

Cama Beach Planning Project

July 9 – July 14, 2024

Hello,

I reviewed the slide deck for the presentation. A couple of questions that come to mind after reviewing it-

1. If the site is 486 acres big, and the archaeological area that may contain further human remains reflects 13 acres, can the cabins not be relocated away from the culturally significant area as well as the seawall? Behind the Cama Center or near the park entrance near the parking lot? 486 acres seems like an awfully significant area, even excluding the 13 acres, that may offer alternative site options for a relocation?

2. Assuming the above, why can't the cabins be available as rustic style cabins/yurts with no water/no plumbing facilities, but instead with portable restrooms within a walkable distance? This would likely also save on the expenses associated with a relocation.

Thank you, ¹

Hello! I just wanted to put in a personal comment about how much Cama Beach has meant to my family over the last number of years. We go annually with a large group of friends and it is the highlight of our summer. My family is so sad that our trip was canceled this year and that future trips are potentially gone. Please consider all options to keep the cabins open and available for rental. It will be a sad day if Cama Beach closes forever.²

I sincerely hope that the cabins at Cama Beach will be able to remain open. This is an incredibly special place for our family and one of the few camping opportunities that is cost-reasonable for a large family to be able to spend time seaside in a cabin within a state park. There are so few public waterfront spaces that are accessible to those who are not wealthy. The Cama Beach cabins are such an incredible gift to the larger community because of this. Please try to make every effort to repair the seawall and the septic system so that individuals and families can experience the joy of staying so close to the Salish Sea.³

Would love to see some EV chargers added so more people can visit! We love the cama cabins and their location by the water - but also would be ok walking down to the water if the cabins location needs to move. Also- the reservation process is awful- can you switch it to a reasonable hour or online system if you reopen? ⁴

If soil conditions permit, consider raising the elevation of the cabins with pin pile supports and constructing a lift station to pump sewage to an upland septic system drain field.⁵

Our family has been camping in the cabins at Cama Beach State Park nearly since it first opened under the operation of the Washington State Park system in 2008. When our children were very young, the cabins and their conveniences made camping more accessible and manageable with small children. As a busy family with two working parents, it was a nearby oasis, a chance to get away, unwind, and enjoy nature and being together. We have continued to be frequent visitors for at least 15 years, our children now grown and off to college but still asking to return to this special place. We have brought our out-of-state visiting family as well, building memories to last a lifetime - my dad building toy boats with my kids at The Center for Wooden Boats, playing board and card games in the toasty cabin on a windy rainy weekend in October, catching the first rays of April warmth on the beach with my mom as the kids searched for tiny crabs and other natural wonders, playing frisbee with my in-laws on the grassy patch near the bathrooms, renting a kayak, hikes to Cranberry Lake, poking around in the camp store, admiring the beautiful quilts on

the beds, and so much more! When the Cama Cafe opened in 2011, our enjoyment of the park more than doubled and the ease of staying there grew as well. It was such a delight to have unsurpassed meals, pastries, and ohhhh the scones right there, just a short hike up from the cabins. There really is no other comparable experience on or off Camano Island.

Today I came across Jack Penland’s commentary “How Cama Beach State Park Was Saved,” and these quotes spoke to me:

“Cama Beach is a throwback to when recreation involved doing things, not just watching things. [It] gives families the chance to spend a few days together on the waters of Puget Sound enjoying simple pleasures similar to what their parents or grandparents might have enjoyed years ago. The feel inside these cabins is rustic and comfortable, and they’re affordable, especially for families who need to get away but not spend a fortune.”

This certainly summarizes our family’s experiences at the park. We have been saddened at its closure and keenly felt the loss of this place and those experiences. While I understand there are significant cultural, infrastructure, and environmental considerations, the closure of the cabins would be a loss to our State Parks system and our wider community. Since they were so often filled to capacity, I expect there has been a loss of revenue during the cabin closure as well, not just for the Washington State Parks, but likely for the Cama Cafe too. Please reopen the cabins at Cama Beach State Park. They are an unparalleled gem. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Bothell, WA

Penland, Jack, “How Cama Beach State Park Was Saved,”
<https://whidbeycamanoislands.com/how-cama-beach-state-park-was-saved/> accessed 07/09/24 ⁶

We moved to Camano Island in 2020. We have grown to love Cama Beach State Park and would like for the State to find a path forward to keep the cabins where they are and replace the septic system that resulted in their closure. This is an important piece of island history that should be retained for current and future citizens and visitors to Camano Island. Thank you.⁷

The cottages at Cama Beach need to stay. They are a part of what makes Camano Island unique.⁸

The Camas Beach State Park is an excellent asset on our Island. We have used the cabins for ourselves and for family members. We are very sorry the cabins are not now available and trust they will be restored soon. In the interim, we trust the beach area, the rental boats, the educational programs and the store will continue to be available on a daily basis.

Moreover, we expect regular public briefings on the status of restoration of CBSP. And, we trust the restoration will not be a long term project because the State does not have funds to properly and timely restore the Park.⁹

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the conversation. Outdoor recreation opportunities are a critical component of my identity and one that I had hoped to provide my own children. Growing up in the northwest, my family started camping in May and didn't stop until the end of September. However, I quickly realized camping was wildly outside of my financial capacity. In addition to the steep costs, there is such a massive demand that's it's often impossible to find a location that fits our schedule and process range that is also within a reasonable distance to our home.

About 10 years ago we found Washington Park in Anacortes. At the time (unsure of current practice), they had a system which did an excellent job of serving and supporting the local community, while also allowing visitors from many different places to stay. Working from memory, it was something of a "tiered" type experience. For example:

Residents of the community could make reservations two (2) weeks in advance and paid a community rate

Non-residents could make reservations one (1) week in advance and paid a non-resident rate

There was a set percentage that was set aside and "reservable" I believe 70% and after that was filled, it was first come, first served.

I wonder if this is a model Cama Beach might investigate. It is an awful feeling to live in a community and not be able to access the amenities offered in your own back yard.¹⁰

Hello,

Please consider a plan to save the cabins and make them rentable again. The history of this site is unparalleled and a treasure for all Washingtonians. Further, the economic impact is good for the park, the cafe and the local community. Please do not abandon this wonderful location that creates great Salish Sea experiences for so many. Thank you. ¹¹

When this park first opened it was affordable for young families. Our understanding is that was one of the requirements set forth by the family when handing over the property on which the park sits. Cost has consistently gone up year over year, leaving our family behind years ago, however the money doesn't appear to be invested back into the park. It appears the state has instead used it as an ATM to collect money and put in other places. We were told by volunteers years ago that the state had even said that the intent was to raise prices to the point that reservations didn't immediately fill up and that would be their stopping point.

Only a state agency could take a beautiful water front park with a plethora of volunteer labor and run it into the ground to the point it is threatening being closed. I personally think there is more to this and an end goal that the public isn't being made aware of, I hope I am wrong. Given the amount of back room deals that comes out of this current administration I am very concerned that the end goal is for this property is to change hands out of state control. The pushback and litigation that took place during the remodel of the original resort and construction of the park makes me concerned ownership of this park will be handed over to local tribes. Admittedly, I don't have any data or information to back this up, it's just the main concern that comes into my mind when hearing what's taking place and knowing some of the history revolving around the resort.

The state needs to retain ownership of this park and make the necessary repairs to allow for the cabins to be utilized and the original focus of affordability brought back into the forefront. ¹²

I'M STANDING UP FOR SCIENCE! As a retired climate scientist actively educating the public about man-made climate change since 2007 I find it extremely frustrating that many of these comments ignore what we climate scientists have been trying to educate you about. Climate change is NOT an excuse for the reason not to continue restore and rebuild the Cama Beach boat house, store and cabins. At the preliminary meeting one quilter asked "would you build there?". Yes, it's a cherished history and park – but it's not the end: it's time to move forward and do what's next. Extreme weather events ARE increasing in frequency. Are we to continue to ask the park to continue pouring money after bad and wait until one of these storms completely demolishes the complex? And then complain about our taxes or park fees that will go up to pay for such restoration? Oh, and let's ignore the permitting process that will take 2 years; let's ignore our tribal partners in this venture as we've done historically.

Let's face it, this, like other shore zones, private or public are flood prone areas whose frequency of flooding is increasing. I support Parks taking the long-term, sustainable view of managed retreat. Island County's Marine Resource Committee has published a white paper addressing these issues; how many of you have read it? It provides an overview of existing and emerging conditions, the issues of importance to health, safety and resilience, and response opportunities. <https://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/21254/20231106-mrc-climate-change-white-paper.pdf>. It's time to stop ignoring the facts. It's time to move forward and plan the next phase going forward with this state park for public enjoyment. ¹³

Creating the park in the form of the original fishing resort was the dream of the properoorevious owners. Continuing that commitment is essential. Cama Beach SP is unique and a crown jewel of Washington State. Many memories have been made there enhancing individuals well being and their connection to the great outdoors. ¹⁴

Hi-

As a fairly new resident of Camano Island (6 months with my Dad being a resident for the last 20 years) I feel very strongly that we fix and update the cabins as their are no other amazing cabins that exist on our island like these do. These bring in quite a bit of people, sales to non existing island members and as an island member my family would love to stay in these cabins.

Looking forward to hearing more on how we can keep them and getting them back into use in our community!

Thanks, ¹⁵

Without knowing the full picture, I would think ayou will not be able to re-open the cabins but will still want a source of income to sustain the trails, the cafe and visitor center.

Some thoughts and suggestions I have.

1. Continue to use the boat house for classes and events and look at charging. Use temporary sanicans to support it.
2. Offer more events and classes at the cafe.
3. Consider creating 10 to 20 flat semi-private camping sites for smaller RVs that have their own bathrooms only. Do not offer any hookups. Spread them out so they are not disruptive to cafe traffic flow or hikers. I wouldn't even offer fire pits to keep fire danger down and impact on others

less.

4. Maybe the building up above can sell small basic sundry items for campers ¹⁶

Cama beach cabins are a special and magical place for us and we would love to be involved in whatever it takes to have them open again. ¹⁷

As a resident and small business owner on Camano, I fully see and understand the impact shutting down the cabin rentals at our beloved Cama Beach. I am ashamed that our Parks and Recreation hasn't attempted to repair this site. For many years I have paid for a Washington State Parks pass and a State Parks license plate, I know I'm not the only one, and I see our Parks has great and expensive equipment (John deer) so I do not understand how the state has no money to repair and fix the septic system at our park. With the amount of money the state receives for our Parks and Recreation, i'm sure this can be repaired. Or replaced or a better idea could even come up so we can have more RVs or campers instead it seems that the state just wants to shut it down and if that's the case, maybe they should give the park back to our island and community to do as we wish. As a previous government employee, I also understand the headache and paperwork that goes through anything that needs to move forward, however, I feel our state has pushed us aside and as a tax paying citizen, who also pays a lot of money to our parks every year I find this very sad. It also makes me wonder if our parks and recreation department honestly cares. This is a park that has so much value, history and meaning to many families across America and especially in our state. I hope that everyone can come with a solution that betters the community as well as continues to welcome people to enjoy the beauty of nature instead of push people away.¹⁸

As a 5 year volunteer at Cama Beach with the Center for Wooden Boats and an interested community member I wish to make a few comments and recommendations as you move forward with reopening the park.

As I'm sure you are aware, the communication to volunteers and user of the park was not handled well. In my instance we were told to leave with no notice, as we were cleaning up the water in the boathouse from the sprinkler system.

I am hoping that the reopening can take a phased approach to the many needs of the park. First open the general store with quick placement of porta-potties. This would give the public immediate access to the lower area with minimal costs.

Second would be to repurpose the Boathouse to a History Museum and Educational Center, perhaps managed by the Foundation. It looks like the Center for Wooden Boats will no longer be involved in Cama. In the many years I have volunteered down there we have many visitors in the Boathouse interested in the history of the property and the boats. This seems like a natural change as it also supports the Educational component of the purchase of the property with the original Resort Owners. Yes, there will be an expense to this concept but I believe it to be minimal, as the sprinkler system only needs to be drained and the heads re-set. This was the only place it failed and that was due to freezing in the Boathouse only.

The septic system seems to be the main reason for the cabins being closed. Many of the comments I have heard concern me. If electrical wiring is a problem, new wires can be pulled through the exiting conduit with no need to dig anything up. The in septic piping can be back flushed and cleared without digging things up. There will be costs to replace pumps but again that could be minimal.

These thoughts and ideas are from my 30 years experience managing facilities in school systems

where many of these same issues happend and were addressed. I must also concede there may be issues that complicate the repaires but they are all managable with a desire to re-open as soon as possible

The long term planning to re-locate the cabins should continue as we will need to address climate changes but the park should be able to operate while the permits and plans are in the works.

I think it is important for the State Parks to have a few quick wins as the public is very skeptical l of the process and the States desire to keep the park in the long run. The ideas I have identified will accomplish that.

Thank you for the oppportunity to comment on the issues at Cama.¹⁹

Hi, my name is [x] and I am 10 years old . I have been going to Cama Beach at least once a year my whole life . I learned how to do many things there including paddle boarding. It is going to break my streak this year. It is a special place to me. Please keep it open²⁰

Cama Beach is one of my favourite places in the world. We have been doing a group trip there for the past 10 years, since the summer we had an infant and a toddler and decided we could not handle tent camping. This trip is a treasured family experience and is now laden with traditions that we would be heartbroken to let go. We have shared dinners in a row of tables near the water, a talent show every night, we run a lil triathlon for the kids, we swim, and watch eagles and seals, play board games, have dance parties and have story circles . The group of kids run around and bike around and live their best lives, off screens and in nature and in a group of multi age, with a cozy family cabin to return to every night to enjoy the sound of waves and rest up for another big day. There is nowhere else like cama beach, especially for multiple families trying to get away together. It has been amazing to watch my kids grow into doing different things at cama, starting from being infants in arms and a watched toddler to now being on charge of other kids. The cabins and the set up create a sense of community that I cannot tell you how much It saved us during the pandemic to get there and be amongst friends in nature. It fills me w awe to look out on the water, catch a glimpse of a grey whale and to look at the green trees behind me. Yes, it will be a lot of work to get it working again. It is worth it. we need places like cama beach to inspire everyone, esp the younger generation, to save the planet. Don't give up on Cama Beach and they won't give up on fighting climate change.²¹

To whom it concerns,

While the resources for State Parks are spread thin & it seems like a very large and costly project to return Cama Beach to an operational state, it is vital that it be considered. Not only does the Beach and cabins area have a significant historical and cultural value, it is a vital resource to the area for many reasons.

The community relies on the revenue generated by the visitors at local small businesses who already struggle after Covid19. Businesses like mine, a pet sitting company, need use of the area for doing nature & park walks for those pets that are used to an "adventure lifestyle" for exercise that they can't quite get at a dog park.

Also, families like mine who can't afford an RV or expensive B&B experiences, but still love enjoying the rich beauty and cultural significance of the area rely on affordable options like this in State Parks to be able to have equitable access to opportunities.

I believe the loss of these resources far outweighs the cost of refurbishing them! Not to mention it is one of the few revenue generators for the WA State Parks Department to get the funds for other needed projects across the state.

I believe in the current society where there are literal advertisements to encourage kids to get outside, it is vital that these areas remain a resource and option for them to do that. There are limited public access areas on the Island for families to be able to spend time outdoors learning and enjoying the heritage this land has to offer.

Community events, such as Glassquest and Painted rocks, rely on the area to bring people together for a common interest or purpose, which is very much needed in times such as the present when we seem to be in a state of opposition and segregation based on so many factors of current society.

It is an important reminder that we all share this land and have a responsibility to care for it and make sure that future generations have the same opportunity to learn about the regional culture, history, and significance it has to offer.

Please take this into consideration when deciding the planning process and realize that there is so much more at stake than just budget restraints. There are so many ways & opportunities to get the community involved to help "save the beach" if we're just given a chance to do so!

Thank you for your time & consideration, and the opportunity to express insights as not only a community member, but also a local business who will be affected by the outcome of this project and others like it.

Sincerely,²²

Listen to the tribes²³

Listen to the tribe.²⁴

Listen to the tribes²⁵

Listen to the tribes, please!!!²⁶

Dear Parks and Recreation Commission:

Please SLOW down on the planning for Cama Beach.

Please take considerable time on consultation with tribes.

The known presence of tribal remains cannot be taken lightly.

The use of this property for predominantly white persons recreation for the past century has been understandable but it's time to move past that.

This land could be transferred to the impacted tribe or tribes.

The many good times had there over the years by the privileged white people should remain as memories but are not what should drive next steps.

This brings up the state's recalcitrance and stubbornness with the Port Angeles Graving Dock.

Please do not repeat that and learn from that experience.

Stop pretending the sea isn't rising.

Stop thinking the tribal remains don't matter.

Take a different course.

Be proud of your work.

Don't bend to the political pressure of the white people who believe this is their legacy and right.

It is not.

Do the right thing.
Thank you ²⁷

My family has used this park and cabins since it became public. Living approximately 5 miles away, it's been a beautiful treasure over the years. Our desire is to fix the infrastructure so the cabins can be in full use again. It is very concerning that prices to stay increased year over year and what was supposed to be affordable isn't. It is equally baffling that there is so much infrastructure need given price increases. The math doesn't add up and it's not clear but what this certainly indicates is a misuse of funds and extremely poor allocation and budgeting. I've known many volunteers several employees over the years and they created generous raises. Money mismanagement -so address that but not at the expense of a public park a family intentionally donated for public use. Honor those wishes and what has been a valuable asset for the greater PNW and Camano. The value of creating memories, improving health, relational opportunities is necessary and Cama offers a spot to nurture life. ²⁸

I have lived in Washington since 1975, over the years, Washington has become one of the most punitive states in the country. The taxes go up, regulations continue to tighten, and crime is allowed to run wild among other things. The current politicians in Olympia are bullies who care nothing about the people of this state. 2020, 2021, 2023 proved that if you have any doubts. Cama Beach is a positive income-producing venture for the state, the county, and the people. It should be a prime concern to fix the issues at Cama Beach and I firmly believe that there is money to do just that, it's just not a priority for the politicians who would prefer to squander money on frivolous schemes rather than enrich the lives of Washingtonians. ²⁹

Hi there,
I am writing to support the repair of the sewer system to allow Cama Beach to reopen for overnight stays. Cama Beach State Park is a truly special place that my family, friends and I have been visiting annually for the last 15 years. Despite busy schedules of school, work, sports, and other travel, we always make time for Cama. The beaches, hiking trails, and unique history of this place are something that we all truly cherish. We are so sad that a trip to Cama is not on our summer schedule this year! We recognize the logistical and financial challenges that this project will entail, but hope that the state parks system will recognize the value of this truly special place for so many of us in this state. ³⁰

Submitting this comment on behalf of retired educator and long time visitor of the Cama Beach cabins.

Thank you so much. I have no fight in me and appreciate you speaking on my behalf. If you want more, please let me know. There is nothing like it....small cabin, bring all your stuff, glamping inside, on the water, state park...watching families, kids, enjoy, safe, quiet, walking in reserves close by, ADA compliant room.....I haven't been able something to replace it. ³¹

WAC 197-11 establishes uniform requirements for compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Under these rules, the proposed plan developed by the State Parks & Recreation Commission and under consideration for Cama Beach State Park requires compliance with SEPA. WAC 197-11-444 lists all of the elements that need to be addressed for SEPA compliance and WAC 197-11-055 states that "to meet the requirement to ensure that environmental values and amenities are given appropriate consideration along with economic and technical considerations, environmental documents and analyses shall be circulated and

reviewed with other planning documents to the fullest extent possible." The Commission's proposed plan for Cama Beach State Park does meet these requirements. What is the State Parks & Recreation Commission going to do to resolve these deficiencies and fully comply with SEPA? ³²

Cama Beach cabins represent a rare, affordable option for enjoying one of Washington State's treasures. I love seeing the diversity of the visitors enjoying the waterfront beauty right outside their door. I love speaking with strangers at the little store. Mainly I love that Washington State makes an affordable and historic lodging opportunity available. If this facility is closed down, the only options for waterfront lodging on Camano Island will be through costly vacation rentals or private home ownership which has long been beyond the reach of the overwhelming majority of Washington State residents. Keep this important resource available and don't rob future families of these treasured memories. ³³

I believe that continuing to provide cabins or lodging at this park, even if on the high ground is imperative. This park's identity has been, and should remain, a unique vacation/resort destination. Generations of our citizens have made this park what it is, a repeat yearly multi day event. Camano has an RV park and boat launch at CI State Park. Let us continue to have this unique and wonderful park in a way consistent with regs and laws. ³⁴

My first summer at Cama I was 7 years old; after this summer, I will head into my final year of college. What started as a few families on a quick getaway has grown to 26 families committed to meeting for one week each summer in our "home away from home", Cama Beach State Park. The closing of the park for this year left us all tear-stained and disappointed. What should be a busy week of gearing up for the 15 year celebration of our Cama community, instead is marked with a sense of misplace, of something missing. Unsettling as it feels to not get to see our found-family in our favorite beach front park this summer, the park's closure has also given me time to reflect on what Cama really means to me.

Cama Beach isn't just a state park. It's a learning experience. It's a lesson in love and resilience and courage and good. Respecting nature. Understanding the waves. Befriending the rabbits and watching the bald eagles soar overhead. Meeting new friends on the swings. Sharing the basketballs on the playfield, and teaching the younger kids the best spots to play in the forest. Communing over caught crab. Paddling and splashing and giggling over sticky seaweed. Memorizing constellations and telling their legends around the campfire. Realizing that there is no place like this. Nowhere that everyone can be the same; no boundaries to accessing the peace of this place, no division over this or that - it's just Cama. Our Cama community has experienced it all. We've seen divorces, near deaths, missed opportunities, dark times, worrisome politics and a literal plague. We've seen birthdays, new babies, promotions, graduating students, the grin on the face of newcomers and the shared joy in watching each other grow old. Cama Beach was there for us, no matter what. We showed up, and Cama Beach showed up for us. No matter what happens next, I can only hope that the positive impact the park has had, and continues to hold the potential to have, is included in the decisions for the future. I will always show up for Cama Beach - I hope it will be here to show up for me too. ³⁵

It is my hope that you will develop a plan to restore the Cama Beach cabins, boat house, and other amenities to operation. This is an important historical area and one that has brought much enjoyment to many families.³⁶

I read the Planning for the Future document and I think the recommendation not to reopen the cabins is the responsible choice. Signing future taxpayers up for the increasingly difficult and costly work of maintaining the kind of park amenities we have now, when they will have to deal with rising sea levels, is fiscally irresponsible. And respect for native tribes doesn't just mean when it's convenient or easy to do because it's what we already want to do. Cama Beach is a much beloved local park and I'm sad for the loss of the beach level amenities that are there now, but I think the staff recommendation shows good stewardship and good long-term thinking.³⁷

As a proud member of the Tulalip Tribes, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Cama Beach project. This project poses significant threats to our cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and the well-being of our community.

The Cama Beach area holds immense cultural and historical significance for the Tulalip Tribes. It is a place where our ancestors lived, fished, and thrived for generations. Any development in this area would disrupt sacred sites and erode the cultural fabric that binds our community together.

The environmental impact of this project cannot be overlooked. The proposed development threatens the delicate ecosystems that have sustained our people for centuries. The potential for pollution, habitat destruction, and disruption of marine life is too great a risk to take. We must prioritize the preservation of our natural resources for future generations.

I urge the decision-makers to reconsider the Cama Beach project. Let's work together to find alternative solutions. Thank you for considering my perspective.³⁸

My name is [x] and I am 13. I have been going to Cama Beach at least once a year for the past eleven years. I think that you should keep it open because it is such a unique and amazing place, and I have had some of my best vacation memories there. At Cama, everyone can do different things and still be in the same area, so it is really nice for siblings. Please keep Cama Beach open!³⁹