

November 2, 2024

Dear Salt Spring Trustees and Planner,

“Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone?  
They paved paradise...” , Joni Mitchell

We think those of us working to protect Baker Road Beach actually do know what we’ve got; and that’s why so many islanders have signed the petition asking for delay (at least) or deny (at best) the Baker Beach Project (Application file # 1415573).

To be as graphicly clear as possible, the stretch of beach proposed to change is 560m (over ½ km.). Walk or drive from the entry of The Legion, past Country Grocer, past Uptown Pizza and almost to the side road, Village Terrace to understand the scope. It would mean alteration to one long stretch of a ‘sensitive’ beach.

We say ‘sensitive’ because the beach where rocks that serve as cover for spawning Midshipman Fish would be altered by the sand in the mix of the proposed ‘nourishment’ eventually filtering out and filling in the crevices where the fish spawn. It might not be during the first year or second, but there is nothing planned to keep the aggregate in place. The ‘small machine using vegetable oil’ still will be running over the rocks and pressing them deeper into the sand. Covering 20% of this section of beach with large rock certainly will change this section of the spawning grounds which extends for a full kilometre. How soon before the fish fail to return to this beach because they need to find other suitable places to spawn? What happens to the population of this fish in the meantime? Will they then need to go on the “endangered species” list?

As an extension of this particular concern is that the eagles and herons that feed on the fish (and bring to their nesting fledglings) lose a food source. How soon do these birds stick around if their food source diminishes? What happens to the forest where their droppings and garbage no longer decompose and supply nutrients to the trees? On which list will these animal and plant species appear?

**Have there been other spawning areas such as Baker Rd. Beach that have undergone this foreshore change? Is this an experiment? Is it a proven solution? We know there are alternative, less invasive approaches. We think deep investigation needs to precede this project. Baker Road Beach cannot be a testing ground.**

At this time, we are only addressing one concern. You will hear from other islanders who are experts on erosion, botanical and marine biology, and geo-technical and engineering concerns. Listen to them. Ask questions. We urge you to use extreme caution in your approach to this application. Because there are risks, unknown outcomes and potential damage, please do not sanction this application.

Debbie and Richard Magnusson



## Key Points from My Presentation to the LTC on Nov. 14: Debbie Magnusson

### Regarding the Baker Beach Project, Trustees can:

- **Ask the Planner to consult with the Islands Trust Conservancy** about the beach's ecosystem and find a way to place a covenant or possibly Park Reserve designation to the beach.
  - o **More partners** might be the CRD's LCC, SS Conservancy? Salt Spring Trails? Transitions Salt Spring? Nature Salt Spring?
- **That a meeting be** arranged for the LTC & Planners with local people who have submitted knowledgeable information (HOURS of research has been done by many)
  - o **Ask the Planner** to read and consider the information and review maps, studies and other documents sent to you that provide counterpoints to the reports from the applicants.
- **Take the petition seriously** – both the wording of requests, plus the fact that > 1,000 signers in less than a month have asked that Crown Land be protected.
  - o **People are questioning** if the request from four property owners outweighs the concerns of a thousand others?
- Make sure **First Nations are involved** (as of Tues. Nov. 12, the 2 boxes of the application re: consultation were blank). Steward of Land, Water and Resources should be asked about this omission.
- **Consider arranging a study** over several years to monitor what needs to be done for the beach? BC Sustainability? A U Vic grad. Student study?
- **Greenshoring** is new. Let's be cautious and apply conservatively in sensitive areas.
- **Encourage property owners** to do mitigation on their own land before considering any changes to the beach. Once a beach is engineered, it can never go back.
- **Use divergent thinking!**

### People want to know that any proposed changes can guarantee:

- Suitability of the spawning habitat is uncompromised
- That the recreational use of the beach is left unobstructed.
- That the beach, essentially, be left wild and natural.

**Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone,**

**Preserve Paradise...and Protect Baker Road Beach.**