

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

From: J C Eckstein
Sent: April 29, 2018 8:49 PM
To: Phil Germuth; Edwin Empinado; Mario Feldhoff; Rob Goffinet; Mary Murphy; Claire Rattée; Larry Walker
Subject: Camping Ban

Hello Mayor Germuth and Councillors:

I am writing this email in response to the possibility of a camping ban on the Kitimat river this summer.

Many of these campers have been coming to this area for many years and from some very distant places. Kitimat has always been a welcoming place and a very good place to fish. Our unique river and town are like no other on the West Coast.

I have been in the fortunate position to meet a few of these anglers and have sometimes had my boat chartered by some of them. They all love to fish and look forward to their annual vacation on the Kitimat River.

I would respectfully request that instead of a sudden and outright ban on river camping this summer, some modifications could be put in place to mitigate the effects camping has on this area. Such things as garbage containers, portable toilets, and free fishing/no camping zones could be put in place and implemented. Kitimat could then move forward with plans to build more permanent facilities for the years ahead. We could expand our current camping area to accommodate this influx of visitors who have come to rely on this area during the fishing season.

Regards,

John Eckstein
Blue Heron Charters

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

From: helga knechtel [mailto:helga.knechtel1@hotmail.com]
Sent: April 29, 2018 9:00 PM
To: Edwin Empinado
Cc: Phil Germuth; Rob Goffinet; Claire Rattée; Larry Walker; Mario Feldhoff; Mary Murphy
Subject: Fw: Kitimat River
Importance: High

Attention Mayor and Council Members of Kitimat BC:

We are emailing you in regards to your agenda to **close camping on the Big Spruce Dyke**. Our families have not only camped on the dyke but have used several motels.

We have brought several groups of people from other provinces to enjoy the experiences of fishing and touring your area.

Using restaurants, motels, grocery stores and tackle shops. Guiding on the salt water as well as fresh water, is only a plus for your community.

Restricting such opportunities of camping on the dyke will only force us to go elsewhere.

Regards from our family,

Robert Knechtel and Helga Knechtel 250-964-2462

Brandee Valcourt and Jamie Valcourt 250 964-1975

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

From: noreply@kitimat.ca [mailto:noreply@kitimat.ca] On Behalf of Mat Mc Greish

Sent: April-30-18 11:17 AM

To: districtofkitimat

Subject: Camping Kitimat

I would like this e-mail read out at tonight's Council meeting please. To Council I would suggest that you not close the Kitimat River to camping and travel trailers. I have spent time visiting friends while they were staying on the river. My friends would stay on the river for months on end. Their camping area was always well looked after and clean. Mark and his wife are types that would clean up and pick up if anything was lying around. I was in Kitimat last week and went down to the River with Al Smith and there was a empty Monster energy drink can left by the river. Someone had a fire and left some fire wood. As there is no one camping on the river I suggest that locals are making fires and leaving the mess, not responsible adult campers. I also know these campers spend lots of money around town buying groceries, fishing tackle, gas, going to the pool, going out for dinners and the list goes on. This helps the community businesses, helps the local tax base as well. I believe that there should be a warning system in place to prevent what happened last fall. With modern technology a monitor could warn when the river is going to flood. So the campers could escape the rising water and return when safe to do so. I think Kitimat would do harm to the local economy and its reputation as a fishing destination if you close the river. I presently live in Victoria and still have property in Kitimat.

Thank you

Mat McGreish

778-584-6649

Origin: <https://www.kitimat.ca/en/municipal-hall/municipal-hall.aspx>

This email was sent to you by > through <https://www.kitimat.ca>.

From: Ron Wakita

Date: April 30, 2018 at 2:18:05 PM PDT

Subject: Angler/Campers on the Kitimat River email to Mayor and Council

Please accept this email as my submission to you regarding the Camping Bylaw.

The first part of my email highlights the Angler/Camping Issue. More in depth details [regarding] history of the camping issue and an Alternate Solution is directly below.

I believe many Kitimat businesses do not know about the Bylaw to ban Camping. I have personally spoke to Kyle, owner of No Frills, Yoojin owner of Esso, Terry Smeader owner of Sujitra's Suds and Seams (laundry mat) , Christian Drabik owner of Rosarios, Mercy, owner of Mercy Food Truck and Tony Deni, owner of Tony's Corner Store. They all did not know of the No Camping on the Kitimat River Bylaw. Many of these businesses will be affected including mine and I didn't find out this Bylaw had reached third reading until 2 days before [the] last Council meeting. I believe many other businesses are also unaware.

I believe this Bylaw will have a dramatic negative affect on the Community of Kitimat. Everyone will be affected in one way or another starting with the Kitimat businesses. I fear many part or full time jobs may be lost.

Economic models demonstrate the multiplier effect of every dollar generated by the influx of tourist dollars into a community.

Many anglers have enjoyed the fishing/camping experience of the Kitimat River for years, decades and in some cases, generations. Many return every year and are customers who have frequented many Kitimat businesses.

I received many phone calls and emails from anglers from all over BC, Alberta and from other countries. Many Angler /Campers were offended that they were accused of dumping their sewer and leaving piles of garbage.

Most Angler/Campers have expressed that they will NOT be back if this Bylaw is passed. The campers that do come back will discover that there is not enough adequate camping facilities available.

This means lost revenue and a tainted image in the eyes of hundreds, perhaps thousands of anglers.

Mayor and Council are considering adopting this Bylaw in response to the 9/11 Flood we experienced last year. This flood was an anomaly. The Kitimat River has not caused this amount of damage to property since 1975 when the Dykes were built. It may never happen again. For Mayor and Council to adopt such a drastic Bylaw to address an event that may

never happen again, I believe is short-sighted especially considering the affect this will have on our businesses.

Previous Mayor and Councils have recognized the Economic and Social benefits to the Kitimat in the past, current Mayor and Council I believe should do the same.

I believe Mayor and Council should postpone the passage of this Bylaw until an adequate Camping solution can be developed. In the meantime current Mayor and Council should provide the same solutions to the camping issues as previous Mayor and Councils has done in the past by installing Port-a-potties and Dumpsters on higher ground. Re-erect the Big Green Signs displaying the "No Camping boundary". These signs have created a "Free Zone" along the shoreline which will satisfy the majority of Kitimat Anglers and residents as it has in the past. Council should also consider developing a Flood Warning System in conjunction with the current Water Consumption Warning System already in place.

I believe a "User Pay Program" to fund these services will satisfy many Kitimat Residents. Many visitors have endorsed this.

Mayor and Council would then have time develop a long term strategy to provide adequate Campsites in Kitimat to accommodate the existing demand. The Haisla Nation has expressed "a willingness to form a task force for the purpose of working together with the District of Kitimat to fully understand and resolve any potential conflicts relating to Haisla traditional use." I believe this Joint Task Force may also be able to develop a Camping solution for all people.

Mayor and Councils have appropriated thousands of Kitimat tax payer dollars to the Kitimat Chamber of Commerce over the past 30 years to attract destination anglers. Starting in 1987 when Kitimat was the "Shining Star" in the fishing world due to the first Chinook return of Kitimat Hatchery enhanced Chinook. This Bylaw will negate all the Marketing dollars and promotion efforts invested by the many business owners and staff who have provided visitors with a welcome atmosphere to encourage them to return.

These are the highlights of the Angler/Camper Issue.

More detailed information and an alternate solution contained below:

Previous Mayor and Councils acknowledged the Economic and Social benefits of the influx the dollars in the Kitimat community.

Many economic models illustrate the multiplier effect of the influx of tourist dollars into a community. I will give examples of our business. The same would apply to other businesses.

Our family's Hardware/Tackle Store has hired hundreds of summer staff over the 61 years we were in business. These jobs were created to accommodate the increased traffic the Angler/Campers created. For example, with their paychecks some staff were able to buy a new bike, new jeans, or in one case, flowers on Mother's Day. These are only a few examples.

Because of the dollars spent by Anglers/Campers in our store, the Bike store, the Jean store, and the Flower shop enjoyed additional sales even though these businesses were totally unrelated to fishing tackle sales. Many businesses have experienced similar outcomes.

Social Benefits: For many of our summer staff, this was their first job. They were able to learn some important life skills: to be on time for work; call if late; how to offer polite, courteous service to customers; and a work ethic. My Mom taught a work ethic by example. I believe many other businesses should also be credited for providing similar development to the youth of Kitimat. Many of our staff are now contributing residents of Kitimat and now own homes and have young families.

There are also many examples of special friendships that have developed between Local residents and visiting angler/campers. Many visiting Angler/Campers have been extended Kitimat hospitality while visiting the Kitimat River.

Visitors have reciprocated with their hospitality in their respective home towns.

History of the Angler/Camping Issue

The camping on the Kitimat River issue has been brought to the attention of Mayor and Council 3 times in the past where it reached a motion and discussion.

There were 4 issues identified.

1. Sewer Dumping

In the past three times this issue was brought to Mayor and Council. Myself or District Administration contacted Minister of Environment, Department of Fisheries, and the R.C.M.P. There was not one verified report of sewer dumping on the Kitimat River.

Our family Tackle business has operated a Mobile Tackle Van for thirty-one years. Our Mobile Van has visited the Kitimat River twice a day, everyday of the fishing season for thirty one years. Myself nor our Mobile Van staff have ever witnessed nor have heard of any sewer dumping in all these years. Sewer dumping, if at all, is definitely not as rampant as alleged.

2. Garbage

There is some garbage, but it is not fair to blame the angler/campers, both local or out of town visitors, as the cause.

The most common camping practice is to hang two garbage bags in camp: one for cans and the other for garbage. Anything that burns is put in the camp fire. Angling Campers, local or visitors, are not the offenders responsible for the garbage. There are always a few bad eggs. Any place where there is high traffic and a large number of people there is bound to be some garbage.

3. Human waste. It was toilet paper land in the bushes close to every popular fishing spots. The reality is that anywhere there are a large number of people in remote places, this is bound to happen.

4. Territorialism

Campers, trailers, or Motor homes would back to water's edge and bang in rod holders staking claim to that portion of river directly behind their vehicles for the duration of their stay. Albeit a night, a week, a month or more. Other anglers who want fish in that spot were reluctant to fish there. If they did, sometimes there were altercations between the angler and campers. Both local and visitor.

Previous Councils have recognized the importance of the Economic and Social benefits to the community of Kitimat. They endorsed camping on the Kitimat River and addressed all the issues by providing Portapotties, Dumpsters and created Big Green signs embedded in concrete blocks. These signs were strategically placed at the Big Spruce and Lower Dike indicating a "No camping boundary" which created a "Free Zone" along the shoreline. These signs addressed the Territorial issue which is the most volatile issue for Local Anglers and residents. These signs have not been in place for the past 3 years and tensions has increased.

Flooding.

Flooding is the new issue related to camping because of last year's 9/11 flood. It is also the issue that has re-ignited the camping/fishing controversy. The Big Green Signs were gone. Campers slowly moved closer to the shoreline and tension grew.

The Kitimat River has significant floods two or three times a year. There are four reasons why campers were caught by surprise and their vehicles were stranded, damaged, flooded, or destroyed.

1. Time of year: Because the flood occurred in early September, there were a larger number of campers exposed and in turn more were trapped. Normally the river floods in October when all campers are gone and nobody really cares.

2. Time of day: The river rose and crested at between 3 and 5 AM. Because it peaked at night when most campers were sleeping, some were caught off guard. When the river rises in June/July caused by snow melt or by rain it is during day light hours because it is light until midnight and day break at 4:00 AM. Campers can simply watch the river level rise and move if they need to.

3. The extreme rise in river height in such a short period of time was the most significant factor. The river rose eleven feet in eight hours according to the Kitimat River Height website. Six feet in the last three hours.

Not since 1975 when the Dykes were built has the Kitimat River caused this amount of destruction of property (forty-three years). It may never happen again. A Flood Warning System is reasonable response to address the Flooding issue.

4. The entrances to the Lower Dike and the Big Spruce have a dip in the road at the entrance to both locations. This dip filled and prevented Angler/Campers from escaping. Many tried to escape but could not. The only reason all the Campers in Radley Park were able to escape is because the entrance road to Radley rises to higher ground because the entrance rises to cross the dike.

Alternate Solution

Mayor and Council should postpone the passage of this Bylaw and first develop adequate campsites to accommodate the returning angler/campers.

There are simply not enough Campsites to accommodate the returning Kitimat River Angler/Campers. Many have already booked their holidays for this year to enjoy their annual Kitimat River Fishing/camping experience. There are many Angler/Campers who don't know about the Camping ban. I didn't know about the issue had reached third reading until 2 days before last meeting and I am in the Fishing Tackle business and live in Kitimat. I was not out of town this past winter as many people had assumed.

If the same 130 Kitimat River Angler/Campers return this year who came last year, there will be nowhere near enough campsites available.

Note: I counted 130 anglers/campers on the river banks below Haisla Bridge on July 4th 2017 (peak of Chinook season). Our Mobile Tackle Van has logged total numbers of campers in each location for 31 years at the peak of each species (Chinook, Chum, Pink and Coho). This was for ordering stock purposes and a customer analysis of the locations our Mobile Van should focus time and efforts.

I also estimated the camper rotation of 500 to 600 campers rotating through the 4 Salmon species, There are potentially 600 Angler/Campers who will be disappointed by this No Camping Bylaw and even more frustrated when they cannot find any camp sites.

If the Skeena Angler/Campers come to Kitimat because the Skeena is closed this will add to the over load. If the F.I D is announced, construction workers will bring their Campers and Motor homes as they did during the last boom. This will add to the chaos in Radley Park and all the other camping facilities.

Jed Stump has 15 campsites (according to Terry Smeader who is previous owner of Jed Stumps), Radley has 38, Hirsch Creek has 8, Mr. Hittel has I believe has 12, MK has ?. Just not enough.

Most importantly there will no campsites available for the local Kitimat Residents campers

I believe Mayor and Council should postpone implementing this Bylaw for this year and consider:

1. Re-installing more Port-a-potties and Dumpsters on higher ground.

2. Re-Erect the signs indicating a “No camping boundary” that creates a “Free Zone” for everyone to have access to the water's edge. This has worked in the past. This addresses the Territorialism issue which is the most valid and contentious issue amongst anglers especially the Local anglers. There has been growing tension because the Green “No Camping” boundary signs have not been placed for the past at least 3 years.

These signs once re-erected could also display a Flood Warning Alert and details how to subscribe. It could also display Camping Rules and the notice a Kitimat River Camping Fee.

3. Develop a Flood warning system. There is a water consumption advisory that is received via text and email that warns of tainted water. The same river height that causes tainted water can also potentially cause floods on the Kitimat River. A Flood Warning system could easily be integrated with the existing Water Consumption Advisory. Angler/campers could be informed by a Kitimat River monitor or Park attendant to subscribe to the flood warning alert.

4. Institute a “User Pay system” to avoid any cost to Kitimat Taxpayers.

A Kitimat River monitor or Park attendant could be hired to collect fees and address any issues. A courteous visit from a Park Attendant collecting fees for services provided is a lot more favorable than a Municipal enforcement officer writing tickets with \$100.00 fine as proposed in this new bylaw.

Mayor and Council could address all the issues related to camping with the Dumpsters, Port-a-Potties, “Big Green signs and the Flood Warning System as outlined in this email just as previous Mayor and Councils have in the past.

Mayor and Council could then explore options with the Haisla Nation as the Haisla Nation Council have expressed “a willingness to work together with the District of Kitimat to fully understand and resolve any potential conflicts relating to Haisla traditional use”. Perhaps a solution could be reached by this Task Force to provide a Camping solution for all people. The Haisla Nation owns a parcel of land downstream of the Lower Dike Road which parallels Jack Oviatt's property. This land is above the flood plain, flat and all gravel. Perhaps the joint Task force could explore this land as a possible camping solution.

Mayor and Council should wait and develop camping facilities to accommodate the 130 Angler/Campers who will be returning this year. There are NOT enough camping facilities in Kitimat. A proper Camping solution should be developed before the drastic measure of Banning camping on the Kitimat River is implemented.

Summary

Many businesses who will be affected are not aware of this No Camping Bylaw yet their businesses will be experience lost revenues.

Does the District of Kitimat intend to advertise the No camping ban. Chinook season is a month away and all returning Angler/Campers have booked their holidays for their annual fishing trip to

Kitimat. All these Anglers/Campers will show up and Kitimat will disappoint them with the news of the Camping ban and lack of campsites.

I was born and raised in Kitimat. I am 2nd generation of a family-owned Hardware/Tackle business that operated for 61 years and now I am the owner of a Fishing Tackle Store and a Guide/Charter business. I am extreme proud of the Community of Kitimat. I love my home town of Kitimat.

I fear for the loss of revenue to many Kitimat businesses. I fear that the Community of Kitimat's reputation will be tainted in the eyes of the many angler/campers.

I respectfully request Mayor and Council to postpone passage of the Bylaw.

Sincerely

Ron Wakita

Ron's Mobile Fishing Tackle Van, Bait Shop and Shuttle Service
380 City Centre
Kitimat B.C
V8C 1T6

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