



DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

Steering Committee
Tuesday, January 21, 2020
Colwood Municipal Hall

Present: Maria Bremner, Owain McKibben, Iain Bourhill, Tami Kempton, Judy Nault, Jason Nault, Bev Deets, Rod Huszar, Gayle Johnston, Terry Phipps, Ken Morgan (via phone), Jody Watson, Kitty Lloyd

Guests: Sue Scott (UVic RNS student), Patty Menning (DFO), Erin Roberts (CWS), Robert Earl (Colwood)

DECISIONS				
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Next Meeting: April 13, 2020				
ACTIONS			ACTION BY	DUE
1	Create an InfoSheet about rollover events at the lagoon, what it looks like, what it is, why it happens		Spring	Spring 2020
2	Follow up RE Pit House Park volunteers, groups to contact Colwood staff to express their interest		Kitty/Judy	ASAP
3	Send link to survey RE Draft Strategic Plan for Colwood		Kitty	Done
4	Send invitation to Harbours Speakers Series – Sea Level Rise		Kitty	done
5	Send out call for volunteers for Green Crab monitoring		Kitty	April 15 training

INFORMATION

Review of Action Items from October 22, 2019 meeting:

- The Green Crab monitoring group decided that purchasing chest waders was not recommended as a size range would be needed, and waders are not needed at this time.
- Friends of Pit House Park:
 - ten people expressed interest, but they have not heard anything since I sent emails around
 - Iain – group should contact Colwood staff about next steps

ACTION –Judy offered to follow up. Kitty to send a note to the group to get that started

Presentation: Canadian Wildlife Service Signage at Esquimalt Lagoon Erin Roberts, Canadian Wildlife Service (see attached slide presentation)

- CWS is part of Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Mandate is to help manage Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and National Protected Areas
- Issue of renewing the signage at lagoon has come up frequently
- Esquimalt Lagoon MBS was established in 1931 when the biggest threat to birds was hunting
- Where is the boundary on outside of Coburg Peninsula?
 - Legal definition of that boundary is not clear, does not address the outer side of the spit
 - CWS is getting legal clarification on “lands covered by water” terminology
 - There is ambiguity, especially with respect to dogs on leash bylaw enforcement on the seaward side of the spit
 - Colwood staff recommended to council to amend the municipal bylaw to include the 100m boundary so they could remove that ambiguity, but council turned it down
- Important to note that CWS does not own this land, different type of stewardship
- Prohibitions in the regulations are defined
- Other than pets on leash, main regulations apply to hunting
- Facts: coastal waterbird survey data: 881 records, higher diversity on outside of the lagoon; does not capture the summer data
- Winter habitat: large numbers of waterfowl use the nearshore in winter, slightly offshore, more fish-eating waterfowl , including some threatened and species of special concern
- Summer habitat: shorebird migration stopover, e.g. plovers, sandpipers; nesting habitat – oystercatchers, killdeer (dunes)
- Check out website: state of Canada’s birds 2019, interesting graph <http://nabci.net/resources/state-of-canadas-birds-2019/>
- Signage: in order for CWS to enforce regulations, these need to be posted
- Suggestion: put a sticker or decal on each garbage can
- Q: what is planned level of enforcement?
 - CWS team has grown, but there is still a limited capacity to enforce
- Comment: education is another approach, need to define where the sanctuary is on the sign;
- Iain: at ELSI meeting a year ago, he reported that Colwood council gave go ahead to create signage in coordination with CWS
- Comment: there are trails on RRU property where signs could be installed
- RRU already has a on leash regulations
- Another option for signage, with information about why regulations are important
- Both types of signs are needed (regulatory and educational)
- Comment: Any capacity to add language about not feeding birds? This is a bigger problem than dogs. Also garbage, parking, kids chasing birds, geocaching, nurdles, human waste, gulls can get into the garbage cans.
- A: Points are well taken, need to look at some of these issues,
- People are feeding birds so much that birds now approach even people with a dog, they are not afraid

- Lots of frustration expressed, but today we are talking about what CWS can bring to the table, maybe bird feeding issue is a problem we can discuss at another time with Colwood
- CWS – focus on dogs in the MBS, since they are obliged to enforce this aspect
- Two options, regulatory and education
- CWS could commission a local designer to replace and update the large signs presently at the lagoon
- VNHS has offered to contribute to signs in the past
- Around the table comments on options for sign content:
 - Need a large sign at entrances
 - Highlight where off leash area is
 - Need to refresh large VNHS signs; need to be readable, very visual, fewer words,
 - Be mindful of having too many signs, they get overlooked
 - DFO would like to add a sign with information about European green crabs, could be a partner in signage effort
 - Missing a big opportunity to have a large sign with map, should include First Nations information
 - Interpretive signs good but there are too many, need a map, bullets with do's and don'ts; need a big sign saying "this is a MBS"
 - Media attention may help
 - Would like to see educational as well as regulatory signage, well posted on both ends of the lagoon, too much info to add to signs, like idea of signs on garbage cans
 - Keep information positive rather than don't do this and that
 - Reward people who do the right thing?
 - Big signs are okay but drab, need large print and brighter, simple positive info, to explain that this is a precious area for the birds; signs on garbage cans good idea
 - Put signs on bathroom doors, lots of traffic there
 - Regulatory signs are needed, but likely that it will be Colwood staff enforcing regulations; need to have a regulations sign that both teams can enforce; overall prefers educational approach
 - Not enough of a bylaw team to enforce regulations, so education should be a priority; especially signs that attract kids, 2 huge priorities: chasing of birds by people and dogs, and feeding of birds
 - Signs that combine Colwood and CWS regulations
 - We've had this conversation for 20 years, need a soft stick approach
 - Needs to be communication with Sandra Russell, coordinate with CWS

Presentation: Summary of 2019 European Green Crab monitoring: Patty Menning, DFO (see attached Jan. 2020 newsletter)

- Attended ELSI meeting a year ago and went over the biology , today will review the results of 2019 sampling efforts
- European Green Crab (GC) - one of 10 worst invasive species worldwide
- New federal program in 2017, to deal with all invasive aquatic species, green crabs are a priority

- Had a look in lagoon in 2018, thought that the lagoon would be a perfect habitat for GC; good place for a long term monitoring program
- GC is more widespread in BC than thought by most people
- Patty is setting up a monitoring network of citizen scientists, to add to existing database
- Develop a partnership and network of community groups
- DFO has an international agreement with Washington to study GC
- 2018 – new detections in Witty's Lagoon, 4 found in total
- New detections in Port Renfrew, up in the estuaries – unexpectedly found a lot up there
- 2019 – new detections, 2 in Esquimalt Lagoon, Salt Spring Is – found at 4 sites, very concerning; Port Hardy also
- Most recent “new” population is at Boundary Bay, huge population found by Washington folks
- WA looking at declaring a state of emergency for EGC, want to get funding for an eradication program
- GC are very opportunistic, outcompete juvenile Dungeness and red rock crabs; voracious feeders. Destroy lots of eelgrass, dig up the beds to eat everything underneath; juvenile rearing habitat is destroyed
- Q: Are there predators?
 - Yes, once the Dungeness and red rocks are big enough they will eat them, can be eaten by shorebirds, river otters, but generally otters prefer native species
- Minnow traps are used, also the Fukui traps – these are better where there is concern of birds getting stuck in traps; no records of any birds being caught and drowned in Fukui
- Many government agencies are alerted prior to each trapping event
- Eradication effort was launched throughout the lagoon after initial GC was found in April, 90 traps set, found 1 more; both crabs were found near the bridge
- Found many other species that can be prey items for the GC
- Approx. 14 marine species found during this trapping exercise
- In 2020 – want to move the trap sites toward the bridge; continue with monthly sampling, starting in April
- Wants to get a few more volunteers to help – contact Kitty if interested
- Training day on April 14, 15 – could take 6 more volunteers; 1.5hr first day, +/- 2hr second day
- DFO has some funds for extra equipment – waders? herring?
- DNA results: from gill tissue collected 2019 (indicates which population the larvae were from):
 - Boundary Bay – 1 from Sooke, 1 from outer coast WA
 - Esquimalt Lagoon - both crabs were from outer coast WA
 - Salt Spring, Witty's Lagoon – both outer coast WA

ACTION: Kitty to send out call for volunteers for GC training

Colwood Updates:

- Nothing new to report RE developments, except that Royal Bay has an open house on Jan 29, 6 – 8pm, presentation at 6:30pm at Royal Bay High School
- Check out city website
- City will do an annual update on development, look for this in Feb,

- Waterfront coastal committee – first meeting in January, will be a year-long committee
- Going to look at the large number of reports already published on this topic
- Draft strategic plan 2019 – 2023 – there’s an on-line survey on Let’s Talk Colwood webpage, available till 29th
- Key priorities for lagoon – series of different tactics, parks planning activities, see Vibrancy section, waterfront planning – “public realm”
- Want public feedback on this draft strategy

ACTION - Kitty send the link to Colwood’s online survey

CRD Harbour Program Updates – Jody Watson

Harbours Ecological Inventory:

- Pilot study completed, looked at 3 different methods of remote technologies, drone, aerial orthophotos, satellite imagery
- Best option is aerial photography, 4 band including infrared to detect vegetation
- Automated classification, train the classification to make mapping easier
- Bird surveys – we worked with Ken Morgan to draft the RFP, bids were way higher than expected, so had to re-adjust budgets, hope to get that back out to RFP soon
- Hope to have a new harbours coordinator soon
- Kitty is retiring end of March
- Upcoming event: Harbour Stewardship Series talk – Sea Level Rise – Feb 6, 2020

ACTION – Send invitation to Harbours Speakers Series – Sea Level Rise

Partner updates:

RRU: Planning for an Earth Day event: email Maria if you have ideas; May 8th – Mother’s Day PaintIn; National Indigenous Day June 21, want to mitigate concerns about nesting purple martins during that event

CWS: Looking forward to working with Colwood, wondering who should they be working with in First Nations community, any contacts would be appreciated; follow up with Iain

Jason: looking forward to participating on Coastal Processes committee, reviewing latest report from Royal Bay, so far following GreenShores policies, we’ll see if they act on this;

Judy: Those interested in Friends of Pit House Park group, stay behind after meeting to discuss

Colwood: currently looking for people to serve on a heritage committee, check their website

Adjournment: 4:00pm