

Subject:Are there none among you who will stand up and call for an inquiry into what is going on?

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**The Directors
Capital Regional District**

Copy to:
**Mayor & Council
District of Central Saanich**

Re: Environmental presentation about Island View Beach Regional Park

We write to the full CRD board because of the importance if the issue – and we say to all of you – are there none among you who will stand up and call for an inquiry into what is going on? The issue is critical – if the CRD cannot be trusted to produce accurate information, then how can the Board make informed decisions, and how can the public assess those decisions?

CFOX reported on February 18, 2015 that the CRD sewage committee refused to accept a staff report on treatment processes because the Directors questioned the accuracy of numbers provided by staff. <http://www.cfax1070.com/News/Top-Stories/CRD-sewage-committee-directors-question-accuracy-o>

In contrast, for 4 years now we have been calling attention to the misstatements being made about Island View Beach Regional Park and no inquiry has been made. You will see examples of these CRD misrepresentations at these links:

<http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/october-2-2011-letter-to-crd.html>
<http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/2013-january-public-session.html>
<http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/2013-01-14-public-information-session.html>
<http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/misleading-claims.html>

In May 2014 a multistep process was decided on, with the first step to be an environmental assessment of the park which was to be the foundation for any new park plan. We urged that due to the history of problems in obtaining unbiased, factual data, that the assessment be done by an independent professional. Our advice was not heeded and instead the Regional Parks Committee directed staff to:

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

. Regional geographic setting

*. Natural features **of the Park:***

- Ecosystems

- Terrain, hydrology

- Species at risk (flora & fauna)”

This is the crux of the issue. The data was to be **factual, technical and scientific**, and it was to relate to **the environment found in the park.**

Eight months later, CRD staff released an environmental presentation they claimed was “scientific”. The CRD web site has been changed but the elements can be seen here: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/island-view-beach-management-plan>

We wrote immediately to staff and two letters were sent to all the directors, calling attention to errors in this presentation and we urged that the public meetings be postponed until the presentation was checked. We also appeared before the Regional Parks Committee on January 21st 2015 where we told the Committee that many of the 33 species claimed by staff to be “confirmed species at risk at Island View Beach” were not in the park at all. We were challenged by the Committee as to what expertise we had to say that. Senior Parks staff were present and said nothing. On January 29th however, staff wrote to us saying the 33 species at risk were “*in and around the park*”, and that there were only 9 species at risk actually in the park. This letter was written by the same staff who sat mute at the Parks Committee meeting

where we were challenged by the Committee for saying there were not 33 species at risk in the park.

The claim that there were 33 confirmed species at risk at Island View Beach, was a constant thread throughout the CRD presentation to the public, and was written in a way that was clearly intended to have the reader believe these 33 species at risk were in the park. We believed it, and so did the Parks Committee on January 21st. There was a “Fact Sheet” headed

**Species at Risk
Island View Beach Regional Park**

And on the reverse it listed 33 species.

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/parks-pdf/sarfactsheetivb.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

The Executive Summary said at page 17: *“There are 33 confirmed species at risk at Island View Beach and the park may support other species at risk that are undetected.”*

<http://issuu.com/capitalregionaldistrict/docs/ivbnep-executivesummary?e=2590922/10799409>

The “Species at Risk and their Habitats” said at page 13 *“There are 33 confirmed species at risk at Island View Beach ...”*

<http://issuu.com/capitalregionaldistrict/docs/ivbnep-species?e=2590922/10796110>

All of these presentations concluded at the back with *“Thank you for taking the time to view the presentation on Island View Beach Regional Park’s natural environment”*.

And on the Response Form, was the statement *“There are 33 confirmed species at risk in the park and on the foreshore.”*

The presentation was clearly intended by the CRD to have the public believe there were 33 species at risk within Island View Beach Regional Park, when all along CRD staff accepted that the number was only 9.

Central Saanich Council – call for references to support the CRD data

On January 26 2015, CRD staff made a presentation to the Parks & Recreation Committee of Central Saanich, following which we gave a presentation showing errors in the CRD material. The Central Saanich councillors passed a resolution: “**Central Saanich Parks & Recreation Committee make a request of the CRD to provide references for the scientific data that they have provided in the current plan that is on their web site, and if they can not provide accurate references that it commission a study by an independent firm in order to provide validity on the facts.**”

In response, CRD staff posted a reference list at <https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/parks-pdf/references-for-ivb-step-1.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Look at the references given there for Species and Habitats – the only references with links are to generic sites and give no evidence of species at risk resident in Island View Beach Regional Park. A number of papers are listed but no link is given to them, so what value are they as references?

The purpose of the Central Saanich resolution was for scientific data to confirm the claims on the CRD web site about species at risk in the park. None of the linked references given by the CRD gives this information, and therefore the request by Central Saanich for accurate references has not been met.

We must advise you that of the 9 species at risk that CRD staff now claim are resident in the park, that we have seen evidence of only 5 as being in the park. Despite frequent requests of CRD staff, no evidence has been made available to us to show that these 4 species are resident in the park:

Common Nighthawk,
Fleshy Jaumea,
American Glehnia,
Sand-Verbena moth

Look for yourselves at the presentation on “Species at Risk”

This is not rocket science, and we urge you to look for yourselves. Here is the link to the CRD Species at risk presentation: <http://issuu.com/capitalregionaldistrict/docs/ivbnep-species?e=2590922/10796110>

Look through this and keep asking the question – “what factual, technical or scientific data is presented here to show the environment within Island View Beach Regional Park?”

- the cover photo is of ducks at sea!

- there is no factual data on pages 2-3, 4-5 just a series of unsupported statements

- pages 6-7 shows a marine bird area that is completely outside the park
- page 8-9 is an e-bird report where people have identified themselves as being at “Island View Beach” which could be anywhere along the shoreline and not in the park, and in the most cases looking at marine birds out at sea
- page 10-11 has nothing
- page 12-13 is the game playing about there being 33 species at risk
- pages 14-15, 16-17, 18-19 are photos of a Common Nighthawk. Those photos were taken at James Island, not at Island View Beach Regional Park. No supporting data is given to show that the Common Nighthawk is resident in the park. We made repeated requests to CRD staff for evidence that the Common Nighthawk was resident in the park yet no data was given to us to show this.
- page 20-21 is the yellow sand-verbena plant. No references are given but it is known.
- page 22-23 is a photo of the Sand Verbena Moth. This photo was taken at Goose Spit, Comox. It was not taken at Island View Beach. No supporting data is given to show that the Sand Verbena Moth is resident in the park. We made repeated requests to CRD staff for evidence that the Sand Verbena Moth was resident in the park yet no data was given to us to show this.
- page 24-25 26-27 is the Contorted-pod Evening-Primrose. The map showing in yellow as the area occupied by the Contorted-pod Evening-Primrose is grossly exaggerated – the plant is present in only a small fraction of that area on the west side, as CRD staff knew from a July 2014 report by Matt Fairbarns. Compare the map in the CRD presentation to this map in Fairbarn’s report:
- pages 28-29 shows the foreshore which is provincial land and outside the park
- pages 30-31 is the sandpiper that does not enter the park.
- pages 32-33 is the summary.

What you have just seen was the entire CRD presentation on the species at risk in Island View Beach Regional Park! Did you see any factual or scientific data? Hard to believe isn’t it, but that was meant to be the cornerstone of a new park plan to show the species at risk that might have to be protected.

What should have been in this environmental presentation was a listing of the species at risk that are actually in the park, and showing for each:

- a description of the species
- confirmation of their presence
- a map showing their location
- and an assessment of what, if any, special protection is needed for the species. This last is important because some of the species like the yellow sand verbena are thriving in the park and need no protection.

An excellent example of a factual, objective, scientific report is that of Matt Fairbarns of Aruncus Consulting, July 31 2014 on the Contorted-pod Evening-primrose

http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/uploads/2/4/3/5/24351508/island_view_beach_camissonia_and_lathyrus_survey_2014.pdf

Other

We are preparing a detailed analysis of the CRD presentation for our website, but we can tell you now, that much was irrelevant, inaccurate, misleading or half truths. The crux of the presentation should have been the species at risk, and as you have seen there was nothing there.

A Response Form was handed out at the meetings and was available on-line. As you have already heard from Dr. Powell, that response form was fatally compromised by incorrect statements CRD staff had inserted beneath each comment box that would likely have influenced the person completing the Response Form.

Conclusion

Our position to you is that the environmental presentation made to the public in January & February 2015 did not come anywhere close to meeting the standard set by the Regional Parks Committee in May 2014 of being:

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

. Regional geographic setting

. *Natural features of the Park:*

- *Ecosystems*
- *Terrain, hydrology*
- *Species at risk (flora & fauna)*”

After nine months and considerable public expense, no environmental foundation exists on which to build a new park plan. The process needs to be done again and this time properly.

We recommend the CRD engage an independent professional such as Mr. Matt Fairbairn of Aruncus Consulting to create this environmental assessment. Mr. Fairbairn has a long and close history with Island View Beach Regional Park, and we believe him to be objective.

Jason Austin
for the Friends of Island View Beach