

**MINUTES**  
**NATURAL AREAS, PARKS AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams  
770 Vernon Avenue  
Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 4:05 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff, Jane Cameron, David Little (via Teams) Evan Papps, Wendy Trotter and Kathleen Woodruff

Regrets: Julian Anderson, Catherine du Bois and Darrell Wick

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Becky Goodall (5:30 p.m.), Park Planner and Design, Parks (via Teams) and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

Guests: Luis Costa Ganoza, General Manager, The Paddel Hub (via Teams) and DG Blair, Acting Executive Director, Stewardship Centre for BC (via Teams)

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**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by J. Cameron and Seconded by E. Papps: “That the Minutes of the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held May 17, 2024, be adopted as circulated.”**

**CARRIED**

**CHAIRS REMARKS**

- The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and the Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) have been endorsed and referred to the Finance and Governance Standing Committee. Efforts are underway to identify how the two strategies will interconnect and function collaboratively.
- On September 9, the topic of edible landscaping and ways to promote urban agriculture and food security was referred by Council to this advisory committee, as well as the Arts, Culture, and Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee and the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee.
- The CRD is conducting a study on pollution concerns and the oxygenation equipment in Elk and Beaver Lake Regional Parks. A presentation, along with a walking tour with the committee, could be considered.
- An open house related to the future of tennis and pickle ball within Saanich will be held at Gordon Head Recreation Centre on Sept 24. Information will be shared about future projects, followed by a Q&A session.
- An interim management plan has been approved for the Royal Oak Golf Course land, now owned by the CRD. Staff are currently conducting environmental studies on the property and engaging with local First Nations. Additionally, a concern has been raised regarding live trapping of quail families. Residents are misinformed about these birds being an invasive species. This practice is illegal on park lands.

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## **THE PADDEL HUB**

The General Manager gave a presentation on The Paddel Hub (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Paddel is an indoor or outdoor sport that requires walls to play off of, similar to squash.
- Paddel courts are smaller than tennis courts.
- A permanent structure is ideal.
- The noise level is less than pickle ball.
- Cedar Hill Recreation Centre is not an ideal venue to introduce a new sport.
- The presenters asked could a demonstration court be built behind Saanich Commonwealth Place.
- Turf is the preferred surface for an outdoor court.
- A fee structure based on location and rental agreements is required.
- Adding a similar sport alongside pickleball could be challenging.
- This could be a private venture rather than a municipal project.
- The upper parking lot areas of shopping centres or private land could be potential options.
- Contacting the Victoria Curling Club to use their facility in the off-season is worth exploring.
- A pop-up type design is preferred.

**\*\*The General Manager left the meeting at 4:35 p.m.\*\***

## **COLQUITZ GREEN SHORES DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

The Acting Executive Director for Stewardship Centre for BC and the Park Planner Designer gave a presentation on the Colquitz Green Shores Demonstration Project (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The Colquitz Green Shores Demonstration Project highlights key principles like restoring natural processes, enhancing shoreline habitats, reducing pollution, and mitigating cumulative shoreline impacts.
- The demonstration project is meant to be an inspiration and will provide guidance to other property owners.
- This technique could be a valuable consideration for property owners adjacent to lakefront and marine shorelines. There is currently no requirement or regulation for this type of action on private lands.
- An overgrowth of aquatic plants is commonly caused by nutrient loading into lakes.
- Gorge Waterway and the Portage Inlet could be considered for future restoration sites.
- Naturescaping can be integrated into traditional horticulture to enhance biodiversity.

The Acting Executive Director provided an update on the ongoing projects and programs at the Stewardship Centre for BC. Future presentations were considered.

**\*\*The Acting Executive Director and the Park Planner Designer left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.\*\***

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**TOOLS AND INITIATIVES TO PROTECT FLOODPLAIN LANDS**

The Chair provided information on Tools and Initiatives to Protect Floodplain Lands. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- It is essential for Saanich to maintain its floodplains to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to protect local ecosystems and communities.
- A section of the Tod Flats wetland has recently become available for sale. This natural floodplain is gradually returning to its natural state and has become a haven for wildlife, including waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds.
- Development is permitted on floodplains, although restrictions are in place.
- Many local businesses and public officials are actively working together to protect and or restore the valued ecological aspects of the Tod Creek Watershed.
- Many environmental groups have collaborated successfully to acquire land, and there is a hope to secure this land as well.
- A future presentation on the Integrated Stormwater Management Plan could be scheduled for the November meeting.
- Urban areas are typically ill-prepared for intense rainfall expected due to climate change.
- Panama Flats is a floodplain located within the urban area of Saanich. Exploring increased protection could be beneficial.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from K. Woodruff the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

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Councillor Judy Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk