

Cama Beach Public Comments

August 30 – September 10, 2024

Dear Parks Commission

I am writing in response to the open dialog and rally cry for support of Cama State Park cabins. Issue 385 of the Crab Cracker took a strong stance in calling all citizens to engage their politicians in finding a solution for these 'historic' cabins.

My partner, [x] and I are regulars on the trails of this beautiful island. We cherish the connection we can have with the Pacific Northwest, the sea, the wildlife. This island is truly a natural jewel.

As we hiked through Cama trails a couple days ago we discussed the struggles brought forward in the article about the park, the failed septic, the worn out sea wall...etc.. We could get caught up in the blame game to understand how we got to this point, but how does create solutions? It's time to move ahead. The parks are overwhelmed taking care of the land they manage, continually being under funded. It's a shame.

We're solution-oriented people, so we thought of some scenarios, some of them pretty harsh, but here our ideas:

The Sea Wall: Remove it! Make the shore natural again. Honor our Native neighbors and their past. This leads us to

Boat Museum: Relocate it upland and expand the café to include the Museum.

Cabins : Remove them, as the beach will now be a natural setting. Remove all infrastructure including the failed plumbing/ Septic

Add campsites upland – There is considerable land upland in the forest that could be developed to support 50-150 sites. Easier maintenance and more people, which equates to more tourist dollars spent. ¹

Fix the septic, sheet pile the seawall, and get the cabins and the boathouse back educating and entertaining people ²

My wife and I recognize the unusual hardship and cost of renovating the Cama Beach cabins and park, and the difficulty the State Park system always has in obtaining funds to cover all of its' many needs. However, in our many years of staying at various parks, mostly in Western Washington, but not always, there has been none as unique as Cama Beach. Yes, the other parks are beautiful and have a variety of scenic offerings, but none can match the peace and thrill of staying in a cabin right on the beach with an old-time unique boat house and cool museum a few steps away. And at a price that anyone can afford! Sure, a person or family could lay out a small fortune to stay at a privately owned for profit coastal cabin or hotel. But not everyone can afford such a luxury. Please do the hard thing, the right thing, and make the investment to allow future generations to enjoy this one-of-a-kind park. ³

We have a home on Camano Island and have had the pleasure of visiting Cama Beach many times. We've loved visiting the boat house, the quirky & fun little store, and walking along the beach by the rustic cabins. The strong feeling of history there makes us feel like we're stepping back in time. We absolutely love it! And it's great having a place where our guests can stay. There's only one Inn on the island with limited capacity, so the cabins are very much needed. And the Cama Beach Cafe is a treasure! We've eaten there multiple times, and fear that closing the cabins for good would permanently devastate this beloved restaurant (again, one of the few on the island). The revenue guests bring to the island (almost \$8M/yr) and related jobs (71) have a significant impact on our local economy - losing it would be a significant blow. The cabin revenue should have been used all along to maintain them. In short, the Cama Beach cabins are a huge draw, a unique treasure, a piece of history and education, and as such they deserve to be kept and maintained. Please keep this little piece of heaven for our children and future generations. It's irreplaceable. ⁴

Hello,
Thank you for taking public comment.
I have lived on Camano Island since 2005 and Cama Beach is a jewel on the island.
I would like to see some type of a compromise that allows us to continue to use the cabins, fix the internal structures and allow folks to visit and use the beach as long as we can. if climate change is an issue, use it to educate folks that we will not have this treasure forever and why. I didn't hear anything from the tribes and I'd like to understand where do they stand, on this issue.

If we have to move the cabins up the hill, use it to educate people about climate change and the world we live in now.
This park should continue in some capacity so everyone can come and enjoy the area. There are so few areas on the island with public beaches, I'd hate to lose this one.

Thank you for you time. ⁵

Please reopen the cabins at Cama Beach. This place is so unique and peaceful. My family have gone there for years and it is a special time when we can stay in the cabins. Waking up here is so special. ⁶

I urge the State Department of Parks and Recreation to prioritize and sustain their efforts working with local tribes in planning a future for Cama Beach Historical State Park. Please listen to and respect the vision that the local tribes have for a Cama Beach. The cabins and resort were built in the 1930's on top of sacred burial grounds, and I urge you to help protect this place and restore cultural humility for land and people. ⁷