



DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

Steering Committee
Wednesday, January 20, 2016

Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Present: Jack Meredith, Don Munroe, Melissa Huston, Julian Anderson, Craig Elder, Jacques Sirois, Tricia deMacedo, Dorothy Chambers, George and Vicki Blogg, Mick Collins, Bill Buckley, Morley Eldridge, Sara Stallard, Jody Watson, Kitty Lloyd

DECISIONS				
1	Photo of the joggers along the Gorge Waterway was chosen for the new GWI display			
Next Meeting: 7:00pm 16 March 2016				
ACTIONS			ACTION BY	DUE
1	Municipal staff meet to discuss the issue of anchored boats		CoV, VR, Saanich, Esquimalt	Soon
2	Send link to City of Victoria implementation plan for Gorge Waterway zone		Janice Schmidt	When available
3	Provide contact info for the TLC covenant manager of 508 Selkirk Ave		Jack M	Next couple of weeks
4	Send invitation to grand opening of Bowker Creek Restoration		Jody	ASAP
5	Request MBS signs from Canadian Wildlife Service		Kitty	Spring

INFORMATION

Presentation: Bowker Creek Restoration Through Oak Bay High School – Jody Watson

- Watershed of this urban creek has headwaters at UVic, includes Hillside Mall, Shelbourne corridor, part of Cedar Hill Golf Course, enters the ocean at Willows Beach. Watershed includes parts of Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay
- 66% of Bowker Creek is underground in pipes
- Community wanted to create greenways through the watershed

- Watershed management plan developed in 2003, but not enough detail, statements were too broad, needed recommendations for more specific actions
- BCI partners worked together to create a 100 year action plan for the watershed, the “Bowker Creek Blueprint”, including environmental considerations, water quality goals, recreation, costs and benefits of different restoration options
- Master drainage plan was developed, and priority actions for all 17 reaches of the creek were identified in the blueprint
- All parties agreed to adopt the plan (2012/13), and take advantage of opportunities as they arose through re-development etc to undertake the recommendations
- Oak Bay High School being rebuilt was just such an opportunity. BCI, School District 61 and Oak Bay applied for a Gas Tax Innovations Grant, received \$438,000 in 2011 to restore Bowker Creek while school and playing fields were being re-built in 2015
- School district held a design charrette (2014), involved students, staff, community; came up with two basic concepts
- Students were very engaged throughout the design process; BCI held a ‘Creeks and Careers’ workshop, curriculum-based, showing students how this project involved landscape architects, biologists, engineers, etc
- One important consideration was to ensure flood control for downstream properties, which regularly flooded during heavy rainfall events. Creek is very flashy, runoff into creek is rapid during rain events since so much of the watershed is impervious
- Got an additional 20m of riparian space by pushing buildings and fields to opposite end of the school property
- Primary features of the restoration include viewing platform, creek access via trails, outdoor classroom with seating for about 50, Garry oak meadow, and increased flood storage capacity of the creek
- Restoration occurred in 2015; first job was removal of invasive golden willow, blackberries and a few cottonwoods. Lots of advance warning to the public before the trees were removed, so no one was surprised by sudden disappearance of the trees; received no complaints from the public
- Creek flow was placed into a pipe during reconstruction
- Rough grading was done to 30 inches below creek height, 30” of topsoil brought in to bring it back up to creek level
- Very low base flow in the creek due to high degree of imperviousness
- Original channel was 5 ft wide, and in summer there was a very thin layer of water. Now there’s a deeper channel with meanders and river rock of various sizes placed throughout. Base of the creek is concrete, had to work around that. They were not able to use coarse woody debris in the creek due to engineering concerns about stormwater conveyance, so used rock clusters instead.
- In July there was a 1 in 250 year rain event, and for the first time in many years, there was no downstream flooding
- Official opening ceremony anticipated for end of February

ACTION: Send notice of date and time for grand opening, when available.

Trail naming in Cuthbert Holmes Park:

- Suggestion to use Chinook jargon words (trade language used by coastal First Nations and early traders). Examples: Tillicum: “friendship”, skookumchuk: “strong water”; tyee: “chief”; may want to enquire with Songhees
- Great blue heronry could be marked
- Could mention archery history “Archers Meadow”

- Trail 5 should tell you that it takes you to the dumpster at the Rec Centre
- Does every trail need to be named? Don't over label, where it's helpful to have a named trail or a map, use local identifiers "big rock, first hawthorn", etc

Anchored Boats discussion:

- Jody, Kitty and Dale Green met with Fraser Work, new Director of Engineering at City of Victoria, to discuss the environmental issues around anchored boats in the waterway
- CoV was interested in doing environmental assessment for the waterway area, but we determined that most of the information has already been provided to the City by the CRD. Lots of new staff at CoV, some of the background to this issue seems to have been lost during the transition, so good to make this information known to new staff.
- Waiting for the implementation plan from the City to get the boats removed

Coordinator Updates

- GWI Display Draft:
 - Discussion about the photos, preferred image was the one with joggers on the Gorge walkway with trees in background
- Goals and Achievements summary 2010 – 2010:
 - Took a lot to get the information from the groups, not that many have responded; is it valuable?
 - How do you measure what's been accomplished? Maybe it would be better to record meters of shoreline restored, amount of invasive plants material removed, area of waterway cleaned up, amount of garbage removed from waterway, number of students attending fish fence or programs at Nature House, etc.
 - It's good to see what all the groups have done, perhaps shorten it to communicate the major achievements, maybe do it as a map with graphics
- GreenShores workshop:
 - Kitty, Sara and Tricia all participated in workshop held at UVic
 - An initiative of the Stewardship Centre for BC, included a site visit to Cadboro Bay where different approaches to shoreline protection can be seen (i.e. lots of failing sea walls)
 - Discussed the concept of using the shoreline restoration site at 508 Selkirk Ave (done in 2005) as an area that we can work on as a GreenShores demonstration site; Brian Emmett was supportive; that site has been neglected since The Land Conservancy is not able to oversee the covenant there. Property is owned by Cov
 - Jack Meredith now lives above this site, he knows the TLC covenant manager

ACTION: Jack to provide contact information about TLC covenant manager to Kitty

- Ideas about this and other speakers series (e.g. herring recovery program) for continued discussion
- Update of contact list – current list was circulated for updating with current groups, representatives, alternates and contact information

Partner Updates and Events

Golden Rods and Reels: Following up on the forum on Elk/Beaver Lake held in October; getting information out through the Colquitz Coalition and GWI websites; consultant's report will be available to the public in Feb.; by Mar/April should get updated Water Quality Objectives for the lake; new weed harvester is in 2016 CRD budget; hope to see an EBL coordinator in place

by April or May; creating a 2 page paper outlining an approach for improving the lake ecosystem; keeping up a degree of momentum and keeping all the government groups continuing to collaborate

VCKC: No courses right now, end of month will start training for the 35th Paddle for the Kids, until March 19th when they do the paddle, over 34 years they have raised \$340,000 dollars; club is organizing annual Gorge Clean-up April 20th; flatwater courses and whitewater courses start in March and April

Gorge Swimfest: Start planning 2nd weekend in August, trying to resurrect the open water race; local swimmer Caroline Walker will be swimming the English Channel, she needs to do an open water swim to qualify, likely occur in March or April before the water gets too warm; swim-a-month club next swim will be on Valentine's Day at noon at the Banfield Park dock

South Island Aquatic Stewardship Society: Have taken heart with the change in federal government, sent off a welcome letter to Minister of Fisheries, explained what SIASS used to do and hoping to get funds to do this work again. If funding is restored, SIASS would plan to streamline restoration efforts and check that projects were conducted properly and centralize the documentation.

South Island Sea Kayak Assoc: Regular meeting soon; thinking of organizing a 16 day trip around Cape Scott

Burnside Gorge Comm. Assoc: Next phase of the local area plan: BCGA gave feedback, CoV going back to the public to present the ideas they came up with, 3 open houses next week, confirmation of wastewater public consultation open houses and workshops that are coming up – one is this Saturday from 1-3:30, daily drop in hours at the CRD storefront in Centennial Square

PISCES – working with Saanich and Ministry of Transportation about McKenzie Interchange

FoVic Hbr MBS – 3 MBS signs have been installed in Esquimalt Gorge Park, giving a talk at the VNHS on Monday, signs going up at Cattle Pt, recently have seen Northern Fulmar, Sooty Shearwater, Short-tailed Shearwater, Black Legged Kittywakes – all birds not normally seen here but were blown in with the recent winds

Saanich – Rammed earth building for new pump station at Austin Ave, senior housing project at Admirals and Gorge is underway, there have been complaints from the public regarding siltation from development. Town hall meetings for EDPA in mid-February, date not announced yet

FoCuthbert Holmes: Met with MoT engineers and environmental managers from Vancouver regarding the McKenzie interchange; toured the CHP park with them, they have designed the project on paper and had never set foot in the park, hopefully there will be some impact with them actually seeing some of the habitat; final count at Colquitz fish counting fence: 265 this year, and over 300 in Craigflower Creek.

Adjournment: 9:30pm