

For Trustees and Planner – Points to be brought to the November 14, 2024 LTC:

- There was an “impromptu” gathering on Oct. 16th of people who have lived on SSI for decades...some 40 or 50 years and have a deep understanding of the beach. Minutes of the gathering begin on page 3.
 - There were some who are experts in their field as well as experts in their lived experience. Before any decisions are made,
 - We request a meeting with Trustees and the Planner.
 - We request having the Islands Trust Conservancy be brought in to discuss this particular beach.
 - **Reports on the application to the Stewards of Land, Water & Resources**
 - Do not report a sense of urgency
 - Do report on a low-risk area. As well you can reference the Islands Trust link <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/11.10.25-IT-Saltspring-shoreline-mapping.pdf>
 - Are not involved with BC Green Shore (the company named Green Shoreing could be misleading).
 - **Have blank boxes re: contact with First Nation**
 - Questions:
 - In the application, the low bank and high bank mitigation plans are the same. How could this work?
 - Can the applicants learn from their neighbours who are using a low-impact method of erosion prevention? Can the Trust make recommendations to this effect?
 - Have decision-makers consider the impact on humans?
 - Trying to walk on a beach studded with large rocks will be like being a ball in a pinball machine.
 - People have been swimming in front of the low bank property for decades. The open area for swimming would be blocked. The logs where people sit would be covered.
 - For each of the group of 16, how many hours of sleeplessness have been spent trying to strategize how to save this unique, valuable and important island beach.
 - For visitors to Salt Spring, what do we think the impression will be when the beach is ‘homogenized’ by uniform materials?

- For those who want the Trust as a governing body, and who do believe the Trust mandate is “preserve and protect”, hope is still there that the protection of Baker Beach will be the priority.
- As of November 3, 2024, there are **900 signatures** on the petition named: **Save Baker Rd. Beach & Its Rare Midshipman Fish Habitat**
- There is difficulty discovering the interplay between applying for a permit (DPA) and an application to the Stewards of Land, Water and Resources. The public needs to be better informed when permits are requested to alter Crown Land (our land).
- **How do we have Baker Road Beach become a federal park?**
- We are requesting that decisions regarding the Baker Beach Project permits be denied based on the information you have. If more evidence is needed, we request several years of erosion study be undertaken to determine the extent and scope of mitigation necessary that will ALSO preserve the biodiversity and habitats found on this beach.

Submitted by,

Debbie Magnusson

An Impromptu Gathering to Protect Baker Road Beach – Minutes Oct. 16, 2024

Present: 16 friends and neighbours who love and use the beach throughout the year (artists, biologists, oceanographer, botanist, people working with First Nations, trail developers, environmentalists, hikers, teachers, engineer, videographer)

- Land Acknowledgement
- Purpose – to further stewardship and protection of Baker Road Beach, to relay information, observations and opinions, and to form possible actions to motivate others to write to
- Guidelines – courtesy and respectful reference to all, ‘conditional’ tense (would vs. will)

Information on the Application:

- The purpose of the application is to “mitigate erosion”.
- There are 4 proposed terrace sites along 650m. of beach. An excavator would create terraces 5m. long and 1m. deep to begin (future unknown). An aggregate of rocks between ¼” & 2” plus a core of sand would be used to form the terraces.
 - Logs would be covered.
 - It is unknown if and how often more material would be needed.
- Wave dissipation –
 - 20% of the area would have large rocks (approximately 1.2 m. x .5 m. in size) placed to break wave energy.
 - Some of the rocks would be exactly in the area many people use for swimming.

Marine biology and the beach – diversity, uniqueness and importance

- Despite a decreased diversity of species due to climate change and competitors, Baker Road Beach remains a **rare** ecosystem. Degradation of the beach (ie-changes with unknown risks) poses increased threat to the many species living on the beach.
- When you change the material of the beach, it changes the suitability of the beach to support wildlife.
 - It’s a role of the dice what the changes would have on this key ecosystem.
 - This is the only beach on SSI with this habitat
- At this time:
 - Native oysters are returning

- Eel grass beds off-shore are essential and could be at risk if there are changes to the shore (especially from the sand in the proposed aggregate).
- It is one of the only beaches with the habitat that supports the spawning of Midshipman Fish.
 - These fish then provide food for the multitude of Eagles and Great Blue Heron that gather and, importantly, to feed their young.
 - The key area (1 km of beach) for spawning includes the exact area for the proposed changes
 - There are at least 100 nesting sites along this stretch of beach
 - The flat rocks provide cover for the nests where >300 eggs are laid
- Rocks provide essential habitat for the native shore crabs

Erosion:

- The beach is different at different places – some of the land is at shore level, and high banks are at other points.
 - Why would the proposed mitigation be the same throughout?
 - Greenshore mitigation is best for low bank
 - Greenshore has not been used for high bank
 - Therefore, the benefits and risks are unknown and undocumented
 - It was observed that the large rocks near steps down to beach have shifted due to wave action; so it there was conjecture that the shelf life of the terraces might be 2 years before needing reinforcement).
 - Further to this, in the future, who would pay for refurbishing?
- One property along the beach is already using natural materials and techniques to preserve the high bank.
 - A page with illustrations of four natural techniques was passed around
- No observable erosion from waves.
 - Island Trust report notes this is a low-risk area of wave erosion; link is <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/11.10.25-IT-Saltspring-shoreline-mapping.pdf>
 - The GeoTech reports to the property owners note that this is a certified low-risk area.
 - Is the sense of urgency exaggerated by property owners?
 - The beach is essentially bedrock and very stable
- Lack of drainage at the property most at risk is notable.

- Only drainage from hot tub
- Erosion from above is what is causing slippage
- No evidence of erosion from the beach

Invasive species:

- At the low-bank property, the application refers to “an infestation of invasive species”
 - Only ivy and blackberries were identified as invasive species
 - Spanish broom is different from Scotch broom.
 - Spanish broom is non-invasive
 - The Spanish broom here is valued as a beautiful, fragrant and botanical bonus to those who swim at this part of the beach
 - The elm, willow and maple are non-invasive
- All the plants along this bank are doing their job of holding the bank
 - The plants offer privacy for the property owners
 - The roots are in place
 - Pulling out the plants there to re-plant with native species does not make sense

Comments on wave dissipation:

- It was observed that the large rocks near steps down to beach have shifted due to wave action; so there was conjecture that the shelf life of the terraces might be 2 years before needing reinforcement.
- Further to this, in the future, who would pay for refurbishing?
- Change in force and velocity when water is directed through small openings – is this helpful?

Other ideas and comments:

- You cannot block a high-tide walk
- Work below the high-tide line is unheard of (ie - legal work)
- The properties of the beach for recreational use cannot be stressed enough
 - Changes that will block swimming access would be a major loss
 - People use the beach for many reasons, and this is one of the only beaches on the island with easy access and a long, flat stretch
- When excavators roll up and down the beach, how much life is being crushed and destroyed?
- Disappointment was voiced that the property owners were not more forthcoming to neighbours and the public in general

- Whose property would the 'terraces' be? Still Crown Land?
- Private individuals should not be allowed to change or modify public foreshore as this would be precedent setting

Actions:

- Follow-up with First Nations
- Post an online petition
- Create a video of beach with information to post on SS Exchange
- Everyone can:
 - o Urge others to write to Stewards of Land, Water and Resources by Nov. 13th:
 - Make sure to use File#1415573 in correspondence
 - <https://comment.nrs.gov.bc.ca/applications?id=66bba8c1abb6b6002255d533#details>
 - o Write often to the above, to the Driftwood, the SS Exchange and other platforms where you communicate with others to keep the issue present in people's minds.
 - o Send a PDF of the final writing of these minutes to friends, islanders and people you think can influence the decision-makers.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Magnusson,

