

Annual
Report

2016



S A S

S Q U A M I S H
A C C E S S
S O C I E T Y

Message from the SAS President

2016 was an extremely challenging year with numerous access issues threatening Squamish climbing resources and life in conjunction with exploding recreational use of all types and residential and commercial expansion in the corridor. We are entering a new period where our access struggles are going to be similar to those seen in the United States. The nature, number, and scope of these issues mean that Squamish climbers can no longer be complacent about the excellent access to climbing resources we currently enjoy. SAS is trying its best to maintain, steward, and grow the existing and future potential for climbing in the S2S corridor but are going to need the lobbying power and assistance of SAS members and the combined climbing community to achieve this. We are trying to form more cohesive partnerships with other climbing community and access groups and the outdoor industry, and government agencies to achieve these aims. We hope we can count on member support and lobbying when we ask for it.

Sincerely,

Chris Small,

President, Squamish Access Society

January 15, 2017

2017 Board of Directors and Financial Summary

1. Election and Appointment of Luke Zimmerman to SAS Board.
 - Luke's Qualifications – Luke is a prominent and keen member of the bouldering community which is a climbing sub-genre the current board is not as involved in. The addition of Luke will help us be better informed on bouldering access issues and represent the bouldering community's interests better.
2. Election of 2017 Current board
Election of the Current was conducted at the Jan 8, 201

President – Chris Small

Vice president – Brian Moorhead

Treasurer – Tood Gerhart

Smoke Access Bluff Committee Representatives- Toby Foord-Kelcey, Krissy MacKay, Brian Moorhead

Directors at Large

Marc Bourdon

David Jones

Emilisa Frerdich

Luke Zimmerman

3. Financial Summary –
SAS has received generous support from corporate partnership and had successful fundraising from the Golden Scrub Brush Awards and is in currently in good financial shape to continue our 7th bolt replacement initiative and additionally consider partially funding outhouse facilities at Murrin Park in 2017. Our current activities have helped increase our membership numbers and we are exploring several partnerships with other organizations to further increase our membership rolls.

Summary of 2016 Activities

1. Smoke Bluffs Management Committee

- SAS continues to provide leadership for the Smoke Bluffs Park Advisory Committee with SAS board members holding the chair (Toby Foord-Kelcey) and two member positions (Brian Moorhead, Krissy McKay).
- The primary focus of the SBPAC in 2016 was completing the park management plan. To that end, in addition to regular committee attendance, SAS board members spent substantial time preparing for, and presenting to, council, as well as engaging informally with other recreational stakeholders.
- SAS board members volunteered for Smoke Bluffs Park boundary and trail mapping projects, and initiated restoration of Elephants Arse sector.
- Toby spoke twice at council in opposition to Kristall Turm Ropes Course proposal- which will lease District of Squamish land at Adventure Centre. Impacts parking for carpooling to other climbing locations, use as overflow Smoke Bluffs parking, and limits current and future use as transit hub in Corridor.

2. Negotiations with BC Timber Sales (BCTS) regarding 2017 -2019 harvesting scheduled on Conroy FSR above Cheakmus Canyon.

In June 2016 SAS in conjunction with CASBC, received Timber Development Plan package for stakeholder comment. In early December , 2016 SAS received a second development plan for additional blocks to be harvested in 2018 – 2019. On June 16, 2016 SAS had a meeting with BCTS to discuss maintaining access and mitigating potential public safety risks during operations.

Results:

- Moving harvest schedule to outside the climbing season was discussed but deemed not operationally feasible for their licensees by BCTS.
- BCTS will include the following measures within the TSL to improve public safety:
 1. **Put signs at the bottom of the FSR noting active harvest operations.**
 2. **No hauling on weekends and weeknights after 5 PM from April to October.**
 3. **Traffic Control:** BCTS will include in the TSL document for the licensee to have a traffic control person guiding and informing people when logging trucks are on the FSR.
 4. BCTS will require the licensee to leave the FSR in the same state or better following completion of harvest operations. These will also a requirement of the road use permit.
 5. **Parking:** BCTS will require the licensee to create a small parking area at the

switchback past Block CN203, where the trail to the Outpost starts.

6. **People knowledge or public awareness:** CAS / SAS agreed to inform their members regarding timber harvesting in the Chek climbing area and hauling on the Conroy FSR through their website.

We are currently in discussions with BCTS regarding the 2018 harvest plans and road maintenance post- harvest or the section between the main Chek parking lot and the Outpost.

4. Advancing a Regional Land Managers Forum to develop solutions with Parking and Camping Shortages in Squamish Area

One of the biggest issues facing SAS is a huge public relations issue between local residents and the climbing community is the `bandit camping` along the Stawamus River and the environmental (human waste and wildlife impacts (loss of migration corridor)and social impacts arising from an acute campsite shortage in Squamish.

In August, SAS sent out an invitation to the District of Squamish, BC parks and BC Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) to participate in a Regional Forum regarding parking and camping issues in the S2S corridor.

- Positive response from FLNRO, BC Parks, and DoS to idea.
- In late August, FLNRO – SAS had meeting to discuss potential new or expansion to existing campground in the S2S corridor. Items discussed included: criteria for new campsites (locations, constraining factors, desirable characteristics from climbers and FLNRO perspective), funding and management partnerships for any new campsites.
- FLNRO indicated that it had higher direction and funds to expand camping options in the S2S corridor.
- SAS identified several potential sites prior to this meeting and identified others in September - November. Most of these sites have had other conflicting interests unfortunately.
- Sites fulfilling criteria: Chek- FLNRO is expanding current campsite 10 x to approximately 30 sites from current 3 which is to be completed in June 2017. SAS expects to be consulted in the design, funding, and management plans for this expansion in collaboration with FLNRO and CASBC.
- Additional sites are also being considered but are likely not to be available for 2017 season due to regulatory and public consultation requirements. We are continuing to advocate for these sites.

BC Parks Response.

Dec 8th – SAS and CASBC met with BC Parks regarding the following issues:

1. Stawamus Chief Campground expansion.

- BC Parks is expanding the Chief Campground adding between 20 to 30 new sites in total. Currently in design phase; SAS is to be consulted on design. General plan is expansion to south with sites north of the Chief trail being decommissioned due traffic on Chief trail and privacy concerns. A second picnic day use shelter is to be built in the SW corner overlooking the gondola lot. SAS is concerned about the lost sites on the north side of trail but is happy that expansion is not occurring to the north into the Titanic boulders. May be potential for additional van camping with expansion.
- Potential for walk in campsites in Malamute cut block was also discussed. Parking, policing, and logistical difficulties associated with human waste management constrain campsite development there.
- Campground potential east of the Papoose in Shannon Falls Park also discussed. Highway access and design constraints presently eliminate this option.
- SAS proposed third day use shelter in field across from Malamute Bridge useful for both events and regular use. Parks was to consider this proposal.

2. Changes to Campground Direction and Site Fees.

- Implementation of reservation system for Chief campground. Starting in 2017 The Chief Campground is included in reservation system. SAS expressed concern that implementation of reservation systems may substantially change the users of this campground away from the climber user group it was originally constructed for especially as climber decision making is often weather based and spontaneous. The percentage of reserved sites is a concern and still under discussion. We are shooting for 50 % max reservation sites. Problems with the current reservation system were also discussed. Gradual release of reserved sites and dates into the system(3 month lead time) were given by BC Park to address our concerns. Time will tell if these changes work. Link to Parks Press release on changes <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/reserve/>.
- Changes to Fee Structure from per person to per site. Due to difficulties collecting individual payments the Parks Operator is moving to per site payment with a limit of 4 person and 2 tents per site (UNLESS a single nuclear family). Price 20 / site. SAS thinks this fee structure will encourage site sharing and increase campground capacity.
- Strict enforcement of stay limits. BC parks is beginning enforcing existing 2 week stay limit in 2017 at the Chief due to overwhelming demand for sites. BC Parks is going to require ID or vehicle registration at payment to track use and aid enforcement. SAS is resigned to this situation as it balances camping needs for both road tripping and short

term visitors.

- Camping in Non –designated areas – Camping restrictions to designated sites is going to be strictly enforced going forward

3. Parking

- Parks has paved and line painted upper Chief campground lot to create more day use parking. Parks implemented aggressive enforcement of posted parking regulations in 2016 including ticketing and towing, and, this will continue in 2017. Parks is also giving their parks operator enforcement and ticketing powers. Enforcement is required to maintain emergency egress. SAS has zero objections to this enforcement.
- Overnight parking in Non-designated areas. Aka(#VanLife)
 - i) Parks noted long term monopolization of parking spots by a very high number of overnight van dwellers in 2016. Signage has now been posted banning overnight use of these lots and will be enforced through ticketing and towing (with the occupants if necessary). SAS sees this measure as necessary to maintain equal access to parking for all climbers whether they are day or longer stay users.
 - ii) Mamquam FSR camping.

The area north of Mamquam FSR along the Stawamus FSR thought to be District land was found to be part of the Stawamus Chief Park. Camping in non-designated sites along the river is going to be strictly enforced and with consistent enforcement. SAS is to work BC parks to develop signage with maps for posting at the entrance of the Mamquam FSR showing closed areas and alternate available camping locations. Additionally the no overnight parking ban is going to be enforced along the Mamquam FSR via District of Squamish Bylaw officers and BC parks staff.

4. Peregrine Falcon Monitoring

- Parks has found climber assistance to be very effective in narrowing down nest locations. Parks would like SAS's continued help in coordinating and gathering falcon sighting data in spring and to disseminate falcon closures. SAS asked that more signage be posted in the Chief campground and at trailheads regarding reporting sighting and closures and a better means for reporting sightings be developed.

5. Murrin Park Issues

- Human waste –Increased climber and hiker numbers resulting from the Murrin Loop Trail and greatly expanded route development has led to human waste management issues. Particular areas of concern are Pet Wall area and Woodstock/ Altamont/Quercus Zones. SAS suggested that a new outhouse should be looked at to address this issue. Parks said this could work as the existing outhouse on the south side of Browning Lake is reaching its lifespan and is not heavily utilized. SAS suggested a composting design

similar to the Smoke Bluffs toilet. SAS stated willingness to partially fund and fund raise with our corporate partners to get such a toilet built. Parks is going to assess the feasibility of this idea.

6. **Filming Protocols.** Discussed Star trek filming in GW boulders of 2015. Parks has now set no filming in peak season. Has developed new protocols after this event. SAS suggested filming guidelines and approval process similar to established Smoke Bluffs model.
7. **Volunteer Agreements.** Want SAS to have volunteer agreements in place for liability and insurance reasons. Wants approval of volunteer projects prior to work parties occurring.
8. **Retro fitting Program.**

SAS conducted an extensive 6th phase of bolt replacement in 2016 at the following areas:

- **Chek** Retrofitting occurred at along with replacement of perma-draws in Circus, Negative, and Forgotten Wall Areas.
<http://squamishaccess.ca/2016-re-bolting-initiative-phase-1/> for more details
- **Area 44** Anchors replaced at on 9 climbs to more sport climbing style chain set-up to deal with anchor loosening. Spinning bolts replaced on 5 anchors and 1 bolt replaced on Blue de Jour.
- **Garden of Gethsemane (Welcome to Squamish).** 3 original routes rescrubbed and re-bolted (20 plus bolts). 5 additional new routes established. Base Area and trail landscaped

9. Trail work

- Organized numerous work parties to address trail and crag maintenance issues at Murrin on Loop Trail, developed lower loop trail to connect Rainbows and Unicorns, Up Among the Firs and Down Among the Cedars. Additional projects completed at the Papoose and Smoke Bluffs.

10. Formed partnerships with other groups and industry to address ongoing challenges, MEC, Arcteryx, ACC, VRCG, VOC, and The Access Fund to mention a few.

- Representative appointed to VCRG Rampage Competition organizing committee to assist in location planning and pre comp retro scrubbing. Trying to rotate locations and introduce climbers to less frequented bouldering areas.
- Work with Arcteryx on Mountain Academy trail day (drainage on Papoose Trail)
- February 2017 Conference with Vancouver Mountain Clubs to integrate actions on access issues. (form larger lobby)
- Collaboration with Squamish Streamkeepers, and The Valleycliffe Neighborhood

Association for the Stawamus River Cleanup.

- Continued ongoing volunteer partnerships with local educational institutions, and businesses

11. Hosted 3rd Golden Scrub Brush Awards. Celebrates Contribution of First Ascensionists to Squamish Community. Raised \$1300 for Bolt/Facilities Fund.

12. Sent Representative to NW Sustainable Climbing Conference

- Conference dealt with establishing partnerships with Land Management Agencies. This is going to be important locally in future.
- Promoting conservation in climbing community
- Engaging youth in outdoors
- Important networking opportunity to establish partnerships with US organizations with large lobbying power.

13. Consulting with Mamquam River Power Corporation to move signage from Swamp Thing Boulder.

2017 Plans and Agenda

1. Attend S2S Recreational Land Use Meeting mid-January to represent climbing interests in Corridor.
2. Continue working with FLNRO and BC Parks on designs for new campgrounds at Chief Campground and Cheakamus Canyon. Work with FLNRO on campground management format for Cheakamus Recreation Site. Continue lobbying BC Parks to maintain new price structure for campground and monitor how reservation system for Chief impacts climber access to this campground
3. Conduct 7th Mank replacement project. Target routes – Genius Loci pitch 1,2. Area 44 anchor change over. Discuss with local Guides and consult with climbing public for additional projects. Consult with local route developers to set standard “Squamish anchor”
4. Collaboration with BC Parks on Murrin Outhouse project.
5. Continued Collaboration with VCRG on Rampage Competition on mitigating impacts of competition
6. Continued collaboration with FLNRO on potential Squamish area new campground
7. Inform Climbing Public of access and safety protocols for 2017 harvesting affecting Chek climbing area
8. Facilitate climber Assistance with falcon monitoring and closures on the Chief.
9. Continued lobbying to remove signage from Swamp Thing boulder.
10. Continued participation in 2017 Stawamus River Clean-up
11. Continued Representation on Smoke Bluffs Committee
 - a. promote 2017 parking lot expansion capital project
 - b. Finish Smoke Bluffs Management Plan

