

**From:** Helen Shilladay  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 2:27 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 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.

The Gabriola Fire Department has today publicly announced its expert opinion that the 707 should be exempt from allowing camping because of the uniquely dangerous circumstances on this island.

The 707 park is very large, and has many areas where access is extremely difficult, making it very challenging to evacuate medical emergencies, and access and fight fires.

Thick underbrush and slash piles make the spread of a fire very likely.

Much of the 707 area 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.

Our Fire Department is small.

It has no reciprocal arrangements with other fire services because of our island nature.

In an emergency through the upcoming summer months, our volunteers would be on their own. Any support from forestry, even if available, would be severely delayed in arriving by our ferry.

Gabriola residents are *\*extremely\** aware of fire risk, respecting and supporting strict fire bans and controls on garden tool use to mitigate risk of sparks.

Unfortunately, as last year's fires in BC proved, visiting campers in wild areas are far less careful and informed.

Longer term campers have no cooking methods or sources of warmth, other than fire.

The temptation will be to take the risk.

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,

Helen Shilladay

  
Gabriola Island