



DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

GWl Steering Committee
Wednesday August 21, 2013
7:00 – 9:30pm

Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Present: Leigh Sifton, Cathy Carolsfeld, Yogi Carolsfeld, Don Monroe, Julian Anderson, Craig Elder, Deb Becelaere, Sara Stallard, Kitty Lloyd, Jody Watson

Guests: Craig Barlow

DECISIONS			
1	GWl, through the CRD, will project manage the interpretive sign project for Craigflower Bridge		
2	GWl will participate in a clean-up at 508 Selkirk Ave, and plan a celebration for 10 year anniversary of the restoration project in 2014		
Next Meeting:		Wednesday November 20, 2013	
ACTIONS			ACTION BY
			DUE
1	Collaborate with Maycira Costa (UVic) and SeaChange Marine Conservation Society regarding eelgrass surveys	Jody/Kitty	2014
2	Request that Shoreline Middle School principal Kim Strom make a presentation at next GWl meeting	Kitty	Nov 20
3	Distribute the Infosheet about water quality	Kitty/Yogi	When finished
4	Contact Craigflower Bridge construction contractor to ensure public safety onsite after working hours	Deb	ASAP
5	Work with View Royal and Saanich to design four interpretive signs for Craigflower Bridge	Kitty/Jody	2014
6	Send RCMP phone number to the group to report speeding watercraft above Selkirk Trestle	Kitty	ASAP
7	Meet to discuss the 508 Selkirk Ave. site (restored site on Gorge formerly managed by The Land Conservancy)	Jody/Leigh/Julian	Sept
8	Send reminder notice about the Harbours Survey	Kitty	Early Sept
9	Send research papers about using caged forage fish to monitor effects of municipal effluent to Jody	Yogi	ASAP
10	Send GWl 2012 Update when available	Kitty	When available

Agenda Review and Update:

Shoreline Middle School principal Kim Strom could not be reached prior to this meeting, so we will request that she give a presentation at our next meeting (Nov. 20).

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Last minute agenda items submitted by GTCA:

- Does GWI want to take action regarding call for proposals to manage Craigflower Manor and Schoolhouse?
- A board member noticed a dock being towed upstream under the Gorge Bridge. Request confirmation that there is a moratorium on new private dock locations.

Action Item Review from May 15, 2013 meeting:

Mysera Costa, researcher at UVic, uses spectral analysis of aerial photos to do marine vegetation surveys. Yogi reported that Dr. Costa's research indicates a 95% accuracy of subtidal surveys using this technique, when ground truthed by scuba. Accuracy decreased in shallow water. SeaChange Marine Conservation Society also has access to this technology through collaboration with Dr. Costa. Due to budget constraints, eelgrass surveys in the harbours will be postponed until 2014 season.

Craigflower Sewer Pump Station update:

- Site clearing has begun and the berm has been removed. Silt fencing and other erosion control measures are being put in place.
- Approximately three trees will be removed, but the other vegetation at the building site is all invasive to be replaced with native species.
- Next week they hope to implement some traffic control changes on the Island Highway (subject to approval by View Royal) and may include removing the asphalt curb and putting up delineators on the highway. This is needed to create a queue area for large trucks entering and leaving the site.
- Some construction of the sedimentation ponds will also occur along with overall site layout.
- There is a bit of delay with this project which means that there will be construction within the school yard into October. This is for the casing work, where pipe will be installed under the inlet. There will be fencing around the school yard prior to school re-opening.
- An update letter to the public will come out in early September
- Completion date for building tentatively May 2014, and shoreline planting project with the school would likely start in Sept 2014
- One of the complicating factors in the project is that there are five landowners: CRD, provincial government, View Royal, Shoreline School and the homeowner who shares the driveway access.

Craigflower Bridge Update Deb Becelaere, View Royal

Schedule The Saanich road work at the bridge approach is on schedule, paving to start next week. Paving should be done before school starts Sept. 3. Lighting likely will be installed next week on the temporary pedestrian bridge.

Bridgeworks (abutments, piers and piles) is largely on schedule, but a 2 month delay in getting the steel for the bridge is slowing things down. Fabrication of steel and building of trusses may

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take longer than anticipated. Road will not be open Dec 1st as initially scheduled, Feb. or March 2014 more likely now. The entire project completion is anticipated for mid-May. The bridge is being built for a 100-year lifespan. Link for the website: www.craigflowerbridge.com. On that webpage, there is a place to sign up to receive email updates about the project.

Still some old piles left but they are being removed (a DFO requirement). Most of the holes are filling in over time; any that don't may be filled with oyster shells.

CRD Parks took some of the old bridge stringers to use on the trestle being rebuilt at Todd Creek near Sooke Potholes.

Shell middens containing many interesting artifacts were found during excavation on the Saanich side. These will be put on display at the new First Nations wellness center at the Songhees reserve. Many layers of oyster shells were found in the midden as well. The midden material has been moved and re-buried at Gorge Park where it will remain.

GWI members expressed concern regarding public safety around the bridge construction site, particularly after work hours. Children have been seen playing on and around machinery and bridge structure.

Action: Deb will pass these safety concerns onto the contractor

Environmental Monitoring: Craig Barlow, Applied Ecological Solutions

The primary concerns of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Michelle Biggs) during this project are protection of the Olympia oysters found at the site, followed by herring and eelgrass. The company doing the onsite environmental monitoring for Don Mann Excavating and Ruskin Construction is Aquaparian Environmental Consulting Ltd. In addition to the day-to-day construction monitoring, a component of their monitoring services is to monitor the fish movement on and under the bridge during construction, and have recently observed thousands of sticklebacks congregating around the site.

Absorbent oil booms that incorporate a silt curtain surround the site at all times throughout the project. During pile driving caissons are in place as part of the structural elements of the bridge. During construction, these caissons also help in protecting surrounding water and marine life from impacts associated with pile driving and bridge construction. Aquaparian monitors the "overpressure" caused by the vibratory hammer used in pile driving. High pressure impacts can extend into the water column and harm fish by causing swim bladders to explode. So far there has been less impact than expected. That is, the overpressure levels measured are far below the level acceptable to DFO.

The silt-laden water from inside the caissons is pumped into a water treatment hopper, a three-chambered tank used to treat the silty water. Once water has passed through the three chambers, clarity is improved to a point it can be released back to the Waterway.

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In the riprap that protects the abutment at the south end of the bridge, large steel rings will be installed into which gravel and soil will be placed. This will provide a growing medium for riparian planting to be done following the completion of construction.

There is a small salt marsh (2 – 3m²) that was salvaged and relocated to a site immediately downstream of the bridge crossing (in front of the old Craigflower Schoolhouse). Additional marsh planting was also done as part of the overall compensation for the project.

Olympia oysters: Yogi Carolsfeld, World Fisheries Trust

World Fisheries Trust relocated more than 100,000 oysters from the bridge construction site to two other sites in the waterway, in front of the GW Nature House and at Christie Pt. Thousands of Pacific oyster shells were moved there first to provide artificial reefs for the relocated Olympia oysters, and to provide settlement substrate for oyster larvae in future years. Following that, 79,000 Olympia oysters were moved to the beach off the Nature House, and 30,000 were relocated to Christie Point. Monitoring to date indicates that the short term survival has been successful. Baseline surveys will be completed soon, and WFT will monitor the reefs for the next 5 years. Effectiveness of the patchy reefs will be studied by UVic students.

Interpretive Signs:

View Royal and Saanich want to install interpretive signs as part of the bridge replacement project: two on the bridge and one at each approach. View Royal already has two of the GWI signs, 'Early Settler History' and 'Underwater Bounty'. We could reproduce the Migratory Bird Sanctuary sign already in place near the Selkirk Trestle. It is in a horizontal format that could be easily attached to the bridge railing. Deb would like a large format 3-sided sign for the bridge. Other sign topics discussed:

- First Nations: Deb is contacting the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations about this
- Archaeology of the area, could inquire about using information that was on old signs done by provincial government at Craigflower Manor and Kosampson Park
- Oyster remediation project

Deb requested that the GWI help with project management for this. We will inquire whether Saanich could fabricate the signs in their Parks sign shop.

Decision/Action: Kitty and Jody will work with Deb on managing the sign project

Birds and Boats: No GWAS members present to address this agenda item

Anchored Boats: Leigh Sifton, City of Victoria: (NB some of the following was excerpted from the [26 July 2013 CoV Governance and Priorities Committee Report](#))

Staff report went up to City of Victoria Governance & Priorities Committee, lots of discussion at council table. Staff members were directed to report back to the committee with draft principles regarding objectives for the management of the Selkirk Waterway, then meet with

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representatives from provincial and federal governments to consult about management of the waterway and explore possible changes to marine navigation rules.

Proposed management plan objectives include implementing a system of mooring or anchoring permits, delineating areas where vessels are prohibited from mooring or anchoring. Intended outcomes of the management plan objectives:

- reduced sewage and other waste discharges,
- reduced noise and nuisance activities caused by vessel occupants,
- reduced the number of abandoned vessels and/or amount of vessel debris,
- unobstructed navigation channel
- healthier marine ecosystems in the area

Summary reports of discussions will be brought before the council before further action is taken by CoV. Budget for each option to be developed to determine if there are resources and capacity to undertake a regulatory role. The public will be consulted before implementing any option.

Yogi: received a call yesterday about speeding zodiac up near Gorge Waterway Nature House. Victoria Police Department was contacted but they said it's not their jurisdiction.

Action: Send out the appropriate police phone numbers for reporting speeding boats

Shoreline Restoration Site at 508 Selkirk Ave – Julian Anderson (Extra item on agenda):

Julian reported that following a UVic case study in 2004 at this site, a seawall was removed and replaced with a small pocket beach and marsh. Since then, The Land Conservancy has not been able to keep up their commitment to maintain the site, and it has become seriously overgrown. The City of Victoria owns the land and it should be part of their parks maintenance program. The 10 year anniversary of that project is coming up in 2014, and we could celebrate by having a clean-up at the site.

Action: Jody will show Leigh the Selkirk Ave. site so that she can get it onto their parks maintenance schedule.

Update on CRD Harbours Program – Jody Watson

Staff is in the process of reviewing data from flow monitoring with colleagues from the provincial government. Monitoring will soon be started on Millstream Creek as part of that program. City of Victoria wants to leave the flow monitor in Cecelia Cr on a longer term basis.

Five in thirty sampling (i.e. 5 weekly samples taken at the same sites) will be conducted on 6 storm drains in Victoria Harbour, as well as at Cecelia Creek. This will be done during the dry season starting in September, and repeated after the first flush of rains in the wet season. This will help to quantify contaminant loads entering the harbour from the creek and storm drains.

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Discussions continue with the provincial government regarding the water quality objectives for the harbour areas. This fall, Jody will meet with municipal staff then hold public meetings to report on water sampling data, harbour survey results and to discuss objectives for water quality. High nutrient levels are coming out of Colquitz River and Colwood Cr. which seem to be causing algal blooms in Portage Inlet and Esquimalt Lagoon.

Very high pH levels in Elk Lake, where algal blooms are a continuing problem. There is a correlation between high pH and nitrogen levels: pH plays a factor in the reactivity of different forms of nitrogen. CRD is gathering data from other sources (e.g. VIHA, WFT) to provide to the province to try and get the “big picture” of water quality in the harbours, and potential problem sources.

Water quality objectives will not be finalized until next year, taking into account new sites being added and dry/wet season data still being collected and analyzed. Hope to get water quality targets established for the creeks flowing into the harbours too. Nutrient monitoring has been done for almost 10 years, but relating that data to discharge rating curves will make that information far more useful in addressing water quality issues.

Sara: Temperature in the water flowing out of Elk Lake was 25°C recently. In tests using fish boxes with eyed fish eggs placed in-stream, the eggs have repeatedly died. Large-mouth bass have recently been introduced to Elk Lake; they are voracious predators.

Harbour survey:

The on-line survey link has been sent to a wide variety of contacts and the CRD sent out a media release on August 12th. To date 500 surveys have been filled out. Postal code information on survey will provide data about whether there are clusters of people interested in certain issues, such as the anchored boats. Some municipalities and community groups have expressed interest in sharing the results which will contribute to work they are doing.

Action: Kitty to send the reminder notice about survey end date (Sept 20th)

Maybe by November, we will be in a position to report out to the public, along with results of initial water quality data. Question: What about data on pesticides and herbicides that are not collected? Ans: Sampling of these contaminants was conducted several years ago for VEHEAP. Sampling sensitivity is more accurate now, but even in Bowker Creek, where sampling was done more recently, there were no “hits” of pesticides/herbicides.

Question: Are biotoxicity tests being done? Ans: Tests with fish boxes give an indication of contaminant levels that are toxic to eyed fish larvae. Yogi: There is a researcher in Winnipeg who has developed a method of quantifying the effects of sewage effluent on caged forage fish.

Action: Yogi to send links to research paper about caged fish experiments

GWI Website: Will be redesigned along with the CRD website; 2012 GWI Update is going to be printed using a temporary template this year.

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Action: Kitty will send 2012 update when available.

Elgrass monitoring will be delayed till next year due to the WQO work.

Point Ellice House Shoreline Restoration Committee

- Work parties on a monthly basis, low numbers turning out lately but in May had a group of SMUS students that accomplished a lot
- A Rotary group is coming to the site next month for a work party
- Three interpretive signs are being made to install on the site, waiting for quotes on costs
- Last August the committee met with the Province to discuss the project, and a new heritage permit application was requested. The application was just submitted, and the goal is to wrap up the GWI commitment by next July and hand over maintenance of the restored site to another group

Partner Updates and Events

VCKC - It's been a busy summer for the club with lots of requests for help at events; just finished the regatta, Canadian dragon boat championship at Elk Lake, held a clean-up on the Cowichan River

BGCA- Cecelia Creek: CoV Parks planted many native plants in the benches along the creek that have formed from sediments coming down the creek during storms. A couple of weeks ago staff removed golden willow that had colonized the lower area of the creek. One was massive, it is good to see CoV put in lots of time and effort on this site. Started 5-in-30 sampling today and will also do some benthic invertebrate sampling in Cecelia.

GTCA – Swim Fest – had about 100 people at Curtis Pt, lots more at other two sites; Swan Creek restoration group has been very busy: clipped 3,700 coho fry; started water quality testing on the creek for oxygen, temperature, pH and turbidity; will be working on riffle improvement at three sites on the creek, had an initial meeting with Saanich staff about the project

WFT – The Gorge Waterway Nature House has been running programs all summer with help from summer students. It has been open to the public every Wed, Sat, Sun. Hope to keep it running through the fall, with help from a UVic SLIP grant (Service Learning Internship Program). Suggested that GWI could have the next meeting at the Nature House.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:45pm