

CAMA BEACH STATE PARK'S CABINS NEED TO BE REOPENED

By SaveCamaBeachCabins.org, dedicated to preserving Cama Beach for future generations



- Cama Beach Historical State Park's cabins are highly popular, especially with families. In the year before the 36 cabins were closed by the State Parks Commission, the park had 272,888 visitors, and revenues of \$979,000, plus many thousands in revenue for the local economy. After closure, annual visitors declined by at least 74,000 and revenues by over \$900,000.
- Cama Beach is *unique*, as the only remaining intact, large, 1930s saltwater family fishing resort on Puget Sound. On the National Historic Register, it is a time capsule from the past which people cannot only experience, but *use* – a living museum where people can stay a few feet from the shore and have the matchless experience of listening to the waves at night while in bed. They can not only build special memories with their families, but also learn about bygone eras of Puget Sound.
- The former owning family donated around \$10 million in value of the property, plus well over \$2 million in cash toward construction of the Cama Center building and Cafe, turning over a heritage and a sacred trust to the State Parks Commission and the public.
- The former owners have an *agreement in writing* with State Parks to protect that heritage, signed in 2004. It provides that the Commission undertakes to *preserve*, and to interpret, the historic structures and artifacts. **That obligation has now been violated, with the unoccupied cabins deteriorating and attracting break-ins and thefts. Continued violation of that contract could result in a lawsuit and a state liability of millions of dollars, plus loss of tribal cultural resources to the sea.**
- **Some unfortunate misconceptions regrettably led to the closing of the cabins. *THE FACTS ARE:***
 - The sewer and water systems need repairs before the cabins can reopen, but that work is feasible. An erroneous assumption was made by State Parks staff that laws and regulations for the protection of tribal resources are more stringent now than when the park was originally developed and would prevent repair work. In fact, substantially the same legal protections were in effect and were followed throughout development of the park.
 - **The sewer and water systems can be fixed, without disturbing underground tribal artifacts.** Work can avoid excavations in areas not previously screened. No graves are present close to where repairs would be made. The permits required are obtainable, and as before, tribal representatives can monitor the work.
 - Only one tribe, the Tulalip, has raised major objection to work at the park. Archaeological evidence does not indicate that any one tribe had sole use of the land, or that there was either a village or graveyard on the site. Rather, a number of tribes used it seasonally or occasionally, and the few graves appear to be random burials. The other local area tribes have either been very supportive of the state park or have been neutral.
 - An assumption was made by State Parks staff, without undertaking an engineering study, that it would not be feasible to enhance the current sea wall for protection of the resort buildings and tribal cultural resources from predicted sea level rise. ***That study needs to be done and should be funded. If flooding were allowed to wash away the historic resort buildings, the underground tribal artifacts, and likely any Native American graves, would also be lost to the sea.*** A number of possible solutions, especially when combined, are likely to provide adequate protection from rising seas for many decades.

A Capital Budget item to fund the engineering study passed the 2025 Legislature as a result of the efforts of many park supporters and area legislators. However, it was unfortunately vetoed by Governor Ferguson based on misleading information. Supporters and key legislators are working again in the new session to restore the funding.

✓ **Please support a Capital Budget proviso to do the engineering study and reopen the Cama Beach cabins.**

✓ **And please ask Governor Ferguson for his support: Phone 360-902-4111.**

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