



AGENDA
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Tuesday, November 23, 2021, 7 pm to 9 pm

To listen to this meeting by telephone call **1-833-214-3122** and use code **775 420 360#** during the time noted above. NOTE: MS Teams callers are identified by their phone number which can be viewed on screen by all attendees of the meeting.

1.	Call to Order	Chair T. Stevens	
2.	Territorial Acknowledgement & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement	Clr R. Mersereau	
3.	Approval of Agenda	Chair, T. Stevens	5 mins
4.	Adoption of Minutes • October 26, 2021		5 mins
5.	Receipt of Correspondence		
6.	Cultural Safety Introduction with W'SAANEC Leadership Council	Clr R. Mersereau, T. Stevens, First Nations Elders	60 mins
7.	Discussion of Resilient Saanich Principles, Goals, Objectives	Kim Walker	30 mins
8.	Discussion of RFP's for State of Biodiversity Report and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy	A. Pollard	5 mins
9.	Report of Biodiversity Working Group	T. Ennis	5 mins
10.	Report of Mapping/Stewardship Working Group	B. Wilkes	5 mins
11.	Motion to adjourn		

* * Next Meeting: December 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. * *
 Please RSVP your attendance to lynn.merry@saanich.ca



MINUTES
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
To be Held in Council Chambers
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue
Tuesday, October 26, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau (Council Liaison), Kevin Brown, Tim Ennis, Purnima Govindarajulu, Chris Lowe, Stewart Guy, Jeremy Gye, Tory Stevens (Chair), Brian Wilkes, Bev Windjack

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Thomas Munson, Senior Environmental Planner, Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; and Lynn Merry, Senior Committee Clerk

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT**

P. Govindarajulu read the Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOVED by B. Windjack and Seconded by S. Guy: "That the Agenda for the October 26, 2021 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be approved, as amended."

CARRIED

It was requested that items 6 and 10 be discussed together.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by C. Lowe: "That the minutes of the September 16, 2021 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be adopted."

CARRIED

5. **RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE**

MOVED by S. Guy and Seconded by K. Brown: "That the correspondence for the October 26, 2021 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be received for information."

CARRIED

6. UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL LIAISON ON COUNCIL'S DISCUSSION ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE CHANGES

Councillor Mersereau advised that:

- Saanich is looking at opportunities to work with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council (WLC).
- The extension of the timelines in the Terms of Reference have been approved by Council.

7. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR – WORK PLAN UPDATE

The Chair prepared a list of tasks for Milestone 2. The list will be updated as the committee makes progress.

8. UPDATES FROM STAFF

The Senior Manager, Parks provided an update as follows:

- Saanich won the Digital Communications Award for the Natural Intelligence campaign.
- The next field trip will be on October 29th at Cuthbert Holmes Park.
- With respect to cultural safety training, First Nations Elders would like to attend the next meeting to meet the committee and to talk about the process.

The Manager of Environmental Services provided an update as follows:

- K. Walker, consultant, has had meetings with staff, the committee Chair and Council Liaison, has been reading through correspondence and reviewing the Official Community Plan, Strategic Plan and other relevant documents which will give context to the vision and goals for Resilient Saanich.
- She has also looked at how other municipalities have communicated their goals and objectives.
- K. Walker proposes that the objectives be nested under the goals.
- Clustering principles together may make the document easier to read.
- The contractor has requested time at the November meeting to present.
- A letter has been sent to the WLC asking if they would like to hear a presentation with respect to Resilient Saanich; letters have also been sent to the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations to ask if they are interested in being involved.
- The Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services is looking at potential First Nations' involvement in reviewing the goals and objectives.
- There are funds available for honorariums for First Nations membership and involvement.

Committee discussion ensued with the following comments:

- It would be helpful to be able to review the document from the consultant prior to discussion.
- The principles should serve as policy filters.
- A small committee could work with the consultant to come up with an infographic.
- It is appropriate to partner with First Nations and continue to reach out with respect to membership on the committee.

Councillor Mersereau stated:

- The consultant that is to be hired will have expertise in working with First Nations.

9. MARINE SHORELINE INVENTORY

The Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- Marine shoreline mapping is twenty years old.
- The Capital Regional District (CRD) has proceeded with mapping from Albert Head to the Ogden Point Breakwater which includes the Gorge and Portage Inlet in Saanich.
- A verification audit of the classification of the data will take place.
- First Nations engagement is included.
- There will be a workshop to develop criteria and ecological ratings.
- The consultant will deliver an atlas-ready final product.
- The cost incurred for this work equates to \$2,573 per km of shoreline; Saanich has 26.5 km of shoreline not included in this study.
- Funding could be requested to pay for the additional shoreline mapping.
- The committee offered to help staff with a presentation to Council on what the information could and would be used for.
- The Urban Forest Land Cover Mapping update has been completed and includes better riparian information.

Committee discussion ensued with the following comments:

- The recommendations from the Manager of Environmental Services coalesce well with those of the Mapping Work Group.
- There may be partnerships and funding available from outside organizations.
- The Province and CRD are already coordinating shoreline inundation and flooding mappings that forecasted sea level rise and coastal flooding.

10. UPDATE FROM MAPPING WORKING GROUP

The Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) looks at the terrain and classifies land, soil and plants; Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) uses air photo interpretation to delineate ecological communities.
- There is a need to have a consistent approach to mapping across larger boundaries.
- Accurate maps will be the core of the Biodiversity Strategy, stewardship programs and monitoring.
- The Working Group recommends updating SEI maps using established methods and that maps be detailed enough to guide land use decisions and rehabilitation efforts.
- The updated mapping could be done in stages.
- SEI mapping was originally initiated by the Federal and Provincial governments as a tool for local governments to be able to put in place regulations to keep polygons from being lost to development.
- A Stewardship Certification Program may be considered to ensure developers are aware of conservation principles and approaches.

The Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- The GIS Analyst has been inputting SEI inventory data into GIS.

MOVED by C. Lowe and Seconded by J. Gye: “That it be recommended that the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee direct staff to present Council with a request for funding in 2022 to complete mapping of Saanich’s marine shoreline, using the same methodology as the recent marine shoreline mapping commissioned by the Capital Regional District for the Gorge Waterway and other selected coastal areas.”

CARRIED

11. MILESTONE 2/3 – CONTRACT UPDATE

The Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- Council approved the extended timeline in the Terms of Reference to the end of March 2023.
- Meetings with First Nations and additional engagement have been added to the timelines.
- It is necessary to ensure First Nations input is included in the deliverables.
- The WLC will determine their level of engagement.

Committee discussion ensued with the following comments:

- The thematic areas are important and are not included in the Terms of Reference for the procurement document for the consultant.
- K. Walker should address the thematic areas in her work.
- There are opportunities to bring enhanced stewardship to Saanich.
- Indigenous led tours may be appropriate.
- The conservation standards include a module to incorporate Indigenous values.

MOVED by S. Guy and Seconded by P. Govindarajulu: “That the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee endorse the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for Milestones 2 and 3 Consultant Team with an edit to page 2 as follows: “Resilient Saanich will include the Climate Plan (2020), a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, an enhanced stewardship program and other coordinated policies and programs.”

CARRIED

12. UPDATE FROM BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

T. Ennis stated:

- The working group has come up with a working list of targets.
- The next step is to determine the key ecological attributes of targets.
- Once that is done, the group will look at indicators.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by P. Govindarajulu and Seconded by B. Windjack: “That the meeting of the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be adjourned.”

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

November 23, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Tory Stevens, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary

Dear Councillor Mersereau, and Thomas Munson, RSTC, and Saanich Council,

The Resilient Saanich Technical Committee wants to halt protection in order to talk with the First Nations bands. I would suggest that the land be protected now, while we're in the midst of climate crisis, and make space for alterations to policies by the leadership of the bands*. Resilient Saanich had the chance to read the Cordova Bay LAP, and the SPEC bioregional framework in order to incorporate those texts which the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership council contributed to, however they did not hear that advice. Please implement protection now, and reach out to the bands, and W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council now, and also follow through on your mandate of protecting the land. I provided several suggestions, several months ago, of how to connect with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council to discuss the RSTC. My experience as an employee with the WLC is that the organization is that they've already asked for protection of the land in the Saanich Municipality and it's laid out in the Cordova Bay LAP. As a member of the Environment committee, we would advocate for as much protection of ecosystems of the land and waters to the greatest extent. So, as a member of the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council's environment committee, I echo, protect the land now, read the two documents approved by the 3 bands for protection of our lands, and email info@wsanec.com with any further questions on how to work with the bands.

Warm Regards,



Tiffany Joseph

*In my experience, the bands may wish for greater protection in certain areas, or be concerned of being excluded from areas that Indigenous caretaking of lands would require more connection to help increase biodiversity and safe habitats for the beings who reside there, what settlers know as "wildlife."

Recommendations regarding a Voluntary Private Land Stewardship program in Saanich

Provided by Ted Lea, Vegetation Ecologist, October 2021

Councillor Plant's motion (seconded by Councillor Haynes) made Oct. 28/2017 stated the following:

"That it be recommended that Council direct staff to bring Council a report as soon as possible on the potential of developing a Saanich program which includes the topics of Climate Adaptation, a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, and Stewardship Program to serve as a policy framework for other Saanich environmental policies and programs and a new Environmental Development Permit Area be considered part of this program; and the Diamond Head report recommendations be considered as a component of this report.

I believe that the Stewardship Program that Councillors Plant and Haynes (now Mayor) made at that time referred to a **Voluntary** Private Land Stewardship program, as many community groups had recommended such a program. This included SAFE, SCRES and multiple community associations. I can provide their proposals if they are of interest to the RSTC.

The present wording of the RSTC Stewardship program, which refers to "Enhanced Stewardship" appears to be focused, at least as presented on the Saanich website, only regarding existing programs. See Enhanced Environmental Stewardship link at <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/natural-environment/resilient-saanich-environmental-policy-framework.html>

There is no mention of a Private Land Stewardship program at this site, yet I believe that is what Councillor Plant and other members of Council were thinking at the time when they approved the above motion.

Executive Summary

A Voluntary Private Land Stewardship program was first recommended to Saanich Council in 2016.

In full support of six major issues of Responsible Stewardship for private and public lands in Saanich:

1. That the District of Saanich fully fund and resource the stewardship of the environment in Saanich Parks and restore and enhance natural ecosystems and species at risk populations in the park system
2. That the District of Saanich fully fund and resource a land stewardship program within the Department of Parks to provide encouragement, education, incentives and a carefully chosen group of individuals who will work in cooperation with

landowners to achieve actions that are fully supported by residents and enhance biodiversity and climate change adaptation for the district.

3. Saanich could hire a Stewardship Coordinator staff position that runs the private land stewardship program and implements the program through a conservation group or groups, such as Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)
4. Saanich Council needs to instruct staff about a voluntary private land stewardship program with a new cooperative spirit towards landowners in order to be effective.
5. Responsible Stewardship necessarily includes vegetation management for resilience, climate adaptation as well as to mitigate risks of wildfires and spread of wildfires.
6. Responsible Stewardship embraces the need for affordable, sustainable housing to accommodate current population of Saanich and expected growth. This will necessarily compete for rationalizing land use.

This report is intended to provide helpful and encouraging information for developing a stewardship program that would work with Saanich residents and develop a successful voluntary private land stewardship program to help with biodiversity and climate change adaptation issues in the municipality. This same information can apply where applicable to public lands and parks.

It is useful to point out that the District of Saanich Official Community Plan recognizes the importance of this approach in the two policy statements in that report:

OCP Policy 24 to “*Foster and support public awareness, engagement, and participation in community environmental stewardship initiatives*”.

OCP Policy 25 to “*Work with private land owners to encourage stewardship that protects, preserves, and enhances natural systems and, where appropriate, enter into conservation covenants or provide incentives to protect riparian or environmentally significant areas.*”

Sustainable Saanich Official Community Plan (OCP) 2008 is the most recent version. It is recommended Council review and revise the Plan to take into consideration the realities of 2021 and onwards on public and private land stewardship.

The realities of 2021 include the need address the impact of climate change on vegetation management. This includes determining which native species are still sustainable and when it might be perhaps better to introduce alternate species that would thrive. Vegetation management also means that practices like letting nature take care of dead trees, plants and windfalls cannot be allowed to continue where it would increase the risk of wildfires and the spread of wildfires.

This applies to private and public lands.

I believe that Saanich needs to follow its Jan. 26, 2015 DECLARATION OF THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT that states to “Ensure equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens within the municipality”. These “burdens” need to

be shared equally among all landowners in Saanich, not carried by individual landowners.

Introduction and Goals of Stewardship

The following quotes are from “Private Land Stewardship in New Brunswick: A Guide for Landowners”

*“Private stewardship can be defined as “care given to the land and our heritage by private landowners based on an ethical commitment to conservation”. In other words, **private stewardship is voluntarily** taking care of your land for future generations in a responsible manner.”*

*“**Private stewardship programs put landowners concerns first** and consider conservation from their point of view. As a result, stewardship agreements may involve little or no land use, or may include an extensive management plan outlining how the owner can maintain, or even expand, the natural features that make their property special.”*

The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations to aid in the creation of a voluntary private land stewardship program to enhance biodiversity and resiliency of the vegetation and land in the District of Saanich. It is recognized that each individual landowner will have a different perspective on the desired vegetation, vegetation management and related biodiversity that they would like to either maintain or change and encourage on their properties. Most landowners need assistance, knowledge, incentives, and encouragement to achieve results that many in the community may like to see on their properties.

Saanich could hire a Stewardship Coordinator staff position that runs the private land stewardship program and implements the program through a conservation group or groups, such as Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)

Many landowners will neither have the time or interest to make any changes on their properties. Of those who have interest, some landowners will be keen to enhance bird or butterfly habitat, while others will want to assure that their properties are resistant to fires that could occur in the future. Certain individuals may be keen to plant species at risk on their property and if provided with encouragement and incentives may eagerly nurture these species. Still others, particularly in rural areas where true natural ecosystems may still occur, will be willing to protect these ecosystems and it would be helpful to have financial incentives to encourage this protection, possibly through voluntary covenants and tax incentives, so that all Saanich residents contribute to protecting these special features for the long term.

- Some residents will be keen to protect or plant native plant species or other non-native species that support biodiversity. Some may be very keen if they could

grow or encourage a species at risk, knowing that they are contributing to the overall biodiversity in Saanich and Greater Victoria.

- Many residents will have interest in improving Biodiversity but not have the knowledge regarding how to go about doing this. Saanich providing this information to them in multiple formats will be very useful in order to see success in a landowner stewardship program.
- Other residents will not have time, interest, or the ability to do these activities and may have conflicting interests on their properties such as food production, play areas for children, FireSmart requirements or concerns about exposure of their property to risk of crime by having dense shrubs in their front yards.
- Willing to work in conjunction with the District of Saanich to help encourage landowners and others to be involved with the Volunteer Stewardship Program by plantings, following FireSmart initiatives and other actions for biodiversity enhancement and climate change amelioration and adaptation.

This report is intended to provide helpful and encouraging information to work with Saanich residents and develop a successful voluntary private land stewardship program to help with biodiversity enhancement and climate change adaptation issues in the municipality.

I look forward to a fully funded voluntary stewardship program that provides education, incentives, and encouragement for landowners to plant appropriate vegetation and take other environmental actions beneficial on their properties for the future good of the whole community and the planet. It is important to excite, educate and provide reasons to landowners so they may be enthusiastic about environmental actions.

Many private landowners could be encouraged to take part in a voluntary landowner stewardship program that they would like to see a high standard of caring for biodiversity on public land by the District of Saanich. This is presently not the case as many of Saanich's Parks are overrun with invasive species, with little funding directly available for the Parks Department to be able to maintain natural ecosystems, especially Saanich's special Garry oak and related ecosystems, which are highly degraded and abused. Saanich does provide support for voluntary stewards of Parks to remove invasive shrub species, but this in no way is able to deal with the very significant problem of invasive grass species, especially in supposedly high priority ecosystems such as Garry oak woodland and riparian ecosystems.

Quotes from the Diamond Head report:

“Public land often safeguards the largest and most valuable Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs). Local governments can demonstrate good stewardship through programs such as treatment of invasive species, native plant restoration, tree planting and stream restoration.”

“Public programs that support landowner stewardship on private land also demonstrate leadership and increase capacity within the community to protect environmental values.”

“Through the engagement process we heard that stakeholders generally seem to agree that the District of Saanich could do more to lead by example when it comes to working in and around Environmentally Significant Areas; and to encourage environmental stewardship. Many felt that requiring restoration on private land was difficult for many residents to accept when nearby parkland was not receiving similar standards of care. Many respondents called for better management and preservation of existing ESAs on public land, and more restoration of degraded public areas. They felt Saanich should lead on removal of invasive species and the planting of native species in park land.”

There are many other good examples of Voluntary Private Land Stewardship Programs across Canada and in the United States that can be assessed for what works well to achieve the results that would be effective for biodiversity enhancement and climate change adaptation.

Regulatory versus Voluntary

Regulatory actions require a level of stakeholder approval that must be reached for the resolution to pass. There is an associated cost with this process. Given the history of the EDPA, it is unlikely the stakeholders would be in favour of a regulatory regime unless landowners are fully involved in the development of these actions, and only, if unlike the original EDPA, the regulations are used to protect environmental values that actually occur on the landscape. Regulations may deter people from wanting to be stakeholders in Saanich. They may go elsewhere. Concerns of lengthy processes around regulations and the fear of penalties will be a deterrent. With regulations, a certain set of circumstances must occur for the regulation to kick in. Not only do regulations establish the objective, but the means to get there. This can limit landowner’s willingness and choices as to how to get there.

A good feature of a voluntary regime is its flexibility for its different users, properties, rural, urban, and built. Flexibility is important and needs to be considered in terms of what is meaningful as we face climate change, the housing crisis, the issue of deer and fires. Under a regulatory regime, compliance isn’t a guarantee. A regulatory, command and control regime will encourage actions no more than required by the regulation. We need better than this if we are to stand any chance at improving biodiversity as we face climate change.

- Stronger stakeholder rights and full involvement in developing regulations, if shown to be effective, will encourage supportive actions towards the environment. Other districts will be encouraged to follow.
- Education is key with both voluntary and regulatory regimes. People need to know why they need to do something. But with a voluntary system, education will allow for actions over and above what is recommended and that can be more readily adopted as our climate changes and new information becomes available. Education and a cooperative attitude from the municipality will encourage participation and this participation will increase over time leading to a snowball

effect of voluntary behaviour. This can only happen in the absence of regulations or carefully crafted, effective regulation.

- A particular system of values and principles of conduct cannot be regulated. In other words, morality cannot be legislated.

Messages for Success

- Saanich needs to be recognized as leading by example in Saanich Parks by restoring precious Sensitive Ecosystems, and by no longer planting non-native species in Parks or on other public land, if the expectation or hope by the District is for private landowners to plant native species. This would include properties such as Saanich Municipal Hall if native species were important to the public.
- The District may need to consider protective fencing or trail closures that prevent access to areas of degraded Sensitive Ecosystems or locations of Species at Risk, in order to restore sensitive areas that have been severely degraded by recreationists and their dogs, in order to access views or other sites. Fencing has recently been constructed at Christmas Hill for this purpose.
- Saanich Council needs to recognize and support the substantial funding required for restoring ecosystems to their natural condition, Saanich needs to fully fund a restoration group reporting to the Parks Department that will begin to restore Sensitive Ecosystems and Species at Risk in the Parks and possibly support landowners in their similar work of voluntary stewardship.
- For private lands, a fully funded stewardship group, again reporting to the *Parks Department*, could work cooperatively and provide encouragement, education, and incentives in support of a voluntary program for residents.
- Saanich Council needs to instruct a new cooperative spirit towards landowners by staff for a voluntary private land stewardship program to be effective.
- Taking on any of these actions might require a plan to deal with the glut of urban deer which are so destructive to new plantings of any kind.
- Biodiversity enhancement may require strong rules and restrictions on freely roaming pets, especially cats and dogs.
- It may be important to do a targeted survey to find out residents' priorities regarding providing significant funding and resources for restoration in Saanich Parks.
- It may also be important to conduct a targeted survey to elicit residents' priorities, so to apportion funding and resources for restoring Parks' Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs). Before a survey is undertaken, an assessment of all Park's ESAs be compiled, along with the costing required for restoration of each Park in the municipality to a natural condition. High priority ecosystems such as Garry Oak, and Riparian ecosystems, are highly degraded in Saanich Parks.
- I feel strongly that unless a program of ESA restoration in Saanich Parks is undertaken, including plantings, at least a *mix* of native and non-native species, and control of invasives, then it would not be appropriate to lay those expectations at the feet of private landowners in terms of regulation. The District of Saanich needs to lead by example in Saanich Parks.

- If landowners are willing to voluntarily plant native species, including native trees on their property there needs to be exemption from Saanich's regulations considered so that many more native species can be included on private properties, otherwise there may be a reluctance to plant native species, knowing the restrictions that were placed on landowners with the previous regulation.
- Saanich should investigate through a variety of means whether regulation or encouragement are more effective in maintaining tree cover and native species cover, etc. Many other jurisdictions in North America are grappling with the same issues and may have already done this work. The present tree bylaw may discourage landowners from planting trees on their properties, particularly native trees that meet regulations when they are two metres tall. Has Saanich determined whether it is more effective to regulate or encourage voluntary tree additions, and maybe consider exemption from regulations when landowners are actively willing to plant trees on their properties, beyond replacement tree requirements?
- Saanich needs to assure that Bylaws will not be enforced for landowners who are trying to provide vegetation on their properties that some neighbours may consider to be "messy". There needs to be encouragement and rule changes to allow for backyard and front yard vegetation whether it is growing food or growing native or non-native plants for biodiversity. There needs to be some consideration about impacts of property values and other issues.
- Saanich Council needs to provide a clear Vision and goals of a whole biodiversity program
- Saanich needs to assure that measurable results in terms of improvement to the environment are included in any work and initiatives by District of Saanich, such as measuring results of Natural State Covenants that have been required of developers or private landowners.
- If Saanich Council wishes to create a regulation to protect species at risk or ecosystems at risk on private lands then the following will need to be in place or considered:
 - 1) Comprehensive plans and resources are required for public lands to restore high priority ecosystems at risk and recover and supplement species at risk.
 - 2) Buy-in and understanding of implications of the regulatory direction needs to be achieved by full consultation with landowners.
 - 3) An analysis and proven effectiveness of voluntary versus regulatory actions need to be undertaken. This was never done with the previous regulation, nor was there ever a full evaluation of how effective that regulation was in achieving its goal.
 - 4) Unlike the previous regulation, there must be a full requirement for clarity on what value is being protected following evidence-based science and honesty towards landowners. No other jurisdiction supports protection of environmental values that no longer exist on a property.
 - 5) An important feature of a voluntary regime is its flexibility for its different users, type of properties including rural, urban, and built environments. Each property is different, and each landowner will have a different

perspective on what they believe should occur on their property. Flexibility is important and needs to be considered in terms of what is meaningful as we face climate change, housing crisis, the issue of deer and fires.

- 6) A regulatory regime will encourage actions no more than required by the regulation. Voluntary action can lead to far more action from a greater number of landowners. Saanich needs this greater involvement if we are to stand any chance of improving biodiversity as we face climate change.

Rural Areas

The following wording comes from the Rural Local Area Plan -

https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Planning/plans/Rural_lap_web.pdf

“Rural Saanich is valued by its residents and by those from outside the area for its natural beauty, diverse environments, high biological diversity, agricultural and well-forested lands, and rural lifestyle. The diversity of the natural environment and the variety of environmental features remain primarily as a result of on-going stewardship by local residents and Saanich’s leadership in implementing growth management, environmental protection, and other planning concepts to retain the character of the area and the health of its natural systems.”

From Chapter 8

“Rural Saanich has a diverse natural environment prized by local residents and visitors. The diversity of the natural environment and the variety of environmental features remain as a result of on-going stewardship by local residents and Saanich’s leadership in implementing growth management, environmental protection and other planning concepts to retain the character of the area and the health of its natural systems.”

“The protection and restoration of watercourses, riparian zones and upland areas in Rural Saanich contribute to maintaining habitat for plants, and animals. Much of this land is, and will remain, privately owned. Private land stewardship occurs when landowners manage their land with the intent of protecting, preserving, and enhancing natural systems.”

“One way private landowners can actively participate in land stewardship is to enter into a conservation covenant to protect riparian or environmentally significant areas of their property. The Local Government Act allows for municipalities to provide property tax breaks to those land owners who have registered riparian conservation covenants on their property. A property tax exemption or discount for that part of a property subject to a conservation covenant could be considered by Council.”

There are multiple policies within the Rural Local Area Plan to deal with stewardship issues. Many of the issues raised in the rest of this report apply to rural properties and landowners, including enhancing biodiversity, providing incentives and working in

cooperation with residents. However, I believe that there needs to be a different approach within rural areas, as in many cases, natural ecosystems still exist, and major development is not likely to occur.

FireSmart

It is becoming quite clear that wildfire is a major concern within the District of Saanich. The Fire Department has commissioned a report by B.A. Blackwell and Associates.

See:

https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Fire/District_of_Saanich_2020_CWPP_FINAL.pdf

Stewardship needs to include and be compatible with BC FireSmart. The main elements I would suggest here would include vegetation management. We must allow landowners to manage vegetation of their land in order to protect their homes and we need to help ensure they plant fire resistant vegetation. The Saanich Fire Department should be consulted by the RSTC for this input. I believe that there is a serious danger of wildfire with the rural portion of Saanich and surrounding many other forested areas including the larger parks.

Incentives

Two kinds – one requires residents do an environmental action; one encourages residents to do an environmental action. I believe encouraging action will be more effective in the long term, as long as it is done with incentives, education focused on landowners and a cooperative attitude working with landowners for common goals for the community.

State of Minnesota - Lawns to Legumes program - Minnesota conversion of lawns to prairie wildflowers similar to Saanich area - <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/l2l> - could be expanded to plant natives shrubs and trees or helpful non-native species that provides flowers for pollinators after local wildflowers have become decreased after early flowering season.

Burrowing owls in Florida – Marco Island -

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/26/us/burrowing-owls-florida-pay-residents-yard-trnd/index.html>

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/an-island-in-florida-is-paying-residents-to-let-a-special-owl-burrow-in-their-front-yard-1.4783938?cache=yes%3Fautoplay%3Dtrue>

<https://www.ecowatch.com/burrowing-owls-florida-habitat-2644930127.html>

https://defenders.org/sites/default/files/publications/incentives_for_biodiversity_conservation.pdf

http://pdf.wri.org/incentives_parker.pdf

Native versus non-native plant materials

There are many differing opinions on whether native or non-native species should be used within Saanich in terms of what is better for the environment and biodiversity and better for future resiliency in response to a changing climate.

Each individual landowner will want to determine whether they want native or non-native species or a combination of the two, which many people presently have. Many owners will determine what they want on their properties based on their interests. If landowners like birds and want to see more birds, they may make different decisions than if they want butterflies or bees. Many birds need a variety of habitats. Cover is important and can be provided by native or non-native plant species and invasive or non-invasive species. Plants such as invasive blackberry or native willows and red-osier dogwood can provide excellent cover for birds. Neighbours may be upset by “messy” areas on nearby properties and may need education to understand what a landowner is trying to achieve in enhancing wildlife.

Many birds in feeding their young require insect larvae. There is evidence out of the eastern USA that due to evolutionary connections, that many native plants may support better insect populations for feeding young birds. Similar studies do not appear to be available locally, but the same may be quite true. Even small areas of native species on a property can provide these foraging areas for birds. As for hummingbirds, bees and butterflies, many non-native as well as native plant species provide nectar and pollen for these species. Many native species flower early in the year, while many of the non-native species flower throughout various seasons. Similarly, birds that use fruit can eat native or non-native plant species (see Tallamy references).

If Saanich creates a staff supported Stewardship program to support landowners, these individuals can provide a variety of information of the options that the interested landowners may consider.

- Certain individuals will want plants that serve the purposes that they want their land to provide for.
- Some individuals may want to attract hummingbirds, other kinds of birds, or butterflies or bees. This could include providing cover, which could be native or non-native species, or plants that encourage insect production for birds feeding their young, or plants that support pollinators, which could include a mix of native and non-native species that support these creatures at various times of the year. Most native species flower early in the spring, so that non-native species (eg blue Ceanothus) can attract bees and other species later in the year.
- Some individuals may want to grow plants that were used by First Nations people.
- Education could be provided by the Saanich Stewardship Program to support all these interests, and in so doing provide significant contributions to Biodiversity in

Saanich and a hub to help them educate neighbours if they see changes occurring on their properties.

Species at Risk plantings or enhancement

A limited number of individual landowners may wish to support species at risk on their property to aid in the recovery of these species, since so much habitat is now gone or been replaced by a variety of other uses. If these residents have appropriate habitat on their property and are willing to make a long-term commitment to protecting and maintaining the habitat and the species, there could be a way to encourage this activity by working with the Saanich Stewardship staff and appropriate Species at Risk Recovery Groups. Significant education may be required for these landowners before introducing species.

- Saanich could instruct staff to determine the issues regarding having private landowners steward species at risk on their properties with an assessment of all the positive and negatives involved.
- Saanich could work in conjunction with the species at risk Recovery Teams to provide significant knowledge and understanding on how a species at risk may be stewarded on private land with willing individuals who are committed to such action.

Covenants

Covenants should only be used for sites that have a high-quality ecological condition and only with incentives such as property tax reductions.

- According to all conservation manuals (Green Bylaws Toolkit, WCEL manual) Covenants need to be voluntary for landowners to maintain them and for the Covenant to be successful.
- There needs to be a monitoring program to assess how successful a Covenant is in achieving the goal of protecting the environmental feature that the Covenant was established for.
- When land with a Covenant is sold to another landowner, there needs to be a process for education and confirmation of the Covenant after purchase, knowing that the Covenant needs to be voluntary and embraced to be successful.
- For landowners who are willing to put a Covenant on their property to protect an Environmentally Significant Area, I believe that there should be some form of tax relief to these landowners, like NAPTEP or similar to the Agricultural Land Reserve, so that all residents of Saanich are supporting these actions.
- Will need to be a means test of the ESA –is it of high enough value or integrity to be maintained as a Covenant, since covenants have significant costs to administering them.
- There should be regular monitoring to assure that the landowners are meeting requirements in the Covenant and that the ESA being protected continues being protected.

- All existing natural state covenants in Saanich should be assessed for their ecological condition and if they have met effectiveness goals in maintaining the ESA that was originally being protected. Any that were put in place under the past EDPA should be assessed for whether they were effective or not.

What resources should a Saanich Stewardship Program Provide to Residents

Provide the following expertise for residents – education regarding FireSmart, deer, cats, dogs etc., biodiversity, pesticide impacts on biodiversity, native plants, non-native plants, what attracts birds, butterflies, bees, other insects, hummingbirds, and other wildlife.

Definitions:

From OCP: “Stewardship: Responsibility for the care and protection of resources so that they will be available to future generations.” Ref OCP Pg A1-8

Stewardship: “In its broadest sense, stewardship is the recognition of our collective responsibility to retain the quality and abundance of our land, air, water and biodiversity, and to manage this natural capital in a way that conserves all of its values, be they environmental, economic, social or cultural.” Ref: Land Stewardship Centre.

<https://www.landstewardship.org/>

References (some of this could be fleshed out further)

Naturescape – Saanich website - <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/natural-environment/naturescape-bc-program-natural-habitats.html>

From a Doug Tallamy presentation

<https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Plants/Trees-and-Shrubs>

<https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>

Plants that produce insects that birds like to eat - especially caterpillars.

I used a zip code from Sequim across the water - 98382

Tallamy <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/tallamys-hub-1>

<https://www.timberpress.com/authors/douglas-w-tallamy>

Green Bylaws

Ben van Drimmlen and Covenants WCEL

2013 WEST COAST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW Greening Your Title A Guide to Best Practices for Conservation Covenants THIRD REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION

B.A. Blackwell and Associates Ltd. 2009 DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN Considerations for Wildland Urban Interface Management in the District of Highlands, British Columbia

Private Land Stewardship in New Brunswick: A Guide for Landowners – add stewardship links to documents

Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team. 2014. Model Bylaws for the Protection of Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems. Victoria, B.C. 187 pages. (Version 1.0)

Benefits of Trees - <https://www.treepeople.org/tree-benefits>

bird-friendly-strategy-design-guidelines <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/bird-friendly-strategy-design-guidelines-draft-2014-09-01.pdf>

South Okanagan Corridors Study
http://a100.gov.bc.ca/appsdata/acat/documents/r42389/Part3DesigningandImplementingEcosystemConnectivity_1405351562655_5351338661.pdf

Links to Stewardship Programs across Canada

South Coast

Fraser Valley

<https://fraservalleyconservancy.ca/nature-stewards/>

South Okanagan

Carolinian Canada

https://caroliniancanada.ca/legacy/Publications/CK_Final_Factsheet_061023.pdf

New Brunswick

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/nr-rn/pdf/en/Publications/PrivateLandStewardshipInNewBrunswick-AGuideForLandowners.pdf>

<https://www.naturetrust.nb.ca/landowner-stewardship>

Mississauga

<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/parks-community-engagement>

One Million Trees

<https://milliontrees.ca/#about>

Healthy Yards

<https://www.healthyyards.org/home/whatarehealthyyards/>

<https://www.saanichnews.com/news/video-landowners-creating-backyard-wildlife-habitats-in-greater-victoria/>

I think HAT should be used to deliver the Saanich voluntary private land stewardship program!!

<https://www.saanichnews.com/community/wild-bees-need-messy-gardens-to-survive/>

Lots of species need messy yards - something to be considered for private land stewardship - like the Tallamy messaging.

Valuable for Voluntary Private Land Stewardship for those that like bugs!

<https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Committees~and~Boards/ENAAAC/Agendas/2021~Agendas/2021-04-21-ena-agenda-combined.pdf>

POLLINATORS Tiffany Joseph, a Certified Pollinator Steward with the Island Pollinator Initiative shared information on native pollinators and how to support them. The following was noted:

- ♣ Vancouver Island is home to a wide variety of solitary bees and bumble bees, (honeybees are not native). Solitary bees nest in plants with hollow stems such as golden rod or in holes in the ground. Mason bee boxes can be installed to help support them.
- ♣ Pollinators prefer native plants. The Western Bumble Bee is endangered, it is important to participate in creating habitat and forage for bees, especially native plants.
- ♣ Stinging nettle is great for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds. Some non-native plants can be habitat for predatory mites or parasites.
- ♣ Solitary bees are gentle compared with honeybees. Typically, solitary bees do not sting unless their life is in danger. Solitary bee stings usually do not cause those with allergies to react in the same way that a honeybee sting would.

Following comments from members of the committee, the following was noted:

- ♣ Saanich recommends Naturscaping using native plants through the development process. There is a Saanich list of plants preferred for boulevard planting, however the

recommendations are mainly based on safety, such as maintaining sightlines, height considerations near powerlines and the impact of roots on underground infrastructure.

- ♣ Council has passed a motion for the RSTC to consider threats and opportunities related to pollinator habitat as they undertake their work.
- ♣ The RSTC could suggest introducing pollination criteria in boulevard planting checklist.
- ♣ There is interest in having informational signage about pollinators for the community.
- ♣ Plants that could be included on the boulevard planting list to support pollinators are camas, snowberry, and sea blush. The quarterly "Our Backyard" newsletter often contains messaging on how to be bee friendly, social media options may be beneficial.

Corridors:

Urban riparian corridors spread both native and non-native plant species

<https://conservationcorridor.org/digests/2018/01/urban-riparian-corridors-spread/>

<http://www.pollinatorpathway.com/about/the-story/>

Would this be good on upper Shelbourne and many other places in Saanich - a potential type of corridor that would work! Better than palm trees and non-native flower gardens on Saanich properties

<http://www.metrofieldguide.com/corridor-ecology-and-planning/> - which states among other things that " There are many impacts on wildlife when habitat is fragmented. Movement is much more difficult, impossible and even potentially fatal for wildlife crossing barriers between habitat patches."

Re-oaking Silicon Valley

<https://www.sfei.org/projects/re-oaking>

Stewardship Education:

<https://wm-no.glob.shawcable.net/service/home/~/?auth=co&loc=en&id=506606&part=2>

Oak Harbor Garry Oak Society - <https://ohgarryoaksociety.org/>

Avenue of the Oaks - <https://ohgarryoaksociety.org/avenue-of-the-oaks/>

Garry oak ecosystem plants - <https://ohgarryoaksociety.org/garry-oak-ecosystem-plants/>

2021 Year of the Oak - <https://ohgarryoaksociety.org/2021-year-of-the-oak/>

Lynn Merry

From: biodiversity
To: TED LEA
Subject: RE: (External Email) Fwd: Submission to the RSTC Committee

From: TED LEA [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2021 4:10 PM
To: biodiversity <biodiversity@saanich.ca>
Cc: Rebecca Mersereau <rmersereau@gmail.com>; Tory Stevens [REDACTED]
Subject: (External Email) Fwd: Submission to the RSTC Committee

This email sent from outside the District of Saanich. Use caution if message is unexpected or sender is not known to you.

Please submit the attached to the RSTC committee for its next meeting.

To the RSTC:

Please accept the two attached documents for your deliberations within your committee.

The Garry oak Condition Assessment is extracted from an assessment of ecological condition that we are doing within the larger Saanich Parks and Colquitz Riparian Corridor. It uses a rapid assessment method to judge ecological condition of ecosystems following the provincial Ecosystems at Risk standard.

The Critique of Parks indicates some substantial issues of ecosystem degradation and minimal management of Species at Risk in Saanich Parks, which, I believe, deserves a comprehensive analysis by your committee.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

I had submitted this before and hope that it will now be provided as Correspondence for the October 26 RSTC meeting.

Respectfully,

Ted Lea, Vegetation Ecologist

cc Council Liaison Rebecca Mersereau, RSTC Chair Tory Stevens

RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

VPGO REVISIONS WORKSHOP DECEMBER 11, 2021 9AM-12PM LOCATION TBA

Facilitator: Kim Walker

Attendees:¹ Brian Wilkes, Jeremy Gye, Stewart Guy, Tory Stevens, Purnima Govindarajulu, Chris Lowe, Bev Windjack, Kevin Brown

Objectives for the Workshop:

- To bring all RSTC members up to speed on the review & revisions process
- To establish common understanding of VPGO revisions & rationale
- To create an opportunity for the RSTC to discuss each revision in depth
- To provide feedback to Kim in preparation for submission of final draft revisions

Pre Workshop Preparation:

- Review Kim's scope of work, draft revisions, & other workshop materials sent to RSTC by end of day, Dec 3
- Complete a 5 minute survey on the VPGO components (part of Dec 3 package)

AGENDA

- 9:00 – 9:30**
- Overview of Review & Analysis²**
- Stakeholder feedback
 - Vision/Principles in the Local Policy Context (e.g. OCP, Climate Plan...)
 - Insights from other environmental policy frameworks (e.g. Burnaby)
- 9:30 – 11:15**
(with break)
- Structured Deliberations**
- The “bones” of the EPF - how the V, P, G, O fit together
 - Each discrete revision - each principle, goal, objective
 - Thematic plans (subject to time & interest)
- 11:15 – 11:45**
- Test Scenarios³**
- 1- 2 scenarios involving the application of the EPF principles, goals, objectives to work through an issue and implement a program/bylaw
- 11:45 – 12:00**
- Next Steps**
- Next steps for Kim to finalize her revisions by January 7
 - Other steps needed by RSTC

¹ Tim Ennis can't attend the workshop but will have opportunities to contribute outside the workshop.

² Depth of this overview will depend on how familiar everyone is with the material coming out of the Nov RSTC meeting & pre-workshop readings. Possibly more of a Q&A or discussion rather than presentation.

³ Scenarios will be developed in advance for this exercise.