

Nov 27, 2019
To: Trustee Langeris, Trustee Colbourne
CC: Islands Trust Planner Ian Cox

From: Deborah Ferens, [REDACTED] Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X1

Re: Staff Report File No: Ecological Protection Zone X-ref.5690-20 (RDN Parks)
Nov 28, 2019 LTC Meeting

I support the Recommendations as presented in the Staff Report to develop a Ecological Protection Zone and to rezone Burren's Acres Nature Reserve and Elder Cedar Nature Nature Reserve as Ecological Protection (EP). I do thank the Trustees for keeping the Ecological Protection Zone as a top priority and for the excellent recommendation by staff for the rezoning of two significant nature reserves on Gabriola.

I do, however have 2 concerns.

First. In recommendation 3 a) create a new zoning designation entitled Ecological Protection (EP) which will regulate permitted uses, buildings and structures, height, siting requirements including setbacks and lot coverage, parking and subdivision.

I do trust that a new zone for ecological protection will not include any provisions for uses such as buildings, structures, lot coverage etc. My understanding is that an EP Zone must be for wild undisturbed spaces and not for people, buildings or recreational use.

Second. I am extremely distressed that Coats Marsh is not recommended for the new zoning designation. Despite ownership & management by the RDN in partnership with TNT, and the 2010 Management Plan which prioritizes recreational and conservation use in equal measure, it is time to call on all levels of government and protecting agencies to take truly transformative measures to prioritize conservation over recreation whenever there are opportunities to make bold moves in this direction.

All the current existing Gabriola parks are for people and human interests and that includes all our provincial parks, regional parks and community parks. We've got almost every conceivable representative park type and they are all for people's enjoyment, benefit and use. We have hiking trails, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, playgrounds, a golf course, a campground, we can access the beaches on all sides of the island for swimming, and seaside enjoyment. These parks aren't just for Gabriolans. We welcome and promote them to visitors from around the world

The protected land that Gabriola needs is for wild places - ecological reserves that do not permit any human activity or access, infrastructure of any kind, development or tourism, no blinds to peer at animals. What we need is significant nature reserves the sole intent of which is for wildlife habitat and undisturbed areas restricted to nature's sole domain.

Thank you for your consideration and the hard work you are doing.