

Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee  
700 North Road  
Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X3

November 27, 2019

Re: Development of Ecological Protection Zone for Gabriola Islanders

Dear Trustees,

I am writing with regard to the staff report for the proposed Ecological Protection Zone, which will be on the agenda for the November 28/19 LTC meeting.

I support the recommendations as presented in the staff report, to develop an Ecological Protection Zone for the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area, and to rezone Burren's Acres Nature Reserve and Elder Cedar Nature Reserve to Ecological Protection (EP).

I want to thank the Local Trust Committee for keeping the proposed Ecological Protection Zone as a top priority, and thanks to the staff for recommending the rezoning to EP of Burren's Acres and Elder Cedar Nature Reserve.

However, I am very concerned that Coats Marsh is not recommended for this new EP zone. In my estimation this is the most significant area on Gabriola in need of environmental protection. Regardless of property lines and boundaries, the entire Coats Marsh wetland deserves the highest measure of environmental protection that can be afforded.


I am familiar with most species of amphibians, birds, small mammals, and riparian area plants that flourish in the Coats Marsh area. Some of them require undisturbed ground, water, shrub and tree areas for breeding, eating, and migratory rest stops. This means as little encroachment as possible by humans, dogs, horses, vehicles – all of which can negatively affect the sensitive wetland ecology of species who depend on this area for their specific habitat needs.

The Nature Trust of B.C., which holds the lease of Coats Marsh Regional Park along with the Regional District of Nanaimo, states its objective for this area as “conservation of critical coastal forest and wetland habitat on Gabriola Island”.

This objective is essential if we are to take a proposed Ecological Protection zone for Gabriola seriously, and I urge the Gabriola Island LTC not to abandon Coats Marsh Regional Park to the kind of recreational use that exists in all of our other parks, Regional and otherwise.

I ask that the LTC do whatever is required to afford the highest ecological protection to the Coats Marsh Regional Park, so that it becomes a prime example of what we can do as a community to give real and enduring meaning to ecological protection.

Susan Yates

  
Gabriola Island