



DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

Steering Committee
Wednesday, September 19, 2018

Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Present: Jack Meredith, Dorothy Chambers, Jacques Sirois, Phil Jamieson, Phil Lancaster, Sara Stallard, Angela Hanes, Doug Critchley, Don Munroe, Bruce Bevan, Rick Daykin, Brian Koval, Ann Klein, Julian Anderson, Ben Chow, Yogi Carolsfeld, Kitty Lloyd, Natalie Bandringa, Craig Elder, Adam Steele, Mick Collins

Guests: Mark Andrews (volunteer at Goldstream), Steven and Jennifer Sprankle (new Gorge residents)

DECISIONS			
1	Form a sub-committee to deal with eelgrass/geese issue		
Next Meeting: November 21, 2018			
ACTIONS		ACTION BY	DUE
1	Help promote concept of installing eagle perch and osprey nest platform along the Gorge	All	Fall/ Winter
2	Put together a proposal for the above	Jacques and Yogi	Fall/ Winter
3	Write to Doug Critchley (PIPS) if in support of the setback proposal for Christie Pt (in Appendix 1)	All	ASAP
4	Contact CoV about the lighting situation on the Johnson St bridge	All	ASAP
5	Invite MoTI to next meeting, ask for update on the restoration plans. Request an onsite meeting in next few weeks	Kitty	ASAP
6	Eelgrass/geese sub-committee to investigate options for protecting eelgrass from geese	Sara, Yogi, Phil J, Dorothy, Jacques, Brian K	ASAP

INFORMATION

Review of action items from July meeting:

- Volunteer Appreciation BBQ very successful, approx. 35 attended from 3 initiatives (GWI, ELSI, BCI). Thank you to Esquimalt for loan of chairs, and World Fisheries Trust for hosting at the Nature House
- RE: promotion of osprey nest platforms and eagle perches:

- Hancock Foundation has provided a design for both structures
- BC Hydro is supportive of this initiative
- Esquimalt Gorge Park would be a great location
- 2 pairs of osprey already nest on light standards at Royal Athletic Park and UVic
- Near CFB Esquimalt there are osprey that nest every year
- 10 active eagle nests in the region
- Pt Hope Shipyard wants to expand their operation, eagle platform is in their plans

Discussion: Geese/eelgrass in the Gorge:

- Phil J – walks the Gorge every day, has observed that geese numbers are higher than in past, eating lots more eelgrass, pulling it out by the roots; by July eelgrass was almost gone along Esquimalt side where a large bed was very recently
- Large rafts of eelgrass are regularly seen floating down the Gorge
- Contacted various gov't agencies, no response from several, but did hear back from Canadian Wildlife Service
- Contacted several media outlets, also no response
- Jacques: Resident non-migratory geese are an introduced species, brought in to enhance hunting opportunities, now an agricultural problem; past 2-3 years, massive damage to eelgrass beds, also endangering the habitat of SARA listed plant species on Trial Is
- 2018 – has become more obvious here in the Gorge, key partners: municipalities;
- Need to trap and remove, could be done in Helmcken or Gorge Park, good sites where geese could be trapped and removed with ease
- They are destroying salmon habitat
- Angela – brought up goose/eelgrass problem at last View Royal committee meeting, residents would probably support this initiative
- Animal rights activists frequently stop control efforts from happening
- Rick – tricky to deal with, eggs are hard to find and nesting geese get smart
- Removal needs to happen every year, not just once
- Jacques: resident non-migratory birds are acting as decoys for other geese to land and spend the winter; we've lost at least 50% of eelgrass
- **ACTION:** Form a subcommittee. Sara, Yogi, Phil, Dorothy, Jacques, Brian K offered to participate on this
- Yogi – has booked a drone to survey at low tide to assess the bird population and eelgrass
- CWS has hired 2 new staff for federal protected areas in BC, they are showing real interest in promoting bird sanctuaries, putting up signage, could be very helpful in the eelgrass/goose problem
- Mick – HCTF has a grant opportunity open till November, subcommittee can look at getting some funds
- Natalie – CRD orthophotos from 2015/17; flyover was done at low tide in May/June, can see extent of eelgrass at that time
- Previous work done on goose management by CRD as an agricultural initiative, is summarized here:

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/past-capital-projects-and-initiatives/goose-management>

Discussion: Lighting on the Johnson St Bridge

- Jacques: sent a photo around of the bridge lit up at night - is this the amount of light that is supposed to be there?
- Adam – report was commissioned, GWI reviewed the draft, comments were incorporated
- Conclusion by CoV based on report: smolts are susceptible to lighting as they head out to sea, adults less likely to be distracted by lights on their way back into harbour
- Should turn off lights Feb-June
- Meantime, looking at ways to mitigate light now, maybe use video to see whether seals are impacting salmon because of lights
- Q: Can we see the consultant's final report?
 - A: has to go to council first, before being made public, thinks it will go to council soon
- Can we use the precautionary principle and turn off lights until we know for sure that it's safe for wildlife?
- Discussion: should we write a letter from GWI requesting that lights are left off longer?
- **ACTION:** Each group contact CoV on their own about the lighting situation on the bridge

McKenzie Interchange Update: Dorothy

- Regarding the berm: Dorothy wrote to MoTI: sediment fences are full of holes, MoTI wrote back to say that they were in contact with site manager and everything was okay
- Dorothy went next day, nothing had been done to repair silt fences
- Mick:: about 6 months ago, he and Julian met with MoTI staff, there has been better communication since then (see last minutes with email summary from Joanne Letkeman)
- Went out twice with the site manager and Ian Bruce (from Peninsula Streams); Mick hopes they can keep dialogue open, enter a new phase of restoration, huge potential for restoration at that site and elsewhere
- Concerns about slope, use of hydro-seeding, fine materials coming down the slopes, especially where cloverleaf slopes down, also very close to the creek; there was a commitment to have Dave Polster add some coarse woody debris to the slope
- Concept is to add loose CWD along fence line (sediment fence); original plans called for trails, lookout, plantings, some of these plans seem to have been abandoned
- Mick – GWI should ask MoTI about restoration plans, whether Dave Polster is going to have the contract to do this; concerns about volume of water that may be coming through the cloverleaf – the size of this is much bigger than planned, now within 10 feet of the Colquitz tributary
- How will new plantings be watered? No plans for irrigation
- Saanich has approved their restoration plan
- Mick – wants to get Saanich, MoTI and concerned community together, this has not transpired
- Rick -typically there's a 3 – 5 year window to ensure that trees survive, they have to replace the ones that die
- **ACTION:** invite MoTI to next meeting, ask for update on the restoration plans
- Meantime, ask for an update since last memo, timing on work that Dave Polster is advising on

- Specific concerns:
 - failing sediment fence, slope of berm, runoff, proximity to river, response time to breaches, volume of water into tributary; updated designs for berm and plantings
 - plan for this rainy season, and the contingency to deal with volumes of rain that we can expect
 - Based on last year's performance, how is MoTI ensuring that this is not going to happen this winter?
- **ACTION:** request an onsite meeting in next few weeks
- On positive side: design for dispersing water from large culvert into tributaries is greatly improved

Partner updates:

- **Friends of Swan Cr:** with help from Peninsula Streams, put in 2 new riffles, another one in the works, 10-12 over past 4 years, hoping for a good return, they count the returning fish in fall and out-migrating smolts in spring, got 700 one year
- **Sara S:** Her monitoring work for CRD this summer included intensive surveys on Cecelia and Millstream creeks; finished dry season sampling, including benthic invertebrates, starting wet season soon; got a rainbow trout fry in Millstream (not native)
- **Esquimalt Anglers:** shut gates on counting fence on Craigflower, fish may come as early as Friday with rains; fishing derby end of Aug, 33% reduction in average weight of spring salmon caught over past years since 2001
- **VCKC:** Club has been cleaning the Gorge for 21 years; club celebrated 50th anniversary last weekend; had lots of municipal councilors, canoe/kayak brigade, have used this clubhouse for 30+ years thanks to Saanich; canoe course coming up on Sept 20th; kayaking course Sept 23rd
- **Victoria Rods & Reels:** Some great speakers coming up, eg Melissa Nottingham (DFO); Portage Inlet Cutthroat Initiative: working with PSS and WFT; support from other angling groups, \$17.5K raised so far; 60% through Freshwater Fisheries Society; major literature review of reports on Portage Inlet and Gorge; flow data, O₂ data; Thetis Lake dam info, CRD library useful; 3 page angler questionnaire now ready, help from Hemmera consultants
- **Esquimalt:** Saxe Pt park restoration on Sept. 23rd, working with geocaching groups, Green Team invasive pull, finished Gorge Park work yard improvements; removed invasive white poplar trees from near Gorge Creek, replaced with Garry oak; Macauley restoration \$30K project; survey on amenity fund open till 23rd; lots of smaller projects in local parks;
- **Peninsula Streams:** looking for volunteers to help plant along Lochside Trail, on BC Hydro land, huge planting event this Saturday, seeds and plants; \$80K project; partnership with Pollinator Project; restoring Garry oak habitat; Millstream Project: quotes came in \$300K so they are short of funds for the fishway, need another year to fundraise
- **Saanich:** Doing a project on Swan Cr, moving downstream; put up a new sign at VCKC about bird sanctuary
- **CoV:** ready for 3rd season for stormwater utility billing and rainwater rewards program

- **Victoria Hbr Bird Sanctuary:** 3rd visit from Canadian Wildlife Service staff last week, their first job is to survey the MBS boundaries, e.g. how far up the Colquitz does boundary extend; 6 weeks of restoration work on Trial Is this summer; discussions with GVHA, nesting boxes for pigeon guillemots at cruise ship terminal; West Bay meeting: purple martin boxes to be replaced on new pilings; Maria MacCooey is new Harbour master
- **PIPS:** Email was circulated to GWI from PIPS concerning setbacks on Christie Pt (see Appendix 1 attached); encourage each community group to write a letter of support on this issue; email Doug if interested; all candidates meeting on Sept 27th; many suggestions for improvement to plan for re-planting; how will all the stormwater be absorbed onsite, it would have to be pumped off site; what about sea level rise
- **View Royal (Angela):** RE: HandiDart maintenance yard being proposed for site next to Craigflower Cr, 2401 Burnside Rd: *[the following is from an email Angela sent following the meeting];*
 - Federally - Bill C-68 has passed through the House and is now moving through the Senate, over half way through. If passed, it will reinstate/amemd protections to federal waterways that were removed during the Harper Administration
 - Provincially - Met with Mitzi to present a solution. My proposal was that given starving Orca's, Ocean protections/litigation from expansion of Dilbit Pipelines and Climate Change, it would be a prudent step both politically and ethically to request BC Hydro's stake, and any other provincial stakeholders claim, in 2401 Burnside to be *transferred to either the Ministry of Environment/Climate Change or Forests/Lands/Natural Resource Ops.*
 - Municipally - Motion was unanimously passed on the Sept 17 at the Council meeting to work towards purchasing this site.
 - I'll be presenting to Council this Tuesday to make sure all of the environmental provisions that Staff, Council and BC Transit handily ignored, be on public record. The other goal is to be very clear that the expectation of the voters engaged on this issue is that there will be follow through and accountability to acquire solely or better yet, in partnership with the Ministry of Climate Change to ensure we are in fact, defending and protecting our backyard.
 - In the meantime, Transit is continuing environmental testing on the site"
- **GTCA:** big clean up in Gorge Park, community mobilization, tree planting
- **Dorothy:** Beached bird and coastal bird survey workshops Oct 27; Esquimalt Anglers receiving funds for fish fence repairs on Colquitz; start to count fish early Oct; reaching out to council candidates taking them on a tour of Cuthbert Holmes Park,
- **Swim Fest:** Received a CoV grant to improve access to Gorge for swimmers, paddlers, etc; want to broaden it to include other jurisdictions; will be asking for input from other organizations to get involved
- **WFT:** event at Hillside Mall, inner space and outer space; star gazing event at Nature House Sat evening with Astronomical Society - 7pm

CRD Harbours Program Updates:

- Elk/Beaver Lake Initiative: RFP has gone out for pilot project to install aeration for Beaver Lake, at recent onsite meeting 10 companies showed up, RFP closes on Sept 28
- Regional Invasive Species Initiative: hired a shared contractor for treatment and monitoring of knotweed

Abandoned Boats

- CRD received funding for Capital Region Abandoned Boat Strategy (CRABS) education and awareness program. More info here: www.crd.bc.ca/boat
- Posters and business cards with abandoned boats website info handed out
- John Roe with Dead Boat Disposal Society is removing abandoned boats in the Gulf Islands, and we are discussing options for him to take over removal of the vessels we've received assessment funding for in the rest of the region

Adjournment: 10pm

Appendix 1 follows

Appendix 1: Email from Doug Critchley, Portage Inlet Protection Society

SETBACKS CHRISTIE POINT.

15m setback is in the OCP and stipulated in Rezoning for CP.

Can only be altered by a variance.

Only argument to use present building footprint is that it is already disturbed so that harm is done.

Real problem is that there may be unknown archeological impacts (delays)

Also moving the building towards the East might impact 5 trees, which are short at 13-18 metres Should those trees be lost there is at least 10 metres in which to add 20 Coastal Doug firs. To the East buffer.

Widening the West buffer from 2.8 m to 15m (minimum 10m) on the West will allow another 20 trees. So gain is 40 trees to offset a possible loss of 5. Any trees removed off-site will take with them the sequestered phosphates & nitrates retained in the past 50 years. New trees will take over the job.

It will take 10 years for new trees to conceal the lower half of the building. Those of us who view the buildings daily, recreational kayakers, canoeists and passive observers will also benefit.

The road should be made pervious and some surface parking will need relocating. Storm water detention is a problem on this site with much rock and little room for swales or ponds. The central site is one massive under-building garage. Only the buffers are available unless storm water is pumped off-site. Present footprints predated environmental knowledge. Now is the only opportunity to make it right and restore with native plants and trees.

If the buffer is restored to 15m it will **still** be compressed and narrowed by an anticipated SLR of 0.8m over 75 years. It will be reduced in width by further erosion of the unstable boundary at the High Water Mark.

Doug Critchley

PIPS

Sept 19 2018.

To Community Group Members GWI

Please email me a letter of support to eagerbeaver@shaw.ca , Preferably by Friday Sept 21st so that I can educate View Royal candidates on the environmental importance of buffers, and to request a commitment not to grant a variance to the 15 metre setback.

Doug