

MINUTES
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue
Council Chambers via MS Teams
April 27, 2021 at 6:44 p.m.

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

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Thomas Munson, Senior Environmental Planner; Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; Rick Hatch, Assistant Supervisor Natural Areas; Lynn Merry, Senior Committee Clerk, and Megan MacDonald, Committee Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:44 p.m.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Councillor Mersereau read the Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by B. Windjack and Seconded by T. Stevens: "That the Agenda for the April 27, 2021 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be approved."

CARRIED

4. OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT GOALS, OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES OF THE RESILIENT SAANICH PROCESS

The Manager of Environmental Services presented the Goals and Objectives Engagement Results (PowerPoint on file). It was the consensus that committee members would review the document over the next few weeks and provide feedback at a future meeting.

5. OVERVIEW OF NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT

The Senior Manager, Parks and Assistant Supervisor Natural Areas presented Natural Areas Management (PowerPoint on file) and answered questions as follows:

- Swan Lake Christmas Hill is an example of successful restoration and stewardship.
- Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary and the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific are keen to build relationships with Saanich in an effort to develop their programming and reach a diverse audience.
- 100 metre stretches of the Colquitz River are restored each year in partnership with the Peninsula Streams Society and Public Works staff.

- There are over 150 sites that Pulling Together volunteers have worked on that are being watered, mulched, pruned and re-planted by Saanich.
- Staff look for opportunities for restoration after the completion of engineering projects.
- Invasive species are not removed unless planting is going to take place.
- It has been challenging this year to purchase plant materials due to the boom in local gardening.
- Keeping people out of sensitive areas has been one of the challenges; there needs to be balance between allowing people to explore and protecting sensitive areas.
- Mount Tolmie has overuse issues and staff have recently created a large enclosure to protect habitat.
- Protective fencing may help with long term sustainability.
- The Natural Intelligence program is now in place to assist Saanich residents in getting to know natural areas; residents can connect with nature at their own speed and level.
- The focus of Parks staff is operational and on-the-ground work; not policy or research.
- Next steps in Parks Natural Areas work include: United Decade of Ecosystems Restoration projects, trail closures and habitat protection, natural resources inventory projects, ecological restoration plans, updating parks plans and use guidelines, strategic acquisitions of land to add to parks systems, and long term protection of habitat.

Committee members expressed interest in visiting some of the areas identified in the presentation.

6. **PLANNING FOR THE STATE OF BIODIVERSITY REVIEW & BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

The Planning for the State of Biodiversity and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy documents were reviewed and committee members made the following comments:

- There is a need to consider mapping barriers and connectivity.
- There are natural areas that could be fragmentation zones such as lakes.
- The document will be used as a guidance piece to develop the Request for Proposal.
- It will be important to identify stressors on biodiversity ecosystems.
- There may not be much information on abiotic stressors in the Capital Regional District and therefore a need to draw on different sources of data.
- It may be appropriate to change the title “State of Biodiversity” and add “and Conservation Action”.
- Condition assessments would be accomplished mainly by desk top.
- Ongoing ecological processes need to be included to understand where landscape came from and future trends.
- The committee should look beyond Saanich protected lands, i.e. consider Capital Regional District parks in Saanich, Department of National Defense land in Saanich, University of Victoria lands, all as part of the conservation network.

Action Items:

- The Excel spreadsheet will be sent to committee members and staff.
- Committee members and staff are to review and provide comments directly in the document.
- Comments will be provided to the Biodiversity Working Group and the document will be refined based on the feedback.
- A meeting will then take place with staff to review the document.

MOVED by T. Stevens and Seconded by P. Govindarajulu: “That feedback be requested from committee members and staff by May 7th on the approach proposed by the Biodiversity Working Group.”

CARRIED

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by T. Stevens and Seconded by T. Ennis: “That the meeting of the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be adjourned.”

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

May 25, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Stewart Guy, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary