one of the most important reasons for the Trusts to make the donation of the buildings is that the activities conducted in the buildings are anticipated to enhance and help ensure the preservation of the adjacent historic resort buildings and related structures. The Commission undertakes to make bona fide and continuing significant efforts to preserve, in accordance with its own Cultural Resources Management Policy, and to interpret to the public, the historic structures and artifacts of Cama Beach." We consider that agreement to still be in effect and binding upon the Commission and the agency. Both the likelihood of future sea level rise and the condition of the sea wall were well known at the time of the agreement. Indeed in the first edition of my (Gary Worthington's) book on Cama Beach, published in 2008, on page 107 the past flooding issues were mentioned, as well as the fact that in 2007 the cabins were raised an average of one-and-one half feet in new foundation posts and around two hundred truck loads of fill were brought in and spread in the lowest areas. The text goes on to say on the same page that "sea level rise due to global climate change may make these improvements even more relevant." (That same text is repeated on page 113 of the second edition of the book which you, as Commissioners, should each have.) Consequently, projected possible sea level rise and the sea wall condition would not be valid legal reasons to abandon the cabins and other historic resort buildings in their waterfront locations. The last sentence of the Commission's own Critical Areas Policy appears to be applicable here: "It is recognized that when historic structures or other historic facilities are involved, extra care and expense may be involved in the short term to comply with this policy, but that they will be both responsible and cost-effective in the long-term." Various alternatives, both "hard" and "soft," exist to protect the sea wall and the resort buildings, and there are many people with expertise that can be brought to bear such as coastal geologists, shoreline restoration managers, and civil engineers, and resources such as the Northwest Straits Foundation. It may well be that a combination of solutions will be best (including, possibly, measures such as raising the cabins again and not making the cabins available for rent during certain predicted King Tide events, and maybe a low dike across the north end of the current resort area following the existing rock wall from the sea wall to the base of the hill). We believe those solutions, and funding sources such as FEMA, have not been adequately explored, given the supremely important implications of the decisions to be made, including the serious, major long term effects on such a large number of interested parties and constituencies, as well on the

land and the buildings themselves. Page 3 Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission August 15, 2024 It is likely that whatever course of action appears to be the best alternative will be costly and naturally will require permits, as well as an agreement satisfactory to the interested tribes. An experienced person has pointed out that with regard to obtaining permits, Cama Beach actually has an advantage, since it has over a mile of shoreline, most of which can be left to natural processes, as the portion needing repair is a relatively small percentage of the whole. In fact, much of the northern section of the sea wall is already protected by natural accretions of logs, gravel, and shells that are in some places even higher than the wall. This would all be taken into account in evaluating any required mitigation. We have long felt that the Native American use of the site should be better presented to the public, and we would be very supportive of the tribes being offered an opportunity such as an interpretive long house or other facility in an appropriate location. The fact that undertaking that project will be difficult, time consuming for the staff, and expensive, does not justify setting aside the obligation and the sacred trust. In our own experience, most things worth doing are indeed hard and take time. We therefore urge the Commission to: 1. Fulfil its obligation to do everything necessary to protect this one-of-a kind historic treasure for present and future generations, including obtaining an engineering study to come up with the alternatives, the permits to be needed, and the likely costs. 2. Request an appropriation in the coming Legislative session to fund the project and undertake it as soon as possible, before the historic buildings and sea wall deteriorate further. We will work with the Commission, the Director, and staff, as we did before, to obtain that needed funding. 3. Make the necessary water and sewer arrangements to reopen the highly popular cabins as soon as possible in their current locations, making them again available for the public to experience and enjoy, and bringing in revenue.

Thank you.

Sincerely, W. Gary Worthington, Attorney at Law, and Trustee, Worthington Foundation

Sandra R. Worthington, Trustee, Worthington Foundation <sup>49</sup>

Dear Parks Committee,

Our family has been joining a large group of other families for a weekly trip to Cama Beach for many years now.

We always get cabins 1-5 on the front and it is the highlight of our summer--especially for our big group of kids of all age ranges.

After being dropped off by the vans on my family's first visit, a group of us dad's walked to all of the far ends of Cama. We checked all the perimeters to see if it was safe for our young kids to run and ride their bikes free and we were pleased to find that it was.

From that weekend almost a decade ago, our 5 families of kids have turned into an independent bike gang who all wake up at 6 or 7am to shoot out the doors to their bikes and be gone to start their day of independent fun. They would return for a sandwich or to grab their allowance money to go to the camp store. Us parents would often not see them for most of the day and they were quite literally in a newfound type of heaven.

Cama beach is the only place I know of in our entire area where kids can still experience safe free play. Being driven in by the vans so there are no cars around, and having steep hills keeps the

place safe and allows them the platform to blossom and develop in ways that have deeply impacted our kids' self-confidence and imagination.

So many scholars have documented that the lack of a free play-based-childhood that happened in the 90's when parents stopped letting their children out to play and explore unsupervised is a major cause of the anxiety, depression, loneliness that is causing many of the mental health issues our young people are facing today.

Please, please see the research of NYU Social Psychologist Jonathan Haidt who is an author every parent we know is reading these days. <https://jonathanhaidt.com/>  
<https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/>

His article titled "Play Deprivation is a Major Cause of the Teen Mental Health Crises is a must read as you process this decision: <https://www.afterbabel.com/p/the-play-deficit>

Our kids are not ok!

Cama Beach allows thousands of children to have the experience of free play and we have seen first-hand the ways this has brought our children out of isolation and shyness and helped them to unleash their personality and ability to interact with other children in truly collaborative ways.

As residents of the city of Seattle, our children do not have this opportunity anywhere else in their lives. I challenge you to think of anywhere else that a place like Cama Beach exists in our state or city. Please also check your own memory and recall how you experienced free-play in your childhood and how impacting it was on your development. Free-play simply does not happen in the lives of children anymore. We know parents in West Seattle who have never let their child (now 11 years old) walk even a block on their own to visit a neighborhood friend the next street over.

Saving Cama Beach and preserving this extremely rare and desperately needed context for fostering positive children's mental health development is something that we as a society cannot afford to lose.

Please save Cama Beach and keep this beautiful experience available to the many families that do not have any other access to a beach-front experience like this--and especially one that cultivates our children's self-esteem and mental well-being in a wonderfully safe-environment.

Thank you for your consideration!

Respectfully,<sup>50</sup>

Dear Parks Department,

My family and I have been coming each summer to Cama for the past 8 years. It's truly my family's favorite spot. We started just us then began to invite friends and their families. Then it grew into a tradition with a group of 10 families coming together each summer. We made amazing memories there crabbing, swimming, hiking and having camp fires. It was such a treat to unplug and not be around cars or have to drive anywhere during our trip. We had piece of mind that our kids could play and ride bikes and run between our cabins without fear of cars or harm



coming to them. Like stepping back in time. The daily kids activities put on by the staff and volunteers was amazing. The Cafe breakfasts became a treasured and convenient perk in recent years for us as well.

Please consider saving the park <sup>51</sup>

A couple of questions about the 7 fifty year storms in the last 20 years.

What constitutes a 50 year storm?

When did these storms occur and what damage occurred at the Cama Beach waterfront?

Are these storms increasing in frequency or occurring randomly thru this time period?

It would be nice to have answers to these and all the other questions asked before the cabins close permanently. <sup>52</sup>

I am disappointed to hear about the plans to shut down Cama Beach cabin and camp facilities. And I wonder if we have fully explored creative funding solutions, inclusive of covering costs through increased rate on cabin rental. The past 7 years we have camped at Cama with 30+ neighbors. Cama Beach fosters an environment where families can truly experience the good life, taking a moment to pause and spend undistracted time in community. Friends within walking distance, kids' laughter, shared meals and a few leaps into the cold waters of the Puget Sound. In this home grown camp experience we play games, take hikes and even throw a regular talent show. In fact, last year kids from this neighborhood wrote a song, mirroring Taylor Swift's hit 'Karma.' It was called - wait for it - 'Cama is my boyfriend' (lyrics below). Here's to an explicit hope from us - and perhaps from Taylor Swift herself - that the Cama Beach experience is kept alive and well for us and many other families in the future!

#### Cama Is My Boyfriend

Your talking 'are we there yet'  
Guess you just can't wait to get soakin' wet  
You're curious to look 'round  
You see your cabin, finally here  
You know gotta to run just to get there  
Luggage is in a big mound

And I keep my side of the cabin clean  
You wouldn't know what I mean

Cause Cama is my boyfriend  
Cama is a mob  
Cama is the breeze in my hair on vacation  
Cama's an exciting thought  
Everybody thinks that Cama's hot  
Sweet like candy, Cama is the store  
Bubble gum and snacks so sweet galore  
Eagles flying in this habitat  
Cause we and Cama vibe like that

Pretty leaves, from the trees

Falling on our heads cause it's windy  
My markers made this crown  
Put your toe in, take your toe out  
'The water is ice-cold' you shout  
Bikes are coming back around

And I keep my side of the cabin clean  
You wouldn't know what I mean

Cause Cama is my boyfriend  
Cama is a mob  
Cama is the breeze in my hair on vacation  
Cama's an exciting thought  
Everybody thinks that Cama's hot  
Sweet like candy, Cama is the store  
Bubble gum and snacks so sweet galore  
Eagles flying in this habitat  
Cause we and Cama vibe like that

Ask us what we learned from all these peers  
Ask us what we earned from all these years  
Ask us why so many fade, but we're still here  
(We're still, We're still here)

Cause Cama is the ocean  
It's a scenic sound  
Cama's low tide is a stinky potion  
Cama's gonna see your frown  
When it's time to go back to town  
Sweet like road trips, Cama is gone  
Cama takes all our friends to the café  
Cama is the talent show  
Bye, Cama, that we all know

Cause Cama is my boyfriend  
Cama is a mob  
Cama is the breeze in my hair on vacation  
Cama's an exciting thought  
Everybody thinks that Cama's hot  
Sweet like candy, Cama is the store  
Bubble gum and snacks so sweet galore  
Eagles flying in this habitat  
Cause we and Cama vibe like that

Cama is next year  
Cama is a glow (oh-woah-oh-oh)  
Cama's an exciting thought <sup>53</sup>

This closer just breaks my heart, I have so many memories with overnight cabin with friends & family. Please find a way to save this priceless piece of our history!!!  
Sincerely<sup>54</sup>

Hello!

I am writing to express my support for maintaining the Cama Beach cabins at the state park on Camano Island. My family has been coming to this island for generations and the cabins hold a cherished part of our memories. We hope many more people can enjoy this beautiful part of the state's heritage for generations to come.

Thank you,<sup>55</sup>

Please support re-opening of the cabins and historic buildings at Cama Beach State Park. I've been involved in various ways with Cama Beach since we moved to Camano in 1998, and have spent countless hours there as a volunteer.

Cama Beach State Park, and especially the cabins and historic buildings, are a much loved part of the Camano Island community, as well as being a popular destination across the state and country. This is reflected in the over \$1 million annual revenue, and over 273,000 visits in 2023 alone. Some of this revenue should be reinvested in addressing the septic and fire suppression systems so the cabins can be reopened. Funding should be pursued for repairs to the seawall to protect the current infrastructure and tribal interests while long term planning moves forward.

I understand that tribal communities have a special interest in the beach area at Cama Beach. I have always felt much respect has been shown to that history and heritage. Cama Beach has been one of the stops on the annual Canoe Journey, and there is an interest in increasing tribal educational efforts. In learning about tribal issues, I've been struck by the emphasis on planning for 7 generations, and the strong emphasis on family. It would seem that the memory of the elders would support the continued use of Cama Beach to continue to build family and community ties.

I hope that the necessary short term repairs can be made, while long term planning proceeds.<sup>56</sup>

September 29, 2024

Comments to Park and Recreations Commission

I have been a long time volunteer at Cama Beach State Park. I have worked in the store since the Cama Beach Foundation took over the store operation in 2010. I have watched and enjoyed the many visitors who have come to the park over the last 15 years and am greatly saddened and appalled by the actions being taken by State Park management and then excuses they have given for closing the cabins permanently.

As a reminder to everyone these cabins are already here. When the park was renovated the trenches were dug after a survey was completed by an archaeologist and staff. The two front row cabins do not have showers or toilets and only have water with gray water pipes The five deluxe cabins and the two bungalows have showers and restrooms. Everyone else used the bath house which has shower, toilets and sinks.

The reason we are having this discussion about keeping the cabins open is because over the last 15 years Park Management in Olympia has failed to do their job in providing the necessary funding to maintain Cama Beach State Park. I am not blaming any one person because it has gone on for 15 years. I'm sure there have been many good reasons why that has happened, but the septic system has needed a major overhaul for a long time. According to the latest from parks "temporary "band aid" fixes often failed or functioned inefficiently" and the fixes didn't meet code. So why wasn't the septic system fixed a long time before now instead of band aiding it? State Parks says that installing new pumps and control panels would require digging existing conduit in a highly sensitive cultural site. First the pumps can be replaced with no digging. The top of the vault lifts off and the pump can be pulled out and replaced. The digging for all of the conduits are in existing trenches. This is conduit for wiring not sewage. These are not huge trenches and they are not far from the pump. If for some reason a trench is no longer viable then don't bury the conduit.

The drain field also needs to be repaired as it was incorrectly installed when the park was renovated. How do you justify not fixing the drain field over the last 15 years? In fact there was budget available to fix the drain field but it was not used. I wonder why?

I have asked State Park Management 3 times, what needs to be done to the septic system and the drain field and what the costs are? On August 2, 2024 as a result of a FOIA request State Parks told me "We currently are in the fact-finding stages of understanding what is the best solution for the sewer needs at Cama. As such we have not made a final decision on any plans or designs that we may have received at this time, so an actual "cost of repair" is unknown and any dollar amount would be speculative until we determine and finalize scope of work". It has been 9 months since they announced they would be closing the cabins. How is it that they can recommend the cabins be permanently closed without this information? And how can the Commission close the cabins without this information. These cabins could be reopened if the septic system is fixed.

The resort is on the National Register of Historic Places along with the Pre Contact Tribal site. Both sites are important, and both sites should be protected. Since the resort reopened in 2008, State Park employees have been respectful of the Tribes and procedures are in place to protect any culturally sensitive areas. Cama Beach is unique. As a large, intact 1930s saltwater waterfront fishing resort on the National Register, it is a time capsule of the more recent history of Camano Island and Puget Sound. It is a living museum that people can use. At one time there were many resorts like this one around the Sound. This resort is the only one left and it allows visitors to step back in time. It is also important to the tribes. State Parks does has ignored the historic and cultural value of the Resort. Yes it isn't thousands of year old, but it is still and it is important history to the people who live on this Island. If you don't value more recent history than it too will be lost.

It is interesting that after meeting with the Tribes that the State Parks decided that their values align with the Tribes' perspectives on keeping the keeping the cabins closed. What about the contract with the donors of the park? What about fulfilling that requirement? Are you just allowed to ignore it? Whether to reopen or close the cabins is not just a Tribal issue and the decision is not just a Tribal decision. There are many other parties who have not had a seat at the table where this decision was made. It may be in alignment with State Parks but apparently you aren't

listening to the rest of us out here. I appreciate that the Tribes have an interest in protecting what is under the ground at Cama Beach. However, people staying in the cabins is not hurting what is there. These cabins have been there almost a 100 years now and protecting them and allowing the public to use them should be equally important. And as I mentioned earlier any digging is happening in existing trenches. There are protocols in place to protect any culturally sensitive items if they are found when digging is happening.

The recommendation by staff that the stories and site history of the resort be well documented in an effort to mitigate the loss of the cabins. If it weren't such a ludicrous statement it would be funny. How does that mitigate any loss? If it does why isn't staff doing that for that Tribes and keeping the cabins open? You don't mitigate with stories and history when the place exists where people can still actually go and stay. It is the small community that develops when people stay there that makes this such a special place. and you don't mitigate that with stories or pictures. Unfortunately I doubt that any of the State Park Management has actually stayed there or has any idea what it is really like.

State Parks at their presentation and again in the Addendum have intimated that there has been careless indifference in cases of accidental disturbance of graves and burial grounds. Having talked to several people who were around when the skeletons were found there was no indifference. The burial sites at Cama Beach are protected.

If bones have been found in existing trench one wonders how that happened, but it is certainly possible to move the trench which the state legislation allows to happen.

I would also say that given the extensive surveying done before the cabins were renovated, State Parks has taken all reasonable action to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse effects of the cabin renovation and continues to do when any digging is done for infrastructure reasons.

The Sea Wall at Cama Beach is like the other infrastructure issues. A portion of the wall needed to be raised years ago. Instead of fixing it State Parks did nothing. When it was further damaged in the storm either 2 years ago or 3 years, FEMA had money available to help repair it. I have heard that FEMA met with the Tribes who at the time were supportive of fixing the wall. However, State Parks did nothing. They could have used the money and fixed the problem. Without the Sea Wall the cabins and the culturally significant items will eventually wash away. If they are so important that they can't be damaged by digging how is it o.k for them to washed away?

There are many different sea level rise models and what they tell us. Is State Parks using the right model? It is interesting that State Parks believe that they can't get permits yet when Kayak Point, a county Park in Snohomish County, also on Puget Sound across the water from Camano Island, was able to get permits for a large dock and yet State Parks can't get permits for an existing sea wall. Have you tried?

The Sea Wall does not have to be repaired for the cabins to reopen. State Parks has done no research looking at alternatives to things that could be done to mitigate damage from flooding during high water events. What things we could we do? Perhaps the cabins could be closed in the winter and temporary barriers put in place to prevent the water from getting into the septic system for example. Raising the cabins another 3 or 5 feet which would probably be cheaper than

trying to move them and raising the septic vaults. It would also involve raising the store and house. I only mention some ideas but there are fixes here that have not been considered or discussed.

State Parks again mentions the Critical Area Policy “The first and generally preferred agency response to a threat by a natural land change process, such as landslides or coastal erosion shall be retreat.” It sounds good doesn’t it? The Critical Areas policy also states, “It is recognized that when historic structures or other historic facilities are involved, extra care and expense may be involved in the short term to comply with this policy, but that they will be both responsible and cost-effective in the long-term.

Since we have no idea what the cost involved are it is hard to say whether or not they might comply in the short term, like fixing the septic system and reopening the cabins. Again State Parks using part of the information they have to support their argument.

In the discussion with the public on July 15, 2024. State Parks made no mention at all of the economic impacts of closing the cabins at Cama Beach State Park. According to a study done by State Parks, Economic Analysis of Washington State Parks by Earth Economics in 2021, they provide data about the economic impacts. The study for Cama Beach State Park says that it had 273,000 visitors. They spent \$8,829,00 and were responsible for 71 full or part time jobs. For Camano Stanwood area this is a lot of money and a lot of jobs that are available for people who live in the area. Yet this was never mentioned by State Parks. It is the cabins that attract the visitors. The upper Park itself is quite lovely, but being able to stay at the cabins at the Beach is what makes it so unique and wonderful. Again State Parks wants to provide part of the story the part that supports what they want to do.

State Parks briefly mentions the volunteers. There were 3,643.5 hours of volunteer work at Cama Beach and Camano Island State Park in 2023. It is a lot of hours. I can't separate out the hours for Cama Beach. State Parks mentions the Cama Beach Foundation, but they don't really understand what it did. The Foundation did operate the store at the park with all volunteers since 2010. In May the store would be opened on Saturdays but starting in mid June until Labor Day is was opened 7 days a week. After Labor Day the hours would cut back to Saturdays through the end of October. Keeping the store running was a great benefit for the people staying in the cabins. However, the Foundation ran the store to raise money that was used for a myriad of educational programs available to everyone who wanted to attend. For several years there was a program almost every day in the summer.. I would spend more time giving you a schedule of what was offered but it seems pointless at this time. If the cabins don't reopen there is little reason for the store and there will be no money generated for programs. It was quite evident from the behavior of State Park Management this last year that educational programs at the Cama were not a priority. They weren't the least bit interested. This is what happens when you take the heart out of a park.

State Parks needs to consider using public dollars wisely. I would say that given what has been spent allowing the cabins to go away would not be a good use of public dollars. The cabins generate revenue that can used to help maintain the Park , if State Parks would fix the infrastructure. The desire of people to stay in the cabins has not diminished since the Park

opened and if anything has only increase.

A big investment was made by the State and the families who formerly owned the resort. They did not make that effort for the State Parks to close the cabins after 15 years. It is clear that for whatever reason State Parks has not kept up their part of the deal to provide the necessary maintenance to fix the systems or replace them when they needed it. Instead State Parks let the problems get worse and now claim that they can't be fixed. These cabins have a longer shelf life than 15 years. They can be and should be used into the future. The Camano Island community loves this State Park and the cabins that are the heart of the Park. If help is needed to get the necessary resources to fix the infrastructure then we are ready to help, but please don't allow State Parks to close the cabins at Cama Beach! <sup>57</sup>

Keep the cabins! We've been going to Cama Beach since 2012, we got married in the boat house in 2013 and have returned yearly. It's an exceptional place and much more than a line item in a budget. <sup>58</sup>

Subject: Cama Beach Historical State Park: Avoid costly legal liabilities by performing the requisite cost-benefit analysis, repair the septic system and water line to reopen the cabins, and plan for managing any future sea level rise while protecting the historic resort  
**(Do you want this included before the first paragraph or is this just for our information.)**  
**I will add the address for the Governor**

Dear Governor Inslee:

We are writing on behalf of the donors of the land for Cama Beach Historical State Park and of the funds to build the Cama Center and Café; **well over a hundred** active park volunteers; and the Washington residents and the wider community that the park benefits.

The contract with the donors requires the Commission to preserve and protect the unique historic resort buildings. The historic cabins and related restored structures, on both the National Register and the Washington Heritage Register, comprise the living museum, the heart of Cama Beach State Park.

The State Parks Commission abruptly closed the cabins, hence shutting down all the sponsored activities and the cabin reservations, including weddings in the Cama Center without so much as a phone call to any of the individuals who created and maintained the park services and activities. Establishing the park was an 18 year Herculean effort by committed legislators, the charitable trusts that donated the land and funding, and many volunteer organizations that came to support the many functions needed to fulfill the mission of its creation.

By its action of closing the cabins, effectively terminating all public activities associated with them, the State Parks and Recreation Commission violated the terms of the sale and gift agreements with the donors and the public and exposed the State and its taxpayers to substantial potential liability for the breach of the original gift agreements.

In the agreement dated April 12, 2004, and ratified June 1, 2004, between the donors' charitable trusts and the Commission for cash donations for what became the Cama Center Building, the parties agreed in Section 13 that among the most important reasons for the donation was the buildings' intended use in providing kitchen, dining, meeting, lodging, and restroom facilities for members of the public attending educational programs at Cama Beach State Park. That section also provides that "Educational programs will be a primary and significant purpose of Cama Beach State Park."

Section 14 of that Agreement states that "the parties understand that one of the most important reasons for the Trusts to make the donation of the buildings is that the activities conducted in the buildings are anticipated to enhance and help **ensure the preservation of the adjacent historic resort buildings and related structures. The Commission undertakes to make bona fide and continuing significant efforts to preserve, in accordance with its own Cultural Resources Management Policy, and to interpret to the public, the historic structures and artifacts of Cama Beach.**" (Emphasis added)

We believe that the intemperate action of the State Parks and Recreation Commission closing the cabins and contemplating their permanent closure subjects the State to a costly breach of contract action that could require the purchase of the donated land at current market value (\$10 million in 1990) and the repayment of the \$2 million-plus cash donation plus interest.

***Both the likelihood of future sea level rise and the condition of the sea wall were well known at the time of the agreement. Consequently, projected possible sea level rise and the sea wall condition would not be valid legal reasons to fail to protect the resort area.***

Any cost-benefit analysis must include not only the park itself, but also the impacts to the local community and to the larger public that uses the park. The Parks Commission made its closure decision without investigating the cost of any of the needed repairs, the loss of a valuable public income-generating asset, the loss of reasonably priced lodging, the loss of safe shoreline access for families and associated educational activities that the Cama cabins offered visitors and the community at large, and the loss of shuttle transportation for visitors, particularly the mobility impaired.

***The recent Commission decision was also made without State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) analysis subject to public review.*** The Parks Commission should be held accountable for its actions which have a negative economic impact on the community from the loss of 275,000 park visitors spending \$8,829,000. in 2023, and 71 jobs on a small island and the loss of a well-received onsite public education program.

The cabins generated \$1 to 1.5 million in income annually, although it is clear from the condition of the park that the funds were not reinvested in the maintenance of the park. The



lack of preservation and protection for the historic buildings clearly violates the contractual obligations.

Sea level rise is a universal issue for coastal communities and should be addressed in a measured fashion that anticipates and plans for the future. The Federal Emergency Management Agency offered its resources to Parks management to address seawall/bulkhead erosion to preserve the cabins and any ancient tribal artifacts. Cama Beach State Park and its historic cabins provide an ideal opportunity to meld short term mitigation and longer term solutions.

We appeal to you to restore this significant State and community asset, avoid costly legal liabilities by performing the requisite cost-benefit analysis, repair the septic system and water line to reopen the cabins, and plan for managing any future sea level rise while protecting the Cama Beach Historical State Park.

With deepest concern,

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Elaine Chan, Attorney at Law  
Volunteer, Cama Beach Quilters and Shore Water Stewards

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Senator Mary Margaret Haugen

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Cindy J. Custer, Volunteer Cama Beach State Park

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Russ Holmes, Volunteer, Cama Beach State Park

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W. Gary Worthington, Attorney and Sandra R. Worthington, Trustees, Worthington Foundation  
signers of the 2004 Agreement with the Commission

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Doug Solowan, Volunteer Cama Beach State Park  
cc  
Attorney General Bob Ferguson  
Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck  
Secretary of State Steve Hobbs

DAHP Director Alison Brooks  
State Parks and Recreation Commissioners  
Washington State Parks Director Diana Dupuis  
Island County Commissioner, Janet St. Clair  
House Finance Committee, Chair April Berg  
House Capital Budget Committee, Chair Steve Tharinger  
Senate Ways and Means Committee, Chair June Robinson  
Washington Senator Ron Muzzall  
Washington State Representative Clyde Shavers  
Washington State Representative Dave Paul <sup>59</sup>

I'm 86 and have traveled extensively throughout the country. It has been my pleasure to visit Cama beach state park. What a unique spot and one that certainly deserves to entertain and celebrate that quiet charming hidden space in Washington. Don't let it slip away! <sup>60</sup>

Please consider the projected population growth in our region, which will result in increased pressure on available parks, and give very careful consideration to the resources and amenities already in place and available to the public at Cama Beach S.P. There is already so much to build on with the cabins, historic store, cafe, Center for Wooden Boats, parking, and magnificent scenic waterfront. The cabins were booked to capacity most months of the year. Cama brings in revenue of nearly \$1M a year. We urge the Commission to explore all possible alternatives to reopen the cabins for use and to upgrade the utility systems as needed. The Commission's mandate regarding historic facilities is clear in its own policy that "extra care and expense may be involved in the short term...but that they will be both responsible and cost-effective in the long term." There is also a written contractual agreement with the original land donors to preserve the historic structures at Cama Beach. We urge the Commissioners to stop at nothing with regard to reopening the cabins. Engineering studies, federal grant assistance, gathering ideas for solutions from geologists, hydrologists, coastal restoration experts should all be pursued. Please do the hard work needed to reopen this one-of-a-kind Park. The residents of Washington State need it, and Parks has an obligation to the donors to honor the agreements that were made between them. <sup>61</sup>

I wholeheartedly support repairing and keeping the Cama Beach cabins open and available to all the individuals/families who frequent them and the lovely beach and park they are a part of. It would be an incalculable loss to generations of people who have enjoyed and continue to enjoy the many beautiful attributes Cama Beach Park offers - the beautiful beach and views of Saratoga Passage, Whidbey Island, the Olympic Mountains, and have also enjoyed the wooden boat building classes, the hunt for the best clam shells on the beach, learning to crab and then catching crab, boiling them to eat on the beach, the really cool store that has so many interesting items for sale for both adults and children, the experience of being transported back in time when you step into one of the cabins and realize just how many families have experienced this magical place over the years. Please do not let this slip away. Find a way to repair/preserve the cabins and open them up again. Repair the septic system and keep this beautiful park viable for all who cherish and value its existence. <sup>62</sup>

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter because I am so disappointed that the Cama Beach Cabins have been closed!

I have enjoyed the park and cabins several times over the past years. I live in Whatcom county but have driven down to enjoy the beach and cabins and beach watch programs. The cabins

made it possible for my family and myself to enjoy ourselves without being tent campers. I was blessed to be able to take advantage of the Beach Watch program. I had no idea of all the different species and vegetation that are in our local waters. When I attended the program there was a diverse attendance that included young children accompanied by their parents, college students, adults and seniors like myself. It was lead by an individual whose knowledge was unlimited! He answered questions all evening teaching every one of us something new. I'm not sure how you can eliminate a program so carelessly that encourages learning and respect for our natural resources.

I'm not sure what could justify this action on your part to make a decision that impacts so many people without stating your purpose and your future plans to take action.

Your Mission statement is:

"Cares for Washington's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places. State parks connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide memorable recreational and educational experiences that enhance their lives".

Which part of your statement justifies your action? My research has shown that the cabins generate \$1-1.5 million dollars every year. Did that money go to maintaining the property that earned the money? Where was that money allocated? I understand there is a park study that revealed visitors spent roughly \$8 million dollars in revenue in the area.

I believe that Washingtonians would be surprised to find out that there is no accountability to the public for decision they make. These actions on your part were a cloak and dagger game. There was no information given to the individuals who have successfully run programs and cabins. You have abused your power and I thin' it's time to review the policies that enable you to work in this manner. I associate the Washington State Parks with an agency that protects our parks and our accessibility to them. Your actions do not support this.<sup>63</sup>

Regarding the Cama Beach cabins, and whether to reopen them, I have heard from boots-on-the ground people familiar with the infrastructure issues in site that repairing the sewer and electrical is very feasible. I have heard from Olympia HQ staff that the repairs are not feasible. I don't personally know. What I do know is that the people most knowledgeable on the issues were not adequately consulted before the initial decision to close was made.

I also know that if I were responsible for:

Commitment to stewardship that transmits high quality park assets to future generations

Involving the public in our policy development and decision making

I would want to make sure I had the full story and get information from multiple sources before I finalized a decision. I encourage the Commission to do so.<sup>64</sup>

I have read all the comments posted for review. It is heartening to hear the overwhelming love and support for the cabins and the park. I have only been a resident of Camano for a few years but have already developed a great fondness for the park, the cabins, the setting and the cafe. The quilt show against the cabins is stunning and one of a kind. I was so sorry it wasn't held there this year. That show draws huge crowds and revenue and interest to the area. When the park has been open , it is obvious how much fun children are having and how much families of all ages are enjoying the cabins - there is a palpable air of joy and freedom obvious even to the casual observer.

I echo the thoughtful comments provided by the Worthingtons on behalf of the Worthington Foundation. I too believe there is an obligation to fulfill - allow for continued use of the cabins as intended when the agreements were made. Many others provided comments pleading for some

effort and creativity to reach solutions that would allow the cabins to be used into the future. Others mentioned fundraising. Others provided ideas (some unique, others more obvious) for water and septic solutions that would not involve disturbing possible native sites. I join these voices to implore the Commission to use all these ideas (and more - that I am sure are available to the Commission from past projects and solutions) to find a way to save the cabins - even if it takes some compromise. It will also take great vision, technology and expertise - - but all the effort is worth it. Please, please. Thank you <sup>65</sup>