

From: Beth Cherneff <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 1, 2024 2:21 PM
To: Rob Pingle
Subject: Baker Beach DPA

Dear Salt Spring Local Trust Committee and DPA Planners

Re: Crown Land File: #1415573

Re: OCP. - DPA - bylaw 434 sec 3. -“Baker Beach Slope and Shoreline Protection Project- Aurora Professional Group

Thanks for your attention:
We are submitting this letter of opposition.

As residents of Salt Spring Island since 1975 my family and I have been frequent visitors to this beach on a year round basis for over 30 years. We believe that the project is poorly designed to achieve its goals of preventing shoreline erosion. We oppose the proposed modifications of the natural beach scape at the foot of Baker Rd. for the benefit of only 4 private beachfront tenures.

Public Announcement

We believe public announcement of this project was minimal. Final design updates were submitted on May 29, 2024. It was not until the first week in September that notices of this project were staked on access points to the beach- At Baker Rd. stairs and Quarry Dr. trail. That announcement had an original response deadline of Oct. 11 2024, extended by citizens request to Nov. 13. Postings missed the 3 month high traffic season (June to end of August). Similarly a notice was placed in the local weekly paper (The Driftwood) for only the Sept 4 issue, one week out of 52. There were no other public or online postings that I am aware of. By design or circumstance, this is insufficient notice to gauge public concern about this proposal.

Re: The “Green Shoring”

The proponents have employed this term as a kind of progressive meme. But have not claimed accreditation from the Green Shores program of the Stewardship Centre of BC . We have noted that the completed case studies based on this approach to shoreline stabilization were all for low lying beach fronts susceptible to deep encroachments of the sea at high winter tides. So far, we have not found a project undertaken on terrain similar to the Baker Beach project. And the Stewardship centre will not do a free project assessment of properties with a slope over 12.5 degrees

Therefore we believe this project will be ineffective in reaching the outcomes that the proponents are seeking. If undertaken this project at this beach could do considerable damage to the ecology of the area and degrade it’s recreational value.

Substance of project design area

Geologically and geographically this linear “Green Shoring” project does not encompass a homogenous landform. The area is characteristically transitional in nature. However, the entire

beach and escarpment is underlaid by the same hard sedimentary formations . On the beach this bedrock is tilted on its edge as exposed sharp strata which are resistant to tidal erosion. The structure of the beach at the south east end is related to the Booth Bay Estuary. The sand /mud flat is shallow with no pronounced drop offs for a swimmer wading out into the water. It extends well out into the bay. It is a clam and crab bed ecology with associated species, and a sensitive eel grass bed further out. The sharp strata here, only occasionally has outcrops above the loose sediment. The first upland property here is a nearly level, broad bench at the house site. Elevation above sea level is about 3 or 4 meters. The cliff face here is well vegetated and has not been subject to any erosion over the many years we have been using this beach recreationally.

The beach at the other Northwest end of the project is radically different than the Southeast. Bedrock exposure is much more prominent. The slope to the sea is steeper. And the incidence of mud/ sand beach is restricted to those areas contained within a couple of barrier reefs. Wading out into the sea is difficult. The upland property here is on a narrow sloped shelf sitting on clay/sand overburden on top of raised sedimentary bedrock. The house here is perched, precariously near an eroding slope which has lost most of its vegetation. Behind the house the upward slope steepens significantly. From the beach to the top of the bank (house site) measures 4 to 5 meters.

These are the two ends of the project area. Every property between them is on a transitional continuum. Significantly, a property in the middle has initiated some remediation to stabilize their slope by “armouring” ,grading back the slope , installing drainage and replanting vegetation. This property is not participating in this Green Shoring project. And to a casual observer the slope erosion looks to be stabilized. Notably the erosion in this case arose out of foreshore and slope scaring from the machinery used to lift a recycled house (Nickel Bros.) to its placement on first shelf above the beach.

From outward observation it seems reasonable (given the erosion resistant bedrock and very steep upland incline on the northeast end) to suspect that erosion could be the result of surface water seepage and poor directional drainage infrastructure as well as vegetation removal. It is notable that the proponents have not acknowledged any other attempted solutions (tried and failed) on their private property . Nor have they attempted remedies such as bluff slope reduction.

We believe this project is poorly designed to prevent bank erosion in the few areas where this is a problem. (Northwest property). Furthermore we believe that in the southeast end there is no obvious bank erosion which requires remediation.

The technical reports we have seen, seem to fault down slope water flow as the primary cause of erosion with wave erosion as a secondary slow acting contributor.

Considering that this project envisions nourishment replenishment periodically. 5, 10, 30 years down the road. One has to be concerned about government oversight and monitoring for the long term as well as exacting a contractual obligation from the landholders.

Risk to sensitive intertidal ecologies

There are important ecological amenities which are at risk if this proposal is approved.

The Plainfin Midshipman fish spawns on this shoreline every spring. This is the only location on Salt Spring where this happens. Many species are atuned to this event and dependent on it's reliability. The spring arrival of nesting eagles coincides with this spawn and has become an annual recreational attraction.

Numerous other ecosystems are: The offshore eelgrass beds, shallow mud/sand flats - home to shore crabs, clams, oysters, starfish populations etc.. Seals and Sealions frequent the area. River otters are residents of the foreshore, as are shore birds such as kingfishers, sand pipers, gulls, oyster catchers, canada geese, various ducks, blue herons, commorants, ospreys and eagles. Many nesting on the slopes and feeding in the intertidal zone

In Closing

This beach is in the public domain and, as such, the primary benefit to any such radical change should be to the net betterment of our citizens as a whole and to the preservation of the natural environment as much as possible. This re-engineering of the foreshore does little to address the public good. In fact, transparently, it ignores the existing public and environmental amenities and privileges private concerns about wave erosion of beach front properties. Furthermore , this new artificial landscape is a risk to the welfare of existing foreshore and intertidal ecosystems and unnecessarily restricts access to the only public road and parking during summer construction and periodic maintenance cycle, presumed to be over a 30 year span.

We urge you to deny approval of this project

Gary and Beth Cherneff

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Salt Spring Island

Sent from my iPad