

**MINUTES**  
**NATURAL AREAS, PARKS, AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams  
770 Vernon Avenue  
Thursday, April 11, 2024, at 4:03 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Julian Anderson (via Teams), Jane Cameron, Catherine du Bois (via Teams, 4:35 p.m.), David Little (via Teams), Evan Papps, Wendy Trotter and Kathleen Woodruff

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Paul de Greef, Manager, Park Planning and Development; Alix Link, Manager, Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship (via Teams); Cassidy Daskalchuk, Agriculture and Food Security Planner; Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer (via Teams, 4:30 p.m.); and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

Guests: Carmel Thomson, The Prospect Lake Road Trees Advocacy Group

Regrets: Darrell Wick

---

**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by W. Trotter and Seconded by J. Cameron: “That the Minutes of the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held March 14, 2024, as amended be adopted.”**

**CARRIED**

Note: The minutes were amended to change the attendance of Wendy Trotter from attending via Teams to absent.

**CHAIRS REMARKS**

No comments were made.

**PROSPECT LAKE ROAD HYDRO PROJECT (MOTION)**

A memo related to BC Hydro Projects and support for funding for Climate Action Ecosystem Restoration was attached to the agenda. The committee members were asked to provide feedback on the resolution and the following was noted:

- The size of this project has established a baseline for future BC Hydro projects.
- Demonstrating a commitment to protecting the environment involves more than funding.
- Ecosystems require as much protection as individual trees.
- Tree and ecosystem destruction is inevitable.
- The province could address this issue more comprehensively in the future.
- The collection of data on the Western Screech Owl population has resulted in a delay of the project until the fall.
- The *BC Hydro and Power Authority Act* and regulations are not required to meet the Tree Protection Bylaw.

- Accountability measures for the budget and spending could be incorporated into the *BC Hydro and Power Authority Act*.
- Funding for technology like soil cells and placing lines underground could be considered.
- It is imperative to be transparent and articulate the impacts on the environment.
- It is requested to add the wording in the last paragraph to “and demonstrate the province’s nature-based 2030 Climate Change targets so that”.

**MOVED by J. Cameron and Seconded by W. Trotter: “It is recommended that the last paragraph of the BC Hydro Projects – Establishment of Funding for Climate Action Ecosystem Restoration. Proposed Motion for the 2024 UBCM Convention, be amended as follows:”**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT UBCM recommend the Province of BC mandate an amendment to the BC Hydro and Power Authority Act to incorporate a budget for Climate Action Ecosystem Restoration as well as technologies that support tree retention and/or re-planting, in all its projects, thus demonstrating the province’s commitment to its nature-based 2030 Climate Change targets.**

**CARRIED**

## **POCKET FARMS**

The Agriculture and Food Security Planner provided information on Pocket Farms (report on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Pocket farms are designated in P-4 Parks, recreation centres and the Municipal Hall. Natural park zones are excluded.
- In 2016, Council considered a zoning bylaw amendment to regulate pocket farm markets in the District of Saanich.
- Staff have developed criteria for identifying suitable locations, which include provisions for ample parking for set-up and public access, as well as accessible washrooms.
- An assessment of the project after one year is ideal.
- In the past music volume was a concern in the Braefoot area. This could be considered as a condition of the park permit.

**MOVED by D. Little and Seconded by J. Cameron: “That the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee recommend that Council endorse the report provided by staff on Pocket Farms and Temporary Farm Markets.”**

The following discussion ensued

- The areas along the side of regional multi-use trails could be considered for markets.

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED**

## **FOOD TRUCKS AND MARKETS IN PARKS**

The Park Planner Designer provided information on Food Trucks and Markets in Parks (report on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- A communication network was established in 2020 through a survey conducted on the District of Saanich website. These contacts are still available today.

**MOVED by E. Papps and Seconded by J. Cameron: “That the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee recommend that Council endorse the proposed bylaw amendments to allow food and beverage sales and concession stands in P-4 Parks, at recreation centres and at the Municipal Hall, and to allow Christmas tree sales in P-4 Parks.”**

**CARRIED**

\*\*\*The Agriculture and Food Security Planner and the Park Planner Designer left the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

## **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION – DRAFT BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY ACTIONS**

The committee had a roundtable discussion about the Draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Actions. The following was noted during committee discussion:

Theme 1 – Recommendations to improve knowledge and mapping of natural features and functions:

- The clarity of establishing quality and standards could be improved.
- First Nations could have a greater role in the decision-making processes.
- Incorporating fish migration and marine aquatics could be considered.
- Maximizing economic efficiency is essential.
- It is important to include Garry Oak meadow ecosystems as at risk.
- Assessing our present situation as it pertains to streamside protection and fish migration could be useful.
- An element of precautionary principle could be added under the Corporate/Regulatory/Policy section.

Theme 2 – Recommendations to acquire and protect a network of habitat areas:

- Acquiring land through diverse mechanisms could help in safeguarding trees.
- Relying on resources within Saanich rather than solely on the public is important.
- Ecological gifts programs could be explored.
- Victoria Natural History Society has a older study of natural areas in undeveloped right of ways in Saanich. This could be reviewed.
- Exploring multiple approaches to land protection is worth considering.

Theme 3 – Recommendations to enhance biodiversity during land use planning and development:

- Develop inventory of natural assets.
- Removing the development permit mapping and replacing with GIS link could be considered in the OCP.
- Monitoring these enhancements could be annually.
- University students could aid and offer insight.
- Native species are suffering with climate change.
- Disposal for invasive species could be monitored and appropriate.
- Education in these subjects could be enhanced through demonstrations, incentives, and cultural and attitudinal shifts.

- Other solutions could be offered to rid the region of vermin and rodents.
- The riparian setbacks along waterways could be widened.

Theme 4 – Recommendations for enhancing biodiversity on public lands:

- This section could see a more specific list of the varieties of bird species.
- Emphasizing the issue of illegal dumping could be prioritized.
- Expanding the inventory at local nurseries could lead to increased revenue.
- Turf grass could be used in measured amounts.
- Adding key biodiversity information to cycling, park, and trail maps could be expanded to reach a wider audience.
- The municipality could partner with outside organizations to protect native species.
- Supporting and sustaining ecosystems defined by nature and not by square footage is important.
- Unused grassed areas in the municipality could be utilized.

Theme 5 – Recommendations for Public Stewardship to encourage biodiversity initiatives on private lands outside of the development process:

- Educational initiatives could be offered to the public regarding natural state covenants.
- This section could include a mention of the proper way to dispose of invasive species.
- Changing the word promoting to providing could encourage education.
- Updating and modernizing covenant and guideline practices could foster increased participation in the future.
- Private landowners could create wetlands to enhance restoration.
- Previously existing water areas could be restored.
- Including information about the environmental damage caused by artificial lighting could raise awareness.

\*\*\*The Manager of Park Planning and Development left the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

Theme 6 – Recommendations to improve public understanding of biodiversity and promote stewardship:

- Expanding education about ecological services could enhance the performance measures.
- Measures could be reported semi-annually.
- Sustainable programs could offer greater benefits compared to one-time initiatives.
- Introducing new programs could engage and raise awareness among the next generation.

Theme 7 – Recommendations to enhance biodiversity on agricultural lands:

- Maintenance of bat and owl boxes could be incorporated.
- Local organizations could aid in leading some of these initiatives.
- Saanich may wish to advocate to the Province to undertake a review regarding the clearcutting of trees under the *Farm Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.
- Exploring an adopt-a-park program, like adopt-a-highway initiatives, could be considered.

**MOVED by J. Cameron and Seconded by W. Trotter: “That the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee recommend that Council direct staff to establish a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy reserve fund to move forward with this strategy and to draft a bylaw.”**

**CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from J. Cameron the meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is on May 9, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

---

Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

---

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk