

# Gorge Waterway Stewardship Strategy – 2010 Update

The Gorge Waterway Initiative (GWI) is a collaborative, community-driven group of organizations dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural features of the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and surrounding watersheds.

The GWI partners developed a stewardship strategy in 2005 to help achieve their vision of a healthy environment for all life in the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and the surrounding watersheds. In 2010, individual GWI partners reviewed the goals and objectives outlined in the strategy, and updated the table below with activities and projects underway or completed that move the GWI towards meeting those goals and objectives.

## **GOAL 1: Provide and promote education stewardship and awareness programs and encourage responsible land and water uses**

**Objective 1A.** Ensure that interest groups and the public understand the values of the waterway so they can act responsibly

**Objective 1B.** Foster long-term community responsibility for the protection, restoration and enhancement of the waterway

**Objective 1C.** Work collaboratively with First Nations to protect areas and sites of historical and current significance

**Objective 1D.** Encourage balanced recreation uses that allow public access but respect the privacy of landowners

Lead member group	Activity
Gorge Waterway Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organize and promote community educational and awareness-raising events: Oceans Day, VicWest Fest, Canada Day on the Gorge, Connecting for Conservation, others</li><li>• Provided Shoreline Living workshops by Living by Water Project</li><li>• Development of series of InfoSheets about different topics pertaining to the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet</li><li>• Interpretive sign project: highlights sites of natural, historical and cultural significance along the waterway</li><li>• Members serve in advisory capacity for Gorge Waterway Education Centre</li><li>• Restoration project at Pt Ellice Shoreline, ongoing since 2007, over 2500 volunteer hours, many community groups involved (Camosun, UVic RNS, Sea Scouts, community service workers, Esquimalt High)</li><li>• Provision of Gorge interactive watershed model at public events and schools</li><li>• Disseminated info regarding International Marina proposal to members to keep them informed of the issue</li><li>• Made recommendations to City of Victoria re wharf at Banfield Park, VCKC re proposed wharf expansion</li><li>• Protection of migratory birds and habitats through Purple Martin nest box program, installation of bird diverters on overhead wires crossing the Gorge Waterway and encouraging BC Hydro to move lines under bridges</li></ul>
Friends of Cuthbert Holmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist with Rivers Song event at Cuthbert Holmes Park</li><li>• Encourage community involvement in restoration work adjacent to Colquitz River: removal of invasive plants, replanting with native trees and shrubs</li></ul>

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Gorge Waterway Action Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friends of the Gorge Project: outreach to waterfront residents</li> <li>Restoration of road right of way on Portage Inlet with District of Saanich and community volunteers</li> <li>Railyards waterfront restoration with community volunteers and City of Victoria Parks (ongoing since 2007)</li> </ul>
World Fisheries Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational programming and environmental monitoring at GW Nature House, Gorge Creek, Gorge and Portage Inlet, with many schools and community groups</li> <li>Partner with several other GWI members to sponsor student employment at GWEC</li> <li>Work with First Nations to offer pit cook at Esquimalt Gorge Park</li> <li>First Nations internships at Nature House</li> <li>Oceans Day at Nature House</li> <li>Care of the Gorge Project: community and school monitoring projects</li> <li>Olympia oyster monitoring project in the Gorge and Portage Inlet</li> <li>Coastal waterbird surveys with community volunteers</li> <li>Public workshops (eg Oysters and eelgrass)</li> </ul>
Burnside Gorge Community Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restoration and daylighting of Cecelia Creek</li> <li>Annual Gorge Clean-up: intertidal and subtidal areas, huge event, tonnes of garbage removed</li> </ul>
Gorge Tillicum Community Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing restoration work in Gorge Park; invasive plant removal, replanting with native trees</li> <li>Organize annual Canada Day on the Gorge event</li> </ul>
Portage Inlet Sanctuary Colquitz Estuary Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual shoreline clean-up in Portage Inlet</li> <li>Monthly bird surveys</li> <li>Newsletter with featured articles such as bird species, invasive plants, care of the Gorge monitoring, environmental and ecological issues.</li> </ul>
Seaquaria in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with many schools along Gorge, environmental education focused on local marine environment</li> <li>Major partner in Gorge Waterway Education Centre</li> <li>Work with First Nations programs at Esquimalt High School – marine education, environmental monitoring on the Gorge</li> </ul>
Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual shoreline clean up of intertidal areas in Gorge Waterway</li> <li>Work with youth groups, service groups; sponsor picnics on the Gorge</li> <li>Provide canoe rides at Gorge community events</li> </ul>
Township of Esquimalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner in GWEC</li> <li>Trees for Tomorrow events in Esquimalt Gorge Park</li> <li>Partners in GWI Interpretive Sign project</li> </ul>
City of Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership and expertise provided for Pt Ellice restoration, Railyards Waterfront restoration</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anti-Ivy League working in Banfield Park to remove invasive plants</li> <li>Trees for Tomorrow event in Banfield Park</li> <li>Development of Cecelia Ravine Management Plan</li> <li>Partners in GWI Interpretive Sign project</li> </ul>
District of Saanich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnered with GWAS and neighbourhood volunteers to restore road end on Portage Inlet</li> <li>Restoration work, invasive species removal and Tree Appreciation Day with community volunteers in Gorge Park</li> <li>Restoration work and Tree Appreciation Day in Cuthbert Holmes Park</li> <li>Partners in GWI Interpretive Sign project</li> <li>Support Seaquaria display at Canada Day on the Gorge</li> <li>Partnership with Victoria Fish and Game Protective Association and Esquimalt Anglers Association to count salmon in Colquitz River</li> <li>Rain garden installation associated with Admirals Rd upgrades</li> </ul>
Town of View Royal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of rain garden and settlement ponds in Portage Park as part of stormwater management system for Four Mile Hill on Old Island Highway</li> <li>Partners in GWI Interpretive Sign project</li> </ul>

### **GOAL 2: Serve as a hub for information sharing and act as a point of contact for waterway issues**

**Objective 2A.** Establish effective lines of communication and coordinate activities with harbour and waterway interest groups and government agencies

**Objective 2B.** Provide a forum for organizations involved in activities along the waterway so they can share information, collaborate and look for funding opportunities

**Objective 2C.** Establish a program to communicate with the public about GWI activities and the environmental quality of the waterway

**Objective 2D.** Encourage coordination between jurisdictions on the management of the waterway

Lead member group	Activity
Gorge Waterway Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of outreach and stewardship materials for public events including tabletop display and brochure</li> <li>Prepared a “who do you call” info sheet with contacts for key agencies and individuals involved in regulation or management of the waterway</li> <li>Update reports on important waterway and watershed issues at meetings and via email</li> <li>GWI coordinator acts as “go to” person regarding Gorge Waterway issues; annually receives hundreds of inquiries about issues such as the proposed marina, appearance of foam in the Gorge after storms, derelict boats</li> <li>Outreach subcommittee organizes activities according to the communications plan developed annually and approved by GWI steering committee</li> <li>Disseminate information about activities and initiatives of individual member groups to each other and the public, at community events, via email and on</li> </ul>

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	<p>GWI website; links to member groups' websites are provided on GWI website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invite key individuals to GWI meetings to provide information on specific Gorge topics (eg development proposals on the Gorge or in watershed)</li><li>• Circulate the list of waterway and watershed activities to key contacts on a regular basis via extensive email distribution list, website, community newsletters</li><li>• GWI annual reports sent to all members groups, posted on GWI website, provided to municipal offices; presentation of annual reports and updates made to each participating municipal council, also to CRD board</li><li>• Speakers Series: very popular free public talks on variety of topics relating to the Gorge and its ecosystems, human history</li><li>• Prepare coordinated responses to development proposals and other issues affecting the Gorge or its watersheds (eg salmon net pen proposal, Panama flats, RioCan, Victoria International Marina,)</li><li>• Addressing derelict boat issue in the Gorge, consulting with other jurisdictions about how to deal with environmental hazards presented by this issue</li><li>• Working on a process to coordinate visions and challenges for the Gorge between all municipalities and other government agencies that have jurisdiction over the waterway</li><li>• Coordinate reviews of Official Community Plan updates for each municipality on the Gorge, promote consistency between municipalities regarding common issues relating to the waterway and its watersheds</li><li>• Act as an information broker connecting the public and media to groups doing specific things in the waterway – via website, email distribution list, public service announcements</li><li>• Participate in conferences, workshops on Gorge-related topics (eg Water in the City conference, UVic restoration conferences)</li></ul>
Portage Inlet Sanctuary Colquitz Estuary Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigated jurisdictional issue of float planes landing on Portage Inlet</li><li>• Provide quarterly newsletters on issues affecting the Gorge Waterway, Colquitz Estuary and Cuthbert Holmes Park</li><li>• Participate with other environmental groups for sharing of information</li><li>• Attend council meetings on subjects affecting our membership and reporting to members</li></ul>
Gorge Waterway Action Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of a realtors' package for new homeowners on the Gorge, with information about environmental stewardship responsibilities</li></ul>
All four municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participate in inter-municipal group looking at coordinating watershed management on a broader scale, discussing issues such as alternatives to traditional "pipes approach" to rainwater; hydrometric studies and investigating flow in Gorge tributary creeks.</li></ul>

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### **GOAL 3. Encourage and advocate for the protection, restoration and enhancement of the waterway and its watersheds**

**Objective 3A.** Encourage land use planning and management in adjacent watersheds to protect the waterway

**Objective 3B.** Preserve, protect and enhance existing natural areas in the waterway, particularly foreshore and riparian areas

**Objective 3C.** Promote and demonstrate restoration of natural shorelines and stream banks in the waterway

**Objective 3D.** Achieve and maintain acceptable water quality and flows in the watersheds entering the waterway.

Lead member group	Activity
Gorge Waterway Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Restoration project at Pt Ellice Shoreline - ongoing</li><li>Input to official community plan for Gorge municipalities as they come up for review</li><li>Coordinated reviews regarding proposed developments that affect the Gorge and/or its tributary watersheds</li><li>Interpretive signs, speakers series and InfoSheets provide information regarding invasive plants, value of protecting and restoring natural shorelines, riparian areas and the marine environment</li><li>Information on protection, restoration of the waterway and its watersheds provided at community events and on the website</li><li>Data from stormwater quality monitoring, is posted on Natural Areas Atlas; more recent data available from CRD staff</li></ul>
Burnside Gorge Community Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Restoration and daylighting of Cecelia Creek</li><li>Annual Gorge clean-up: intertidal and subtidal areas</li></ul>
Friends of Cuthbert Holmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Restoration work adjacent to Colquitz River: removal of invasive plants, replanting with native trees and shrubs</li></ul>
Gorge Waterway Action Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Railyards waterfront restoration with community volunteers and City of Victoria Parks</li><li>Restoration of road end on Portage Inlet, replanted with native vegetation; used as a demonstration site</li></ul>
World Fisheries Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Education programs (schools, community groups, general public) that demonstrate importance of shoreline conservation and restoration</li><li>Care of the Gorge program: environmental monitoring along the Gorge and Gorge Creek by schools and community members</li><li>Established Coastal Waterbird survey program along the Gorge Waterway with community volunteers</li></ul>
Portage Inlet Sanctuary Colquitz Estuary Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Coastal Waterbird surveys on Portage Inlet</li><li>Annual shoreline clean up in Portage Inlet</li><li>Annual tree planting on Tree Appreciation Day</li><li>Weekly environmental monitoring for "Care of the Gorge Community</li></ul>

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	<p>Monitoring Program"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor for the growth of Native Oysters</li> </ul>
Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual shoreline clean-up of intertidal and shallow subtidal areas in Gorge Waterway</li> </ul>
The Land Conservancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restoration of two adjacent waterfront properties on Selkirk Ave, including removal of seawall and creation of pocket beach and intertidal marsh</li> </ul>
City of Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bioengineering as part of upgrades to sewer trunk lines crossing the Gorge (adjacent to Gorge Hospital)</li> </ul>
Capital Regional District	
All four municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in inter-municipal group looking at coordinating watershed management on a broader scale, discussing issues such as alternatives to traditional "pipes approach" to rainwater; hydrometric studies and investigating flow in Gorge tributary creeks.</li> </ul>
City of Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in restoration work on several projects: Railyards waterfront, Pt Ellice shoreline, Cecelia Cr Ravine, Banfield Park</li> <li>• Controlled shoreline erosion in Banfield Park using bioengineering (live cribwall)</li> <li>• Controlled shoreline erosion on Harriet St road end using bioengineering techniques</li> </ul>
Township of Esquimalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daylighting and remediation of Gorge Creek in Esquimalt Gorge Park</li> <li>• Purple martin nest boxes installed in Esquimalt Gorge Park</li> </ul>
District of Saanich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed invasive plants and provided native plants for Murray Dr road end on Portage Inlet</li> <li>• Consulted with GWI re Admiral Bridge reconstruction (2008);</li> <li>• Consultation with GWI re Craigflower Bridge upgrades (2010)</li> <li>• Restoration of marine foreshore and rain garden in Gorge Waterway Park near playground</li> <li>• Established Streamside Development Permit Area along banks of Colquitz River and tributaries to protect riparian area</li> </ul>
Town of View Royal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with GWI re upgrades to Craigflower Bridge (2010)</li> <li>• GWI provided extensive input to engineering staff on Island Highway rain garden project</li> <li>• In Official Community Plan review, attention paid to stronger protection for waterways in development permits</li> </ul>