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E-Team Intern

Introduction

Purpose of the Farm Plan

The purpose of this farm plan is to provide management and operations direction for the Working Farm and the Heritage Farm within Ruckle Provincial Park¹. This plan responds to the need for BC Parks and the Ruckle family to develop a plan for transition of the farm and dwellings to BC Parks in preparation for the time when the family no longer wishes to operate the farm and reside in the residences.

The Ruckle family has continuing tenancy of working farmlands and farm dwellings as part of the 1972 purchase agreement with the province. This tenancy, together with subsequent associated agreements includes the right to operate the farm, the right to cut wood for personal uses, and the right for named members of the Ruckle family to live on the property for their lifetimes.¹ These tenures are detailed in the Lifetime Tenancy Agreement (1973), Gentleman's Agreement, and Associated Agreements (1972) (refer to Appendix 2) and they will be valid as long as the Ruckles reside in the park. These three agreements will assist with guiding the implementation and interpretation of farm management by BC Parks.

The Park Management Plan specified that "A significant central portion of Ruckle Park is an operating commercial sheep farm under management by the Ruckle family as part of the purchase agreement. However, a management direction needs to be developed to replace the present operation or when the Ruckle family no longer wish to exercise all or part of their right of occupy and farm any portion of the park." The Farm Plan will set that management direction.

Principles for the Farm Plan

The following principles guide this farm plan:

- The Lifetime Tenancy Agreement and the Gentleman's Agreement with the Ruckle family will assist with guiding the implementation of the Ruckle Farm Plan.
- The Ruckle Provincial Park Management Plan² (1986) and annual park management plans provide overarching guidance for the farm's management and associated heritage interpretation.
- BC Parks has management responsibility for the park. BC Parks will manage the working farm and heritage farm areas. Other agencies, corporations,

¹ See Ruckle Park File 00146-02/0267, AGREEMENTS – GENERAL, Agreements Register, Ruckle Provincial Park, Correspondence, and Dave Chater to Gwen and Lotus Ruckle.

² This is the same as the Ruckle Provincial Park Management Plan, 1986, renamed to conform to current practices

societies and individuals may be involved on a partnership or contractual basis, to deliver services and programs, and to provide resource information. BC Parks will assume management responsibility for future operation of the farm when the family decides they no longer wish to farm.

- Any development associated with strategies and actions outlined in the farm plan are subject to the BC Parks Impact Assessment Policy.

Direction from Previous Planning, Ruckle Provincial Park Management Plan (1986)

Farm Purpose and Goals

The 1986 Management Plan for Ruckle Park states “It is the purpose of Ruckle Park to: Preserve and interpret the Ruckle Farm and heritage buildings so the public gains an appreciation of the agricultural and farming endeavors of pioneer settlers in the Gulf Islands; and conserve a scenic landscape and natural environment representative of the Southern Gulf Islands”

The park purpose, as stated in the Management Plan, is :

“to preserve a significant historical farm so that the theme of pioneer agricultural settlement in the Gulf Islands is presented to the recreating public. The park will also be managed to provide a variety of compatible recreational opportunities as part of one of the key destination parks in the southern Gulf Islands.” (p. 30)

In order to achieve this broader purpose, the management of the Heritage Farm and Working Farm within the park will:

1. preserve and interpret the historical farm component of Ruckle Park so as to represent the agricultural and farming endeavors of the Ruckle family and other pioneer settlers in the Gulf Islands.
2. ensure the conservation, preservation and representation of Ruckle Park – an area associated with the Gulf Islands landscape of the Coastal Lowlands natural Region
3. provide future direction as to the types of use and constraints permitted by the leasee within the existing agricultural area on the north side of Beaver Point Road the area being called Working Farm Zone.³

Farm Zoning

As delineated in the Management Plan, Ruckle Farm comprises two sub-zones, the Working Farm³ sub-zone and Heritage Farm sub-zone. The farmed land south of Beaver Point Road and Henry and Alfred Ruckle houses and farm buildings are the Heritage Farm area. The Working Farm “contains all Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) lands north of the main road. It includes both the William Norman Ruckle and Daniel Henry Ruckle houses

³ The Management Plan used this term interchangeably with “resource use sub-zone”. This plan uses the term Working Farm sub-zone throughout as it better expresses the intent of the zone.

plus a number of outbuildings. The intent is ... to keep this land for recreation-historic-commercial farming administered by a Park Use Permit.” The Heritage Farm Sub-zone “includes the oldest Ruckle home (Henry Ruckle – built in 1870’s which has been partially restored), numerous farm outbuildings; the Alfred Ruckle house” (presently occupied by Lotus and Gwen Ruckle); “cultivated fields south of the Beaver Point Road; and a small wedge north of the road adjacent to the orchard which (is used for overflow parking on the existing grass surface, during events).⁴

Role of the Park

Background

Ruckle Farm is the oldest operating family farm in the Gulf Islands, and it is a significant property among British Columbia’s working farm heritage sites.

Ruckle Farm presents opportunities to preserve and interpret the layered history of land-use and farm settlement in the southern Gulf Islands. The cultural landscape of Ruckle Park contains evidence of Native resource use and successful and unsuccessful immigrant farmers and businessmen. The park also offers the opportunity to preserve farmland for the public, and provide recreational opportunities within a farm setting.

“Ruckle Park contributes significantly in promoting tourism, historical interpretation and recreation activities on Salt Spring Island and the Gulf Islands generally.”⁵ Currently, about 100,000 people visit the park annually. Ruckle Park offers natural and cultural interpretive programs, walk-in camping, group camping, hiking, ocean views and views of a working farm, interpretation of historic buildings and sites, and opportunities for nature observation.

A variety of cultural features have been preserved within Ruckle Park, providing a place where people can learn about historic land-use and settlement in the southern Gulf Islands. The cultural landscape of Ruckle Park contains such features as middens, First Nations camping sites, five houses built in the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century, farm-outbuildings dating from the 1870s and later, fields, fences, hedgerows, gardens, roads, and evidence of logging. Depending on the availability of funding and following the guidance of previous reports such as Jonathan Yardley’s “Building Restoration Feasibility Study” (1997) and the Ruckle Provincial Park Management Plan (1986), all heritage houses and outbuildings within the park will be preserved, restored, stabilized or left in their existing condition.

⁴ Ruckle Park Management Plan (1986) p. 30

⁵ Park Management Plan p. 3

Vision Statement

Vision for the Farm Operation and Heritage Interpretation

The 200 acre (81 hectare) Ruckle farm (working farm), which includes cultivated land, fenced fields, pasture, hedgerows, three kitchen/market gardens, a number of farm buildings, the Norman Ruckle House, the Daniel Henry Ruckle House, the Alfred Ruckle House, roads, orchards, and wooded areas, will be preserved and/or interpreted so the public can gain an appreciation of the agricultural history of the Ruckle family and other pioneer settlers in the Gulf Islands. Ruckle Farm will retain its scenic landscape representative of southern Gulf Islands farms and will remain a working farm. The heritage features of the farm may be preserved and/or interpreted, in the context of the history of the park area and the history of farming on Salt Spring Island. In the heritage farm sub-zone, which is separate from the working farm discussed above, the demonstration of historic or period farming methods will be encouraged.

Management Themes and Issues

The following management issues require attention in the Farm Plan.

Theme	Issue
Cultural Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruckle Farm is the oldest operating family farm in the Gulf Islands and its conservation is regionally and provincially important.
Environment and Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential visual impacts of new cropping systems or new farming structures. “To protect scenic views and the natural /historic setting unique to Ruckle Park” Conservation of heritage view corridor Changes in farm uses, such as re-introducing fruit trees, new crops or animals have potential impacts on the heritage viewscape. Design and location of facilities must be consistent with heritage conservation goals. e.g. location of signs, trails, service areas. Farming practices can negatively affect soil and water
Farm Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicts between farming and recreational use e.g. Park visitors entering crop and animal areas. Impact on humans, wildlife and ecosystems caused by farming practices, including ground water use, pest control methods, tillage, vegetation removal. (Example: a) farm animals grazing in natural areas. b) hedge rows important for wildlife movement were replaced with fences in the past. Hedgerows have since grown back) Introduction of exotic species in seed mixtures
Fish and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicts between farming and conservation of natural values e.g. park is home to blue listed bird species
Tenancy Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to plan ahead for eventual transfer of farm and residence tenancies to BC Parks.
Access and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impacts caused by increased use of old roads, trails and/or construction of new buildings or roads.
Safety and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing potential impacts of farming practices on park users.
Recreation and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced quality of recreation/education experience due to lack of interpretive opportunities about the farm. Develop interpretive plan for the Working and Heritage farms

Management Strategy

General Strategy

Generally the type, scale and pattern of future farm production uses within the Resource Use Zone will be similar to the current and historic farm production uses, within standards that will ensure natural and cultural resource conservation. (see draft list, APPENDIX 3) It is also recognized that farming enterprises remain viable and vital over time by responding to changing market conditions by adopting new crops and methods. Planning for the working farm is a task in conserving the past, but also one of managing change. At various times in the past, Ruckle Farm has supported dairy cattle, beef cattle, orchards, vegetable growing, wool sheep and butcher lambs, and wild berry gathering. In the spirit of a working farm it is expected that there may be changes in the farming land uses of Ruckle Farm. However, while shifts to new crops in areas of the farm may be feasible, where aesthetic and visual impacts could be acceptable, approval of significant new uses or significant expansion of existing uses in the Farm Zone is not contemplated prior to the establishment of a revised Management Plan for the park.

Management of heritage buildings, landscape and viewsheds is a critical issue in park management and all farm uses will be assessed to ensure that cultural values are not impaired.

Farm management will:

- Ensure that its provincially significant cultural heritage and recreational values are protected.
- Encourage public understanding appreciation and enjoyment of the farm in a manner that maintains the heritage values
- Facilitate the assumption of farm operations by BC Parks through a park use permit with a non-profit society or individual
- Recognize that transfer of tenures to BC Parks may be phased over time.
- statement about interpretive approach and inclusiveness of other histories besides the farm –i.e. first nations – layered history

Priority Farm Management Objectives and Strategies

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
<p>Plan the future transfer of Working Farm to BC Parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with the Ruckle Family about the Farm Plan • Document a process, satisfactory to both parties, by which the farm operations and management will transfer to BC Parks. This transfer may occur in phases. • Prepare alternative transition plans if required, to ensure a smooth transition whether lead-time is long or short. • In the event that farm lands transfer to parks prior to the life tenancy dwellings, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensure Ruckle family members who continue to reside on the property continue to receive the same services that they do at present - firewood cut, driveway plowed in case of snow, external repairs to residence, and assistance with garden. b) Ruckle family continue to enjoy amenities and privacy of residences and their immediate surroundings. c) Operator of the working farm would have use of farmlands and farm buildings in the working farm area (including the Norman Ruckle house for a residence), except gardens and residences that the Ruckle family uses as part of the Lifetime Tenancy agreement. • Consult the Lifetime Tenancy Agreement and Gentleman's Agreement (Appendix A) • Continue to maintain buildings as stated in the sale agreement
<p>Protect the natural values of the park</p> <p>– these strategies would be implemented at the time of working farm transfer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasize organic farming methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – suggest agricultural methods will be Certified “Organic” within the Working Farm and Heritage Farm area. • Where possible, use farming methods that improve the natural values of the park • Maintain fencing around grazing areas to protect conservation areas of the park, while maintaining sheltered areas for animals. • If compatible farming uses cannot be established for marginal farm lands, consider regenerating a portion of lands with native vegetation in areas that do not impact on the open landscape character. Use regeneration area for demonstration and education.

Protect the recreational values of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to manage for appropriate level of recreational use • Continue to design fencing, trails, signage and parking to separate farm and park visitor uses.
Protect cultural heritage values of the park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the unique landscape features that show the historic farming land use scale and pattern of the Gulf Islands • Preserve the landscape character of the farm, including the open viewscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that future agricultural operations do not compromise the integrity of the visual and cultural landscape. • Develop a list of acceptable farm land uses • Maintain the general scale and pattern of fields and hedgerows that exist at the present time. (This pattern has existed for much of the farming history - it is essentially what was put in place at the time the land was first cleared) • Identify visual conservation zones as may be required to maintain open views over farming areas from primary viewing locations – i.e. roads and trails; while allowing new farm uses and structures.(see appendix for draft) • Any park use permit for farming will contain provision that the permittee will consult with and obtain approval from BC Parks prior to planning or implementing the alteration of existing buildings or structures, or the construction of new facilities. <p>Ongoing strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to gather and document information about past working farm uses and practices. • To continue working closely with the Ruckle family to gain more knowledge and understanding of Ruckle Park. • Documentation of land use history and cultural inventory • Encourage further research of the history of the park, for example, by an advisory group, a society, or students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Service Delivery Model - Park Use Permit • To continue to operate the agricultural land “in a farm-oriented manner sensitive to the historic and preservation/conservation objectives” of BC Parks, as stated in the Management Plan (p. 38). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate the working farm at least BC Parks involvement and financial support, consistent with attaining the vision for farm operation and heritage interpretation. • Farm Park Use Permit will contain provision that : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principles for private sector investment in parks apply: investments and improvements in lands or buildings become the property of BC Parks. - The permittee submit a fully detailed farm management plan to BC Parks for approval. This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. - Ensure park users receive reasonable assistance and helpful service • Consider drafting an interim park use permit or contract and proposal call to be used in the event that the Ruckles ask BC Parks to assume operation of the farm at short notice (less than one year) • Put forward an “expression of interest” to assess the types

	<p>and quality of operators who would be willing to operate the farm/interpretive programs/park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with Agriculture BC, research viable options for the working farm, including water availability and management, soil quality, crop varieties, acreage, marketing, etc; (see Appendix 5), and obtain order of magnitude levels of capital investment necessary for establishing various agricultural operations options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage and expand community involvement in cultural heritage conservation and appreciation of the farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the involvement of volunteers and consider establishing a society to assist in the preservation and presentation of heritage values • Consider establishing a community advisory group to assist in providing guidance and recommendations for specific Ruckle Park projects. • Identify Henry Ruckle House interior and kitchen garden area as a focal point for heritage interpretation and volunteer participation. • Prepare conservation and use plan for the interior of Henry Ruckle House and seek donations for this project • Commission a volunteer group to form an advisory board and prepare terms of reference and business plan for Henry Ruckle House and garden.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the heritage resources of the farm areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an interpretive plan for the working and heritage farms • Develop restoration plans for historic plantings as appropriate, including orchards, kitchen gardens and ornamental plantings • Establish and interpret heritage gardens. • Consider planting historic varieties and demonstrations of crops and animals that existed in the farm's past. • Plan for the farm in the context of other historic working farms in the region and across Canada. • Continue to research the variety of crops, types of animals, and methods of farming that the Ruckles utilized in the heritage area. • Encourage the establishment of past crops and animals, such as apples, rhubarb, hay, sheep, seed potatoes, wheat, oats, etc. (Ella Anna planted and sold rhubarb from a hedgerow planting near HRH) • Interpret the historical significance of these crops. • Create an information centre and/or museum at Henry Ruckle House . When Ruckle Family residences transfer to BC Parks, assess space requirements and resources and allocate interpretive and park uses as appropriate to these buildings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development of the forge by interested blacksmith group. • Expand community activities such as Ruckle Farm Day – hold these activities more often. • Consider installing signs along trails with farm views to interpret the history of the farm and use of the fields. • Consider offering guided historical tours of the heritage farm area or trails adjacent to the working farm, heritage farm, and heritage farm buildings.
Continue to preserve significant heritage buildings and structures associated with the farm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to preserve, stabilize, reconstruct, conserve, leave in their existing condition, or restore farm buildings, as proposed in Jonathan Yardley's <u>Building Restoration Feasibility Study</u> for Ruckle Park, (1997 and 2001), subsequent studies, and communications, as funding becomes available. • Promote fund raising campaign for restoration

APPENDIX 1

Park Use Permit Content Outline

This overview is based on the Park Use Permit developed for Churn Creek Protected Area, Cariboo District, Williams Lake, BC.

Permit Area Description

- Boundaries
- Structures
- Fields
- Water Supply & Management

Purpose

- Farm Operations, - list appropriate uses, see Appendix 3
- Agro-Tourism operation – list size, location, and scale of operations

Special Provisions

- Insurance
- Operating Plan (Ruckles would know what is in this plan and supply comment if still resident on property)
- Facilities Maintenance
- Major Repairs
- Fences
- Water Management
- Water Systems
- Field Irrigation
- Weed Control
- Hayfields
- Hay Sales
- Public Relations
- Relations with Ruckle Family

APPENDIX 2 - Agreements

1. Lifetime Tenancy Agreement (1973)

“The right to occupy and to farm the currently farmed portion of the park in the style and on the scale in which it has been in the past for the lifetimes or as long as they wish of the following people:

Henry Gordon Ruckle

Lotus Lillian Ruckle

Mary Gwendolyn Ruckle

Ella Anna Ruckle

Helen Agnes Ruckle

Gordon Henry Ruckle

There were no successor rights to other family members.

The commitment includes the right to replace any existing building destroyed by fire or other cause by the life occupants at their discretion. It was also recommended that the buildings and contents be adequately covered by loss insurance in case of fire or other damage.

The farmed portion of the park referred to in the Lifetime Tenancy Agreement was determined to be approximately 131 acres [corrected to 200 acres in Dave Chater correspondence, July 24, 1997, same file] and encompasses essentially all the existing cleared/fences areas.

It was subsequently determined that in lieu of the significant donation to the Province to create the park by the Ruckles that no property taxes would be levied.

2. Gentleman’s Agreement

“No development will take place without the Ruckle Family’s approval to ensure that current farming activities are not hindered.

Development in the farm interpretation zone will conform to the existing architectural motif.

Developments will not be permitted which will infringe upon or alter the distinctive cultural landscape.

Sheep grazing will be confined to the immediate farm area and remainder of the park will be permitted to return to a natural condition.”

Associated Agreements (1972)

Wood Cutting

Permitted to remove trees from the farm for personal uses (e.g. firewood, fencing). Trees not to be cleared for commercial activities such as firewood, Christmas trees, or timber sales.

APPENDIX 3 - Guidelines for Agricultural Uses within Ruckle Farm

Agricultural tourism, involving the public in agricultural operations, demonstrations, or workshops on a commercial basis, may be a viable option for Ruckle Park. In the immediate future it is not likely, however, that the public will directly participate in farm activities on the working farm. Nevertheless, there are other opportunities for agricultural tourism at Ruckle Park, such as Ruckle Farm Day.

Area	Uses Permitted	Uses not Permitted
Heritage Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Grazing– Hay– Animals – sheep– Vegetable growing– Orchard (within limits of historic orchard)– Farming demonstrations– Orchard tree maintenance, restoration & harvesting only within historic limits of orchard– Kitchen and Ornamental Garden restoration – for demonstration and consumption– Displays, interpretive programs, in buildings or outdoors– Displays, gift shop, refreshments, in Henry Ruckle House– Special Events in grounds, barn, Henry Ruckle House and other structures.– In field areas, consider emphasizing uses that can allow increased public access for interpretation and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– No other uses permitted

Working Farm - Landscape “View Corridor” – land visible from the Heritage farm and Beaver Point Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Traditional Farm Landscape – Visual Conservation Zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Same as above, and cattle, goats, chickens, – Demonstration – Gulf Islands Farming history, practice. – Horse rides – Agri-tourism – Interpretive programs – Farm stay opportunities in existing buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New Buildings – New Roads – No new trees other than orchard – Exotic Animals
Balance of Farm Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All uses above, and : – Vineyard – organic grapes – Christmas trees – Any new structures to accommodate farm activities must be of appropriate scale and visually compatible with the farm landscape. May include: greenhouses, Winery , barns, New accommodation/ i.e. cabins for farm stay 	
Natural Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Vegetation Management Exotic Species control 	

APPENDIX 4 - Interpretive and Cultural Resource Package

Request Ruckle family to continue to assist with completing some aspects of this.

- Ken Pedlow, Ruckle Provincial Park – A Documentary History (1984)
- Historical sections of the Ruckle Provincial Park Farm Operation and Historic Interpretation Background Report (2001)
- Interviews with the Gwen and Lotus Ruckle conducted by BC Parks. More interviews may be conducted.
- Interviews with the Ruckle Family and people associated with the Ruckle Farm and Ruckle Park that are located at the Salt Spring Island Sound Archives.
- Cultural Landscape Inventory of Ruckle Park
- Information from the Provincial Archives of British Columbia relating to the history of Ruckle Park
- An inventory of the Ruckle family's historically significant household items. This inventory would require the permission and participation of the Ruckle family. The inventory would be written (date, description, use, significance, etc) and photographic and could include their furniture, wooden items constructed by Alfred Ruckle, furniture in the other houses, currently unidentified machinery (there are some pieces near the Daniel Henry Ruckle house), Alfred Ruckle's gun collection, photographs, Gwen Ruckle's paintings.
- Discuss with the Ruckle family the acquisition/donation of farm and household items that are significant to the history of Ruckle Farm
- An inventory of the existing orchards and gardens, with additional historical information provided by the Ruckle family.
- An inventory of buildings and structures in the park relating how they have been used and altered over time.

APPENDIX 5 – History of Ruckle Farm

History of Ruckle Park

By s.22

E-Team Intern

The history of the Ruckle family is central to that of Ruckle Park. The park's cultural history also extends to other families and land-users, and goes beyond the boundaries of the modern farm.

Evidence of First Nations land use at Ruckle Park includes middens, interior camping sites and boulder cairns. The Saanich and Cowichan people travelled to Salt Spring Island. First Nations people gathered shellfish off the coast and hunted in the interior of Ruckle Park. Gwen's family has several hundred arrow heads that they found while plowing the fields of the farm. A bibliography from Parks Canada, Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy Park Annotated Bibliography of First Nations Land Use, written by Cox, Kennedy and Bouchard, should allow us to expand our knowledge of the First Nations history of Salt Spring Island.

Non-Native settlement at Ruckle Park began in the 1870s. Land was granted to settlers in southwest British Columbia at this time through the pre-emption system. Settlers could pre-empt 160 acres of land (a quarter section), and once they made improvements to it such as clearing land for crops or animals, building a house, and building fences, they could purchase it for a dollar an acre. Many settlers on Salt Spring Island took advantage of the pre-emption system without becoming what the government would consider "successful" pre-emptors: they pre-empted land then abandoned it when they found better land, or they lived rent-free, maybe selling the timber, without purchasing their property.⁶ In the 1870s and 1880s, six men, including Henry Ruckle, pre-empted land in what is now Ruckle Park, and two of them abandoned their land without purchasing it. The settlers came from countries such as Ireland, Germany and Hawaii. By the 1880s Henry Ruckle had purchased much of the land in Ruckle Park but it was not until 1948 that the Ruckle family owned all of the land in the present park.

Henry Ruckle pre-empted 160 acres in 1872 and with the help of Japanese labourers to clear his land he was already selling meat and vegetables to a surveyor two years later. In 1877, Ruckle married Ella Anna Christensen, a Norwegian widow with a young son, Alfred. Henry hired a construction firm from Victoria to build the red and white house that stands there now, but it did not have a kitchen, so Ella Anna had to hire a local contractor to add one on later. Henry was considered the businessman and Ella Anna the farmer. Henry rowed to North Saanich and New Westminster to sell eggs, butter, and lambs. He eventually built a wharf at Beaver Point at which the CPR steamer made a stop. Ella Anna grew rhubarb to sell to the Hudson's Bay Company and remained at home with her four children and a guard dog. First Nations retained a presence on the land. In 1895 the farm Ruckle farm area was 100 acres. The Ruckle family was growing wheat, oats, peas, hay, turnips, potatoes, and raising various livestock. They also had a 600 tree orchard of apples, pears, and cherries. They sent the Bartlett Pears from this orchard to the cannery in Sidney.

⁶ For more information on settlement and landowning on Salt Spring Island, see chapters and articles by Ruth Sandwell

John Peavine Kahon, a Hawaiian, pre-empted land to the west of the Ruckles, built a cabin and grew an orchard and garden in the 1880s. When his wife died in childbirth in the early 1890s, he left. The Ruckles acquired his property, rented the house to schoolteachers at the nearby Beaver Point School, and eventually directed water from a nearby spring to houses and farmbuildings at the Ruckle Farm.

In the early 20th century, the Ruckle sons Alfred and Daniel Henry were old enough to contribute significantly to the farm work. They married, built their own houses near their parents' and joined local agricultural associations. In 1905, Alfred Ruckle married Helen Martha Margison. Neighbour Charles Beddis, who constructed other homes on Salt Spring Island, helped Alfred build his house, which is now the residence of Lotus and Gwen Ruckle. Daniel Henry Ruckle married Mary Galloway Patterson in 1908 and built the house north of Beaver Point Rd which is now a home for his daughter Helen Ruckle. Alfred Ruckle served as director of the Islands Agriculture and Fruit Growers Association, and Daniel Henry Ruckle was a member of the school board, director of the Salt Spring Creamery Association, and member of the BC Egg and Poultry Cooperative Association.

Competition from Okanagan fruit growers lessened the profitability of the orchard, which the Ruckles dramatically reduced. The Ruckles then focussed on raising sheep and dairy cattle, selling milk to the Salt Spring Island Creamery. Henry Ruckle died in 1913. Omadan, a Japanese man hired by the Ruckle brothers to help with the farm, lived with his wife in a building that has been moved to form half of the pighouse located near the main barn. In the 1910s the Ruckles were purchasing supplies such as grocery staples, fruit and nut trees, farm equipment, clothing, fertilizer and hardware from Victoria and selling produce such as potatoes, eggs and cream to the province's capital. In 1914 Captain Arthur Cecil Good established a store by Beaver Point wharf. Mary Galloway Patterson Ruckle's brother, William Patterson and his wife Emma purchased the store about a year later and William also took over the role of postmaster at Beaver Point.

From the 1880s to 1931, the McLennan family held land north of the Peavine pre-emption. Daniel Henry Ruckle's sons Gordon and Norman worked on the McLennan farm and the McLennan sons worked on the Ruckle farm as a cooperative exchange. From 1913 to 1931, Douglas Stuart McLennan and Daniel Henry Ruckle co-owned much of this land. Other neighbours also helped the Ruckle family with their farm work.

In 1930, Daniel Henry and Mary Ruckle's son Gordon Ruckle married Lotus Fraser and they moved into Gordon's grandparents' house. The house had been used for plucking chickens and was home to an incubator. Their daughter Gwen remembers being mesmerized by the hatching eggs when she was a child. Gordon's brother Norman built a house in the mid-1930s for his upcoming wedding. The wedding did not take place and his house became storage space for potatoes instead. The house now doubles as a residence for farmer Mike Lane and as a park headquarters. Lotus raised her two children, prepared meals for the family and farm workers, made butter, and raised lambs (apart from the ones who looked after themselves on the periphery of the farm). Lotus established a terraced garden behind her house. Kitchen gardens continue to be important for food production and as components of the cultural landscape at Ruckle. The family kept cattle and grew crops such as wheat, oats, and potatoes, on a six year rotation in the fields.

The 1940s were prosperous years for the Ruckle farm. The men slaughtered animals for Salt Spring Island farmers. Daniel Henry decided to cut timber off the woodlands and sell it. The cutting of timber allowed his grandchildren Gwen and Henry to

pick and sell brambleberries growing in the slash, and the sale of the wood meant that his daughter-in-law Lotus could purchase a gas washing machine so she no longer had to wash the butchering sheets by hand. The Ruckles could afford to purchase a tractor and phased out the use of horses on the farm. In 1951, the Patterson store followed the ferry and relocated to Fulford Harbour. Lotus learned to spin and she and her daughter Gwen made socks and sweaters out of wool that was worth little otherwise. They sold the socks to Japanese fishermen at the Patterson's store.

The Ruckles harvested natural resources in addition to berries and timber. They canned or smoked the deer and salmon that they hunted and fished. They exchanged apples for herring from the Japanese fishermen. They sold pheasants to the Empress Hotel that had originated from a nest found in a field.

Daniel Henry's half-brother Alfred and his wife Helen withdrew from farm activities that were mostly carried out by Daniel and his two sons, Gordon and Norman. Alfred made and played violins, he built boats and grew strawberries. Helen made rugs from the wool of the farm sheep.

The 1960s and 70s brought more changes to the farming way of life. In the 1960s the Ruckle farm got electricity. After the death of Daniel Henry in 1972, the family decided to sell the property to the provincial government to be a park which would be a legacy to their farming history. Camping and recreation were not new land-uses at Ruckle Park, however. A family from Victoria camped on the beach in the summer when Gwen was young. When Gwen was older, she camped at her own beach to the north. The Ruckle family continues to operate their farm in the midst of the park.

The Ruckle family's involvement in the almost 1000 acre Ruckle Park began with a pre-emption of 160 acres in 1872. The family bought up the adjacent land and turned it into a viable farm surrounded by woodlands used for grazing, timber, hunting and berrying. The history of Ruckle Park includes the other land-owners and land-users over the park's history, such as First Nations people, temporary pre-emptors, neighbouring farmers, hired labourers, and store owners. The Ruckles operated within an economic web that extended to Vancouver Island and the mainland. Women and men worked in different roles on the farm to produce goods for sustenance or trade. The history of Ruckle Park was and continues to be shaped by a variety of people and the different ways that they use and perceive the land.

