

Mr. David Tibbo  
Director of Recreation & Leisure Services  
Town of Conception Bay South  
106 Conception Bay Highway  
Conception Bay South, NL  
A1W 3A5

March 20, 2008

**Re: Recommendations for Municipal Action Priorities at Topsail Beach Rotary Park**

Dear Mr. Tibbo,

Over the last year, residents of Conception Bay South have appreciated your commitment to and efforts regarding Topsail Beach and we, the Friends of Topsail Beach Board, look forward to continuing our support of your work in this valuable public area. We all share in our responsibility of this environmentally sensitive area of great natural beauty.

Today we write for three specific reasons: 1) to repeat the key concerns about Topsail Beach that have been raised by local citizens and park visitors, 2) to remind the Town of C.B.S. of the commitments it made regarding the park in Spring 2007, and 3) to recommend that the Town of C.B.S. take a new action that will address the most pressing public safety concerns in this area.

**1) The Problems**

As people living in this area have noted for years, and as concerned citizens discussed with you last spring leading up to and following our community meeting in June 2007, there are multiple serious public safety and park sustainability issues regarding the use of Topsail Beach. The most pressing include the following:

- i. Uncontrolled fires, as many as thirty at a time, are being lit on the beach (and in the woods) in this residential area. Often toxic materials are burnt in these fires and they result in a great deal of dangerous debris (especially glass) littering the beach.
- ii. Public drinking occurs regularly on park grounds.
- iii. Illegal cutting happens frequently in the park, often to fuel the fires.
- iv. Dangerous driving occurs constantly on the narrow, deteriorating road leading to Topsail Beach.
- v. Vandalism of park grounds is common.
- vi. Garbage collection on park grounds is erratic.

**2) Town Commitments Requiring Action**

To address these major public safety and park sustainability issues, Friends of Topsail Beach members made recommendations to the Town of C.B.S. last spring. The Town of C.B.S. took action on many of these, for example, by erecting speed limit signs and patching particularly bad areas of Topsail Beach Road. The Town also agreed to pursue several more initiatives.

Here are the remaining commitments that need town action:

- i. Installing fire pits. Given the high usage of this area, we recommend 12 pits.
- ii. Building up current speed bumps and adding new ones.
- iii. Installing signage indicating park use rules (for example, that consuming alcohol is prohibited, fires must be restricted to the fire pits, and only non-toxic, biodegradable materials may be burnt).
- iv. Consistently monitoring the area and enforcing laws and municipal rules.

We thank the Town of C.B.S. for committing to act on these points and we recommend that action be taken on each of these before visitors return to the park in great numbers this spring.

**3) New Recommendation: Close the Park to Vehicle Traffic at 11:00pm**

Based on our experience in this area and the concerns we have heard through public meetings and many comments from local people and beach users, the worst acts of unsafe fire activities, vandalism and dangerous driving occur during the late hours of the night. To prevent these problems, we recommend that the park be cleared of all vehicles and closed to vehicle access at 11:00pm. To do this, we recommend the installation of a gate at the entrance of the park (near the footbridge and Rotary sign) that can be closed and locked each evening and then reopened each morning. Park staff, town enforcement officers, or perhaps even a local resident might be responsible for these tasks. This new policy will also require a turnaround area near the gate and there is plenty of space to permit this addition.

Restricting access to parks is standard in many areas in this province and we feel it would dramatically reduce the public safety hazards currently posed by the park as well as the frequent damage done to the park grounds at night. This is a practical solution in the best interest of residents and park visitors.

We recognize that the park is the Town's responsibility and the Town has the real capacity and authority to act. But as a group with great community support and many contacts with local people and beach users, the many Friends of Topsail Beach are willing to help support the Town of C.B.S. as it addresses problems at Topsail Beach. We would be happy to serve as a liaison between the town, local citizens and park users.

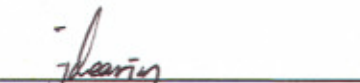
We look forward to hearing your response to these recommendations and to continuing working with the Town of C.B.S. on Topsail Beach issues. To schedule a meeting to move forward on these initiatives, please contact Mary Grouchy by phone at 781-1601, by e-mail at marygrouchy@nl.rogers.com or by mail at 10 Topsail Beach Road, C.B.S., NL, A1W 5V9.


Sincerely,  
The Friends of Topsail Beach Board  
[www.topsailbeach.wordpress.com](http://www.topsailbeach.wordpress.com)


  
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Agnes Fekete

  
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Roy Noel

  
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Fred Greening

c.c. Paul Davis, Ward One Councillor  
Scott Andrews, Chair of the Policing, Public Safety and Environment Committee