

***The Friends of Island View Beach***

By email from

FriendsOfIslandViewBeach@gmail.com

January 19, 2015

**The Directors**

**Capital Regional District**

**Victoria, BC**

**Re: Island View Beach Regional Park**

We are writing to the full CRD Board instead of the Regional Parks Committee, because of the short time, and the seriousness of the issue.

For the last 4 years the CRD has been attempting to draft a new park management plan for Island View Beach Regional Park to replace the existing park bylaw. This long period has been marred by a consistent pattern of misinformation within the CRD and to the public. We will be writing to you and the Minister about this later.

In 2011, at the only public meeting held about the future of the park, the public told the CRD to *leave the park alone*. The CRD ignored this.

In 2013 the CRD released a draft park plan that contained so many exaggerated and misleading claims that it had to be withdrawn. [You can see those here](#).

In May 2014 the Regional Parks Committee gave staff direction that a new environment study was to be done to:

*"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)"*

Last week the CRD released their latest environmental study, and have scheduled public meetings for January 29 & February 5<sup>th</sup> based on this. You can see the report here – scroll down to the heading "[Presentation on the Park's Natural Environment](#)"

**The purpose of the environmental study is to determine if there is any species of plant or animal in the park that requires protection in the new park management plan. The Friends of Island View Beach support this, with the qualification that any proposal to exclude the public from the park on environmental grounds should only be made on factual, scientific data showing clear need.**

In the abandoned 2013 plan it was proposed, in the name of environmental protection, to reduce the area of the park for public recreation from the **17%** it is now, down to **3%**. (These numbers exclude the camp ground which is not open to the general public who are not camping.) As was subsequently found, those environmental claims were grossly exaggerated and the plan had to be dropped.

This 2015 environmental study by the CRD is also anything but factual, technical or scientific. We expressed our concerns to CRD staff on Wednesday and requested a response but they have not replied. We show in the supplemental material below some of the problems with it, but it has two fatal omissions that overshadow all else:

1. **It fails to show what species are resident in the park and need protection there.** Instead it speaks, misleadingly, about things found at "Island View Beach" not "Island View Beach Regional Park". "Island View Beach" is a much larger area than the park, and includes habitats and species not present in the park. Also, the report talks of things being on endangered lists, but overlooks that just because something is endangered across Canada, it is not necessarily endangered in the Park where it might be thriving. An example of an endangered species thriving in the park is the yellow verbena plant which has been increasing over the years, and evidently does not need protection.

2. **It fails to address climate change and rising sea level.** With rising sea levels and increased storm surges, in a short number of years the park will be under sea water unless something is done to protect it. So any talk about saving the environment at the park without a parallel plan to save the park itself, is a waste of CRD resources and taxpayer money. The 2015 CRD environmental report makes several references to the Stacey Filatow 2009 report, but chose not to quote this statement at page 17:

*"Sea level rise due to global warming may threaten the ecosystems .... It is important to integrate climate change into management considerations ..."*

**The CRD has owned this park for 50 years and staff have been studying it for the last 9 years with a view to a new management plan. After all these years and expense, why is the CRD not capable of giving an unvarnished, factual report of what is in the park and what needs protecting? The public deserves better than this – a lot, lot better.**

## Conclusion

Once again an environmental report by the CRD for Island View Beach Regional Park is misleading, and no reasonable person would be able make an informed decision based on it.

The public meetings scheduled for January 29 & February 5<sup>th</sup> should be postponed because there is no factual information about the park to put before them.

A new model is needed because the process is broken, and public trust has been long lost.

**We believe a Parks sub-committee should be formed of the three Peninsula Mayors to make inquiries, and present recommendations to the Regional Parks Committee on how to move forward.**

Respectfully submitted

**Bren Axon   Dr. Barbara Powell   Jason Austin   Jim Laite   Linda & Victor Devlin   Tom Michell**

For ***the Friends of Island View Beach.***

## **Supplementary material**

### **Notes on the CRD environmental report**

- We found gross errors of fact. For example, claims that the average width of the ditches in the park is 3.4m (11 feet!). Director Hicks has been seen leaping over these ditches which either makes him Superman or this claim is a fabrication.
- There were off the wall, unsupported statements.
- What supporting references that were presented, came from unpublished papers with no link given to them, no page number, and no indication as to which part of the text that the paper supported, if it did at all. This makes the claims in the environmental impossible to verify.
- One paper that was referred to three times was not even a research paper by qualified professionals - it was a school project by Camosun students, and CRD staff had been told of the flaws in that paper.
- Despite the direction that the study was to be “**of the Park**”, it spoke throughout of “Island View Beach”, a much larger area containing environments and species not found in the park.
- Two photos were used from the Saanich archives, but the titles and dates were changed to something quite different
- A section of the report showed data that the Tsawout lands had a high saline content which would lead the reader to assume this was a natural occurrence. The CRD did not disclose however, that these lands have been flooded by salt water for over 20 years due to a malfunctioning flapper gate that allows sea water to come up a drainage ditch.

### **Sea level rise**

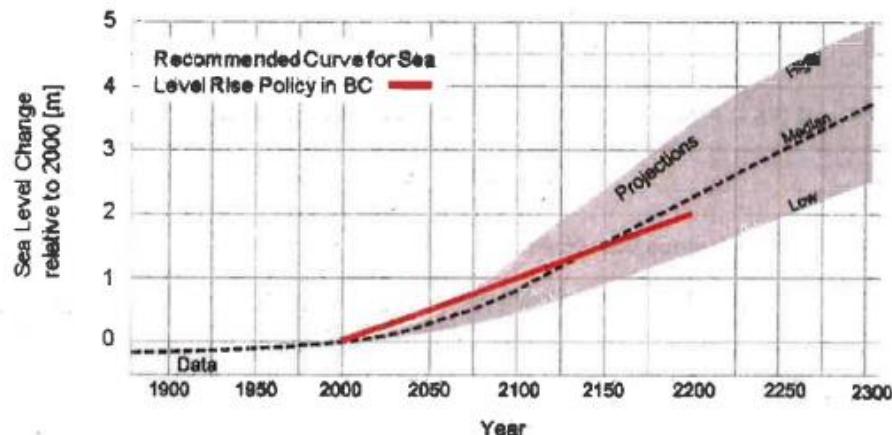
The CRD recognises the potential impact of sea level rise and is taking an active role in working with First Nations and Municipalities. The CAO, Mr. Lapham, sent a letter to all municipalities in the Capital Regional District on November 20, 2014 about the Province’s BC Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines.

[See here](#)

Below is the province’s projected sea level rise contained in Mr. Lapham’s letter.

## Draft Amendment Sections 3.5 and 3.6 "Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines"

The scenario in Figure 1 is intended to be reviewed in 2015, or sooner if there is significant new scientific information.



**Figure 1.** Recommended Global Sea Level Rise Curve for Planning and Design in BC

And here is the CRD projection showing Island View Beach being flooded:

