

-----Original Message-----

From: AJ Carson [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 10:02 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re April 28 Meeting: Support for prohibition of camping in Gabriola 707 community park

Dear Chair Ian Thorpe and all RDN representatives:

The 707 community park on Gabriola Island is a large area, with vast tracts of underbrush and many slash piles that pose a significant fire risk throughout late spring and summer. With limited cell coverage, little road access, and limited water, firefighters cannot easily get to the park to handle emergencies. Allowing camping in this park is unwise and could easily have disastrous effects on Gabriola.

I therefore write to support agenda item 13.1 at this Tuesday's Board meeting:

"That notwithstanding "Regional District of Nanaimo Park Use Regulations Bylaw No. 1801, 2019", homeless camping in the 707 Community Park in Electoral Area B be immediately temporarily prohibited until park conditions and wildfire risk due to homeless camping is assessed, and a recommendation received as to whether or not, based on park conditions and wildfire risk, homeless camping should be prohibited in all or some areas of the park either permanently or seasonally, and a mitigation plan developed and implemented if appropriate."

I urge representatives to seek other solutions to meet the housing needs of the Gabriola homeless population, perhaps, in the interim, by allowing camping in Descanso Bay Regional Park campground.

Respectfully yours,  
Arlene Carson  
Gabriola Island

Sent from my iPad

**From:** Alfred  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:06 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Camping in Gabriola's 707 Park

Mr. Thorpe:

If you had influence in the decision to allow the use of the 707 Park for camping by homeless folks please reconsider. It is simply too risky. Our fire department is extremely concerned it could result serious fire issues. I trust their judgment and so should you.

Thank you,  
Alfred Hoeflok

**From:** Carol Billings  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 25, 2020 3:35 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** 707 Community Park Homeless situation - Attention: Mr. Ian Thorpe

The Gabriola Fire Department has issued this notice to Gabriolans:

While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

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The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment. The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

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In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out **with no outside help from forestry.**

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Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

. Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. **Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.**

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**We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.**

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As a concerned Gabriolan, I can tell you that every summer our drought conditions get worse. Fire bans begin as early as the end of April and run through the end of September. We are terrified of our island going up in smoke. We have no "city" water here; everyone is on their own.

Please reconsider the decision that allows the 707 Community Park to be a camping spot for the Homeless.

Thank you.

If there is someone else to whom this should be directed, please advise.

Carol Billings



**From:** cfindlay's mail box  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 7:12 AM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** 707 Park

To Chair Ian Thorpe,

This letter is to support banning of camping at the 707 Park on Gabriola. It is dangerous in various ways to allow addicted and mentally unstable people to freely inhabit park environments. This has been proved over and over again. Gabriola island is not their mother to provide free land for them. Let them camp in your backyard.

Thanks

-----Original Message-----

From: Carol Goozh

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 8:07 AM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Camping Ban Gabriola

Dear Ian Thorpe,

I'm sending this email in support of the Gabriola Fire Department recommendation that camping in the 707 park be banned. I also believe that with the exception of parks that are set up for camping (ie Descanso Bay) that all camping in Gabriola parks be immediately and permanently banned.

This is due to the extreme fire risk that such camping presents.

Thank you for your attention to this serious issue.

Carol Goozh

  
Gabriola Island, BC

**From:** Catherine Hart

**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 11:44 AM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>; Ian Thorpe <[ian.thorpe@nanaimo.ca](mailto:ian.thorpe@nanaimo.ca)>; Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Gabriola 707 Park fire ban

Dear Chairman Thorpe and Director Craig

I am writing to lend my support to the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department's initiative to have camping banned in the 707 Park.

While I sympathize with the plight of the homeless, I have thought long and hard about this issue and I keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 emergency services often have a difficult time locating people.

Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

Islanders are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

A fire on this island would be beyond devastating, especially now!

Sincerely,  
Catherine Hart  
Gabriola, BC V0R1X4

**From:** CAL Marshall

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 9:46 PM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Please consider a Ban on camping in the 707 at Gabriola Island

Please consider a camping ban for the 707 Acre wildlife preserve in Gabriola Island. As an islander, I understand the concerns that a fire in that area would be devastating for the island. With limited cell coverage in the area, detection could be delayed. Our Fire-station needs to keep us safe.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carey -Ann Marshall and Tammy McGrath

**From:** Carol Ramsay  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 6:42 AM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Bylaw 1801 exemption on Gabriola

Attention: Claire Thorpe

When I first heard that camping would be permitted in the 707 (on Gabriola) I thought for sure that had to be incorrect. But it's not and I am astounded.

As a 20-year resident of Gabriola, I have cycled and walked those paths frequently. I once felt safe in doing so. I have picked up trash left by illegal (now legal) campers. I will no longer walk alone in that park, although I will cycle. I don't feel safe. I'm a 70-year old woman, and the potential for an encounter with a "camper" scares me. If such an encounter went bad the likelihood of being able to summon help is slim. Add to that, and more importantly, the potential for fires is huge. And that scares all of us.

It's an extremely large park with limited and difficult access, and honestly how would you get water into any of those places? Has the RDN asked themselves that question? Never mind a pumper truck. There are no real roads. It is already a fire hazard. And campers start fires, there is little else that needs to be said on that topic.

If a walker or biker came across a fire there would be the added difficulty of getting through to help, given the extremely poor cell coverage. And to expect our volunteer fire department crew to take on such the task of tackling a fire in the 707 is beyond unreasonable.

With all due respect, have the people at the RDN who passed Bylaw 1801 ever been to Gabriola, or walked through the 707? There are no facilities at all, which begs the question where are campers putting their "waste?" Where are they getting water to douse their illegal fires, as no outdoor fires are permitted at all on Gabriola?

Please do the right thing and exempt the 707 from Bylaw 1801. To do otherwise is a recipe for disaster.

Best regards,  
Carol Ramsay



*"The secret to having a great life may be how we remember it."*

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2020 2:07 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Cc: Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: 707 Park.

To Chair Ian Thorpe.

If My votes counts for anything, I do strongly object to homeless set up in our park.

We all walk the trails, keeping it clean on the way each time we go in. From what we have seen the destruction and mess the homeless leave is unbelievable and expensive to clean up. Look at what happened outside the Victoria courthouse buildings.

It's also wont be safe for us to walk alone. I for one will never go in there again once the homeless are camping in there. At present we have very little crime, but to be sure that will not be the case once you allow this to happen.

It's sad I know but it's even sadder than our government will not address the real problem by accessing those who really have mental problems and sending them to be helped in an institution. Shame on them for closing Riverside.

Thank you

Carol

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----

From: Dawn Adair

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 10:30 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Gabriola

Attention:Ian Thorpe

Hello

My family of 6 live on Gabriola very near to the 707 where camping in said park is currently allowed. We do NOT have the resources to deal with a fire if it were to break out. A lot of the 707 has pore if any cell reception and even less physical access for firefighting vehicles and equipment . A fire here could wipe out a large portion of the island, including our homes, families and animals. While I feel for people dealing with homelessness, it is currently irresponsible and dangerous to allow camping on a remote island in dense foliage away from firefighting infrastructure. The past has proven this to be a real risk. Please review the current bylaw and remove Gabriola from the park camping exception bylaws of bill 1801! This is a chance that cannot be taken. Please help before it is too late!!!

Sincerely

Dawn Adair

(& David, Mackenzie, Larrie, Cahleigh & Kaiden)

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Dax Belanger  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 6:21 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** 707 a Danger Zone

Hello Gabriola, the GVFD is asking for letters of support to ban camping in the 707 park.

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While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

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The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

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The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

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In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

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Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

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Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

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We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

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We are asking for your support by writing a letter to the Region District of Nanaimo requesting the 707 be except from their Bylaw 1801 which allows people to camp in selected parks.

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 4:54 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Homeless Camping in RDN 707 Community Park

Dear Chair Ian Thorpe,

I understand that the next RDN Board Meeting will be discussing the acceptance of homeless camping in Gabriola Island's 707 Community Park. This is a bad idea for many reasons but mostly from a health and fire hazard perspective.

We have all seen the disaster homeless camping brought to Vancouver's Oppenhiemer Park through fires and sanitation problems. This is in spite of the close proximity of portable toilets and police, medical and fire services. While the numbers expected in the 707 Park would of course be considerably less, these hazards are relevant. Some of the mental and addiction issues found in Oppenhiemer Park must be assumed in the Gabriola homeless population as well.

I have already experienced the delight of taking home a dog who has found and rolled in human excrement while walking through Gabriola's woods. Parkland in the vicinity of homeless campers will become a no-go-zone for walkers and their pets for this reason. The 700 acre park is served by a complex narrow trail system which is unsuited for motorized access. Police, medical and fire response will at best be severely restricted unless remedial road construction is done throughout effectively reducing its appeal as a nature park. The breakout of a fire in the 707 Park during the fire ban season will threaten the entire island. Policing the campers in the park will have to be an 24 hour job for a RDN park warden.

The Descanso Bay Regional Park is already equipped with pit toilets and fire sites. During fire bans, the park is easily patrolled and is completely accessible to all types of emergency vehicles. Yes there is no potable water in this Park but there is non in the 707 Park either. If the RDN assumes its mandate includes sheltering the homeless, there has to be a better solution than allowing them to camp wild in Gabriola's wilderness parks. Homeless camping in the 707 Community Park is unacceptable.

Doug Cavill

[REDACTED]  
Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X7  
[REDACTED]

**From:** donna deacon  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 10:57 AM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Bylaw 1801 - 707 park

Dear Ian Thorpe,

I am writing to ask you to make the 707 Park on Gabriola Island exempt from camping.

While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 the fire department often has an difficult time locating people in a emergency.

Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

Sincerely,  
Donna Deacon  
Gabriola Island resident

**From:** DAN ELIUK  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 7:45 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Camping on Gabriola Island

To: Claire Thorpe

I am writing this in support of removing the 707 Park on Gabriola Island from the list of approved parks that can be used for overnight camping.

This is a very large park with dense underbrush that gets extremely dry. It also has very limited access in case there was a fire.

If there was a fire in the park I am afraid of the possibility that it would spread quickly and have the potential to get out of control and spread to nearby properties. I live at [REDACTED], which is only a short distance away from the park.

Thank You.  
Dan Eliuk

Sent from my Galaxy Tab® S2

**From:** Dave Ferrero  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 7:43 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** No Camping in the Gabriola 707 park

Attn; Claire Thorpe

While I sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

I am asking the Region District of Nanaimo to make the 707 except from their Bylaw 1801 which allows people to camp in selected parks.

Thanks for your consideration in this matter  
Dave Ferrero

**From:** Doris Gallas  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 4:33 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Attn. Chair Ian Thorpe

Dear Mr. Thorpe,

It has come to my attention that the GVFD is asking for people to send in letters of support asking the RDN to prohibit camping in the Gabriola park known as the 707.

While I understand that the park is not safe for camping due to the potential for wildfire, I believe that attempting to enforce a ban here would be difficult and only force the homeless population to hide in even more inaccessible places.

A solution to the homeless problem is long overdue; now we have a crisis in the midst of a pandemic. In this extraordinary time when we are trying to discourage visitors to the island, we could encourage the local homeless to camp at the Descanso campground; perhaps adding some amenities like showers and for safe food preparation.

It makes absolute sense to have campers where our fire department/first responders can easily access them if necessary, instead of hidden and inaccessible places in the forest that may not have roadways for ambulance or cellphone service. Let's make it as easy as possible for our emergency and health workers as we can.

I hope some thought is being put into a common sense solution, especially by not creating unenforcable rullings.

Doris Gallas (Gabriola Island)

-----Original Message-----

From: Diane Green

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 12:18 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Gabriola Island

Attention: Mr. Ian Thorpe, Chairman.

I am writing in strong support of the recommendation by our Gabriola Island Volunteer Fire Department concerning a major safety issue which has arisen on our Island.

We are requesting that the Island's 707 park be exempted from Bylaw 1801 which allows camping. This particular park has poor cell coverage and emergency calls from there are next to impossible. Campfire incidents and other accidents could become extremely dangerous to deal with.

We would appreciate your discussing this with our Fire Department who could bring both local knowledge and expert opinion to assist you.

Thank you for your attention.

Diane Green

Philip Akers

(20 year Gabriola Island residents)

**From:** Dave Hendry

**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 9:45 AM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Camping in Gabriola 707 Park

Mr Thorpe

I have seen the media reports regarding homeless camping in Gabriola 707 Park.

I walk and bike that park often, and there is a tremendous amount of fuel piles, often near single track trails. There would be no access to fight a fire in much of that park and it would be a dangerous disaster.

Please reconsider the decision to allow homeless camping in the park

PLEASE

Dave Hendry



**From:** DNCNMCPH

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:12 PM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Camping in the 707 park on Gabriola Island

Hello,

I am a resident of Gabriola. With our increasingly dry climate, wildfires are a concern. Fire bans are frequent - this includes shutting down the use of power tools, as well as open fires. The posted fire hazard is 'high' for most of the summer, and usually spikes to 'extreme' at some point during the summer months. Virtually everyone who lives here has this worry in the back of their minds - what happens if we have more summers like 2017 and 2018, when the whole province was going up in flames? What if help is not available from the RDN because fire-fighting equipment is needed elsewhere? Our volunteer fire department could be quickly overwhelmed.

For this reason, I am urging that all camping in the 707 CommunityPark and the Cox Community Park be banned. These parks are large, heavily wooded, and would be hard to monitor. Allowing anyone to camp in them, let alone homeless people, would be an invitation to disaster. It is an established fact that many of the forest fires in BC are human-caused; it would be no different here. I realize that homeless people need shelter, and I empathize with them. But allowing them to camp is not a solution, and it only puts Gabriola residents at risk without really addressing the problem of homelessness. A better solution has to be found.

Duncan MacPhee



Gabriola

-----Original Message-----

From: Receveur Darryl [REDACTED]  
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 9:35 AM  
To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
Cc: [gabfire@shaw.ca](mailto:gabfire@shaw.ca)  
Subject: Camping in the 707, Gabriola

Hi, I would like to add my voice to vote against the idea of allowing camping in the 707 park on Gabriola. This would create another fire hazard. No matter how many signs and warnings are given there is always those who will start a campfire, cooking fire with the perspective that they (of course) would never let their fire get out of control, or leave embers, etc. Every year we on Gabriola hear of just one more fire created by people with that frame of mind. The other problem of course is social, and if and when people started camping there, free, the word would get out and we would end up with large numbers of campers coming to the island to avail themselves of a camping area with no fees, no rules, etc. Who would be overseeing this program and how many overseers would it take to thoroughly monitor that large an area. And then there would be the problem with parking and along with that there would be those who would bring their motorbikes, etc. I can't imagine how anyone can consider this a good idea and why the hell it needs to happen. DON'T DO IT. IT IS RIDICULOUS TO EVEN CONSIDER IT. Thank You for listening to the people who live here and use those trails on an ongoing basis. We pay property taxes on this island and they are not to support a program such as this. Darryl Receveur Deborah Blake [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Deb Scott  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 7:22 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** 707 park on gabriola /bylaw 1801

Dear Claire Thorpe

We on gabriola are very concerned about camping in parks such as the 707 park on gabriola.

the following issues are why camping shouldnt be allowed on gabriola parks such as the 707:

While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

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The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

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The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

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In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

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Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

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Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

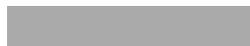
.  
We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

the above reasons were listed by Gabriola Volunteer Fire Dept, and they are wanting us gabriolans to write you to allow a ban on any camping in 707 park

thank you for considering this issue

Deb Scott

20 yr gabriola resident



**From:** Felix Amuir

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 9:35 PM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** gabriola fire department begging for camping shut down

they've started a letter writing campaign to ban homeless people from camping in parks and crown land. this is short sighted because it will force people who have nowhere else to go to actually go deeper in the woods and be a greater fire hazard. In addition to making them feel shunned and rejected.

I have been on the gabriola volunteer fire department for 6 years now and it is well equipped to deal with all emergencies because it is staffed by nearly 40 members with 13 fire trucks.

this is coming from a personal distain for homeless not an actual risk assessment or any evidence.

**From:** Lesley McMahon  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 1:23 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** re camping in the 707 park on Gabriola Island

**Attn. Chair Ian Thorpe**

**please do not consider it a good idea to allow camping in the 707 park on Gabriola Island. this is a remotely situated park with limited vehicle access and in case of a fire breaking out many homes (including mine) will be in danger of being consumed.**

**Glenn and Lesley McMahon  
Gabriola Island**

**From:** Shirley Armstrong  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 6:58 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** 707 park

To RDN,

While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

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The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

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The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

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In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

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Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

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Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

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We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

.

We are asking for your support by writing a letter to the Region District of Nanaimo requesting the 707 be except from their Bylaw 1801 which allows people to camp in selected parks.

Thank you  
Grant and Shirley Armstrong

**From:** S-G Green

**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 8:59 AM

**To:** Inquiries <[inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:**

Dear Claire Thorpe,

I am writing to you to ask that the 707 Community Park on Gabriola Island be exempted from the RDN Bylaw 1801 which would allow camping for the homeless. The 707 Community Park is a large track of land that has been identified by the Gabriola Island Volunteer Fire Department as problematic for homeless camping and a most dangerous use of that park for all of our Island community on a typically summer drought-prone Island. That is not to say that I do not sympathized with the homeless plight but may I be so bold to say that the RDN Bylaw 1801 is a pitiful stop-gap to addressing homelessness regardless of the Supreme Court Ruling. Can't you do better than allowing homeless people to tent in unserviced areas? The Supreme Court is clear on that point, it is because of the inertia of governments to respond to homelessness that the ruling came down the way it did.

Please do not endanger a whole community for your lack of understanding and vision on how to address homelessness in a human and thoughtful way,

Thanking you for your consideration,

G. Green

**From:** Heather Cameron  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 10:52 AM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Camping in the 707

Dear Chair Ian Thorpe,

I am writing in support of the Gabriola Fire Department's request for the 707 park to be exempt from Bylaw 1801. The Fire Department has clearly articulated the reasons:

While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

.  
The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

.  
The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

.  
In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

.  
Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

.  
Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

.  
We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

Thank you,

Heather Cameron  
[REDACTED],  
Gabriola Island, BC

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 7:01 AM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Cc: Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: 707 Camping on Gabriola Island

We strongly disagree with the RDN decision to allow camping in the 707 Park on Gabriola Island. We are daily walkers in the area and the amount of 'fuel' on the forest floor is huge. The park is difficult to access by vehicle and impossible in some areas. As well there is little and sometimes no cell phone coverage in the area in case of a medical emergency or fire. As well, the request that campsites be off the trails and that the campers remove their garbage assumes that there is somewhere that garbage can be taken too. These campers would most likely be on foot or bike and it is naive to assume these 'orders' will be followed. This is a dangerous choice and we would request that this decision be reconsidered.

John & Yvonne Cox



Gabriola Island

**From:** Jack Bones  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:46 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** regarding 707 Park on Gabriola Island

Hi there,

At the behest of the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department, people I know are emailing you about prohibiting camping in the 707 community park.

Gabriola does have a population of homeless people that live in the park, and while the justifications for requesting this ban have sound logic - fire risks, difficulty with rescue operations, no cell service - I fear many will be using this as an excuse to take punitive measures against those people and dispell them.

There is a vocal aspect of the community that bases their decisions on biased views against homeless people - no, houseless people. Their home is indeed the island of Gabriola, but given the discrimination here, the lack of housing, and jobs to pay for housing, they are unable to attain lodging. Here, the income discrepancy is drastic, obvious in the attitudes of high income people migrated here from cities like Vancouver, or from the United States, and it's becoming more and more apparent, and not what many of us in this community want.

It is my very strong belief that if the decision is indeed made to prohibit camping in the park, it is imperative to have a plan in place for supporting the individuals displaced, and either providing them lodging or providing them with an alternate site they can erect their tents safely.

To root people out of a public park and force them to hit the streets in Nanaimo or elsewhere while a global pandemic threatens their health and safety, a direct violation of human rights, is abhorrent and not what our community stands for.

To reiterate, I believe the health and safety of these people is important, and the fire risk is real, and I know the GFVD have had difficulties with operations in the 707, and the most likely outcome is that camping will be prohibited. That is what it is. However, if that is indeed what it is, it's equally important to the health and safety of those individuals to treat them with respect, and have somewhere for them to go. Perhaps the camp grounds (closed to tourists during this time), other parks close to the village core, or perhaps temporary housing agreements with the owners of the houses on this island that sit empty for 10 months a year.

I urge the people making this decision to weigh the human cost of displacing houseless people during this pandemic as the monetary cost.

I thank you for taking the time to read my message, and to consider what I have said. Please don't leave anybody behind during this terrifying time.

- Jack Bones,  
Gabriola Island

**From:** Julia Courtenay  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 8:48 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Gabriola Camping

To: Chair Ian Thorpe,

I'd like to express my strong support to the Gabriola Fire Department's request to prohibit camping in the 707 Park. The potential for a massive disaster is real, due to the size of the park, the poor cell coverage and the difficulty to access many of the areas.

I do support the need for provision for the homeless, and have a great empathy for their situation, but there must be a better provision for them in a more accessible area.

Kind regards,  
Julia Courtenay,  
Gabriola Island resident.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jacinthe Eastick

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 7:55 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Exemption sought

Dear Claire Thorpe,

I am writing to you to ask that the 707 Community Park on Gabriola Island be exempted from the RDN Bylaw 1801 which would allow camping for the homeless. The 707 Community Park is a large track of land that has been identified by the Gabriola Island Volunteer Fire Department as problematic for homeless camping and a most dangerous use of that park for all of our Island community on a typically summer drought-prone Island. That is not to say that I do not sympathized with the homeless plight but may I be so bold to say that the RDN Bylaw 1801 is a pitiful stop-gap to addressing homelessness regardless of the Supreme Court Ruling. Can't you do better than allowing homeless people to tent in unserviced areas? The Supreme Court is clear on that point, it is because of the inertia of governments to respond to homelessness that the ruling came down the way it did.

Please do not endanger a whole community for your lack of understanding and vision on how to address homelessness in a human and thoughtful way, Thanking you for your consideration, Jacinthe B. Eastick

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----

From: Jan Ellison

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 8:43 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: 707 Park, Gabriola Island

Chair Ian Thorpe,

I am writing to ask that you exempt the 707 park on Gabriola island from Bylaw 1801. The park is large with a complex trail system, much of it inaccessible by emergency vehicles and it is at extreme risk of fire because of all the fuel on the ground. If a fire started there it would be very hard to control. I think if a park is going to be used in this way there needs to be a way to monitor the activity. It would be impossible in the 707.

I ask that you seriously consider this exemption, help to keep campers, firefighters, first responders and residents safe. Not to mention the park itself and all the creatures in it.

Thank you.

Regards,

Jan Ellison

Sent from my iPad

**From:** Judith Anne  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 9:39 AM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** ByLaw 1801

Attention: Ian Thorpe

I am strongly against any camping in any of the parks on Gabriola Island, therefore I am asking that all parks on Gabriola be exempt from Bylaw 1801.

It should be appreciated and respected that our resources are already stretched and adding any further demands would greatly endanger this island and its residents.

Judith Anne Henderson

[REDACTED]

Gabriola

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Janice Power

Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2020 1:48 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: image3.png

Dear Ian

I am a Gabriolian and concerned about homeless camping in our forested areas and the worries about fires and the inability of our fire department to access these areas. Please allow homeless camping in our park areas where the fire dept and other services can readily access them thanks. Concerned Janice Power

**From:** Jay  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 8:32 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Ban camping in 707 Gabriola Island

Please consider banning camping in the 707 on Gabriola Island. The person who wrote the following summarizes why better than I could:

While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

.  
The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

.  
The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

.  
In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

.  
Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

.  
Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

.  
We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

.  
We are asking for your support by writing a letter to the Region District of Nanaimo requesting the 707 be except from their Bylaw 1801 which allows people to camp in selected parks.

.  
If you would like to send a letter in support of this please email Chair Ian Thorpe at [inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)

.  
Thank you

Jacob Stopa  
Gabriola resident

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 10:10 AM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Bylaw 1801 & Gabriola Island

To: Chair Ian Thorpe:

Dear Mr Thorpe, I write this letter out of fear. I have lived on Gabriola Island for 24 years and understand the terrifying reality should a wildfire happen here. I need to feel confident that our Regional District understands that we need to protect this community against the potential hazard of wildfire. Disallowing camping in any of the community and regional district parks on Gabriola Island is an absolute necessity.

In particular the parks known as The 707 and adjoining Cox Park, exceed 700 access and have difficult access for firefighting by crews, equipment and let's not forget our lack of water for this purpose. These parks form a huge portion of Gabriola's interior. It should also be noted that it would be impossible to police the activities of campers in a park this size (cooking, smoking, camp fires, etc).

I walk this park several times a week and I can attest to the lack of cell service in most of the area. Calling in a fire would be difficult.

It would seem that 90% of British Columbia's wildfires are human started, in particular by campers. PLEASE, exempt Gabriola's "707" Park from Bylaw 1801 and stop the allowance of camping.

Thank you for your immediate consideration, fire season is about to begin.

Joanne West

[REDACTED]  
Gabriola Island  
B.C. [REDACTED]

Cell [REDACTED]  
Email [REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

**From:** Kim Engelen  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:42 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Bylaw 1801

Hi

I am writing this email to kindly ask you to reconsider opening up certain parks on Gabriola island for camping. We are a small community with limited resources and the potential for something going horribly wrong is very real. The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful. In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

I am all for camping myself, we go on roadtrips every year but I feel I needs to be monitored. Is there any kind of monitoring plan in place to make sure it's actually campers spending the night and taking all their stuff as they leave? I feel people would take advantage of it and it could attract homeless people to set up camp in the parks. While I sympathize with the plight of the homeless, I don't think they should come here and be a strain on our small community. We already have people in need here without taking in more. There are barely jobs here, limited medical resources, a small police force and the majority of islanders are elderly people. Opening up the parks without any control or monitoring feels like a recipe for disasters. Locals are going to avoid those places because they don't know who's in there. I have a dog myself and I would hate to have something happen to her by ingesting some kind of narcotic.

There are already proper campsites on the island that are all set up to host tourists, why do we have to open up a park that's over a 1000 acres?

Cheers  
Kim

**From:** Kim Kasasian  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 9:57 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Gabriola and bylaw 1801

To Ian Thorpe :

As a resident of Gabriola, I am writing to ask that the 707 Community Park on Gabriola Island be exempted from the RDN Bylaw 1801 which would allow camping for the homeless.

I trust in knowledge that the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department has of the 707, and the potential for a fire that would be beyond their ability to control.

The 707 is a large tract of land, and access is poor. This makes it a particularly challenging environment for fire suppression.

I believe we should respect the GVFD's ability to make an assessment of the risks.

Kim Kasasian

**From:** Kitty Prucha

**Sent:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 1:17 PM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Bylaw 1801 and the 707 park on Gabriola

To whom it may concern,

As a Gabriola resident I am writing in support of the GVFD asking that the 707 be exempt from BYLAW 1801, which permits overnight camping in certain parks in the Nanaimo Regional District. It just is not an easily accessible park in case of emergency and or fire. This is very concerning to both my husband and myself. I do not want to see something terrible happen that could have been avoided!

Thanks Kindly,

Kathleen Prucha (and William Wolfe)



**From:** Lynda A. [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 1:04 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Carroll Hodge [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Attention: Ian Thorpe, Regarding closure of the Gabriola 707 Park

Dear Ian Thorpe: I am writing in support of our Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department, that is requesting that the 707 be closed to camping and lodging of any kind over the coming months.

Ours is a small fire department and they do not need any additional challenge that may arise out of a fire in the 707 park.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. And I hope closure may be affected very soon.

best regards, Lynda A. Archer

Lynda A. Archer, Ph.D. MFA  
Author: TEARS IN THE GRASS, Lambda Literary Award Finalist  
[www.lyndaarcher.ca](http://www.lyndaarcher.ca)  
[www.facebook.com/lyndaaarcher](https://www.facebook.com/lyndaaarcher)  
[www.dundurn.com](http://www.dundurn.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: Linda Carroll

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 8:54 AM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Attn: Chair Ian Thorpe

Please consider Gabriola's Fire Department's request in restricting camping in the 707 Park due to the extremes of this location. Who better to decide the needs of the island in this regard.

Thank you

Sent from iPad

**From:** leigh cornett  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:32 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** re: Gabriola Island's 707 bylaw

Dear Chair Ian Thorpe,

I am writing this letter to the Region District of Nanaimo requesting the 707 be except from their Bylaw 1801 which allows people to camp in selected parks.

We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

We are asking for your support in helping protect this vulnerable area.

Thank you so much,  
Leigh Cornett

**"THE DOOR TO THE SOUL SHOULD ALWAYS STAND AJAR, READY TO  
WELCOME THE ECSTATIC EXPERIENCE " - EMILY DICKINSON**

**From:** Leah Holland  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 7:36 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** GVFD letter of support: Ban of camping in 707 park

Hi,

As a homeowner on Gabriola I am concerned about how allowing camping in the 707 Park and any other park on the island. Gabriola is a remote island community with an amazing volunteer fire department.

The issue with camping in the 707 Park is that it is remote and isolated. If a fire breaks out in the forest the whole area could easily go up due to the remote and dense forest area. The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

While I sympathize with the plight of the homeless, but camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

I understand that GVFD and other interested parties are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open and working on decreasing the forest fire risk. But the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

Thank you

Leah Holland

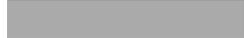
**From:** Nerissa .L  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 10:01 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Ian Thorpe

Please do not allow camping in the 707 on gabriola during pandemic.  
High risk fire hazard.

From: J P  
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 8:38 PM  
To: RecParks <[recparks@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:recparks@rdn.bc.ca)>  
Subject: 707 Park Gabriola

I feel the decision to allow camping of any sort in this park is very risky, the summer season has been extremely dry, the only access for approximately 5000 residents on this Island is the ferry. Our volunteer fire department would be hard pressed to contain a fire in the park. The RDN Would be putting all residents at risk with the decision to allow camping in this heavily Forrested park. For your Consideration , Thank you

Phyllis Proudfoot



Gabriola, B.C

Sent from my iPad

**From:** Penny Sidor

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 8:24 PM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>; Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Camping in the 707 Park on Gabriola

Dear RDN Representatives,

As a resident of Gabriola, I am writing to express my very great objection to offering the 707 Park on Gabriola Island as a camp for homeless people.

The possibility of fire, the lack of services, the difficulty of getting emergency vehicles into the park – all of these considerations make it an exceptionally poor choice for camping of any kind.

I realize people need housing – I would suggest the DesCanso Bay Campground. It has washrooms and is accessible. Better than that – place homeless people in motels and hotels, which are unused at the moment.

Best of all – how about proper, real, permanent housing for the homeless. Camps have become the norm – they are not normal, they are a disgrace. Canada can do better than that. ( I realize the RDN can't take this on by itself. )

Please do not allow camping in the 707 – it could easily be disastrous in a hot, dry summer, when our fire hazard is so extremely high.

With thanks,

Penny Sidor

[Redacted]

Gabriola Island

VOR 1X6

[Redacted]

Dear Vanessa,

I recently learned of a plan outlining the possibility of permitting homeless camping in the RDN 707 Community Park and I wanted to give you my thoughts on this issue.

I am strongly opposed to the notion of anyone camping in the park, principally because of the risk of fire. Added to that is the general degradation that comes with random camping; waste control, effluent control, unsightly structures and interference with others who enjoy the wilderness walks.

Regardless of any rules or patrolling, campfires will happen, guaranteed. A campfire out of control is such a huge risk to our island and I think the risk by far exceeds the benefit for a few, whether they are camping for recreation or they are homeless. A fire could go undetected until it is a total disaster, worsened when the fire fighting crew have such limited access to the area.

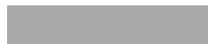
I don't believe we have an obligation to provide free housing for the homeless, but if our island majority do then let's put a plan together that will satisfy the need and provide a safe situation.

I do not want to see a tent city here; just look at the situation in the bigger cities. Let's not let it happen on Gabriola!

I feel sure that most Gabriola taxpayers would feel the same; do we need a vote?

Sincerely,

Rod and Di Maddison



Gabriola, B.C.



-----Original Message-----

From: Robin Kelley

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 9:18 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Cc: Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Att: Ian Thorpe

Dear Mr. Thorpe,

I'm writing to express my concern about camping being permitted in the 707 park on Gabriola Is., B.C.

Due to the increasing fire potential each year with dryer weather, and the difficulty of the fire department getting into that area, I firmly believe that there should be no person or persons allowed to do this.

Regardless of homeless, affluent, visitor or local....it's just too dangerous for the entire island.

I hope you will seriously consider this request.

Thank you,

Robin Kelley

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Krize

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 8:10 AM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Camping in the 707, Gabriola Island

Ian Thorpe,

I live on Gabriola Island. I have invested a great deal of money into my beautiful home. In the summer Forrest fires are a huge concern for us. We understand that the 707 has been open to camping for homeless people. I concur with the following statement by our volunteer fire department:

.  
While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

.  
The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

.  
The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

.  
In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

.  
Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

.  
Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

.  
We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

.  
We are asking for your support by writing a letter to the Region District of Nanaimo requesting the 707 be except from their Bylaw 1801 which allows people to camp in selected parks.

.  
Thank you for your attention to this matter, Sincerely,

Robert L. Krize

Sent from Gabriola Island

Bob

Sent from Gabriola Island

**From:** Randy T Milne  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 8:23 AM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** [gabfire@shaw.ca](mailto:gabfire@shaw.ca)  
**Subject:** Camping in the 707 park on Gabriola

Attention: Ian Thorpe

I would like to lend my support to the Gabriola Fire Department in banning camping in the 707 park.

When I learned of this, I was astounded by the colossal ignorance of the decision to permit camping in the park. The 707 is a large forested area and has limited accessibility by fire crews. Campers can carelessly start a fire that would be impossible to control. Inviting them to the island is irresponsible.

I can only imagine that the RDN will share some of the financial burden should properties be lost or damaged as a result of this bylaw.

Sincerely,

Randy Milne

[REDACTED]

Gabriola

[REDACTED]

**From:** Randy Phillips  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 12:33 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** 707 Park at Gabriola

Ian Thorpe,,,

I would like to support our Gabriola Fire Department in requesting the 707 Park on Gabriola be exempt from the Regional District of Nanaimo's Bylaw 1801.

This bylaw allows people to camp in selected parks.

I would be happy to discuss this matter and justify my support if required.

Yours truly,  
Randy Phillips  
Gabriola Island

-----Original Message-----

From: Ruth Wright

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 8:51 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: 707 Community Park, Gabriola

I am writing in response to Bylaw 1801 which allows homeless people to camp in the 707 Community Park, Gabriola. This is a vast area of land - now increased to 1043 acres. This is not a park that is conducive to allowing homeless people to camp over night. There is limited access for a fast response by the Gabriola fire department to access any fires in this park. We will be experiencing another dry summer. This is NOT what we need on Gabriola. Any accidental fires started by campers will not be quickly extinguished. With the size of this park, it would take hours to find any homeless people not leaving after camping overnight. Having said that, it is inconceivable that they will not be making fires to cook as well. This is just a disaster waiting to happen. Please rethink this decision. As well, the Cox Community Park is another example. It will be impossible for our fire department to put out any fires caused by campers. We are not against the homeless needing somewhere to shelter but this is not the solution. We are a small island with a volunteer fire department. Without easy access to these 2 parks, it will be impossible to put out any fires.

Ruth Wright

Gabriola Island

-----Original Message-----

From: Sue

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 9:28 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Cc: Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Banning camping in 707 Park Gabriola

Letter to Ian Thorpe, RDN Chair

Dear Mr. Thorpe, Please consider the request below of the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department to ban camping in the 707 Park on Gabriola.

Thank you. Sue Gould, [REDACTED]. Gabriola

Hello Gabriola, the GVFD is asking for letters of support to ban camping in the 707 park.

.

While we sympathize with the plight of the homeless, we have thought long and hard about this issue and we keep coming to the same conclusion, that camping in the 707 could have disastrous affects for our community.

.

The 707 is an extremely large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment.

.

The thick underbrush and slash piles alone are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

.

In the late 90's there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out with no outside help from forestry.

.

Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707 we often have a difficult time locating people in a emergency.

.

Being an island Gabriola has no mutual aid agreements so in most emergencies we are on our own. Forestry will come when they can but their resources and ability to respond is also limited.

.

We are working hard with forestry to keep access to the 707 open but at this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire.

.

We are asking for your support by writing a letter to the Region District of Nanaimo requesting the 707 be exempt from their Bylaw 1801 which allows people to camp in selected parks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Castonguay

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 9:26 AM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: Bylaw 1801

Attention: Ian Thorpe

I strongly request that Cox Park & the 707 Park on Gabriola be exempt from Bylaw 1801 which allows camping in selected parks.

Our island is too vulnerable to forest fires to allow this.

Susan Castonguay

Sent from my iPad

**From:** suzanne christopher  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 1:00 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** camping on Gabriola Island

Dear Ian Thorpe,

I completely agree with the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department in their statement asking for camping to be banned from the 707 area on Gabriola Island. At the start of many trails there are signs asking visitors not to smoke cigarettes while on the trails - imagine the risks posed by campfires in areas inaccessible to fire trucks and rescue vehicles. The same applies to the Cox Park area on Gabriola. Please ban camping in these areas.

Best regards from a Gabriola Island resident,  
Suzanne Christopher



**Scott Colbourne, Trustee, Gabriola Local Trust Area**

235 Ricardo Road / Gabriola Island / Snuneymuxw First Nation Territory  
BC / Canada / V0R 1X1

27 April 2020

**Regional District of Nanaimo Board**

6300 Hammond Bay Road, Nanaimo, BC

cc **Vanessa Craig**, Area B Director, RDN  
**Chief Will Sprogis**, Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department  
**Doug Routley**, MLA, Nanaimo-North Cowichan

**Dear Board Members,**

I am writing to you in my capacity as an individual Trustee on the Islands Trust and as a community member on the island now called Gabriola, in the territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

I am also a recruit firefighter with the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department, and would like to add my support to the motion calling for an assessment of homeless camping in the 707 Community Park.

Here's the central issue: The federal government and, for decades until very recently, the provincial government here in British Columbia, abdicated their responsibility to address core housing needs. Now local governments and communities are facing a housing crisis without the tools or resources to help the people most in need.

We could all be working together, as we have during the pandemic: Put the emphasis on health and science and provide what everyone agrees is the cornerstone of poverty action: safe and secure housing.

There are signs we are heading in that direction. This past weekend, the BC government announced it will use hotels in Vancouver and Victoria

to house homeless people, and I want to thank you and RDN staff for partnering with the Gabriola Local Trust Committee and other area municipalities on a UBCM grant application for a Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan.

But we are not there yet. Gabriola has a very high proportion of people and families living in poverty, and many of the solutions, including adequate mental-health and economic support, feel far away for people sleeping rough right now.

What to do in the interim is the challenge in front of us, and I hope kindness and care for all our neighbours can guide our actions.

In terms of the 707 park, it has many issues for first responders in an island community without the redundancies of larger, more connected centres. From access for vehicles to inconsistent cell and radio communications to the very real dangers of interface wildfires, we need to make sure we aren't making things worse for everyone involved.

I agree with Director Craig and Chief Sprogis that an assessment is required, and I look forward to working together to get support and funding from senior levels of government to implement long-term housing solutions for our neighbours and communities.

Sincerely,

*Scott Colbourne*

Trustee, Gabriola Local Trust Area

**From:** Suzanne  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 10:20 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Chair Ian Thrope / Gabriola 707 Park

Dear Mr. Thorpe,

I am writing in support of our Gabriola firefighters on their recommendation that the 707 park have a ban on camping of any kind.

The park has very limited access to firefighters and their equipment and no cell phone coverage. Our summers have been very dry the last few years and keeping the park open to camping is endangering every household on the island. I've been a resident of the island for 14 years now and the thought of a fire in a forest that is very difficult to access is terrifying.

Please ban all camping in the 707 Park. It's simple and common sense and can save lives. I empathize with the very sad situation many homeless people find themselves in but allowing camping in this forest is not a solution. It's compounding a serious problem that requires a very different approach.

All the best. Keep safe and healthy in these challenging times.

Suzanne Kimpan

[REDACTED]

Gabriola, BC

**From:** SUSAN YEEND

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 9:04 PM

**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** to Ian Thorpe

Because I trust the wisdom and knowledge Of our Fire Department, I sent this to the RDN : Dear Claire Thorpe, I am writing to you to ask that the 707 Community Park on Gabriola Island be exempted from the RDN Bylaw 1801 which would allow camping for the homeless. The 707 Community Park is a large track of land that has been identified by the Gabriola Island Volunteer Fire Department as problematic for homeless camping and a most dangerous use of that park for all of our Island community on a typically summer drought-prone Island. That is not to say that I do not sympathized with the homeless plight but may I be so bold to say that the RDN Bylaw 1801 is a pitiful stop-gap to addressing homelessness regardless of the Supreme Court Ruling. Can't you do better than allowing homeless people to tent in unserviced areas? The Supreme Court is clear on that point, it is because of the inertia of governments to respond to homelessness that the ruling came down the way it did. Please do not endanger a whole community for your lack of understanding and vision on how to address homelessness in a human and thoughtful way,  
Thanking you for your consideration,

Susan

**From:** Tom Radcliffe  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 6:53 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Camping in Gabriola's 707

Dear Claire Thorpe,

As you likely know, the Gabriola Fire Department has asked for letters of support to ban camping in the 707 park.

I am a year-round resident of Gabriola and grew up in Nanaimo. I've hiked in the 707 and know how dry it gets in the summer. It is difficult for emergency services to access, has no access to potable water, and would make a poor and dangerous campground for people living out.

Allowing camping in the 707 will endanger the lives of the campers, the lives of Gabriola's emergency service personnel who will be responsible for rescuing them and putting out any fires when things go wrong, and the natural environment itself.

Homelessness is a failure of Canadian society to take care of our most vulnerable people. It is unfortunate that we aren't taking cost-effective measures like a housing-first policy to address it, but given that we aren't, I would much rather see camping allowed in more accessible, better serviced areas under the RDN's control than in the 707.

Regards,

Tom

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[REDACTED], Ph.D., P.Eng. | [w](#) [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Wendy Geddes  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 6:54 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** claire thorpe

My name is wendy geddes and I reside on Gabriola Island. I am writing to oppose allowing people to camp in the 707 park. It is a fire hazard and there is no cell reception in the area which will be problematic if there is an emergency. The last few summers have been very dry and fire has been a major concern.

thanks, wendy geddes [REDACTED]

My name is Ted Johnson and I also oppose camping in 707 for the above reasons. There is a very real risk of fire summer season, having people in the park will increase the risk, Ted Johnson [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Arlene Yardley

Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 2:08 PM

To: Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>

Subject: To : Chair Ian Thorpe

Hi.. I am sending my support for the appeal from GVFD , to protect our forests from the very real threat of a catastrophic forest fire in 707 Park , if camping is permitted there with very little oversight . Seems a reckless endangerment of citizens on Gabriola as well as any visitors that may take advantage of open camping w/ no monitoring . No way to monitor the use of camp fires in a reasonable way over 707 acres of dense forest. Fire risk is just too great given very dry conditions.. & w/ no registration required for campers , and Covid dangers for First Responders who would have great difficulty to address any emergencies due to camping away from trails or easy & safe access within a very large Park. No cell phone viability in many area . Seems a very irresponsible concept to open up camping in this dense & wild area of 707 Park on a small island with a large population of thousands and a limited amount of water to fight fires & small volunteer fire department. Please act prudently , to protect lives. Sincerely , Arlene Yardley . Gabriola Island.

**From:** catherine p  
**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:26 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Camping in Gabriola's parks

Chair Ian Thorpe,

This email is in regards to the RDN allowing camping in Gabriola's parks. I have walked or jogged many, if not most of the trails and I concur with Fire Chief Sprogis that the park, because of its size and heavy vegetation/growth would be impossible to monitor anyone camping here.

The trails are such that a fire could be started through cooking, keeping warm or lighting cigarettes/joints and our fire department would NOT be able to get to it. Smoke coming from said fire would be hard to trace where it is coming from unless there is absolutely no wind and then to try to find the fire would be very difficult. Just how are the fire fighters suppose to run into site accessed by narrow deer trails with all their equipment on and drag equipment behind them? The RDN is putting our lives and property at risk with this decision. Or what about first responders carrying all the equipment they would have to anticipate they might need? Someone will die.

Gabriola been described as a Mediterrean climate so we get less rain than Nanaimo. With less rain, it gets tinder dry here quicker and for longer time periods. As well, our water supply is limited even at the best of times.

Anyone using this property to camp and using drugs and happened to OD would likely die as they could be too hard to find. Most camping drug users would position themselves where they would not be seen and they would not be found in time to prevent an over dose.

We have limited fire fighting and first responders services and having them combing through the bush in search of campers is not properly using their abilities. Sending people over from Nanaimo to track the campers and TRY to get them to pack up at 9 a.m. isn't the answer either, as these people would likely get lost and would require Island people to look for them. Truly now...how realistic is it that the campers would pack up all their gear & be out by mid morning? Sure...and pigs fly.

During this time of Covid-19, small communities want non residents to stay away because of limited resources. It is the same with homeless campers in our forests...we have limited resources to track their movements and try to keep us and them safe.

As I said above...having the homeless camp on Gabriola is putting our lives and property at risk and their lives at risk. It is not even a good temporary solution. Be realistic....the homeless need permanent homes...not always temporary solutions governments come up with.

Sincerely, Catherine Phillips

**From:** neil shilladay [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:25 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>; Craig, Vanessa <[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Attn Chair Thorpe - Gabriola - camping in the 707

Dear Chair and Councillors.

I wish to register my support for the Motion to temporarily give exemption from the current bylaw 1801 to the 707 park on Gabriola Island, disallowing camping for reasons of public safety.

I believe this is the correct decision, bearing in mind the Gabriola Fire Department's recommendations.

The 707 park

- is very large, and has many areas with difficult access to both evacuate and to fight wildfires
- Has thick underbrush and slash piles make the spread of a wildfire very quick and difficult to contain
- Has no cellphone coverage, increasing the delay in reporting a fire and presenting a risk to anyone camping there in the event of a wildfire.

The Gabriola Fire Department

- is small.
- has no reciprocal arrangements with other fire services because of our island nature. There would be no support from surrounding areas

Recent years have seen unprecedented wildfires in BC

Campers have no cooking methods or sources of warmth, other than fire.

Should Gabriola need evacuating, it would be extremely difficult to evacuate residents and visitors

It is the expert opinion of our Fire Chief and his staff that allowing camping in the 707 at the moment, and going forward, presents a serious and unacceptable risk to the island and its population, as well as to the campers themselves.

I quote from the GVFD Facebook statement:

"At this time the park is still not safe for any type of camping due to the potential of wildfire."

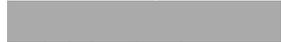
I strongly urge you to heed the considered, expert advice of our experienced GVFD team and suspend the freedom to camp in the 707 effective \*immediately\*.

I further urge you to agree to lift that suspension only when the Gabriola Fire Chief and his team judge it safe to do so.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Regards,

Neil Shilladay



Gabriola Island

**From:** Richard de Lissa [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:39 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Gabriola 707 acre park

Re Proposed amendments to Byelaw 1801 to allow overnight camping in some RDN parks for homeless persons.

This is to advise you that we are opposed to allowing **anyone** to camp overnight in 707 acres park on Gabriola for reasons of fire hazard concerns relative to the size of the park, its myriad trails through heavy brush, and poor accessibility and response time for fire-fighting and medical staff.

Richard de Lissa, Anniken de Lissa  
[REDACTED]  
Gabriola B.C.

**From:** Maria [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:51 PM  
**To:** Inquiries <[Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:Inquiries@rdn.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** [gabfire@shaw.ca](mailto:gabfire@shaw.ca)  
**Subject:** no camping in Gabriola's 707

Dear Mr. Thorpe,

Re: 707 park exception from Bylaw 1801

We're writing to you today to ask the RDN to put a moratorium on camping in Gabriola's 707 parklands.

The 707 is a large park with already limited and difficult access for our firefighting crews and equipment. During the summer drought, when the fire threat is especially high, a lack of water only compounds this risk.

The thick underbrush and slash piles are an extreme fire hazard in normal circumstances, let alone with the added risk of campers being neglectful.

In the late 90s there was a fire in the 707 that engulfed five acres of land. It took the fire department over 18 hours to put it out.

Due to the extremely poor cell coverage in the 707, our firefighting crews often have a difficult time locating people in an emergency. So if there was to be a fire in the park, you'd be looking at severe environmental damage **and** loss of human lives.

Thank you for considering our request.

Maria Lironi & Clint Montgomery  
[REDACTED], Gabriola Island