

Questions for Parks Canada: July 23, 2023 Q & A Session – Terrace Gardens

Member Question: *What are the procedures and policies about how the Park deals with dead trees on its property? What is the communication method to make an inquiry, particularly when personal safety or property damage is a risk?*

PCA Answer: Call the Townsite Office and staff will take your report and get it out to the assessors. The assessors will examine the tree to determine if it is or is not hazardous and assess its wildlife value. They will then make a plan to remove or modify the tree(s), or hire a contractor to remove/modify them, if they are deemed hazardous, after securing any permitting required by Environment Canada.

Member Question: *It is taking an inordinate amount of time to obtain a permit for the removal of trees from leasehold properties in Waskesiu – even trees that are obviously dead or have fallen. Some leaseholders have been told by Parks staff that it will take many months to obtain a permit. Why is it becoming so difficult to remove trees from cottage/cabin/business lots in the townsite, and what is being done to rectify the backlog?*

PCA Answer: There has been confusion in interpreting some of the newer federal legislation which has now been rectified and we have cleared the backlog of permits. There is currently only one permit left to be worked on. Just a reminder, you need to fill out a permit to remove any trees from your property. **Please note that some circumstances related to migratory birds or species at risk presence will potentially prolong the process**

Member Question: *As a green initiative would Parks Canada consider placing a recycling unit for cardboard/paper items beside the metal garbage bin at the Community Hall? There are a number of large scale functions that use this facility throughout the season that bring in a significant amount of paper, cardboard, paper packaging, drink, and liquor boxes.*

PCA Answer: This is a great idea, but Parks does not operate the Community Hall building so we are not aware of the volumes of recyclable materials. Also, there is no bin currently available for that kind of recycling.

Member Question: *Could the bicycle paths along Waskesiu Drive or the roadways be identified or stenciled with yellow paint or a cyclist symbol? Few cyclists are using the designated paths causing concern for pedestrian sidewalk safety.*

PCA Answer: PCA was able to add this to this year's budget and the work has been done for this season.

Member Question: *What are the plans for refurbishing the breakwater, which is disintegrating?*

PCA Answer: The townsite breakwater refurbishing is on PCA's long term capital plan. An inspection was done in 2017 and the estimate to refurbish at that time was for \$1,000,000 and there are not enough funds in the annual budget to do the refurbishing. The complete breakwater has been inspected and found to be structurally sound. Inspections are performed every five years. The next inspection will be done this year. Parks is working on getting the funding for the refurbishing.

Member Question: Does the Park have any plans to improve the Paul Horne arena, including the roof?

PCA Answer: This spring interior work was done on the arena roof. An improvement plan is on the capital plan for external funding, but we do not have a year that it will happen.

Member Question: Can Parks Canada please provide an update on the status of the proposed new Land Use Regulations, including when the revised draft regulations are expected to be released by the federal government?

PCA Answer: They are expected to be released by spring of 2024.

Member Question: I have noticed several spruce trees have a disease or insect infestation. The new growth needles are easily seen at a distance to be yellow. Upon closer examination, there is a row of eggs or fungus on each of the yellow needles (see photo). It is noticeable on the Fisher trail and in that general area. What is the problem and is there concern about it spreading and becoming serious?

PCA Answer: PCA is aware of this spruce needle fungus. The bumps are spores, and they cause a change in color ranging from yellow to orange. This is part of a natural cycle. PCA expects needle drop this year, but this is nothing to worry about and isn't expected to affect tree health in the long term

Member Question: A section of Waskesiu Drive between Orchid Street and Fern Street was dug up two or three years ago. When will it be repaired?

PCA Answer: The section was dug up as part of work done being done on a leaseholder's property. PCA is currently working with the leaseholder to get this work done as soon as possible.

Member Question: What is the status of an off-leash dog park in Waskesiu?

PCA Answer: Gregg Rutten announced he is the Project manager on the off-leash dog park. The next step is to determine the location of the off leash park by the end of the summer. They will be working on the design and all other aspects which will be completed by December 1st of this year and will be ready to go out for tender for construction in the spring of 2024.

Observations/Concerns - Off leash dogs on the Flower Streets (Fern, Orchid, Lily Street):

I am writing to bring to your attention several concerning issues related to off-leash dogs on Flower Streets within our national park. These observations have been made by concerned visitors and owners, and we believe they warrant urgent attention:

- *Incidents of Attacks by Off-Leash Dogs: There have been observations of off-leash dogs attacking both visitors and other dogs within the park premises, posing a significant safety risk.*
- *Fecal Contamination on the Beach: Dog feces have been found on the beach area, creating an unpleasant and unhygienic environment for park visitors.*
- *Improper Disposal of Dog Waste: Bags of dog waste left on the beach, instead of being properly disposed of, contribute to environmental pollution, and detract from the park's natural beauty.*
- *Dogs Attacking Other Dogs: Some off-leash dogs have displayed aggressive behavior towards other dogs, causing distress and fear among pet owners and their companions.*

- *Food Theft from Tables: Instances of dogs taking food off tables while their owners are occupied elsewhere have been observed, leading to potential food safety concerns.*
- *Wet Fur Shaking on People: Dogs shaking wet fur in close proximity to visitors can be both unpleasant and unsanitary.*
- *Driveway Blockage by Dog Owners: Some dog owners have been inadvertently blocking driveways, causing inconvenience to other park visitors.*
- *Dogs Approaching and Running Up to People: Off-leash dogs running up to park visitors, especially those who may not be comfortable with dogs, can be intimidating and distressing.*
- *Pacing and Barking on the Beach: Dogs left unattended by their owners on the beach have been observed pacing and barking, disrupting the tranquility of the environment.*

As responsible stewards of this national park, it is imperative that we address these concerns to ensure the safety, cleanliness, and overall enjoyment of all visitors. I urge PANP staff to consider implementing measures to regulate off-leash dog activities on Flower Streets and enforce existing regulations more diligently. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that steps will be taken to address these pressing issues promptly.

Member Comment: *I urge PANP staff to consider implementing measures to regulate off-leash dog activities on Flower Streets and enforce existing regulations more diligently.*

PCA Answer: PCA is aware of the problems with off-leash dogs. PCA law enforcement and visitor experience staff treat this as a valid concern. This is happening in all areas of the Park. The primary method to enforce this is signage on the beaches and working with Park wardens on this priority issue. The areas of concern are patrolled regularly and there is a priority for action. By creating an off-leash dog park it is hoped that will help the situation. There is great importance is timeliness of reporting issues. The best thing to do, as soon as there is an issue, is to call dispatch or report to the Visitor Centre staff to deal with the incident. You should include, if possible, the description of the dog, a photo, a licence number, any information to help the wardens.

Additional questions (taken from the floor):

Member Question: *Can we get a composting update please?*

PCA Answer: PCA is working with a contractor out of Prince Albert. The decision has been made that there will be a composting bin situated in the area near The Post Restaurant and Canada Post mailboxes. The bin has not yet been approved as it will need some alterations to it before it is.

Member Question: *At last year's AGM it was tabled that we would like to get statistics on how well Mother Earth is doing in the Park, and the wellness of the ecosystem. A report is wanted to get quantitative information on how well the Park is doing in this area.*

PCA Answer: PCA does this kind of monitoring on an annual basis and does a full report each fall. Parks will have this information provided to the public this year.

Member Question: *Recently on the road to the Narrows I experienced dogs running free. The signs restricting dogs to run free are hard to find. Could the Park install more signs? There are no signs restricting dogs to run free on or near the flower streets and no garbage bins in the area. Just recently a leaseholder was attacked. The existing signs throughout the townsite restricting dogs to run free are too small and do not stand out.*

PCA Answer: Call the Visitor Center and report all incidents. It has been noted to supply more signs and Parks Canada will consider this recommendation.

Member Question: *There is an invasion of Canada Thistle growing all the way from Armstrong Hillcrest Cabins, the Lakeview Suites area and along waterfront area and near Community Hall. Can PCA deputize citizens to snip the thistle to get rid of it?*

PCA Answer: That is an invasive species. PCA will address this problem on their priority list. Agree that snipping it might be an interesting citizen science endeavour, but will have to consider that more. PCA encourages the use of an app called iNaturalist. Reporting invasives through this application allows the park to see where the infestations are and action control appropriately.

Member Question: *Is there a practical way to expedite getting work done in the Park by using local contractors without PCA having to get approval? Referring to the hump in the road preventing a safe walking/scooter surface on the old road to Kapasiwin from the townsite.*

PCA Answer: PCA is aware of the need to have the hump/divot repaired but they must work with the previous contractor deficiencies, which sometimes takes a long time.