

Subject: Island View Beach Regional Park

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The Board of Directors
Capital Regional District

Important issues are being raised about process at Island View Beach Regional Park. In particular we are asking you to postpone public meetings scheduled on January 29 and February 5th, because the environmental presentation prepared by the CRD is incomplete, misleading and plain wrong, and no reasonable person will be able to come to an informed opinion from it. It would be reprehensible to take this to the public as representing the species at risk that need protection in Island View Beach Regional Park.

Some of you will be unfamiliar with the background at Island View Beach Regional Park, so I will give some here.

This link shows the make up of Island View Beach:

<http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/introduction.html>

This gives background on the existing park plan and the mosquito problems. It also shows some very troubling statements. <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/october-2-2011-letter-to-crd.html>

In October 2011 the CRD Board had to ask Central Saanich to clean the park ditches because CRD staff did not.

And this link brings things almost up to date.

<http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/lurching-towards-a-new-park-plan.html>

Staff were tasked with producing a factual, technical and scientific environmental inventory of what is in the park, and, by assumption, what needs protection. They have not done so. It is a just an unsupported list of species that may be in the general area around the park, including the sea! Also the presentation appears to contain factual errors about the drainage ditches, the water table and other matters. I wrote to staff a week ago requesting an explanation and have not had a reply, which leads me to believe these were errors.

Staff had 8 months to make this presentation. There can be no excuse for it not to be complete and factual. We had this with the 2013 draft plan that was riddled with misstatements <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/misleading-claims.html> And a public information session in Sidney in January 2013 was also incomplete and misleading <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/2013-january-public-session.html>

The environmental study will determine public access in Island View Regional Park so it must be done right. We had foreseen the problems and in 2014 called for an independent environmental review but that was not done, and now again we have something unusable.

There is nothing factual to take to the public meetings scheduled for January 29th & February 5th, so those should be postponed.

In order to keep this email short I have only touched on a few of the problems experienced over the last 4 years - there was much more and there is no public trust. To give the process credibility, a Parks sub-committee could be formed of the three Peninsula Mayors, Sidney, Central Saanich & North Saanich, to make inquiries, and present recommendations to the Regional Parks Committee on how to move forward. These Mayors know Island View Beach and they are respected in the community.

Sincerely

Jason Austin

PS The drainage ditches often come up in discussion when talking about Island View Beach. There is a lot of misunderstanding about them - as is evident from the environment presentation the CRD has just made. The Friends of Island View Beach web site gives the history of these, right down to the correspondence and the final tally of the cost, with thanks to Saanich Archives. Island View was in Ward 6 of Saanich in those days, and the ditches were put in by Saanich. What was particularly impressive was that the work was completed within 4 months of the first proposal by the land owners, and that included arranging for a contribution from the Dominion Government! The CRD environment presentation is wrong in almost all its comments about these ditches. It says for example, "*Considerable effort has been made to drain the coastal marshes at Island View Beach since the early 20th century.*" To the contrary, those ditches were put in by Saanich in half the time it took the CRD to prepare that presentation! And they have required little maintenance since. As another comparison, the CRD has spent 4 years on the draft plan for Island View Beach with nothing to show for it, and at a cost that is probably well past the cost of putting in the entire ditch system. The CRD presentation also claims "*The ditches have an estimated average width of 3.4m with sloping sides.*" !! It makes one wonder if the author of the presentation ever set foot in the park. And the CRD presentation goes on to claim there are 2.7 acres of water in the ditches in summer and 5 acres in winter, which is also nonsense - the ditches are mostly dry in summer and as the ditch width is wrong the other calculations are wrong. The amount of water in the ditches in winter is irrelevant anyway, because it is flowing water and mosquitoes could not breed in it. This is an example of the curious throw away comments made throughout the CRD presentation that seem to have no factual basis. It may be understood why we say this CRD environmental presentation is incomplete, misleading and plain wrong. Here is the link to the story on the ditches: <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/1936-mosquito-drainage-project.html>