

From: Frances Hill <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, November 3, 2024 1:22 PM
To: Jamie Harris; Laura Patrick; Rob Pingle; Timothy Peterson
Subject: Baker Road Beach application

November 3, 2024

Dear Saltspring Island Local Trust Committee and DPA Planners,

I am addressing the permit to cover the top part of the Baker Road Beach with a meter of sand, gravel and large rocks, a process called Green Shoring. When we hear the word “green” applied to any project, we are immediately skeptical, and in this case I believe our doubts are warranted. We’re living in an age of desperation, a time when those with wealth are willing to throw any amount of money, or in this case sand and gravel, in a bid to hold back the tide.

This beach has been an almost daily walk for me since the early 1980’s. During that time trees have fallen due mostly to having their roots exposed from water running down the slopes above. These trees are often 15 feet above the beach, out of reach of even king tides. Admittedly 40 years is short in geological time, but I have not seen the shoreline change. This can be illustrated by noticing where the rocks were placed below a house that was barged in and dragged up to its position in 1998. The retaining wall of large rocks built below it slightly impedes a walk along the beach at high tide, but this hasn’t changed since the stones were placed there 26 years ago, nor has their position changed relative to the beach. The Islands Trust map shows this part of the island’s shoreline to be at low risk of erosion.

This beach is part of a trail system, a delightful loop with Baker Ridge Trail and the Quarry Drive Trail at either end of the 1/2 km stretch of beach, with a short section of Quarry Drive connecting the trails at the upper ends. Although we are assured by the applicants that the beach will still be walkable, the idea of slogging through a meter of sand and gravel is not appealing.

My concern for this project is not just due to my enjoyment of the beach. Geologists and an oceanographer have voiced their immediate thoughts about sand and gravel placed on a bedrock beach. “It will be gone in a year or two”. Where it goes is the question, and what effect it will have on the lower beach ecosystem, a sensitive habitat that includes the Plainfin Midshipmen. Baker Road Beach is one of the few places in the Salish Sea where this fish spawns and sings.

The other unsettling request in this application for me is “reapplication may occur as required.” We are setting ourselves up for an unknown quantity of this so called “nutrient” to be barged in, only to have it wash away and interfere with the shore life below. A biologist pointed out that nutrient, for any beach, is what comes off the land above. It is not a random application of unknown minerals coming from barged or trucked in sand.

Until we know more about the effects of this project the application file #1415573 needs to halted.

Thank you for your consideration,

Frances Hill