



DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

Steering Committee
Wednesday, 16 July 2014

Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Present: Dorothy Chambers, Craig Elder, George Blogg, Vicki Blogg, Audrey Whittall, Rick Daykin, John Noyes, Tricia Demacedo, Yogi Carolsfeld, Kitty Lloyd

DECISIONS				
1	Group will meet to work on outreach material addressing stormwater contaminant reduction			
Next Meeting: 17 September 2014				
ACTIONS			ACTION BY	DUE
1	Set up meeting at CRD office to review outreach materials and displays		Kitty	July
2	Send Harbour Survey results presentation to GWI		Kitty	ASAP
3	Request City of Victoria to give presentation on their new stormwater utility at next GWI meeting		Kitty	Sept
INFORMATION				

**Presentation: Harbours Survey Results – Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet
by Kitty Lloyd**

- Results from 2013 harbour survey were presented, and compared to responses for other three CRD core harbour areas
- Demographics (age range, gender), respondents' proximity to harbour areas were summarized. Respondents evenly split between genders, about 75% were older than 40; plan to do proximity analysis of the data, i.e. relate answers to postal codes to see if some issues were more important to people living closer to the waterway
- Topics mentioned in the comments section were collated and grouped according to subject; anchored boats was mentioned more than any other topic in any harbour
- As a reminder, the survey concentrated on four topics:
 - types and frequency of uses
 - issues of importance
 - features most valued about the Gorge/Portage Inlet
 - vision for the future
- Results were presented as overall counts for each question, and as weighted counts where frequency (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly) and level of importance (very, somewhat) were calculated for the uses and issues/values listed

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- Weighted counts were used to rank topics within the harbour, and weighted percentages were used to compare results between harbours. This compensated for the difference in response numbers for each harbour.
- Top five **uses** for the Gorge and Portage Inlet, in order, were:
 - Using trails or walkways
 - Visiting parks and beaches
 - Viewing wildlife/birding
 - Solitude/reflection
 - Social or cultural gatherings
- Top five **issues** of importance:
 - Loss of marine habitat
 - Garbage and littering
 - Disturbance to wildlife (by people, dogs, boats)
 - Loss of shoreline vegetation
 - Deterioration of stream habitat
- Top five **values**:
 - Clean water
 - Aesthetics (e.g. water views, open space)
 - Wildlife (e.g. fish, birds, mammals, etc)
 - Parks walkways and public access
 - Freshwater creeks and estuaries
- Top five **vision statements**:
 - A place where healthy natural areas are conserved and enhanced to increase biological diversity
 - A place where recreational activities can be enjoyed on the water and on the lands along the shore
 - A place where people recognize, understand, appreciate and protect the natural and cultural features
 - A place with a community active and engaged in the well-being and stewardship of this area
 - A place of solitude and tranquility
- In the comments section, the **five most common topics of approval**:
 - Protection, enhancement of natural environment
 - Recreational development
 - Public access and walkways
 - Swimming opportunities
 - Enforcement of existing regulations
- In the comments section, the **five most common topics of disapproval**:
 - Anchored boats in the Gorge
 - Storm drain contamination
 - Commercial development
 - Speeding boats
 - Survey design (should have separated Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet)

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- In comparing results between harbours, interesting to note that the top 5 issues, values and visions were very similar in all areas. Healthy natural environment, access to trails, walkways, beaches very important in all harbour areas, even in the industrial and working harbours.
- Comments at GWI meeting regarding the survey results:
 - surprising that garbage and littering were considered important, as generally parks and shoreline are relatively litter-free
 - surprise expressed that dog poop wasn't listed as an issue
 - one of the most common requests at Esquimalt Parks is for more public access to the harbours and shoreline, surprising that it was not listed as an issue
 - Were results statistically significant? Looks like many answers ranked very close in importance
- Jody has given this presentation to City of Victoria planning and engineering staff, and has one planned for Saanich's engineering, parks and planning staff. Presentation will be made to Integrated Watershed Management municipal working group at their September meeting. Same offer is open to Esquimalt and View Royal as well as any community group that would like a presentation of these results.
- ACTION: Summary of this powerpoint will be sent to GWI via email

Interpretive signs on Craigflower Bridge

- Signs are all up on the bridge, they look great
- No ceremony with First Nations as they were unable to attend on date sign went up. An event may be held at a later date

Anchored boats: Kitty summarized some recent events:

- In May 2014, Victoria Council passed a motion directing staff to “prepare Zoning Regulation Bylaw amendments that would limit use of the Gorge Waterway to recreational activities and prohibit live-aboard use or long term anchoring”. The motion included requesting the Mayor to write MOE inquiring about the process for having the Gorge declared a “sensitive, protected ecological area”, and to ask if CRD would consider doing an ecosystem study of the Gorge. (It is in Harbour Program work plan to do this in 2015, as part of an update to Harbours Atlas data base)
- Bylaw No. 14-059 was drafted, and proposes a new zone “9.3 GWP Gorge Waterway Park”, to include the “land covered by water known as the Selkirk Waterway and Gorge Waterway”. This covers the water from the Selkirk Trestle upstream to a line between the Gorge Rd Hospital property and the western boundary of Banfield Park.
- Uses permitted would be:
 - parks and related uses;
 - water-related recreational activities
- Uses not permitted:
 - Anchoring between 11pm and 6am (similar to current camping in parks bylaw)
 - liveaboard or float homes,

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- docks, wharves, piers
- At the July 10, 2014 Victoria Council meeting, the rezoning bylaw amendment received first and second reading and will be going to **public hearing, tentatively Aug 28 or Sept 11th**.
- Jody may hire divers to do a subtidal survey of the area in question prior to the public hearing. Survey would assess size of the eelgrass bed near Banfield Park, and could also examine the eelgrass for any damage from anchoring etc
- Policy direction in Victoria's OCP covering neighbourhoods in this area of the waterway:
 - “enhance environmental conditions in Cecelia Creek watershed and ecologically sensitive shoreline areas”;
 - “enhance environmental quality of harbour and restore ecological functioning of shoreline areas”
- One of key objectives in Victoria Harbour Plan is to “conserve the natural environment”
- No mention in the Harbour Plan of overnight anchoring as a desired use in this area
- Shoreline along the Banfield Park is considered high to very high ecological rating (Harbours Environmental Inventory Rating, as used in the Harbours Atlas); eelgrass beds there have been expanding following the recovery of the sea bed from past log booming
- Other issues:
 - public concern that untreated sewage and grey water, as well as garbage is being dumped into the Gorge from anchored boats;
 - shoreline and vegetation is being negatively affected by trails leading up from where dinghies are tied up during the day;
 - many noise complaints;
 - garbage piling up along shore;
 - there are now 24 boats including 2 house boats anchored off Banfield Park;
 - parking congestion on surrounding streets;
 - harbour ferries and recreational boats have difficulty maneuvering around the anchored boats;
 - crowding on the dock at Banfield Park means less opportunity for recreational boaters to launch and pull out there. This public dock was installed for short-term use by swimmers and for launching small boats

Discussion:

- Boat sewage entering the Gorge from live-aboards should be addressed
- Vancouver Island Health Authority has not found any elevated fecal coliform levels during their regular sampling in this area. VIHA is testing several locations bi-weekly: Craigflower Bridge, Nature House beach, Banfield Park, Christie Pt, Curtis Pt; World Fisheries Trust helps with sampling
- Installing some mooring buoys could be a solution to the anchoring - this would prevent damage to the eelgrass, and limit number of boats
- Prohibiting anchoring at Banfield Park may just move the problem further upstream, not necessarily a long term solution for the waterway

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Update GWI outreach and display

- Would be useful to have watershed maps where neighbourhood drainage areas are shown eg Blenkinsop Valley
- Watershed model is effective, maybe one that shows the entire watershed of the Gorge or of Colquitz
- Map display – consider what features we want to have displayed; examples shown were maps of Craigflower and Colquitz watersheds created for use by UVic Geography students for a watershed resiliency study (2013), showing land uses, sensitive ecosystems, water features (creeks, wetlands, etc)
- What was the outcome of the oil spill in the Gorge creek? All the media attention raised awareness of how this can affect a huge area very quickly
- How effective are brochures?
- Shaw community channel – very effective for communication
- How to engage and target people who aren't already engaged in watershed-friendly activities?
- Reach them through educating kids? That worked with recycling program.
- Gorge Canada Day – huge crowd, more chance to get a random cross-section of the community at events like that
- Suggestion for an interactive display, e.g. people put in their address and the map shows where their stormwater drains to.
- Where are oil spills coming from? Leave info at gas stations for people when they come to change their oil (i.e. if they change it at home, must dispose of used oil responsibly)
- Same for fertilizers. Proper disposal as well as use
- Discussion of vegetated boulevards in the middle of roads to help filter pollutants from runoff
- Group volunteered to work on updating GWI materials, and will come to CRD and have a look at the variety of outreach materials and approaches used for different messaging
- ACTION: Set up meeting with CRD outreach staff and anyone from GWI interested in helping with new outreach material
- ACTION: Request that City of Victoria present info on their new stormwater utility at next GWI meeting

Partner Updates

Saanich – asked parks staff about the midden project at Gorge Waterway Park; it's being turned into an amphitheater to be used for performances; area will be landscaped, tree planting will be done in the fall; Gorge Park community gardens: construction to start mid-August; Saanich Parks met with GTCA about designing an interpretive sign for fish fence on Colquitz; Panama Flats (owned by Saanich) – want to lease it out for farming, suitability for farming being assessed first; senior facility for former Brookmans Store (Admirals and Gorge Rd) approved

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Esquimalt - got the okay from council to rebuild Esquimalt High School tennis courts, in partnership with School District 61, court is currently unusable; Archie Browning Sports Centre design is now complete, “option 3” was chosen –larger more grand façade in front, getting quotes now from contractors for cost to build; trees being planted along Colville Rd; the old house in Saxe Pt Park was demolished, will do concept plans for a variety of ideas for what will replace that: maybe a gazebo like Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver, covered outdoor venue for weddings etc, public open house will be held after some concepts are worked out; ordered more lights for the driveway into Esquimalt Gorge Park

What about better directional signage for the nature house in the park? Signage at entrance to park needs improvement, outlining features in the park, it's under discussion; way-finding signage being installed in Saxe Pt Park; WWI guns going back into in Memorial Park across from city hall, event on Sept 4th to commemorate this, including reenactment; German guns were captured by the Canadians during WWI; staff have finished design for the teen centre which will go in where the parks department is now in basement of rec centre.

WFT – new summer staff settling into programming at Nature House, open 4 or 5 days/week, no specific summer camps being held there but many day camp groups and others come there for programs every week. Yogi may do dive at Banfield Park this weekend to assess the eelgrass bed there.

PISCES - last week filled up a dumpster with blackberries pulled from Portage Park

Friends of Swan Creek – applied for permits to create 3 riffles, no permit to do smolt count – DFO sent application on to Province, but delays (lack of staffing?) caused it to be too late to do the work during the fisheries window this summer, hope to re-apply for next year

GTCA: Successful Canada Day event on the Gorge

Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Carolyn Knight and Paula Jardine did a great art project with students from Colquitz Middle School. Students' art work is now up on railing along creek; area of new planting near Dysart St bridge wasn't watered, hundreds of native plants were planted into very poor soil and 50% have died

VCKC (via email from Don Monroe): raised nearly \$2,000 for the kids program at Camp Shawnigan by giving canoe rides at Canada Day on the Gorge

Point Ellice Shoreline Restoration

- Group of exchange students from Quebec were onsite Sunday, got lots done
- Plan to be completely wrapped up by end of October

Meeting Adjourned: 9:45pm