



DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

Steering Committee

Tuesday, September 08, 2015

Fort Rodd Hill & Fisgard Light National Historic Site Administration Building

Present: Beth Mitchell, Gayle Johnston, Joe Richardson, Ken Morgan, Jason Nault, Nathan Fisk, Phil Lambert, Lara Cohlmeier, Judy Nault, Nancy Wilkin, Kitty Lloyd, Jody Watson, Gary Nason

Guests: Katheryn Robertson, Colwood Community Association

DECISIONS			
1	Kitty and Jody will meet with Gary Nason and Iain Bourhill to discuss roles and expectations of ELSI and Colwood		
Next Meeting: 13 October 2015			
ACTIONS		ACTION BY	DUE
1	Request that Colwood put links to ELSI website on theirs	Kitty	ASAP
2	Send links to Env CA recommendations for determining presence/absence of breeding birds to Kitty for inclusion in the letter to Colwood re Pacific Landing	Ken	ASAP
3	Send letter regarding Pacific Landing wetland plan back to ELSI after incorporating comments from this meeting	Kitty	ASAP
4	Send Species At Risk draft recovery plans from Env CA to VNHS and Rocky Point Bird Observatory	Kitty	ASAP
5	Send a link to Resilient Region breakfast event Sept 11 to Kitty	Nancy	ASAP
6	Send drafts of new ELSI display panels via email for comment	Kitty	ASAP

INFORMATION

Action items from last meeting:

Bull frogs in Colwood Creek:

- This item going to CRD Environment Committee, CRD will play some kind of role in invasive species management, bullfrogs will be part of that, decisions need to be made regarding how that will be resourced.
- CRD Parks and Integrated Water Services continue to do bullfrog control work to try and prevent bullfrogs entering the drinking water supply area
- Need a more concerted effort among all players, staff report will be going up to board, Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) is coordinated by Saanich right now, 10 municipalities, DND, RRU and other large landowner agencies, Royal BC Museum, Parks Canada, going on beyond plants to include species like frogs;

Presentation: Postponed to Oct. 13 meeting

Colwood Updates:

Gary Nason, Colwood Interim CAO, brought a 2 page memo-style update from Planning Dept. with information about ongoing developments around the lagoon

- Gary has been attending Standing Committee and Advisory Committee meetings to get a feel for what the different issues are, and how the committee process works throughout the municipality
- Observed that the relationship between ELSI and staff is strained, this issue landed on his lap following the June meeting, there is a lack of clarity for staff regarding the roles of Colwood and ELSI, are they required to attend our meetings?
- Gary brought a memo-type summary of development status around the lagoon that staff would like to send to ELSI meetings instead of attending in person
- Staff want clarity on the advisory role of ELSI
- Some reticence on their part to participate in ELSI, if we have to draft up the relationship of Colwood staff to ELSI formally for the record that would be good
- Colwood is and will be receiving an avalanche of development proposals in foreseeable future, staff are strained to deal with all of this at current staffing levels and timelines
- ELSI will be provided with referral request for other major land use and applications for some things that have a significant impact on the lagoon, staff would try and give as much notice as possible, normally they allow 2-3 weeks for outside agencies, but can contact staff for extensions on the time frame
- Comments from the committee – these are many other things that ELSI deals with beside development proposals, such as float planes landing in the lagoon, establishing wildlife refuge areas to minimize disturbance to birds, water quality and fish monitoring; dune restoration and decommissioning parking spaces along the Coburg Peninsula to name a few
- In the past, ELSI has worked with developers before their plans went to Colwood, to make sure that issues of concern to the lagoon and its ecosystems were adequately addressed in the plans before the development application was submitted.
- ELSI has always acted as an environmental advisory group to help Colwood staff and advise on issues that staff may not have expertise in, or the time and resources to adequately research
- Members are concerned that the City would not want to send a representative to ELSI meetings because Esquimalt Lagoon is a focal point of the community
- Colwood is being and will continue to be swamped with development applications in foreseeable future, staff resources are stretched thin, part of the problem is a staff resource issue.
- Members emphasized the two-way learning forum that this committee provides to all participants, and that face to face meetings are far more informative and productive than a 2 page memo
- Another role that ELSI has played, and one of the reasons that the group was formed, was to address the overlapping jurisdictions within government at the lagoon. ELSI provides a forum where all stakeholders are represented. Overall this has been a very successful and fruitful partnership
- Until recently, ELSI has always had a good working relationship with Colwood staff; recent staff turnover has perhaps left a gap in corporate memory of the partnership role that Colwood has always had with ELSI
- ELSI members have felt frustrated recently by the tight timelines in development plans going before council or to public hearings before committee has had a chance to review and provide comments; our role seems to have been eroded

DECISION: Kitty and Jody will arrange a meeting with Gary and Iain to sort out this issue and clarify the roles

Discussion: Environment Canada Draft Recovery Plans for Species at Risk

- Great Blue Heron
- Band Tailed Pigeon
- Red Knot
- Oldgrowth Specklebelly Lichen

Ken looked at the recovery plans for the three bird species and thought they looked comprehensive

ACTION: Send draft plans to Victoria Natural History Society and Rocky Point Bird Observatory for their input

Review/Discussion:

- Draft of new ELSI Display – didn't get to this item!

ACTION: Kitty will send drafts via email for comment

Comments re RRU Sustainability Plan 2015 – 2020

- Very different from the 2008 version - more broad brush, high level statements
- Living document so it can easily be updated
- Emissions reduction targets are confusing
- Most comments in ELSI draft letter concern the stewardship section; DND has been working hard on invasive species control in the adjacent areas but more work needs to be done on the main campus area which is RRU's responsibility. Highlight the ecosystems on campus, recognize the restoration opportunities
- Not much mention of sea level rise and how that could be accommodated
- DND has completed a 5 year invasive species management plan for the adjacent areas, now RRU has mirrored their plan to bring it into the core

Nancy reported on two significant student projects both under the Bachelor of Science, Environmental Science program:

1. "Sense of Place" project sponsored by Department of Communications and Advancement resulted in a new guide for RRU campus called "Beyond the Classroom". The publication is like a tour of the various ecosystems of the surrounding area, all of the photos we taken by the students. Plan is to have the guide printed and available for orientation for all staff and faculty, and available on line. Many of the RRU faculty were not comfortable talking about the ecosystems on campus as many are on-line associate faculty members. This guide will help with RRU's desire to establish an outdoor classroom where some on-campus learning can take place
2. Invasive Species project sponsored by RRU operations division. This has resulted in digital mapping of the ecosystems on campus, including extent of 6 invasive species and a 5 year plan to control and manage their spread in the core lease area; DND already has a 5 year invasive species plan for the non-core lease area. That project will be posted on line, on the Sustainability Website.

Comments re Pacific Landing Development Permit

Councillor Nault declared a potential conflict of interest as his wife is under contract to the developer of this property. Councillor Nault excused himself from the room during this portion of the meeting

- ELSI considered the draft coordinated response – mainly focused on Appendix B of the Development Permit, the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Plan by Aqua-Tex Scientific Consulting
- Environmental Assessment was done previously, Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA) was established by Swell Environmental in 2009. In the Aquatex report, they recognized that there are more flows coming into the property (intermittent flows) than were reported in the 2009 survey.
- Sewer hook up could possibly have to cross Bee Creek, how would that work?
- Existing pond was designed to have an inflow and an outflow – is there any concern about mosquitos and the stagnant water from newly created wetland? Should try to ensure movement of water
- One of major concerns expressed by committee members was about the tree removal – almost 60 trees will be removed from the site
- Phase 1 tree inventory (Gye and Associates) shows a discrepancy between the tree inventory and the site plan - tree plan shows some trees retained while site plan shows them removed
- Plan indicates only 6 trees in SPEA and MBS will be removed, site plan actually shows 14 trees will be removed
- Important to replant with trees of mixed structural height and composition
- Colwood has no tree management bylaw – many municipalities require 2:1 or higher tree replacement
- Ken – if planning on doing the tree cutting outside of breeding season, need more details on the bird nest survey; Environment Canada has many recommendations on how to determine presence/absence of bird nests, we should include links to these in our letter

ACTION: Ken will provide the EC links on bird nest surveying to Kitty

- CWS was not consulted on this even though the report indicates they were, permit from CWS not required because it is on private land (Ken checked this)
- The boardwalk through the MBS is of concern, preference is that there should be no access, make it a place for birds
- Development will be pet-friendly – will that conflict with the MBS regulations (no dogs off-leash)?
- EC may have some significant concerns; Ken needs to consult with some people

ACTION: Incorporate these comments and mail out to ELSI again for further comment.

- Councillor Nault rejoined meeting following this discussion item

Colwood Community Association – Gayle Johnston and Katheryn Robertson

- Canvassed neighbours during the summer to gauge interest in forming an association
- Desire to form a cohesive group with coordinated actions for the good of the whole Colwood community
- Now have a Facebook site (www.facebook.com/groups/colwoodcommunity) , outreach to neighbours in need, help each other achieve the community everyone wants; interest in helping ELSI with outreach etc.; assist with getting volunteers to help at ELSI events; help organize broom bashes, food drives and other events

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- Plan to form a society, would like to join ELSI
- Looking for a regular meeting place

Nancy: Resilient Region breakfast event being held this Friday might be a good place to connect with people from other areas of the CRD, everyone gets a 5 minute introduction; great way to connect and reach others; use Meetup website as a venue for connecting

ACTION: Nancy will send a Kitty a link to the event to forward to Katheryn and Gayle

Partner updates:

FRH – Nathan: invasive species removal through summer and fall; will be planting native shrubs in back of foreshore area

- Will FRH hold another Bioblitz? Not sure, this year was a pilot for the west coast, may do one every 2 – 5 years, maybe do a larger region next time
- Beth – recommends including Shorespawner Alliance next time to assess the beach area for forage fish

FRH - Lara: great summer at FRH, 50,000 visitors more or less, 1,000 more people/month this summer; Otentiks were successful; announcement was made about infrastructure funding, end of fiscal year – working on barracks, new roof, will install lighting so they can hold evening events

- Suggestion made to contact Nancy about lighting, RRU just applied for funding for changing all outdoor lights to LED; will result in a huge annual cost savings

CWS: No report

VNHS: Field trips: Esquimalt Lagoon birding Sept 20, VNHS and RBCM, 9am - 12, starting at the bridge, Phil to send a link; HawkWatch, Sep 26 at Aylard Farm, East Sooke Park, followed by a BBQ for members

Beth: Fish trapping probably next week

Gayle: Waiting for developments to get started again

Judy: Pacific Landing: this Sat, Greater Victoria Green Team coming to help at Bee Creek, will do two sessions from 10am - 1pm and 1 – 4pm

RRU: Brought new CRD bike maps; encouraged people to stop in and see renovated library, student centre now located there with new work stations; stream depth gauge now in Colwood Creek; discussion of memo from AquaTex regarding the stream gauge

Joe: Has been measuring temperature of creeks every 2 weeks or so; highest recorded reading was 18^o in June; all other times, 17^o, within the safe realm for trout and coho; Bee Cr – stayed at 17^o all summer

Jason: Transportation Master Plan for Colwood will go to committee tonight; bike lane on the spit on hold although the trail is marked on the plan

Meeting adjourned: 5:00pm

Volunteer Appreciation BBQ followed the meeting.

Thank you to Thrifty Foods in Colwood for the generous donation of \$100 for the BBQ

Thank you to our hosts at Fort Rodd Hill – what a beautiful venue for the BBQ!