

November 19, 2009

To Park Board Commissioners and City Council:

As previously stated, the Lifeforce Foundation supports the Staff Report recommending the closure of Children's Farmyard. It is time that there is more promotion of the diversity of wildlife found living freely in Stanley Park. It is time that people respect animals and stop exploiting them as something to chase and pet. The buildings can be easily converted into a Stanley Park Nature and History Centre. Volunteers would help with this progressive change.

There is so much to learn about the natural wildlife and the historic sites. In the 90s Lifeforce did a series of ten Nature and History Walk brochures. Included were historical photos that would provide a great educational experience for all. I doubt that many people could presently tell you more than ten waterfowl species found in the park. Education programs will change that and all would learn about the diverse fauna and flora. From the mosses, lichen and fungi to the native plants to the towering ancient trees people we can show people... And within this vast vegetation there are the insects, amphibians, reptiles, dabbling ducks, diving ducks, raptors, shorebirds, gulls, owls, woodpeckers, corvids, swallows, chickadees, finches, herons, cormorants, loons, mink, river otters and much more that all would learn about.

There is also a very interesting history of the geological features. From the basalt columns below Prospect Point to the 32 million year old lava that was injected into sandstone near Siwash Rock it is all part of nature's classroom.

There has been past and present interest by the Stanley Park Ecology organization to use the Farm Yard area for a more comprehensive education center about Stanley Park and other Vancouver parks. Lifeforce has started discussions with them in this regard.

Closing the Farm Yard would allow society to evolve with the land being use as a green project. We will move away from the past practises exploiting live animals as educational tools in captivity to respecting wildlife living freely in their natural habitats. People will learn about how they live in the wild. A Stanley Park Nature and History Centre would also help educate people about the complex ecosystems in all of the Vancouver parks. It will instil a greater understanding of the ecosystems that surrounds us all and that we are all a part of. It will show people the ways to protect the fragile habitats.

If the general public was aware of these infinite treasures of nature they would choose these experiences over that of chasing and petting some "farm" animals. Economic realities and changing ethical standards will continue to show us that scarce funds must not be spent on animal prisons in zoos and aquariums. I hope that the City will take this opportunity to provide residents and visitors with an experience to learn about supernatural Vancouver and BC. Lifeforce would look forward to working together to achieve this goal.

Thank you,