

Friends of Island View Beach & Capital Region Dog Owners

Joint submission to the CRD Regional Parks Committee

Island View Beach Regional Park

April 10, 2017

Introduction

In January 2017 the CRD Regional Parks Committee granted 60 days to the Friends of Island View Beach (FOIVB), the Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) and other stakeholders, to collaborate and make presentations to the Parks Committee. An extension was later given, taking this to April 10, 2017.

FOIVB and RPBO brought in the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) and the Capital Regional Dog Owners (CRDO). Numerous meetings were held between the four groups, both on and off site.

Regrettably, no consensus was reached for an overall recommendation to the CRD. This is a joint recommendation of two of the groups – the Friends of Island View Beach and the Capital Region Dog Owners.

What we have addressed:

1. The trespass on to the Tsawout lands
2. A balance between the majority dog owners; those who do not like dogs; and wildlife
3. Access for equestrians
4. Protection for ground nesting birds if they are present
5. All weather trails, and access for ditch and mosquito maintenance
6. Sand restoration area in the north east
7. The public boat launch and the two unused ½ acre parcels on Island View Road
8. Identify the natural boundary between the park and the beach as this affects all the plans
9. Signage for protection of birds
10. Dog waste bags and more garbage containers
11. A trail from Lamont Road into the park
12. Climate change: the future of the park and the cost to the CRD of proposals
13. The proposals for removing the beach logs; flooding the park with sea water; fencing the berm; and a sand restoration area on the beach.

Recommendations

The recommendations following are shown on the map attached. They are drawn from information provided by CRD staff; from indications by CRD directors; and from information gained during the collaborative talks. We express our appreciation to Ms. Hutcheson, General Manager of Parks & Environmental Services, for the assistance she gave us.

1. Prevent trespass onto the Tsawout lands – fence the north boundary

The northern park boundary borders the lands of the Tsawout First Nation. A beaten trail has developed on the north east side of the park that leads the public on to the Tsawout lands. There is

no malicious intent, the trail simply crosses an unfenced boundary, and most people are unaware they are trespassing. The trespass occurs only on the north-east, not the north-west.

- Fence the entire northern boundary
- Utilize the proposed sand restoration discussed below to create a buffer on the north-east only, so that the public are directed on to the beach at a distance before the Tsawout boundary. No buffer is needed on the north-west as no trespass occurs there.

2. A balance between the majority dog owners; those who do not like dogs; and wildlife

- **For people without dogs**

To provide for those who prefer not to be around dogs, we recommend setting aside areas of beach frontage and meadowland, where no dogs will be allowed. Logically, these should be at the entrance to the park.

- Make the existing **public recreation** area a no-dog area - 3.69 acres
- Make the **meadowland** to the west of the tenting area a no dog area - 18.74 acres

- **For wildlife**

- Create a **seasonal no-dog area in the meadowland**, immediately north of the other no-dog area, for possible ground nesting birds. April-July - 11.58 acres
- Create a **Wildlife Refuge** in the area naturally bounded by the northern ditches - 9.23 acres
- The **north-east sand restoration area** at 6. below will provide a further dog-free area - 3.37 acres

These no-dog areas total 47 acres which is 39% of the park.

- **For people with dogs**

- Create a new, dog friendly picnic area to the north of the campground
- In exchange for the no-dog areas of 47 acres, allow dogs to be off leash and off trail in the remainder of the park.

3. We support the multi-use gravelled equestrian trail proposed by the CRD in 2016

....., with the recommendation that as a cost saving measure it be routed around the north ditch system instead of through the swamp which would be prohibitively expensive. No environmentally sensitive area was found around that north ditch during the collaborative process, and because it is beside the ditch the ground is firmer.

4. Ground nesting birds?

The Rocky Point Bird Observatory report they have no inventory of birds that actually nest in the park. During the collaborative process we observed two species in our proposed 18 acre no-dog area. There is no evidence of any species of "at risk" birds in the meadowlands. The Common Nighthawk is mentioned from time to time, but the CRD records show it was last observed nesting

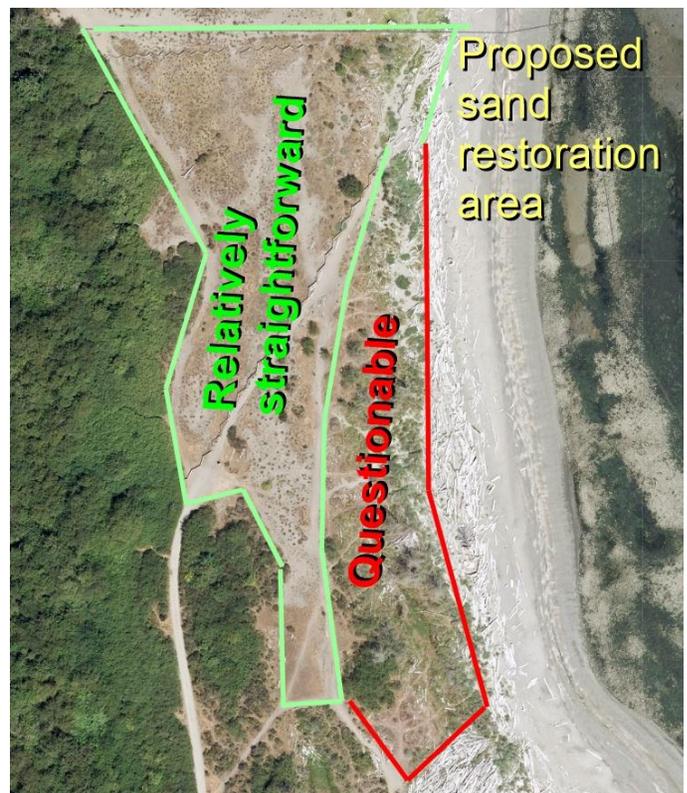
in the park in the 1980's, and in any event it is not at risk in BC (it is yellow listed here), and is not tracked by the BC Conservation Data Centre for this reason. Whatever ground nesting birds there may be, are common. Despite this, our proposal sets aside 47 acres where dogs will not be allowed, either permanently, or seasonally during nesting time.

5. Informal beaten trails

- **The 1987 CRD park master plan, and the 2009 Stacey Filatow report, both observed that the system of beaten trails at IVBRP has caused no damage to the vegetation in the park. That was the conclusion of the collaborative process too. Dilution is the solution** - the more that people can be encouraged into the meadowlands, the less pressure there will be on the more sensitive beach. *(Note: "Meadowlands" was the term developed during the collaborative process to describe the lands west of the main north south ditch, as the term "grasslands" used in the existing 1989 bylaw is no longer accurate, nor is it correct to call them wetlands as they are only seasonally wet.)* **We encourage the use of informal beaten trails – they do no damage to the vegetation and the cost to the CRD is minimal.**
- **Mow one side of all the ditches at the beginning of each year**
This will provide a triple benefit to the CRD and the public:
 - Gives access for the ditch maintenance
 - Gives access to the mosquito control contractor whose staff currently cannot get to many of the ditches because the banks are overgrown
 - Will create year round inexpensive trails for the public in the meadow lands, as the land alongside the ditches is generally firm.
- **Create two new access places from the inner loop trail to the meadowlands at Lamont Road and at the next northerly ditch, so that with the two access points for the equestrians there will be 4 places to access the meadowlands.**

6. Sand restoration area in the north east

In the north east of the park is a remnant of a coastal sand system which is home to several sand based species of "at risk" plants and an associated moth. This coastal sand system is endangered because there has been no makeup sand from the beach for considerable time, and what should be loose sand has begun consolidating and becoming organic. Invasive plant species have also established. If left to nature, this coastal sand system will, in time, not be suitable habitat for the sand based species of at risk plants and the associated moth. Intervention to counter the natural processes occurring in the park will be needed if there is a wish to save the sand based species at risk and the associated moth.



The proposed sand restoration area can be divided into two areas. The west side has mostly invasive grasses and moss, and the sand only lightly contaminated with organic material. We believe this should be relatively straight forward to restore for the short term but we do not know the cost. The long term would still remain doubtful because there is no makeup sand.

The area to the east however has changed significantly – the sand has a noticeably higher concentration of organic material and there are even trees growing there. **We question the cost and limited benefit of attempting to make this into a coastal sand area, and recommend it be used for a trail to the north that would exit to the beach about 50m before the Tsawout boundary.**

7. Transfer the public boat launch and the two ½ acre parcels to Central Saanich

There is desperate need for a second public boat launch on the Saanich Peninsula to relieve the pressure from the one operated by the Town of Sidney. Also, when it was functional, the boat launch served the James Island barge, and the Central Saanich emergency services. Beside the boat launch are two ½ acre parcels that were the original Island View park from 1916 but are now overgrown.

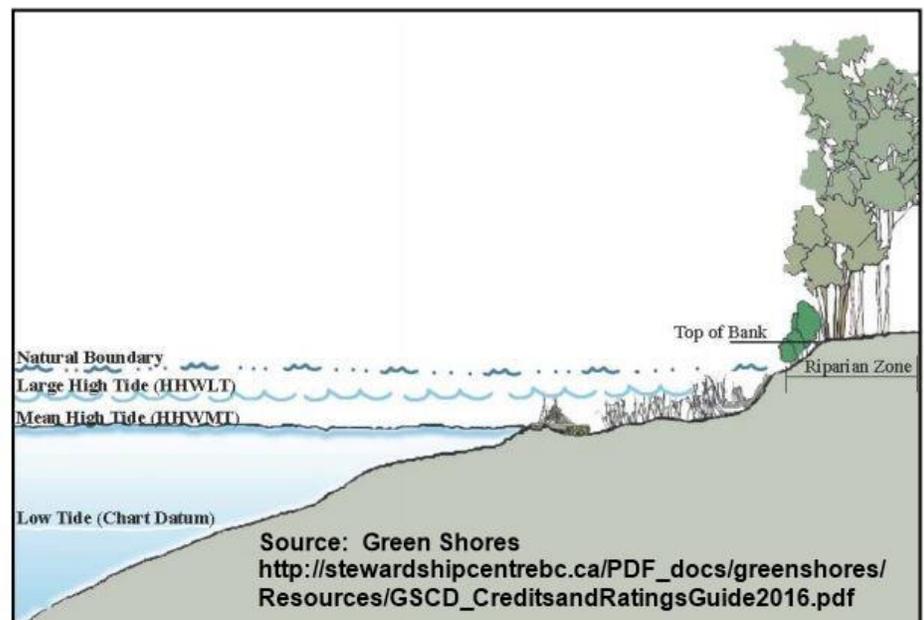
Operation of the boat launch is more a municipal than regional function, and we recommend that it, and the two half acre parcels, be transferred to Central Saanich. The north half acre parcels can serve as horse trailer parking, and the south for boat trailer parking.



8. The coastal boundary of the park

Two main points where FOIVB and CRDO were unable to reach agreement with RPBO and VNHS, were their wish to have a sand restoration area on the beach and restrict the public's access to the beach, and to restrict the beach to dogs for periods of time. **Both these areas are outside the park boundary, and therefore outside the park plan.**

Important Boundary Features in the Shore Environment



It is our understanding the park boundary is where the sea comes during king tides and winter storms (close along the berm trail), and is not the mean tide line as is often shown on maps of the park. See the diagram by Green Shores above.

9. Signage for protection of shore birds

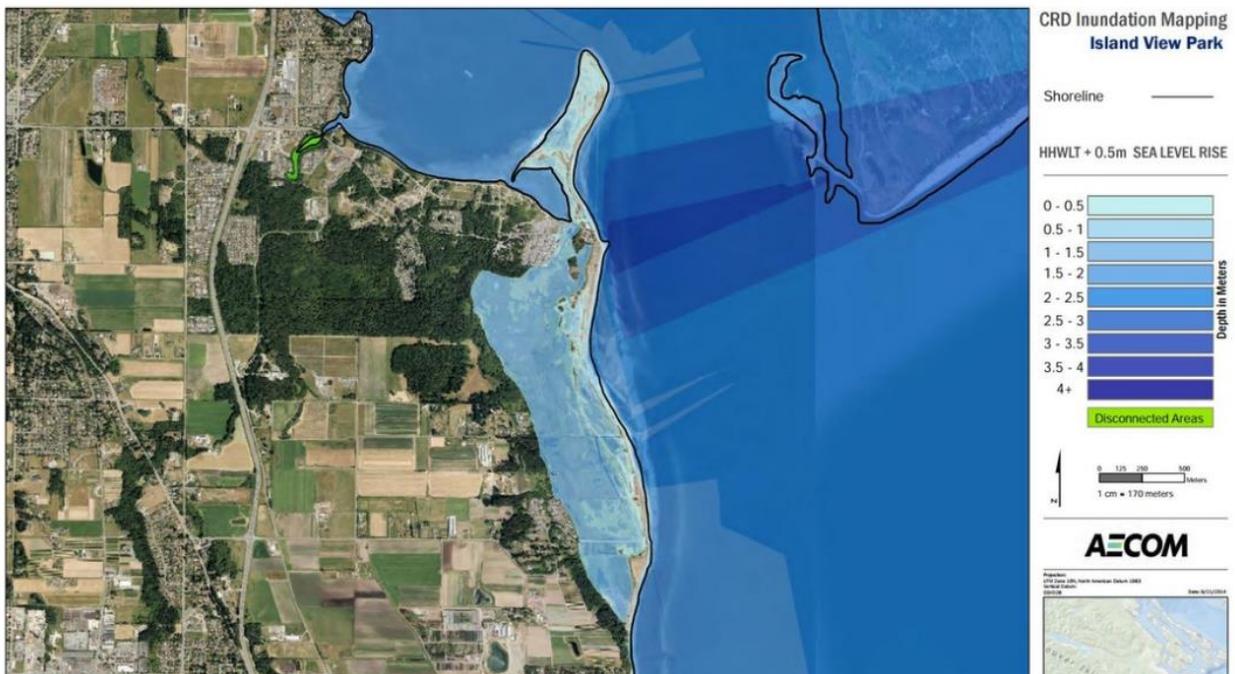
Although the beach is outside the park, we recommend the CRD post signs in the park, urging dog owners not to allow their animals to chase birds at any time of year. The great majority of dog owners are respectful of wildlife, and the provision of clear signs will help change the thoughtless few.

10. Provide dog waste bags and more garbage containers throughout the park, including the south end by the public boat launch

11. A trail from Lamont Road into the park

12. Climate change: the future and the costs

The 2015 report by the CRD consultant Aecom, suggests Island View Beach Regional Park will be lost to the rising sea within 30 years.



And the March 2017 draft [CRD – Climate Change Strategy](#) says at page 9:

“Locally, according to the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC) Plan2Adapt Tool, climate model projections for the capital region indicate:

- *Year-round temperatures will rise.*
- *Dry spells in the summer will extend.*
- *Storm activity will become more frequent and intense, with higher winds and more precipitation falling during storm events.*
- *Sea levels will rise and will be subject to larger storm surge and wave effects, further increasing the risks of sea level rise.”*

Island View Beach is one of the most vulnerable areas within the Capital Regional District; the ecosystem will change, and in relatively short time the park will be flooded. This makes it difficult to recommend any major expenditure other than the equestrian trail, and to protect the berm for as long as reasonably possible.

13. Proposals we do not endorse

(a) Removing the beach logs

During the collaboration process we were asked to endorse removal of the beach logs from the Tsawout boundary to south of the outfall. Those logs are on the beach which is outside the park. There are countless logs; the project would be fraught with risk of damage to the environment; there would be risk to the berm; and substantial cost to the CRD. In our opinion the cost and risk to the CRD would be high and we question if there would be any benefit from this. Furthermore, the beach logs represent a massive carbon sink, and if their removal entailed burning the logs or otherwise destroying them, the release of that carbon would be contrary to the CRD’s Regional Climate Change Strategy.

(b) Flooding the park with sea water

We were also asked to support flooding the park with sea water as a means to control invasive species. Again we believe the cost to the CRD would far outweigh any possible benefit, and we doubt that the area proposed was flooded naturally with sea water in the past, so this proposal would change the natural environment.

(c) Fencing the berm, and a sand restoration on the beach

We were asked to support fencing the berm to restrict the public’s access to the beach, and a sand restoration on the beach. The beach is outside the park so a sand restoration of it does not belong in the park plan, and any fencing would be lost at the first storm. The photo on the right shows the sea comes right up to the berm in storms, and that is the park boundary. If isolated pockets of



“at risk” plants are found, they can be fenced individually.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to put forward these ideas. Our focus has been for balance between the needs of different park visitors and the environment, and the cost to the CRD.

Respectfully

The Friends of Island View Beach *and* Capital Region Dog Owners Group





FOIVB & CRDOG
Proposed areas
with no dogs.

Dogs off leash &
off trail outside
these areas