

From: Briony Penn [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, January 8, 2021 2:18 PM

To: Peter Luckham; Peter Grove; Laura Patrick

Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

Subject: Request that Trustees advance the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alignment and Opportunities Project.

January 7, 2021

Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

Dear Trustees Patrick, Luckham and Grove,

Request that Trustees advance the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alignment and Opportunities Project.

We are writing to support Trustee Patrick's proposal for the SSIWPA to develop a strategic watershed management approach. This approach is not new but our research points to its increasing importance to:

- Engage the public at a scale that is easy to understand and relate to, providing local targets for forest protection and equity of effort and supply;
- Align priorities of water quality and supply, fire risk, biodiversity protection, green space, even affordable housing allocation;
- Enable an ecosystem-based management approach that can be applied internally or externally by carbon projects or non-profit initiatives;
- Support collaboration of first nations, multiple agencies and land managers at the watershed level

This watershed approach certainly aligns with the Ecological Research Network. We understand that this approach requires skills, resources and capacity that might not currently exist. It might require raising public awareness on the relevance and importance of forests to our health. We feel that filling the gaps in education, offering incentives and additional resources are central to the transformative work that needs to be done.

One of the reasons the Ecological Research Network have come together is to bridge the gap between research and policy. Typically, policy builds on research that is ten years old or more but given the climate crisis we no longer have the time. To shrink this gap, we support transformative policy that is grounded in science and local knowledge but also resonates with the public and is capable of being implemented even with limited tools and capacity.

Background

Ecological Research Network is an informal network of resident scientists and social scientists who have come together to share information with local government and non-profit groups who are interested in the health, management and interrelationship of our forests and island community. We have been supporting islanders over the last year in various ways:

- identifying climate risks, providing data and mapping services for Transitions Salt Spring Climate Action Plan;
- providing mapping resources, expert knowledge and data layers to the ITC CDF Advisory Committee;
- assisting communications staff at ITC with CDF infographics on relationships between water quality, fire risk, carbon sequestration and healthy forests
- exploring a blue/green forest carbon project in the CDF zone with a range of forest stakeholders to incentivize ecosystem management.

Dr. Briony Penn, ERN

Dr. Briony Penn

