



Present: Tricia Demacedo, Sara Stallard, Leigh Sifton, Rebecca Kennel, Dorothy Chambers, Mary Vasey, Craig Elder, Vicki Blogg, George Blogg, Norm Bruce, Yogi Carolsfeld, Kitty Lloyd, Jody Watson

Guests: Gabe Epstein (Gorge Tillicum Urban Farmers), Gary Darrah (Saanich Parks), Bradd Tuck (UVic student), two Brazilian students volunteering at World Fisheries Trust

DECISIONS			
1	Investigate ways to get involved with restoration at Shoreline School related to Craigflower Pump Station project		
Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 21, 2013			
ACTIONS		ACTION BY	DUE
1	Send draft InfoSheet on swimming water quality to GWI for review	Yogi	When available
2	Send link to UVic Geography interactive map created by Cam Owens' class	Kitty	ASAP
3	Send UVic's Mysera Costa's contact information to Kitty, regarding spectral analysis of intertidal areas	Yogi	ASAP
4	Ask Kim Strom, Shoreline School principal, to attend GWI meeting to present ideas for how GWI could become involved in restoration during pump station relocation	Kitty	Next meeting
5	Provide any final comments about the draft Harbours Survey to Kitty/Jody	All	Friday May 17
6	Send a summary of the Olympia oyster habitat creation project for posting on the GWI website	Yogi	ASAP

INFORMATION

Action items from last meeting:

1. Create a one-page info sheet on water quality in the Gorge: A meeting was recently held with Gorge Swim Fest organizers, VIHA (Irwin Dyck), World Fisheries Trust (Yogi Carolsfeld), and CRD Stormwater Program (Dale Green), where this was discussed. Yogi reported that the group will develop an info sheet for the public, addressing issues such as industrial pollutants, sewage, etc. WFT will sample for coliform at Banfield Park and Curtis Pt. based on gaps in present sampling by various agencies. The info sheet will help people make informed decisions regarding the safety of the waterway for swimming.
Action: Yogi will develop a draft, send it to GWI for input, after which it will be available for the public.
2. Letter of support to View Royal regarding remediation of area north of the new Craigflower pump station: Individual GWI member groups should write support letters if interested.
3. Summary of UVic student projects involving videos and photo essays by students for the coastal communities and ethnoecology classes have been posted on in interactive map. Kitty will send the link.
4. Satellite imagery for eelgrass inventories in the harbours: Doug Critchley investigated this and found that the website no longer exists, so we can't do it that way. Discussion followed about ortho photos currently taken for CRD mapping, and whether they could be used to inventory eelgrass. Jody reported that LIDAR may be used for next flyover, which will give us lots more detail. (LIDAR is Light Detecting and Ranging, a remote sensing technology that measures distance by illuminating a target with a laser and analyzing the reflected light). Mysera Costa at UVic does spectral analysis of marine habitats, Yogi will provide her contact information.

Presentation: Proposed Gorge Park community gardens, by Gabe Epstein

Idea has been floating around the community for a few years. Gary Darrah (Saanich Parks manager) attended a GTCA meeting a while ago and asked if people were interested in community gardens, and the issue was discussed earlier at a workshop in 2011 about Gorge Park. An on-line survey was also conducted by Saanich, which garnered 150 responses and an email list was assembled. There has been lots of input from the community, and strong support for continuing with the project. Proponents have talked with other local people who have done permaculture and other garden design work (e.g. Patti Parkhouse at Vic West Raynor Shine Gardens, Burnside Gorge community gardens).

Questions/Concerns:

Saanich guidelines: must be organic, soil supplements okay but no chemicals to be used

How do we protect waterway and park around the gardens? Concerns regarding invasive garden plants were raised (eg lovage, fennel). No invasive plants will be allowed.

Slope of the area is an issue, how to manage water flow: a swale and low berm will be installed at the top of gardens; on-site water could be managed with a rain garden installed at the lower end of proposed area.

Saanich has received written comments from Doug Critchley (PIPS) with suggestions for protecting the waterway. The proposed garden area is well outside the EDPA area (30m from the waterway) and away from the existing plane trees at the west side of Cedar Shores.

There will be no fencing – this is a public area for anyone, dogs are allowed, but in control; paths will be wheelchair accessible. Regarding deer: locals report that there has been 1 deer seen there in past 5 years.

Gardens will be functional, aesthetic and educational.

How to plan for the 10% slope? Gary: Slope is actually closer to 8%, similar slopes at Capital City Gardens along the Pat Bay Highway; could build planter boxes, control moisture with mulch to help hold soil.

Has the group considered putting a garden in at a school, eg where there is a culinary program, rather than using park land for gardens? Idea was discussed at GTUF, but no one took up the project; Colquitz School is investigating this idea and so are some other schools (e.g. Shoreline).

Is there First Nations midden material there? Gary: The potential is there, and Golder & Assoc. will investigate this and map the area.

Would raised beds be okay if subsoil is not disturbed? Gary: probably yes, but depends on the assessment by Golder.

Gabe: There will be a mixture of raised beds and level beds

What about the gorse and broom along that shore? Gabe and others are aware of that problem; Saanich will include restrictions about invasives. Gary: education, orientation for gardeners will include education about invasive plants.

Comment was made that this project will take away green space, and could be located instead on paved area like an old parking lot, using raised beds, e.g. Raynor Shine Gardens: on private land, on a gravel parking lot.

Timeline: Formal public consultation is now complete, intent is to take the proposal to Saanich Advisory Committees in June, then to Council later in the summer.

NOTE: following the meeting, Gabe provided some additional background information about the project:

The community garden proposal is a local community initiative, separate from both GTCA and Gorge Tillicum Urban Farmers, although supported by both organizations. The Working Group doing the legwork is tasked with helping establish, together with Saanich Parks, the level of support from the community. If it is widely supported, the group will help facilitate its creation, taking into account the context defined by Saanich policies and practices as well as the full range of suggestions and comments expressed by a variety of individuals and groups. Should the project go ahead, the group looks forward to an ongoing, collaborative relationship with GWI.

Craigflower Sewer Pump Station:

Project has completed the Environmental DPA process.

Seems to be a shift at View Royal: restoration of area surrounding the new pump station is more likely. Project will be going out to tender soon; want to do the inlet crossing during the summer when school is out. Possibility that the entire shoreline may be restored, part of this depends on what the tenders come in at and how much money is available for that.

Shoreline School is very excited about this project, and wants to naturescape and include food gardens and native gardens at the school grounds. Kim Strom, principal, wants to partner with GWI groups to do this restoration work. New vision for the school is outlined in their newsletter, circulated at the meeting.

Are GWI members interested?

Questions/Comments:

School projects always happen between 9-3, so could be difficult to organize time-wise

Who owns that property in question? Most of the restoration will be along existing shoreline at head of the marsh, along the school property, "untitled foreshore" which is basically crown land.

Possible native plant source: local plant salvage programs

WFT has a Seaquarium at the school that is less than active, could be an opportunity to tie in with marine education.

While the machines are there working, great opportunity to get lots of invasive plants removed that would take kids and loppers years to control.

Action: Ask Kim Strom to come and talk to the group about opportunities to get involved

CRD Harbours Survey:

UVic student Bradd Tuck is doing an undergraduate honours thesis based on this public survey process, specifically the public engagement process. His area of focus is the Gorge, how and why people become involved. Have we captured the main uses of the Gorge in the survey questions? Any other issues that people have as they read through?

Now we're minimizing the survey to "uses, visions, issues". Mapping and pollution questions are going to be explored at an open house or workshop scenario.

Bradd: Early results from surveys done at Vic West Fest last week show that people who want to be very involved took the time to answer all Qs, general public did not. Feedback regarding the maps: area is too fluid, hard for people to pick specific areas. Bradd's research shows that using a matrix style for questions, i.e. with all harbours included in each question, would drastically reduce the response rate. Instead, there could be one or half page for each harbour, and we can tailor values, uses and issues to each area.

Looking at the short summary, want a broad brush survey: uses, visions/values, and key issues. Comments received earlier indicate the current format may be too detailed.

On-line version will be same as the paper one.

Comments:

Frequency choices for harbour use should be changed to: daily, 2-3 times/week, 2-3 /month, 2-3/year

After transportation add "(ferries, planes)"

In the values section, add in fish and aquatic life, or nature on land and water

What about the distinction between natural shoreline, vs. formal gardens or "manufactured landscapes"? This would help to capture the concept of valuing open space (e.g. Esquimalt Lagoon vs. Victoria Harbour)

Recommend using an agreement scale instead of High, Medium Low

Define "shoreline hardening"

Issues section has emphasis on environmental issues. What about adding loud noisy parties, more boat launches, swimming access, too few fishing locations.

Other issues suggested: Garbage and littering, water quality, unattractive development, loss of forest cover, development of walking routes, walkable community with accessible shopping, traffic, opportunities for beach fires

Action: Any other ideas and input need to be submitted by Friday, May 17th

New GWI Website: Jody showed the draft of the new GWI website; general consensus was that it looks great. Content will be the same, but new layout is much better.

Partner Updates:

Colquitz River: Dorothy: BC Hydro transmission fluid leak has been ongoing for several years, recently the bank has sloughed. There was no consultation with community about this project before trees were cut down and shotcrete sprayed on the bank. Dorothy talked with Environmental Manager for BC Hydro in Vancouver, has met with contractors and Hydro. DFO doesn't know what the fish are doing in the creek unless the community stewardship groups tell them, BC Hydro now knows that community stewards should be the ones contacted about such projects, not just DFO.

Don't know how many coho left following this latest oil spill and the shoreline work done.

Finally have signs up along Colquitz with PEP number, although there seems to be variable response rates and times. Lots of stories of people not getting any response.

GTCA: Canada Day event is being planned as usual for Gorge Waterway Park

Friends of Swan Cr Watershed: Peninsula Streams got the group together, now they have a constitution, committees, events last weekend, restoration plans for creek as well as riparian area, want to get 3 projects underway during this Fisheries window 2013, although may be too late to get the proper approvals.

PISCES: Recently held a clean up in Portage Park; painted turnaround area so people won't park there; improved area at end of Portage Inlet

WFT: Renovations at the Nature House have been finished, opened April 19. School programs starting next week, public opening hours through the summer; WFT is hiring two summer students who will help deliver programs. Olympia oysters are getting relocated as remediation for the Craigflower Bridge replacement. There will be an oyster reef created across from the Nature House, 6 dump trucks loads of oyster shells and 17 tons of gravel were dumped in patches onto the mud for oyster habitat, this will make good habitat for snorkeling. Radio and TV interviews have been lined up regarding this project.

ACTION: Yogi to send an update about the oyster project for posting on the GWI website

VWCA: Rebecca: Vic West Fest: Zero Waste event; out of 100lb waste, only 3lb went to the landfill. They have a DVD about "Bag it" is your life too plastic? Story about a man who went a year without using plastic

CoV: Crew has been busy at Cecelia – east side of creek below Community Centre

BGCA: CoV Parks doing invasive species removal in the creek (e.g. willows) and replanting with natives. Sediment has filled in several flood plain areas; there was a spill upstream during planting – water turned white, smelled like sewage, white is usually from macerated toilet paper; another time it was almost black with increased flow – indicating a sediment event; Sara called PEP number, and timed the response: 20 min afterwards there were people there taking a look. Flow continued for 45 min, probably a construction site pumping out. Need a sign there with a phone number for people to call if they see a spill.

VCKC (via email from Don Monroe): Just finished their 17th Gorge Waterway Clean up; Next community events are: Teaching the kids at Craigflower School about voyageuring and dragon boating every Tuesday and Wednesday in April, May and June. Power To Be, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Boy & Girls Club picnics in June, and July 1st voyageur and Dragon Boat rides at Canada Day on the Gorge.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm