

# Lighthouse Public Access - FAQ

**Q: *When was the Lighthouse View Trail completed?***

A: The trail was completed in 2009 after almost two years of negotiation between the Society and the adjacent landholder, with many hours of community input solicited by the Society. The trail was designed in consultation with the community, the Society and the adjacent landholder, and built by the adjacent landholder to the standard used for the East Sooke Park trails.

**Q: *Who donated the trail?***

A: The trail was donated as a result of negotiations between the Lighthouse Society and the adjacent landholder, and included community consultation. The trail (over private property) was always intended to be part of a more extensive trail system connecting the lighthouse land and trails once the Society took possession of the property. The section of Lighthouse View Trail called *Jennie's Trail* from the parking area walking south was intended to be the entrance to the lighthouse property. In that way, no vehicles would drive onto the lighthouse property. (The gated road just past the parking area is used only for Lighthouse site maintenance.)

**Q: *What is the access now?***

A: Jennie's Trail which is a small part of the overall Lighthouse View Trail, is the pedestrian access, leading from the parking area to the gate at the start of the Lighthouse site proper. Visitors legally cross the private strata road to get to the lighthouse property. Sheringham Point Road, the only access for the public, which served as access for light keepers and their families for over 75 years, continues to be the only access.

**Q: *What is the CRD's plan?***

A: At some point during negotiations between the Society and the Juan de Fuca Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission on acquisition of the lighthouse land, CRD staff decided that if the CRD did not own the lighthouse land, then the stretch of road leading from the end of Sheringham Point Road to the parking area, over which the CRD holds a statutory right of way, would be unnecessary. By that rationale, the CRD would be giving up hard won public access and locking it off by moving the existing gate. The gate would be moved almost a kilometre north of the parking area, trail and existing access. It would therefore make it impossible for visitors to access the parking area, and very difficult for those who have trouble walking long distances to visit the lighthouse. CRD staff has indicated this plan is to relieve the CRD of any liability for public use of the road, despite the fact that the Society has willingly assumed liability and all maintenance responsibilities for the trail, road and parking area.

***Q: Why limit and give-up existing public access?***

A: It is unclear why, when the Society is so close to opening and making public the lighthouse land for the first time in over 100 years, the CRD would move to restrict public access. In every community across the country, this type of achievement would be celebrated and encouraged - in the Capital Region, the staff seems to want to spend their time and taxpayers' money finding a solution to a problem that does not exist. Instead of working with the Society to improve, protect and encourage public access, they are trying to restrict access to what will soon be a foreshore park owned and operated as a Canadian Heritage Site by the Society.

***Q: What are the facts surrounding the park acquisition?***

A: The Society worked with JDF Parks Commission for a number of years on efforts to acquire the lighthouse site under a public Treasury Board process. In the middle of those negotiations, the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act (HLPA) was passed. It opened up a new path for site acquisition. The Society Executive sought and received approval from Parks Staff, Federal Government representatives and the Regional Director to submit a petition and business plan and generally proceed on parallel paths for acquisition — continuing efforts under the Treasury Board process, but also pursuing the new HLPA process. Once approvals were given to the Society by local parks staff and others, it appeared that the new HLPA process might be a superior manner in which to acquire the site since it included a Heritage designation and an assurance of protection of the lighthouse structure.

Since local CRD parks staff had indicated that the CRD was not interested in protecting, maintaining or saving the lighthouse building, and only acquiring the land, the Society's membership, after a full public discussion, passed a resolution unanimously directing the Executive to pursue acquisition via the new legislation because it would ensure protection of the lighthouse. The first step was heritage designation achieved in May of 2015, while the final step is the recently concluded negotiation between the Society and the Federal Government to acquire the site and protect and preserve both the land and structure, opening the property to the public as a park.

***What can I do to help the Society maintain the existing public access?***

A. Click on <http://sheringhamlighthouse.org/how-to-help/take-action-now/> and send an email and sign the petition to save the public access.