

Fairness for Clear Lake: Advocacy Update

Over the past several weeks, Fairness for Clear Lake (FFCL) has continued to build momentum in our efforts to restore fair and transparent access to Clear Lake and overturn the ban on motorized watercraft by Parks Canada. Here's a summary of our recent activities:

Key Meetings with Elected Officials:

Representatives from FFCL have met with a number of key decision-makers, including several senior Ministers from Manitoba and federal Member of Parliament Dan Mazier.

During these meetings, FFCL discussed the concerns of our community regarding Parks Canada's decision-making process relating to the ban on motorized watercraft on Clear Lake. FFCL emphasized the social and economic impacts of the ban on local residents, visitors, and small businesses in the community and in the municipalities around Riding Mountain National Park who had made investments under the previous policy of one boat, one lake. FFCL also requested provincial support to advocate for a science-based, balanced approach to invasive species management that takes into account local experiences.

Meeting with M.P. Mazier gave FFCL the chance to discuss our concerns with the federal representative for Riding Mountain. FFCL gave M.P. Mazier and his team a comprehensive briefing of the current situation and discussed the potential for federal intervention to ensure that Parks Canada engages transparently with local communities in Riding Mountain and across the country. FFCL also encouraged M.P. Mazier to push for a community meeting with Parks Canada to allow residents of Riding Mountain to voice their concerns over the watercraft ban and potential future implications of failing to consult the community.

These meetings have helped us build a political coalition with support from different parties and levels of government but there is still more work for us to do. Behind the scenes the FFCL team have been meeting with federal officials to make the case for a renewed relationship with Parks Canada. FFCL is continuing outreach efforts and is regularly in communication with decision-makers at all levels to make sure our community's voice is heard.

Municipal Engagement:

FFCL has also been engaged at the local level with municipal advocacy in Riding Mountain. We have delivered a presentation outlining the economic and social impacts that the watercraft ban has had on our community and the municipal council has passed a resolution supporting our concerns and formally communicated these concerns to government ministers at the provincial and federal level. The council's letter urged Parks Canada and the relevant federal officials to revisit the watercraft ban decision, consult meaningfully with the local communities in Riding Mountain, and seek a balanced, scientific solution.

Letters Sent by Fairness for Clear Lake:

To date, FFCL has issued formal letters to the Federal Minister of Canadian Heritage who manages Parks Canada, outlining our concerns about procedural fairness, economic harm, and lack of proper consultation. FFCL has also sent formal letters to decision-makers in the Parks Canada agency, including

the Field Unit Superintendent for Riding Mountain National Park, requesting immediate reconsideration of the boat ban decision and a commitment to transparent dialogue with local stakeholders.

FFCL has also sent M.P. Dan Mazier a formal “Thank You” letter for his vocal support in the House of Commons and his support for our campaign for transparent decision making by Parks Canada and the evidence behind the decision to ban watercraft. Finally, FFCL has formally contacted municipal councils to request support in raising the issues that are impacting our community to provincial and federal governments. The letters sent by FFCL will be shared publicly on our campaign’s Facebook page, where you can follow to receive additional updates.

Judicial Review Filed:

FFCL has formally filed an application for judicial review of Parks Canada’s decision to ban watercraft on Clear Lake, reflecting our commitment to ensuring fair, transparent, and evidence-based decision-making that respects local communities. This was not a decision taken lightly but was a necessary step to ensure that Parks Canada’s decision-making on the watercraft ban would be made public and stakeholders from the community could review and provide an honest assessment of Parks Canada’s processes.

FFCL has also submitted an Access to Information (ATIP) request, seeking information relating to Parks Canada’s decision-making process on the watercraft ban, all evidence used in making the decision, a list of who was consulted and any additional information to give us a clear picture of how and why Parks Canada enacted this ban. This will also allow FFCL to better understand how we can advocate for the removal of the watercraft ban and restore community consultation processes.

Independent Scientific Study Commissioned:

FFCL has retained a scientist to conduct an independent study of water movement and related factors in Clear Lake. This research will help inform a more accurate understanding of invasive species spread and support the development of practical, science-based management solutions. This will also support our advocacy efforts by giving us the tools and information we need to make a clear, scientific case for why Parks Canada overreached by banning watercraft and that this decision should be overturned immediately.

Community Meeting Announcement Coming Soon:

In the absence of Parks Canada hosting a public forum, an issue that FFCL and the Riding Mountain community have been advocating for to get to the bottom of Parks Canada’s decision-making process, FFCL will soon announce dates for a community meeting to ensure local residents and stakeholders have an opportunity to come together, share concerns, and discuss next steps.