RSTC Briefing Note   March 28, 2022

From: Mapping Working Group

Recommendation: RSTC endorse the findings of the Mapping Working Group to send to Staff
and the Biodiversity consultants for action.

Findings:

- The terrestrial mapping is out of date and contains many errors and should be updated
  and corrected.
- The priority should be inside the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and includes the
  large nature parks. (Use SEI inside UCB, with TEM in the larger parks, and TEM in Rural
  Saanich)
- When updating mapping of at-risk ecosystems, the provincial standard methods be
  used, with adequate ground truthing.
- The working group recognizes the importance of other inventory layers as a means of
  identifying and more fully understanding the values on any particular site
- It is necessary for all inventories to be as accurate as possible and to be updated as
  often as reasonably possible.
- The emphasis should be on the importance of establishing credible baseline conditions
  for evaluating change over time, and to help focus on priority areas for stewardship
  activities.

Background:

The mapping working group was launched in support of the biodiversity working group. To
assemble a State of Biodiversity Report, it is necessary to understand where important
biodiversity hotspots are, how much of it there is, the condition it is in, and if it is accurately
captured on maps. In studying map layers, increasing discomfort has arisen over the accuracy
of ecosystem mapping and classification, as has been explained to RSTC on several occasions.

The working group has reached a consensus that the mapping needs to be updated and
because the pressure for development is more intense within the Urban Containment
Boundary, we recommend that this should be the priority, including the parks within the UCB.

The working group has had wide-ranging conversations about mapping, including discussing the
possibility that biodiversity mapping could be done at a regional scale and not just within
Saanich.

The working group also discussed the need to pull the different resource inventory maps
together in a way that makes multiple pieces of information more useful. For example, there is
a possibility of proceeding with an Environmental Reference Atlas once there is more
confidence in the accuracy of certain map layers.