

Subject: Island View Beach environmental report 2015

From: Jason Austin <jason.austin@shaw.ca>

Date: 14/01/2015 4:52 PM

To: Mike Walton <mwalton@crd.bc.ca>

Hi Mike

I've copied you my email to Lynn where I have a number of questions about the environmental report the CRD has just published about Island View Beach. You know the history as to why this report was done, because there were so many misstatements in the 2013 draft plan about the environment that the CRD put out for Island View.

In May 2014 you appeared before the Parks Committee and the public, and promised a new environmental report that this time would:

*"Provide factual technical and scientific information about the natural environment **found in the park.***

- *Regional Geographic setting*
- *Natural features **of the Park:***
 - *Regional geographic setting*
 - *Terrain, hydrology*
 - *Species at risk (flora and fauna)"*

You sounded sincere and I believed you. But look objectively at what has been presented now in 2015. And I have to ask that you look objectively, because every time I challenge the CRD people swing into defense mode instead of listening to what I am saying. Look at the CRD web site where it lays out the environmental report: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/island-view-beach-management-plan>

Go through those sections and ask yourself, seriously Mike, is this a factual, technical and scientific report about the natural environment found in Island View Beach Regional park? In my opinion it comes nowhere near to measuring up to that standard. It is not neutral, it is trying to sell something. Much of it is filler, a lot of it harmless stuff about thousands of years ago, but other filler parts seem to try to give the impression of scientific purpose where none exists. But where is the factual scientific substantiation for what is said? Key statements are made without substantiation. Other key statements are made on a page with multiple paragraphs with a note at the bottom referring to some unpublished report, with no indication which paragraph that report supports; no link to that unpublished report; and no page number in that report if one is lucky enough to find it! This would get a failing grade in a high school! For example look at this:

Land Use History

We spoke about the sinuosity of low lying habitats but not the linear transitions. These reflect the human element of landscape change.

Island View Beach was managed for thousands of years by the Tsawout people and continues to be important to them. The backshore wetlands provide resources such as plants for medicine, food and technology; and waterfowl or deer for hunting. The beaches provide nearshore marine resources for seafood, transportation (canoes), recreation and other cultural activities.

In the past 150 years or so, many people have come to this area to settle. Island View Beach has been influenced by the local agricultural community and more recently has become an important recreational site for the region. The long history and hard work of settlers in this area to maximize agricultural use of this land is still evident today. If you look at the park landscape from north to south, there are subtle changes in texture and pattern that correlate with old property boundaries and land use changes like cultivation.

Page, N. 2010. Cordova Shore Conservation Strategy. Unpublished report prepared for CRD Regional Parks, Tsawout First Nation, and Canadian Wildlife Service. 66 pp + appendices.

Which paragraph does the Page report relate to? Where is the Page report? What is the page number?

Mike, go through the questions I asked Lynn. How can she change the titles and dates on the Saanich archive photos? How can she make statements about "constructing a large berm" without support? How can she present maps purporting to show high salinity on the reserve lands without disclosing that the Tsawout flood gate was open and letting in the sea - and is still malfunctioning - for more than 20 years,. In all likelihood the salinity on the reserve was man made. How can she state that the park ditches are 3.4m wide??? And then come up with more silly stuff like saying the park ditches have 2.7 acres of water in them during summer when they are bone dry! Does she never go to the park? She quotes the mosquito contractor but does not disclose that since the park ditches were cleaned by Central Saanich that the use of the lavicide by the mosquito contractor has reduced to almost nothing in areas outside the park and there is no longer a mosquito problem in the area. (I say outside the park because the CRD has not drained the standing water in the park - what has improved has been Puckle Farm and the reserve lands.) Lynn quotes a lot from Randhawa et al as if that was a Camosun College report. It wasn't - they were just 4 students doing a school project at Camosun! This report was not put before the Parks Committee because I pointed out the errors in it, yet that student report is now it is being quoted from in a CRD report that is expected to be factual, technical and scientific!

You'll have seen in my email to Lynn I questioned her use of the term "Island View Beach". One of the big problems in the 2013 draft plan was the CRD wrote it in a way that suggested that birds and flora from all around the area were present in the park when they were not. There is that same drift in this latest report. Instead of confining itself to what is "**in the park**", this report clearly drifts off to the much bigger and different area of "Island View Beach" which includes the Tsawout lands and possibly up to Cordova Spit, and once it does that the integrity of the report is compromised.

The greatest disappointment for me was the absence of solid information on species at risk and what needs to be done. Some at the CRD like to suggest I am against environmental issues, but that is not true as anyone who reads what I have said knows. I have been calling for factual environmental information for years. My strong objections have been with the false claims made about the environment.

This latest report is not just incomplete, it is inaccurate. It does not meet the standard of providing "*factual technical and scientific information about the natural environment **found in the park***" that you promised us. I ask that you withdraw the report and postpone the public meetings until it is corrected. And Mike, when it is redone, why not circulate it to a few of us to read over before you go public and save all this.

Regards

Jason