

Topic: Fallis Informal Boat Access

**Introduction:**

In the spring of 2015, issues arose with regards to the informal boat access point at Fallis due to significant modifications made to the road allowance that were neither carried out by nor approved by Parkland County. This report and subsequent recommendation is being presented to Council for consideration and approval.

**Background Information:**

In 2010, Administration was made aware of concerns of residents in Fallis with regards to the informal boat access along Beach Way, parking issues, as well as the maintenance of the municipal reserve historically used for parking. At that time, a public meeting was held to hear the concerns and to brainstorm potential solutions. From that meeting, Administration worked with a committee made up of residents representing those in attendance. It was determined that the informal boat access would remain unchanged, open and accessible by the public. The Province had no issues with this type of use remaining, as they were not concerned with any significant impact to the bed and shore or water due to the hard coal base on which the access point rested. Additional “No Parking” signs were also installed along Beach Way and the municipal reserve began being maintained on a more frequent basis.

Minimal concerns have been expressed, nor formal complaints received, over the past 5 years until the spring of last year. Numerous calls were received following some significant modifications that were made to the County road allowance running parallel to Beach Way. This included the addition of top soil, sod, trees and signage along a significant portion of the road allowance, including the informal access point. These modifications were not carried out by Parkland County, nor were they approved to occur. Enforcement Services investigated the complaints, however were unable to identify the person(s) responsible for the actions. The signage which indicated that the boat access point was closed due to environmental damages was removed immediately and the access continued to be allowed.

As the investigation was ongoing, and it was not formally known how the residents as a whole felt about the modifications, staff did not alter the landscaping that had been done. Instead, access continued to be permitted and Enforcement Services monitored the area to see if any additional evidence could be found to substantiate who carried out the work. Access, for the most part, was able to continue until late in the summer when the sod became worn out and the top soil eroded causing a large sink hole at the point of access. This was filled in by Public Works staff, which allowed access to continue for the remainder of the season.

Following continued calls from residents with a wide array of perspectives of what actions the County should take, along with in-person meetings, it was determined that a public meeting was likely warranted to determine if the opinions of residents had changed since 2010. The meeting was scheduled for Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and letters were mailed to every property owner in the immediate area (identified in

the attached map). The intention of the meeting was to obtain feedback from residents on a number of options related to the informal boat access. Following the mail-out, Administration became aware of a survey that had been distributed to Fallis residents by an informal committee called the “Fallis Residents Committee”. This survey addressed a wide variety of topics, one of which was the informal boat access. The summary of the report, specifically as it relates to the informal boat access, is attached as information. This information was shared at the public meeting following the input gathering session that was conducted by Parks, Recreation and Culture staff. While the data appears to be properly dissected and analyzed, we are not able to definitely substantiate the results, as staff were not involved in any part of the data collection or analysis.

The public meeting was well attended, with approximately 65 residents in attendance. A brief introduction was given by staff, including a summary of the 2010 meeting, recent concerns that had been received and a brief overview of the Wabamun Lake Boat Launch Study and the work currently being undertaken around the Wabamun Lake Sub-Watershed Land Management Plan.

Residents were then broken up into four groups to discuss possible options to address the variety of concerns, identify pros and cons to each of the options and to identify any other possible options that should be considered. The options discussed included:

1. Leave boat access as is (which then was further defined as “leave as was prior to 2015” and “leave as is with the access point cleaned up”)
2. Restrict access to local residents only
3. Close access completely
4. Other options identified by residents

A brief summary from each group was provided at the conclusion of the meeting, and residents were provided with a voter card, on which they ranked their preference of options. Voter cards were collected at the meeting, and residents were given the option to turn them in at a later date once they had a chance to give more consideration to the options. The summary of input gathered is attached as information.

Residents who were unable to attend the meeting, but identified a desire to provide input and be a part of the discussions, were provided with the same information as was provided at the meeting and were given the opportunity to submit their thoughts and voter card rankings no different than if they had been in attendance.

A total of 59 voter cards were returned, and the summary of responses are attached for information. 37 out of the 59 respondents identified that maintaining public access as their first choice, the majority of which was returning the area to the way it was prior to the modifications being made. The next most supported option was providing local access only, followed by closing the access completely. Conversely in the survey conducted by the Fallis Residents Committee shows significant support for local access only in the summer months, followed by closing the access completely.

Administration from Parks, Recreation and Culture, and Public Works proceeded to further explore the options, including cost estimations for each. Costs for each are as follows:

- I. Leave access as is \$2,500  
This would involve cleaning up the access point, adding some granular materials to firm up the access and leaving the remainder of the modifications to the road access untouched. Labour, equipment and materials provided by the County

