



Ruckle Provincial Park Active Farm Management and Operations Information Sheet v2

This information sheet provides a brief overview of the direction for the Ruckle Park active farm operations and management for potential proponents and interested parties to the pending Request For Proposal (RFP). This information is intended to assist interested proponents in developing a vision for the operation, raise any questions or points requiring clarification and prepare for an RFP submission. All information within this document is subject to change as BC Parks completes the work to draft the final RFP, which will be posted on BC Bid this summer.

Any questions on the RFP process and ideas for consideration can be directed to Susan Rybar, Vardo Creative at susan@vardocreative.com. Susan is assisting BC Parks with the RFP process.

Overview of the Park

Ruckle Provincial Park consists of 529 hectares and was established as a Class A park in 1974, after the Province purchased the land from the Ruckle family. The park protects a variety of provincially significant ecological, cultural and recreational values. This includes the protection and interpretation of the oldest working farm in British Columbia. The active farm (also referred to as working farm) is an 82 hectare section within Ruckle Provincial Park.

Why is BC Parks going through this process?

In June 2018 the 1973 “life tenancy agreement” between the Province and the Ruckle Family expired when the last surviving member of the Ruckle family passed away. This means that BC Parks is now fully responsible for the management of the farm and must undertake an RFP process to select a proponent to manage and operate the active farm.

What is BC Parks vision for Ruckle Park?

From the Ruckle Park Management Plan vision: *“Ruckle Park offers an unique opportunity to visit a Gulf Island pioneer settlement and to experience an historic farm setting that characterizes a significant chapter in Salt Spring Island and British Columbia’s history.”*

Based on the Ruckle Park Management Plan, BC Parks has developed the following additional guidance for the long-term (term to be determined) vision, management and operation of the active farm:

As part of Ruckle Provincial Park, the Ruckle Park active farm will be a diverse, self-sustaining and economically viable business operation that allows the visitor to experience a Gulf Island pioneer settlement. The farm is productive and includes modern and historic farming practices. The natural, cultural and historic values of the landscape and buildings are emphasized in such ways that the heritage values and charm are celebrated.

The Ruckle Farm is not a theme park; instead it's a modernized and accessible window to the past. The farm maintains its heritage and may also offer new products, experiences, business models and enterprises that allow long-term viability of a profitable operation. Ruckle Farm will encompass creative, and/or unique business models to ensure its viability in the 21st century.

What areas of Ruckle Park are within the RFP?

The RFP will include the 82 hectares of the active farm, three houses and several out-buildings that date back as far as the early 1870's. This includes cultivated land, fenced fields, pasture, hedgerows, three kitchen/market gardens, a number of farm buildings, the Norman Ruckle House, the Daniel Ruckle House, the Alfred Ruckle House, roads, orchards, and wooded areas. The area that will be outlined in the RFP is termed as the farm "Operating Area," and is within the Agriculture Land Reserve.

The campground will not be included in the farm Operating Area and will continue to be operated and maintained under contract with a Park Operator. The publicly accessible heritage farm section of Ruckle Park (the Henry Ruckle house, heritage barn, orchard and out-buildings) may be included in the Operating Area, if BC Parks believes there is increased benefit to the park and park visitors. The Cusheon Cove portion of Ruckle Provincial Park (Hatfield property) may also be included. If you would like us to consider these properties as part of your proposal, please let us know in advance.

Will this change the look and feel of the park?

While we are considering the allowance for new activities within the Operating Area, we are not entertaining significant changes to how the farm and broader park area will look and feel. This opportunity is not intended to erode the unique attributes of the park and the strong community attachment to the park. There was significant public consultation during the development of the park management plan and BC Parks will continue to follow the direction within the plan.

How is this space to be used?

Ruckle Park will continue to be used as an active working farm, used in the spirit of the Ruckle Park Management Plan. This means maintaining the natural, historical, and cultural values of the property. However, BC Parks wants the Operating Area to evolve and to be used in a way that maintains the integrity of the property while functioning in a financially sustainable way that benefits the park and park visitors.

In order to accomplish this, BC Parks is determining the parameters and guidelines by which the Operating Area may be used. This may include additional activities that complement the current operation of the farm, ensuring the activities are consistent with the park values and direction in the [Ruckle Park Management Plan](#) in addition to historical farming practices.

What activities are expected to be mandatory components within the submission?

Activities	More details/clarification
Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate and maintain the Active Farm as a mixed farming type • Maintain hayfields and hedgerows and ensure fencing is in good repair to keep livestock away from sensitive ecosystems, riparian zones, and species at risk • Ensure environmentally responsible farming practices • Maintain the heritage orchard for the production of fruits and nuts
Hosting of an annual Farm Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host of Farm Day, a heritage day of demonstrations of old-style farming and practices
Fire management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a fuel management plan that defines long-term fuel management objectives and actions (requires BC Parks' review and authorization)
Invasive species control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include invasive species control within the farm operating plans (Requires BC Parks' authorization for treatment)
Reporting to BC Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting requirements will be set out within the RFP (including Public Safety, Park Security issues, annual financial statements and annual operating plans)
Facility maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain all buildings within the Operating Area. BC Parks will be responsible for significant capital projects (such as replacement of a roof or septic system, as examples)
Water management, systems and irrigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a water management plan that provides long-term, responsible, sustainable activities within the Operating Area
Security presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain safety and security within the Operating Area
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop positive relationships between BC Parks, the Park Operator of Ruckle Park campground, local partners, and the community at large.

What additional activities may be considered?

Any additional uses are expected to adhere to Agriculture Land Commission Act regulation.

Use	More details/clarification and examples of appropriate uses:
Facility-based uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of existing houses for fixed-roof accommodation • Use of existing barn and other buildings for tourism opportunities, e.g., guided walking tours • Retail store • Administration office/building • There may be some limitations based on the utility services available in the heritage houses
Commercial recreation – no facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires BC Parks’ authorization. Examples: guided education programs, cycling and hiking tours
Mixed farming type – crops and livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cows, turkey, hens, sheep and lambs, hay, vegetables, etc. Any proposed livestock or crops to be authorized by BC Parks
Operation of a farm stand / market garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowers, vegetables (baked goods and canned items within Vancouver Island Health Authority permits) • Limitations/restrictions will apply and outlined in the RFP
Farm stay programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example: WWOOF
Horseback riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within locations approved by BC Parks
Special events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No large events. Size to be determined—e.g., events at or under 30 to 40 guests may be approved. Examples may include weddings, dinners, participation in the Apple Festival, etc. • Participation in the local Fall Fair in September, including a heritage farm display, sheep dog demonstrations, assistance with sheep-shearing demonstrations, and contribution of fair entries (the farm currently has five straight wins of the Family Garden trophy)
Picnic areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or small group picnics
Education, interpretation and information structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive signage, if desired, must be aligned with existing interpretive signage and BC Parks’ sign standards • Interpretive programs, tours, museums, etc. • Visitors may be asked to not interfere with the farming operation

Please note:

- This list is not exhaustive. For example, construction of new buildings (small scale) and their uses that do not detract from the values of the park may be considered.
- For existing uses, the Ruckle Park Management Plan will provide guidance on the appropriate level or scale of this use and may address specific restrictions or enhancements.

- For new or expanded uses, this does not constitute approval. This indicates that the use may be considered for further evaluation and possible approval in the RFP process. In some cases, the appropriateness may not be confirmed until further assessments are completed.
- BC Parks’ authorizations can be defined as park use permits, contracts, volunteer agreements, stewardship agreements, or letters of authorization.

If you have questions regarding potential uses, please contact Susan Rybar at susan@vardocreative.com

What is not going to be considered within a proposal?

Use	More details/clarification
Camping/campsites/RVs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there is currently camping in Ruckle Park, it may not be done in the Active Farm area
Cycling/mountain biking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside the scope of this proposal; Beaver Point Road, Ruckle walk-in campground access road, and the Cusheon Cove access road only
Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No on site fishing
Hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed under the Park Act or Wildlife Act
Sale of firewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed under the Park Act
Motorized off-road access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm equipment to manage the working farm will be allowed
Large special events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than Farm Day
Tree removal for commercial purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger Trees may be removed with BC Parks’ approval. Danger Trees may be used for personal use i.e. firewood, fences may be approved
Land clearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except to keep existing fields clear of new tree cover

What do I do if I have questions about my vision of the Ruckle Park Heritage Farm?

Please send any questions to Susan Rybar at susan@vardocreative.com. We will do our best to answer them. Please note that this is not a formal part of the RFP process, but a way for BC Parks to provide clarity for those considering responding to the RFP process, and incorporate your questions into the RFP as best we can.

What will BC Parks use to evaluate proposals?

Any proposals need to fit within the intent of the Park Act and the Ruckle Park Management Plan document. Other considerations will be identified within the RFP once issued. They may include: proponent experience, organizational structure/key personnel, business plans, and financial capacity.

More Information:

- BC Parks Ruckle Park website: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/ruckle/>
- Park Act: http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96344_01
- Ruckle Park Management Plan, 2014: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/ruckle/ruckle-mp.pdf?v=1549910340776>
- Permitted Uses in the ALR: <https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alc/content/alr-maps/living-in-the-alr/permitted-uses-in-the-alr>
- Agricultural Land Commission Act – Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation: http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/171_2002