

From: Gary and Beth Cherneff [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 9:56 AM
To: Rob Pingle
Subject: Letter to Trustees and planners
Attachments: Baker Beach Intertidal Ecosystem to Trustees.docx

Dear Salt Spring Local Trust Committee and DPA planners
Please find attached a letter in opposition to the current DPA applications regarding Baker Beach.

Gary Cherneff

Dear Salt Spring Local Trust Committee and Planners

The ISLANDS TRUST describes its job as-"Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea"

My house is on a high ridge overlooking Ganges Harbour. When the big wind smacked us in Jan. 2019, eleven large trees were blown over. Just at the back of my studio one fallen tree left a 14 foot hole when the root system was levered out of the hillside. At the bottom of the hole there was a mass of saturated sand and clay that looked like my breakfast porridge. I didn't talk to my neighbors about collaborating on a wind abatement scheme, or go to Environment Canada or the Islands Trust to seek protection from climate change. This would have been absurd and impossible. Instead, I fixed the problem at my own expense. Now my studio has gutters it didn't have before and much better perimeter drainage. And the slope is no longer slipping.

THE BAKER BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN is a proposal to reduce natural oceanfront bluff erosion in an attempt to address property losses for several Beachfront Owners. Their proposal to reduce or eliminate "Toe Erosion" is the primary aim of this plan but this will change the beach immediately and forever. The procedure will be to construct an artificial berm along the beach to protect the slope. Toe Erosion is a SLOW Natural conveyor belt of nourishment (erosion) which occurs at the high tide mark where the sea meets the land. The process has been going on for thousands of years. For the critters that make a home in the intertidal area, this erosion is a normal, healthy, part of their world. Changes to the beach occur over many decades and unevenly over the expanse of the area. When a natural disaster happens, organisms, in selected locales are affected differently. The population is resilient because things rarely happen all at once, everywhere. THAT IS UNTIL -- 85 truckloads of mixed aggregate (artificial Nourishment) are dumped in just a few weeks over much of the area. The substitute materials will inevitably be dispersed by wave action, triggering repeated assaults from the Beachfront Owners as they struggle to maintain their barrier.

The plan envisions a 30 year maintenance life span. For "30 years". You can substitute the word "indeterminate"-or maybe "forever". It is pretty much the same thing. The Copper smelter at Osborne Bay (Crofton) built in 1902, lasted about 6 years . The beautiful black sand –Slag- from that industry continues to assault the shoreline 122 years later. The Baker Beach Owners group are requesting approval from the Islands Trust for a LIFE TIME SENTENCE for the Beach as we know it. They are asking the Islands Trust to give them authority over the future of this beach, in other words to privatize the authority of the TRUST. And they plan to replace the natural cycle of beach nourishment with an artificial one.

Baker Beach, right now, is a part of what could be described as an Intertidal Ecosystem" that stretches from Stonecutter Bay, southeast along Baker Beach into the Booth Canal estuary, past the Bridge and into the Salt Marsh beyond, eventually reaching Okano Creek. (The Islands Salmon Enhancement Association has already performed some restoration here to improve fish habitat). This is a rich geographic area, that is biologically interrelated . ALL of US on Salt Spring Island, are the joint stewards of this area. Think of this as THE BOOTH BAY INTERTIDAL ECOSYSTEM. We have One Chance to preserve it as an amazing example of a transitional ecology that is accessible by foot or watercraft, a place that we can learn from, that our children can learn from.

That we are now struggling to save what we know as Baker Beach could be seen as a consequence of the perfunctory offloading by the Islands Trust of sensitive community engagement in favor of efficient processing of development permit applications. I don't want to believe this outcome was intentional.

For one moment, imagine that all of the waterfront landowners in the Trust area follow the precedent of this application and begin to protect their land values in such a way. Future flexibility in the way we adjust to sea level rise would be compromised. Solutions not yet considered would be hampered by existing agreements.

I encourage the trustees to find a way to set aside this proposal and to consider a different vision for the Beach and the System it is a part of. As our elected representatives, you have an obligation to intervene. If you cannot do this or will not do this, you will have failed in your responsibility to protect Salt Spring Island.

Thanks

Gary Cherneff