



REASONS FOR DECISION

FILE NUMBER: 1415403, 1415404, 1415322

APPLICANT: ONE WITH NATURE CORP.

BACKGROUND: One With Nature Corp. has submitted three related Crown land applications to establish a commercial outdoor education and wilderness training operation near south Sooke Basin. The proposal includes an Intensive Use Site lease, an Extensive Use Area licence of occupation, and a foreshore lease to support land- and marine-based programming, with tenure terms of up to 30 years.

DECISION DATE: 2026-08-19

DECISION: PROCESSED – APPLICATION DISALLOWED

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The applications are disallowed because the proposed long-term commercial use, infrastructure development, and exclusive occupation are incompatible with the existing conservation, recreation, and stewardship objectives of the area. The proposal would introduce permanent buildings, vegetation clearing, a dock, and intensive commercial activity within lands functionally integrated with East Sooke Regional Park, resulting in significant land use conflicts, potential impacts to sensitive ecological and cultural values, and reduced public access. Referral agencies, including the Capital Regional District, Ministry of Forests, and WLRS Ecosystems Branch, did not support the proposal, citing environmental concerns, incompatibility with park values, and insufficient environmental assessment information. Significant concerns were also raised by affected First Nations regarding Aboriginal and Treaty rights, cultural heritage values, and ongoing treaty interests in the subject lands. Public engagement demonstrated overwhelming opposition, with the vast majority of submissions opposing the proposal. Taking these factors collectively into account, approval would not be in the public interest and would be inconsistent with provincial land stewardship, conservation, and reconciliation objectives.

Considerations

Land Use Report (LUR)

I have reviewed the Land Use Report and agree with its analysis and recommendation to disallow the applications. The proposal would introduce permanent infrastructure, exclusive commercial use, and long-term occupation within lands that are managed and used as part of the broader East Sooke Regional Park wilderness area. The proposed use is incompatible with the conservation, recreation, and wilderness values associated with the site.



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Land Act Policy and Procedures

In making this decision, I considered the Crown land allocation principles, including whether the proposal represents an appropriate and beneficial use of Crown land and whether approval would be in the public interest. Based on the information available, the proposal is not consistent with the existing land use context, conservation objectives, or public interest considerations associated with the area.

Land Status Review

The application area adjoins and functions as part of East Sooke Regional Park and overlaps interests associated with park management, sensitive environmental values, archaeological resources, and areas of Indigenous interest. These overlapping interests create significant land use conflicts that were not resolved through the review process.

Referral Responses

Key referral agencies, including the Capital Regional District, Ministry of Forests, and WLRs Ecosystems Branch, recommended refusal of the applications. Concerns included incompatibility with regional park values, impacts to sensitive ecosystems and archaeological resources, unresolved access issues, and the absence of sufficient environmental information to assess the proposed development.

Public Engagement

A total of 3,255 submissions were received, of which 3,216 opposed the applications. An additional petition opposing the proposal contained more than 8,700 signatures. Public concerns focused on protection of environmental values, preservation of wilderness character, impacts to public access, and the appropriateness of commercial development within an area widely regarded as part of East Sooke Regional Park. These concerns were considered in this decision.

First Nation Consultation

Consultation and engagement identified substantial concerns from First Nations with two nations formally opposing the applications, citing potential impacts to Aboriginal and Treaty rights, cultural and archaeological values, environmental resources, and ongoing treaty-related interests in the area. These concerns were considered and weighed in this decision.

Additional Information or Evidence

The Capital Regional District advised that it does not support commercial development in the area and would not provide access through CRD-managed park lands. In addition, the proposal remained subject to substantial revision during the review process, limiting the ability to consistently evaluate environmental, operational, and land use implications.

Summary Statement



REASONS FOR DECISION

After considering the Land Use Report, referral responses, public engagement results, First Nations consultation, and all information on file, I have determined that the applications do not represent an appropriate or beneficial use of Crown land. Significant land use conflicts, unresolved environmental and cultural concerns, strong opposition from affected First Nations and the public, and the lack of support from key referral agencies demonstrate that the proposal is not in the public interest. Not all concerns and conflicts were suitably addressed or mitigated by the applicant; therefore, applications 1415403, 1415404, and 1415322 are disallowed.

DECISION MAKER:

Name: Peter Warburton

Title: Senior Licensed Authorizations Officer

Delegated authority under *Land Act* s. 11

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