



AGENDA
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
December 15, 6:30– 8:30 PM
Held virtually via MS Teams

In light of the Saanich Communicable Disease Plan related safety measures, this meeting will be held virtually via MS Teams. Details on how to join the meeting can be found on the committee webpage – [Resilient Saanich Schedule, Minutes & Agendas](#). Please note that individuals participating by phone are identified by their phone number, which can be viewed on screen by all attendees of the meeting.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Call to order & agenda

Chair T.Stevens

- Approval of agenda

3. Adoption of Minutes

- November 17, 2022 meeting

4. Receipt of Correspondence

5. Introduction of Council Representative - Zac DeVries (15 min.)

- Lead: Council rep to RSTC

6. Update by Secretariat to RSTC (10 min.)

- Lead: Judith Cullington

7. Facilitated session on Environmental Policy Framework questions (30 min)

- Lead: Judith Cullington

8. Update on Diamond Head Consulting State of Biodiversity Rpt. (10 min).

- Lead: Eva Riccius

9. Update on Discussion of Environmental Policy Filter (10 min) - TBA

- Lead: Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability

10. Staff Review of Stewardship Working Group Summary (20 min.)

- Lead: Eva Riccius / Thomas Munson

11. Update on Workshop with W'SANEC Communities (5 min.)

- Lead: Eva Riccius

12. Review of Climate Action Plan (Environment Section) (10 min.)

- Lead: Tory Stevens

* * Next Meeting: January 19, 2022 * *

To ensure quorum, please email megan.macdonald@saanich.ca if you are not able to attend.

MINUTES
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Via Microsoft Teams
November 17, 2022

Present: Tory Stevens (Chair); Kevin Brown; Purnima Govindarajulu; Chris Lowe; Stewart Guy; Jeremy Gye; Tim Ennis; Bev Windjack; and Brian Wilkes

Guests: Judith Cullington and Carly Bilney (Secretariats)

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager of Parks; Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Thomas Munson, Senior Environmental Planner; and Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

T. Stevens read the Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by J. Gye and Seconded by S. Guy: "That the Agenda for the November 17, 2022, Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be approved as amended."

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by S. Guy: "That the minutes of the October 20, 2022 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was received.

INTRODUCTION OF SECRETARIAT TO RSTC

The Senior Manager of Parks introduced the Secretariat, Judith Cullington and Carly Bilney of JCA Judith Cullington & Associates, who will be focusing on the Environmental Policy Framework and other initiatives. Judith provided information on previous initiatives, and roundtable introductions of committee members took place.

UPDATE ON DIAMOND HEAD CONSULTING MAPPING

The Senior Manager of Parks led a discussion on the Diamond Head Consulting Mapping. The following was noted:

- The draft maps have been distributed. The Capital Regional District (CRD) has requested that the Condition Assessment Map is not displayed publicly. They have requested that the document is kept as background/technical information.
- Publishing this information may be more problematic than beneficial.
- Francis King/Bear Hill is not shown clearly on the map.
- There are still issues around the condition mapping and accuracy of mapping.
- The Biodiversity Ranking Map would be a better map for public display.
- The committee will take time to review the maps and advise the Chair and Staff if there are comments on what should be displayed.
- It is important that the maps are accurate, concerns about inaccuracies need to be addressed with DHC as soon as possible. An example of Mt. Tolmie being considered “fair” despite being worn to bare rock from foot traffic was given.
- Knockan Hill was also discussed as being inaccurate due to invasives.
- There are 4 combined factors to determine the biodiversity ranking. The combination of these factors determines the condition. More time is needed to review the weighting factors as they relate to each area.
- The mapping working group will gather to discuss the maps in more detail, a couple field visits will be made to compare random point samples of actual sites to the maps.

DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FILTER

The Manager of Sustainability attended to obtain clarification on the intended use of the Draft Environmental Policy Filter (EPF). During discussion with the committee, the following was noted:

- A request was made to have the EPF tested against existing policies and procedures.
- There are a multitude of programs and policies in Saanich, a better definition of what the EPF will be used for would be useful as there are many policies (such as Human Resources) or programs where this would not be applicable. Is the intention for senior policy makers to implement this while preparing report recommendations to Council, or will this be used at a more operational level?
- The EPF was designed as an evaluation framework to guide decision making.
- Some policies may have no relevance to certain aspects of the EPF, some may only have more. The intention of creating this was primarily for environmental policies.
- Council requested this filter; it will be useful for Council to have the information to help them make policy related decisions.
- There are benefits to focus on policies outside explicit environmental policies and operational level details. A top-down approach starting with the Official Community Plan would make sense as lower-level framework will then need to be consistent.
- Removing the numerical scoring values would remove the performative value.
- When there are difficult decisions are brought forward for Council to consider, this common set of principals and parameters will put the metrics in place to measure the evaluation of the decision. This is a common denominator for all to use the same lens.
- The framework will bring consistency and transparency while standardizing the criteria for all policies and framework it is applied to.
- Embedding this design into guiding documents will be beneficial in many aspects.
- Cross-departmental evaluation is complex as the level of detail is challenging with a scoring matrix. Embedding these tools in the creation of policies could add more value than a scoring piece once the policy is already created.

- This matrix could be useful to evaluate a major project such as the Shelbourne Corridor as a case study to see how effective it is.
- Concerns were noted that project managers using an evaluation matrix may feel uncomfortable doing so, as different scores would be inevitable between users.
- If a proposed policy or program does not score well, then there is a potential to change it before it is approved by Council.
- Examining how different departments fit into the EPF to gain understanding on how the tool can be used would be beneficial for the committee.
- Staff will examine the Active Transportation Plan to see how it scores with the filter.
- Implementing specific questions and objectives at the onset of the creation of plans will help to improve the outcome. Having the specific intentions clear is valuable.

UPDATE ON WORKSHOP WITH W̱SÁNEĆ COMMUNITIES

The Manager of Parks gave an update on a workshop with W̱SÁNEĆ communities

- The workshop was moved from November 15 to November 29th.
- Committee members were asked to confirm if they can attend.
- Staff will provide the address via email to the committee.
- Dr. Thom will provide assistance facilitating. He has helped build communication between the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council and Saanich Council, as well as input on the Cordova Bay Local Area Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- This will be a deeper dive into the principals of the MOU, clarification on what fulfilling the principals looks like will be an important aspect of the discussion.
- A discussion on food security and availability of traditional foods will likely take place.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from Purnima, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Tory Stevens, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary

Memo

To: Resilient Saanich Technical Committee, Stewardship Working Group
From: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks
Date: December 8, 2022
Subject: Staff comments on Resilient Saanich Technical Committee's Stewardship Briefing Note (Oct. 20, 2022)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Stewardship Briefing Note (Oct. 20, 2022) provided by the RSTC's Stewardship Working Group. We appreciate the time and thought that has gone into this draft document to provide information and recommendations to enhance stewardship opportunities in Saanich.

Staff with key roles in environmental stewardship have reviewed the brief and offer the following feedback.

Style

The SBN would benefit from a good copy edit to increase focus and clarity on the Committee's recommendations to enhance stewardship opportunities.

Concepts and Terminology

Concepts related to ecological restoration are important to stewardship. The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) would be a good source for the definition of terms. For example, the term rehabilitation is used, which is not commonly used in Saanich. Staff suggest that the term is defined, and context is provided.

Reference to SER principles would help to bring important concepts to the Working Group's (WG) Briefing Note, including the importance of many types of knowledge and factors important in restoration goals.

Staff recommend replacing the goal of restoration to a "natural state" with terminology supported by current research that considers ecosystem function, future climate conditions and current biotic conditions. Restoring ecological function considering future conditions is one way to describe restoration goals that is supported by current research.

Specific sections

Comments are provided for the sections of the briefing note. There are a few instances where staff recommend wording changes as corrections or to improve accuracy.

Wording recommendations (to existing text) are provided in **red** for additions. Recommended text to be removed is indicated by strike-through.

We recommend an amended introduction, such as: “This document **is a brief from the RSTC Stewardship Working Group, having reviewed** ~~has been compiled from~~ submissions from Bev Windjack, Kevin Brown, Carolyn Richman, Ted Lea, and others **and staff. This brief provides recommendations towards enhanced stewardship opportunities in Saanich.** ~~Any missed contributor names are unintentional and we are happy to give credit where due.”~~

- A statement like this would clarify that this is the work of the RSTC and what it is. Please refer to staff vs individual staff names.

Background Section

- (Page 1, opening sentence) Staff recommend the following changes: “The Resilient Saanich Technical Committee (RSTC) was mandated to assess opportunities for enhanced environmental stewardship in Saanich **as outlined in the Terms of Reference (last updated October 2021) for the Resilient Saanich process.** ~~following the rescinding of the Environmental Development Permit Area in 2018.”~~
- (Paragraph 3) See general feedback above regarding the term ‘rehabilitation’ and other concepts.
- (Page 1) Recommend reconsidering the definition of stewardship. Stewardship can go beyond voluntary measures, such as stewardship requirements of companies that are mandated, actions of property owners that are meeting requirements of natural state covenants (which are not voluntary), following bylaws or other regulations, and stewardship approaches that are part of doing business, such as best management practices.
- (Page 1, 6th bullet) While it is important to give definition to how the RSTC is considering stewardship, staff recommend using the Society for Ecological Restoration as a source.
- The first bullet under the list for stewardship to be successful needs a small adjustment to change the sentence to “**for** both public and private lands”. Most often it would not be appropriate for staff to work on private lands, so we recommend changing this to coordination “for” versus “on” these lands.
- (Page 2, 6th bullet) We recommend clarifying what “rejuvenated environmental and stewardship community groups” refers to.
- Community Association support would be best described as something to “develop” (and involves ongoing relationships). Interest and ability to support will vary among Community Associations.
- Recommended: “educate landscaping **professionals and** companies **as well as developers** on the value of using native plants”

Voluntary Stewardship vs. Regulation

- Staff recommend a rewrite of the opening of this section to be more clear. Is the Committee trying to say that voluntary stewardship is just one tool that can be used for biodiversity conservation?
- We recommend additions to this sentence: “Factors **to be considered could include:** ~~such as~~ the need to protect, enhance and restore hub/spoke biodiversity corridors ~~should be considered.~~, **creating buffers around protected areas and riparian areas, and protecting ecosystem integrity in Rural Saanich.**”
- Tree replacement issues are being considered in the Urban Forest Strategy Update. We recommend removing related statements from this document or clarifying that the Urban Forest Strategy will deal with Saanich’s urban forest and its stewardship.

Objectives, Targets and Metrics

- Consider the use of ‘indicators’ and ‘targets’ rather than ‘metrics’ (for public clarity). The Conservation Standards process is a good example for this.
- Staff do not agree that it is “likely impossible to restore ecosystems on private lands” and recommend removing this statement.
- Staff recommend focusing on priority invasive species or reducing invasive species to a realistic target. “Eliminating 100% of invasive species from parks” is not a realistic target. There will never be enough resources (staff, volunteer time and funding) to meet this goal.
- The Urban Forest Strategy Update will cover tree and urban forest issues including stewardship of the Urban Forest. Staff recommend a simple statement that refers to the Urban Forest Strategy Update for further information about stewardship of the Urban Forest. A short statement about the role of native tree species in the context of biodiversity conservation could be included but it should clearly relate to stewardship.

Existing Stewardship Programs

- (Page 4, #2): There are multiple themes in this item from promotion and outreach to staff site visits. Separate items for each recommendation would improve clarity.
- Hiring a ‘private property stewardship coordinator’ is only one step towards enhanced staff capacity in Saanich to undertake restoration, invasive species removals, environmental education, etc.
- We recommend that the RSTC provide some examples of subsidies or incentives from other jurisdictions that could be considered in Saanich to improve private land stewardship.
- Saanich’s long standing and very successful Pulling Together Program could be noted in this section.

Stewardship During Development and Landscaping

- A developer Environmental Steward certification program is best administered by an independent agency, with certification processes and standards developed by an external body.
- Other examples of municipal “Green Building Checklists’ could be included for options to apply in Saanich.

Barriers to Enthusiastic Participation

- 2nd paragraph: if the Working Group finds it important to refer to the EDPA review in relation to barriers, staff suggest referring specifically to the Diamond Head Consulting report (2017) and its findings.
- In terms of identifying barriers, staff recommend providing specifics regarding when and where barriers were identified.
- Given the current level of resources and staff levels in Saanich, enhanced protection of sensitive ecosystems beyond current levels of stewardship will not be possible without further resources. Efforts to protect and restore sensitive ecosystems as well as prioritizing ecosystem functions and services is important on both public and private lands.
- Regarding checklist recommendations, Surrey’s Sustainability Checklist, which includes additions from their Biodiversity Strategy is worth considering. Toronto also has a similar checklist.

Native vs. Non-Native Species

- The promotion of native plants by the landscaping industry would be welcome. Industry education and native plant supply will need to be considered.
- While environmental stewardship in the context of biodiversity conservation is primarily focused in natural areas, restoring and enhancing natural areas and planting native plant species, there is a role for stewardship of non-native or mixed gardens and plantings in urban environments. Staff recommend clarifying the difference, adding some examples to clearly show the differences and explaining where and when it would be appropriate to consider stewardship of non-native gardens and plantings in the context of biodiversity conservation.

Staffing and Coordination

- Saanich has one full time equivalent in an Environmental Education Coordinator, which is focused in part on private land stewardship. In addition, the half time Environmental Planner and half time Senior Environmental Planner also support stewardship on private lands through review of development proposals.
- With the integration of ES into the Parks division, the goal is to realize efficiencies and build on successes to support increased stewardship on public and private lands. Changes will be demonstrated over the coming year, however, further support would enhance acceleration of stewardship activities.

- Staff recommend that requests for funding/ staffing in the Working Group's briefing note be aligned with the yet to be completed Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.
- Partners such as Habitat Acquisition Trust and other community organizations are useful to expand impacts and reach into the community.

A summary statement with the key recommendations would be useful to include at the end of the document.