



## DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

### Steering Committee

Tuesday, October 13, 2015  
 Colwood Municipal Hall, Committee Room

**Present:** Lara (Cohlmeyer) Martens, Nathan Fisk, Beth Mitchell, Joe Richardson, Katheryn Robertson, Judy Nault, Jason Nault, Jody Watson, Kitty Lloyd

**Guests:** Jacques Sirois

DECISIONS			
Move ahead with installation of the interpretive sign and mural, if Esquimalt and Songhees Nations are in agreement at this time.			
<b>Next Meeting: 8 December 2015</b>			
ACTIONS		ACTION BY	DUE
1	Request that Colwood put links to ELSI website on theirs	Kitty	ASAP
2	Send ideas for ELSI 2016 Work Plan to Kitty	All	Dec. 8 Meeting
3	Send Jacques contact info for BC Shorespawners Alliance	Beth	ASAP
4	Forward electronic copy of Victoria Harbour MBS poster to ELSI	Kitty	ASAP
5	Incorporate suggestions for map and image into ELSI display	Kitty	Winter
6	Contact Jason Nault regarding photos for display	Kitty	ASAP
7	Contact Esquimalt and Songhees Nations about installing the signs and mural	Kitty/Jody	Fall

## INFORMATION

### **Presentation: Friends of Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary**

#### **Jacques Sirois**

Two events inspired him to start doing something to raise awareness about the Victoria Harbour MBS – talking with Joe Richardson at the ELSI display Fort Rodd Hill and meeting the folks at Shoal Harbour MBS (near Sidney)

- VHMBBS was established in 1923 to rein in market hunting
- Boundaries extend from Ten Mile Point, along the Oak Bay and Victoria waterfront to Macaulay Pt and includes Trial Island and all of Victoria Harbour, Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet; 1840 hectares total
- During 1930s and '40s – MBS was basically ignored as industrialization and urbanization occurred throughout harbour and the Gorge area
- Attempts to de-list it started in 1950s – same thing happened at Esquimal Lagoon and Shoal Harbour

- Efforts since 1990s to “rewild” and restore the Gorge have revitalized the harbour
- Now marbled murrelets, sea otters, elephant seals have been seen in the MBS, and four species of whale are frequently seen in the area (Orca, humpback, Gray, minke)
- 1000s of common murrelets, lots of other sea bird activity, wildlife seems to be coming back, or at least not disappearing; Purple Martins too
- With three MBS’s in the region, we should be on the same page, inviting ELSI to join a regional conversation
- CWS is working on establishing a marine protected area at the Scott Islands, why not similar thing here?
- Greater Victoria – best urban marine and coastal environment in western Canada
- One of the reasons for relatively few birds is loss of herring in Salish Sea, herring are a crucial part of the coastal ecosystem
- Are people aware of what’s happening in Howe Sound? Amazing herring recovery program there, entire food chain has flourished, including killer whales, dolphins, thousands of surf scoters and gulls, etc; this could happen in Victoria too
- 20,000 birds have been seen south of Oak Bay, large flocks possibly associated with herring schools
- Songhees and Esquimalt term for the area is Lekwungen – land of the smoked herring
- Beth:
  - has photos of 3km of beach covered in herring spawn in 2013, from Albert Head to Esquimalt Lagoon bridge
  - This summer, saw sand lance along the beach at Coburg Peninsula
  - Beth will put Jacques in touch with BC shorespawners alliance – Ramona de Graaf
  - Lagoon has had huge anchovy spawns, 1000s of gulls here 3 weeks ago, feeding on anchovies
  - there was a small herring spawn at the lagoon last spring
  - saw a young beaver at the lagoon in the spring
- Friends of Shoal Harbour MBS group has established annual “All Bufflehead Day”, it’s this week, when buffleheads return to the coast on 293<sup>rd</sup> day of the year (+/- 2 days)
- Anchovies were cleaned out of the Gorge by gold rush workers in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century
- We have a fantastic package of marine nature here in Victoria; would like to build a regional initiative
- Joe: need to set up something as for the fish monitoring, somewhere to document and store information
- 12 volunteers doing beach bird surveys, coastal waterbird surveys, bird disturbance surveys
- School of anchovies at Kitty Islets a while ago – maybe because of an influx of warmer water?
- Big conversation unfolding through Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps, aim is to create an urban UNESCO Biosphere Reserve; an unusual urban biosphere reserve
- Jacques is on his own doing this; he’s in touch with top bird watchers, even they have not heard of the Vic Hbr MBS
- Wants Fort Rodd Hill to be part of the story as well
- Jacques provided a poster he has developed to help promote the concept; working toward the centennial of 2023 as a goal

**ACTION:** Forward electronic copy of Victoria Harbour MBS poster to ELSI

**Development Updates:**

**Pacific Landing:**

- Judy thinks that construction will start around mid-October

Has any restoration work been destroyed? Yes, but it's work that volunteers did outside the riparian area

They have built a concrete block patio into the riparian, City thought since it's not a building it was okay

- Bee Creek – Joe and his helpers have surveyed fish there 3 times recently, talked to Dale Fish (construction manager) about this, and there is no problem to continue with fish monitoring
- The project is going to public hearing Oct. 22, Jason thinks it may be to request to stagger the development cost charges

**Subdivision on Anchorage Ave:**

- Cascadia Consulting has replanted the riparian area with native shrubs

**Review of new ELSI display and map:**

Members reviewed the draft map and photographs that will be part of the new display.

Comments:

- Make map include more land area around the lagoon
- Could put a map of the entire watershed on a separate display on the back of the 3-fold display frame
- Include more information about the fish, birds, other natural features of the lagoon
- Use icons rather than shading and polygons to show natural features; could maybe use icons we have from the Gorge Waterway map project
- Use MBS logo and include the date of establishment (1931)
- Ideas for photos: ask Jason Nault if he has some that might be suitable; osprey, Purple martin and nest boxes at RRU, Caspian tern were suggested

**ACTION:** Take suggestions to CRD communications and mapping staff for new display draft

**ACTION:** Contact Jason regarding photos for display

**Discussion: 2016 Work Plan:**

What about talking to Colwood Parks about starting a volunteer restoration project in Pit House Park, below Ocean Grove?

- Broom is very large and will require a brush cutter
- Water (Selleck Creek) enters property through a pipe, floods the field, it's now a marsh that is providing good habitat for shore birds to nest and forage; provides a refuge from surrounding areas being cleared and developed
- Could take on a corner and start small, only start what we think can be accomplished

How is Parks Canada dealing with invasive species?

- Nathan: trying to be strategic in dealing with invasive plant management and restoration, only have so much personnel, he sees no point in planning for more than 2 years; this winter they will re-prioritize for areas used by birds and Species at Risk, review progress after 2 years

- Should be coordination between all the groups working on different areas around the lagoon in managing invasive plants; ensure everyone is working on same priority species and using similar techniques
- FRH has talked with RRU to align efforts along common borders; looking at critical habitat for species at risk, concentrating on those areas and removing invasive species there with their volunteer groups; also planning for big storms predicted for the coming winter, address possible shoreline erosion and other effects

For 2016, FRH planning to review lessons learned, identify the most important thing to do, concentrate on crucial habitats and issues, pick best spot to focus efforts

What would ELSI like to see done 2016?

- Beth: Cindy Moyer suggested that we contact Royal Bay Secondary School, they are interested in developing a science-based community initiative, want to get students out doing field work in the area

Other thoughts for 2016 work plan will be considered at next meeting

**ACTION:** Send ideas for 2016 ELSI Work Plan to Kitty

### **CRD Harbour Program Updates:**

- **Water Quality Objectives:**
  - Draft report is still with the province waiting for their input; province is concentrating efforts right now on real problem areas like Elk/Beaver Lake
  - Transportation is included in our draft WQOs, linking data to roads and amount of road use, fragmentation of habitat by roads; this is a different way to look at the watershed data and different metrics now being used
- Jody requested a budget increase for the Harbours Program in order to do the harbour inventories, since we didn't get the grant from National Wetland Conservation Fund; provisional budget approval may be in November
- Trying to get First Nations involved with Integrated Watershed Management; Jacques's idea of establishing a biosphere reserve may align well with First Nations' goals of re-establishing traditional land and water uses in the harbours
- **Sewage treatment:** site announcement and details have been delayed for various reasons
  - Had a discussion with Colwood engineers – sounds as though Colwood Creek is no longer being considered as a possible discharge area for treated effluent

Beth: A couple of times during the summer she observed at the Royal Bay Bakery parking lot being washed down with sudsy material, and a day or so later foam showed up at the lagoon; runoff from this parking lot discharges into Selleck Creek

Jason reported about the insulin needles showing up at the lagoon last week; quick response from Colwood Parks to clean them up daily

### **Coordinator Updates:**

- **Beach Clean-up:** September 13 – good showing from students and faculty from Pearson College, no show from BC Hydro. Not really much garbage there, lots of cigarette butts
- Planning to meet with Pearson College students in early November to talk about lagoon ecosystems

**Meeting with Colwood CAO and staff:**

- Kitty and Jody met with Gary Nason, Colwood interim CAO, and Iain Bourhill, Senior Planner, to clarify the role of ELSI and flow of information from Colwood staff to ELSI.
- General frustration at ELSI table, seems like Colwood doesn't know about the existing agreements on some of the developments
- From Colwood perspective, they have a small staff to deal with a massive number of developments coming at them, they have a resource crunch
- Gary recognized that there is a lot of expertise at the ELSI table, a good resource for Colwood
- Colwood has grown to the point where there needs to be a more formalized process for consultation, make clear guidelines for how information gets passed along to ELSI
- ELSI role is not the same as a Colwood committee
- Colwood proposed that ELSI should be treated as a referral agency, and given adequate time to provide a response to development proposals, rezoning, etc
- Once proposed developments in the lagoon area have their plans outlined, for example at the OCP amendment stage, ELSI would have an opportunity for input.
- Three primary triggers for a request for input from ELSI:
  - Rezoning
  - Development Permit application
  - OCP amendment
- A memo such as the one presented at the Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> meeting could be prepared and submitted for each ELSI meeting
- Iain agreed that Colwood staff would continue to come to each ELSI meeting
- There needs to be a reasonable expectation regarding possible timelines for receiving a response from ELSI
- Colwood agreed to try and provide updates in a more timely manner so that ELSI members have time to formally respond and provide input
- It's difficult for Colwood staff to be prepared for all possible questions regarding a particular topic or development.

**First Nations Mural and Signs:**

- Colwood recognizes that the ceremonies and other requirements for reparation of the damage done during the lagoon sewage pump station installation will be a long and complicated process
- Colwood recommends that ELSI go ahead and work with Esquimalt and Songhees Nations to install the signs and mural, if that is acceptable to them. This could be considered as a start on the healing process, rather than using the installation as a way to mark the end of that process
- Healing process can be a separate process that Colwood will continue to work on

**ACTION:** Contact Esquimalt and Songhees Nations about installing the signs and mural

**Partner Updates:**

- **Joe/fish monitoring:** lots of coho in the creeks, new volunteers have come forward, mostly through the Colwood Community Association
- **Judy/Bee Creek:** Green Team work party just after last ELSI meeting, about 20 people came, lots of sword fern and Oregon grape moved

- Judy is continuing as a volunteer with the Bee Creek group; landscaping work at Pacific Landing includes a few hours for community work
- **Katheryn/Colwood Community Association:** moving to Gabriola Is, but someone else will continue coming to the ELSI meetings
  - Lots of fragmentation in Colwood, many neighbourhoods don't necessarily know what each other is doing; one aim of the association is helping to pull all groups together and help with each others' projects
- **Jason/Colwood council:** Development of property beside Royal Roads Coffee Shop is going to Council for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings; plan to build a boarding school in front, residences in back; 4 stories, limited parking, grades 8 – 12; 80 – 100 students
- **Nathan, Lara/Fort Rodd Hill:** working on the native plant nursery within the field unit that includes all west coast parks; not much work on the foreshore, keeping an eye on the birds that use the area at the foreshore; beach is degraded, mostly logs now, not much just sand there; looking into how they can improve the sand habitat; wrapping up the summer visitor season
  - Beth – suggests Fort Rodd Hill contact the BC Shore Spawners Alliance about doing a survey of the shore there

**Meeting adjourned: 4:30pm**