



## DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

**Steering Committee**  
**Wednesday, February 20, 2013**

Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

**Present:** Rick Daykin, Terry Eckstein, Cathy Carolsfeld, Doug Critchley, Norman Bruce, George Blogg, Vicki Blogg, Tricia DeMacedo, Sara Stallard, Caren Cameron, Dorothy Chambers, Kitty Lloyd, Jody Watson, Audrey Whittall

**Guests:** Cam Owens, Hanna Horn, Don Priddie, Richard Atwell (stormwater and wastewater researcher), Dick Faukes, John Sanderson, Diane Carr

DECISIONS			
1			
<b>Next Meeting:</b>			
ACTIONS		ACTION BY	DUE
1	Develop a one-page info sheet on water quality testing in the harbour areas, and the contaminants that are assessed by different agencies	All	Spring 2013
2	Write a support letter to View Royal supporting remediation of the area north of new Craigflower sewer pump station when that project goes ahead	All	ASAP
3	Send Cam Owens' contact info to GWI with summary of Coastal Communities course that he will provide.	Kitty	ASAP
4	Send a notice around about the Cecelia Cr work party dates	Sara	ASAP
5	Send information to Jody or Kitty about use of satellite imaging for eelgrass surveys	Doug Critchley	ASAP

## INFORMATION

### Over view: Harbours Public Consultation and UVic Collaboration

We have engaged UVic Geography department staff to assist with the public consultation process and three courses this term are focused on the CRD harbour areas. Three courses and an honours student project will be focused on the harbours and will provide outputs for the public consultation process.

In Dr. Bhattacharyya's "Applied Ethnoecological Research of the Local Landscape" course students will focus on relationships between people and places associated with the Gorge Waterway. Information about this course and an invitation to participate was circulated to GWI members earlier this year.

## **Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee February 20, 2013**

**Page 2**

Some of the students' project ideas include photo essays, video hiking guide, cookbook highlighting indigenous plants, video essay on herring in the Gorge, history of recreational gatherings, place name changes, and a summary of ecological restoration projects on the Gorge. (NB: this information was not available at the meeting, but was sent to GWI members via email 21 Feb).

Dr. Michele-Lee Moore's class on Water Resource Management will investigate three watersheds (Colquitz, Craigflower and Bowker) in the context of climate change and vulnerabilities. There are three themes:

- ecosystems: shifts we can expect as sea levels rise and local climate changes
- vulnerabilities of the built environment and infrastructure: eg what will happen with all the stormwater discharges when sea level rises?
- agriculture: shifts in crop types, timing, etc with climate change.

Dr Rosaline Canessa has a BSc honours student who will be working on developing a survey for use in the public consultation process. The student's particular area of interest is paddling and other recreational uses on the Gorge. He will develop a public survey in consultation with Jody and Kitty, and will attend several outreach events on the Gorge this spring and summer to conduct surveys. He will also conduct surveys at other locations and times during summer.

### **Presentation: Dr. Cam Owens: Coastal Communities**

There are two main themes for this course: sense of place, and what that means, and building coastal resilience in communities in light of climate change and socio-economic change. The students will focus on Victoria Harbour, and will be working on 10 contiguous areas so that both sides of the harbour shore will be covered from Ogden Pt up to the Selkirk Trestle. Students will look at past, present and possible future uses and activities in these 10 areas. Based on what they discover by using resources provided and through interviews with people in the harbour community students will be asked to envision what we should be concerned about in 50 or 100 years. Jody has provided copies of the 22-volume Victoria and Esquimalt Harbour Environmental Baseline Study, prepared for Transport Canada in 2000. Students will mine these for information and make their findings accessible to the public through the CRD Harbours webpages. Cam is hoping that GWI members who have knowledge of or connections with Victoria Harbour will be willing to be interviewed by some students.

Summary provided later by Cam:

The Coastal Communities course "has been redesigned around an assignment that encourages groups of students to research and disseminate information about a specific site in the Victoria Harbour area (from Ogden Point to the Selkirk Trestle Bridge). Each group will be delving into the environmental, cultural and economic histories of these sites as well as looking into the future - identifying some of the potential challenges and opportunities these sites present in an era of rapid climatic, environmental and socio-economic change. Students will produce a short video, an illustrated essay and a vulnerability analysis to raise awareness about these sites - their rich histories and challenges / opportunities."

**Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee  
February 20, 2013****Page 3**

Cam invited GWI members “to share your knowledge and passion about this place with the students in the following specific ways: 1) sending any knowledge, sources, web links etc. you have pertaining to the geography / history of the harbour that might be useful to the students to me (see contact info below); 2) agree to field questions from the students about a particular aspect of the history / present / future of any of these sites; or 3) direct us to others who might be interested in sharing their knowledge.”

The specific areas being investigated are:

1) Ogden Point, 2) Fisherman's Wharf area; 3) Laurel Pt / Belleville St Public Port; 4) Causeway and Wharf St Public Port; 6) "Working Harbour" / Rock Bay; 7) Selkirk Waterfront; 8) Point Hope / Railyard / Dockside; 10) Westsong / West Bay

Contact information:

Dr. Cameron Owens  
University of Victoria Department of Geography  
Phone: (250) 721-7330  
Fax: (250) 721-6216  
Email: [camo@uvic.ca](mailto:camo@uvic.ca)  
<http://geography.uvic.ca/people/faculty/owens.php>

Comments:

It would be interesting to have the students present their findings at an event such as a Speakers Series.

It is very powerful for the public to hear young people present research.

Students could share their findings with harbour business owners and other community members who are interested.

There are several high schools in the Gorge area that might be interested in participating with the projects. Some are focused on environmental education (e.g. Esquimalt High) and this might be an opportunity for mentoring. Cam mentioned that part of his responsibilities include going to local high schools to encourage students to consider studying geography at UVic.

**Craigflower Pump Station project**

Open house Tuesday 26 February at Shoreline School, 5 – 8pm

Question regarding the letter to be written in support of restoration at the pump station site: what are some sources of contamination that might be on the site? No areas over the acceptable levels for residential use have been found, but any areas with hot spots will be removed. Two sites were found with elevated hydrocarbon levels.

Are there provisions for sewage overflows? Yes, the main impetus for building the new pump station is to prevent sewage overflows into Portage Inlet, and building a station with appropriate capacity for the current and anticipated population levels.

**Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee  
February 20, 2013****Page 4**

We are expecting higher sea levels with climate change, has this been considered for this project? Yes, infrastructure will be 3-4 m above current high tide level. There will be a catchment basin to prevent potential overflows.

Are chemicals being used at the new pump station? Yes, but only ones that are deemed safe to use near water bodies, as listed by Materials Safety Data Sheets. A bioxide chemical, used for odour control, is stored in a large double-walled tank contained within a concrete berm, as an additional spill control best management practice. Staff are trained in proper tank-filling and emergency shut-off procedures.

Engineers at the open house will be able to answer all technical questions.

**Anchored boats in Gorge:**

This issue is becoming more political. Maureen Karagianis, local MLA, has become involved and took the lead on the discussions with different government agencies, municipalities, and integrated land management bureau (provincial organization that gives leases). Maureen organized a meeting with CRD, Victoria Police Department, BGCA, VWCA, VEHS (Victoria Esquimalt Harbour Society) two CoV councilors. The province is willing to give the water lease to CoV, city could then define uses, create regulatory bylaws governing anchoring. CoV councilors Shellie Gudgeon and Charlayne Thornton-Joe to go back to council, discuss taking over the lease, define uses and see where to go from there. Jody mentioned at the meeting that we could use the harbour public consultation process as an opportunity to get public input about the anchored boats issue.

**Questions:**

What size is the area under consideration? Unclear what the boundaries would be, depends on what city decides.

Should be done in conjunction with other municipalities so the problem does not get moved further up the Gorge.

What about sewage being dumped into harbour? If boats were anchored below the Selkirk then Victoria Harbour regulations would apply and no sewage dumping would be allowed, but regulations are different above the trestle (out of Transport Canada's jurisdiction).

Some boats are being lived on and others are just anchored there.

So – discussions are happening, but the issue is not yet resolved.

**Harbour updates:**

Meeting to be held March 1<sup>st</sup> with the Province regarding water quality objectives for the harbours. The CRD has done 5 in 30 sampling at 35 stations in harbour areas, in dry and wet seasons; the province will interpret the data, and decide where to go from this point.

**Flow Monitoring:**

Continuous flow sensors are now installed in Hospital, Colwood, Colquitz and Cecelia creeks. Three of these sites also have sensors to measure temperature, pH and turbidity (not on Hospital Cr as the meter is in a 'confined space'). The Cecelia Cr sensor needs to be cleaned weekly due to buildup of sediment. As a comparison, Colwood Cr needs only monthly cleaning.

## **Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee February 20, 2013**

**Page 5**

The Cecelia Cr watershed is 88% impervious, and the vast majority of businesses in the watershed are automotive. Burnside Gorge Community Association did an outreach and education project in 1998 or '99 to provide local businesses with best management practices and a stewardship pledge. This should probably be repeated now with updated information, to remind businesses about those BMPs and to raise awareness about Cecelia Cr watershed health.

City of Victoria already wants to leave the flow meter in Cecelia Cr permanently as water quality in that creek changes so quickly and so often.

Is sediment being tested? Not at this point, but want to see if turbidity can be used as a surrogate for pollution levels.

Part of public consultation could be having an interesting Speakers Series talk eg Denis Minaker (history), Grant Keddie (archaeology), as a draw to attract people to consultation events.

**Eelgrass Surveys:** CRD Harbours program is hoping to do eelgrass surveys in CRD harbours with SeaChange Marine Conservation Society. Want to do the surveys in May, same as the initial surveys were done for Harbours Atlas.

Doug Critchley: what about using satellite analysis system that Department of Fisheries and Oceans and other international collaborators use to map eelgrass in other areas of the world's oceans? Doug was asked to provide contact information about this initiative.

**Gorge Swim Fest:** VWCA has withdrawn from Victoria and Esquimalt Harbour Society, Swim Fest, started by VWCA last year, BG and GT and Esquimalt Residents were invited,

**Pt Ellice Shoreline Restoration:** Work party this Sunday, on the last section of ivy removal, UVic students have been helping

### **Partner updates:**

**GWAS:** Received funding from Esquimalt in 2012 to deliver Gorge waterfront homeowners in that municipality with information about bylaws, GWI info sheets, and other information about living on the Gorge, with an emphasis on environmental stewardship.

**FOCH:** Group has been working with Peninsula Streams Society, currently working on Swan Cr restoration. Coho are spawning there, but the habitat is in poor shape, and needs restoring.

**BGCA:** CoV has applied for a permit under Section 9 of the provincial Water Act to do work in Cecelia Cr. There was a home heating oil spill into Cecelia a few days ago, spill response was quite fast. Planning for more invasive plant removal in flood plain area, will be replaced with native aquatic plants; a UVic student is working on this. Camosun students are working on water quality there; Friends of Cecelia Cr invasive plant removal group meets once/month, Sara will send a notice about next work party. Plan for the rest of the park is on hold for a bit since Fred Hook has retired. Sara spoke to CRD Parks and Transportation group from Regional Planning about installing washrooms for E&N Trail at the new Craigflower pump station, but the answer was no.

**Esquimalt** A request for proposals has been posted for mapping invasive and native plants at MacCauley Pt sewage treatment plant site; mapping to be done by April 15. Also an initiative to map all assets in Parks using GPS is underway. Sioux St foot bridge into Esquimalt Gorge Park is going to be re-built. Design will be tied in with Japanese Garden; will solicit feedback from public, different design options are being worked on.

Question: What about the holding ponds on Gorge Cr – do they need to be dredged out yet? Some sampling has been done by Camosun students, but nothing official from municipality at this point.

Earth Day event is being held at High Rock Park; will involve removing invasive plants  
Esquimalt Rec Centre: they are now heating the pool with solar heat, as well as excess heat from boiler, and evaporation from pool.

**Saanich:** Started work on Admirals Rd in preparation for the bridge replacement, may be some stalls due to archaeological finds. Trees have been cut down as part of road widening for a new left turn lane. Parks will try and replant as many as they can by asking homeowners to plant, trees that Saan will provide. Tricia wants to do some bioengineering beside the boat launch ramp at VCKC, the sidewalk near there is being moved to align with the new wider one, sewer line on the beach being abandoned, moved up to road.

There is a proposal for community gardens beside Cedar Shores in Gorge Park. Members expressed concerns about fertilizers, invasive plants that could be brought in by gardeners.

**WFT:** Working with Saanich on oyster remediation/compensation for the Craigflower Bridge replacement project. They are picking up a load of oyster shells from up-island to put in the water at Christie Pt, to see how many will be needed to cover the area available there for compensation.

Herring Creel survey: WFT have been going out almost daily, not many people fishing, and the catches are way down. Terry said that he used to see lots of cormorants and herons in Portage Inlet in December, chasing herring, now hardly any are seen. There was a big spawn about 10 years ago, none have been seen since then. Not much is known about this herring run, could be cyclical. Herring runs were poor for the past three years or so. The Nature House renovations are going slowly, but still hoping to get everything done by Oceans Day.(June 8<sup>th</sup>).

**PIPS:** Not much to report, AGM will be held in the next month or two.

**PISCES:** Members are monitoring the Craigflower Bridge and pump station projects. Vicki will include information about WFT's herring creel survey in next newsletter.

**WVCA:** New president is Diane Carr, asked to be on GWI mailing list.

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:30pm