

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2011**

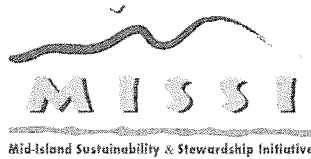
A D D E N D U M

PAGES

COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

2 - 6

Laurie Gourlay, Mid Island Sustainability & Stewardship Initiative, re Proposed Mid Island Biosphere Reserve, RDN Water Resources Report and Area 'A' OCP.



RDN, Committee of the Whole
Att'n Administrative Services
Regional District of Nanaimo
6300 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6N2

January 10, 2011

Dear RDN Board Members & Staff,

We would like to draw your attention to some matters relevant to the RDN, and the Regional Growth Strategy, as well as particular to the regional district's OCP for Area A.

In this letter MISSI requests your attention, and consideration to:

- 1) a proposal for a Mid Island Biosphere Reserve, extending through the southern boundary of the RDN.
- 2) the RDN's upcoming report specific to water issues in each community, and the need for additional time and meeting requirements to garner public input.
- 3) concerns about the draft OCP for Area A, particular to the need for additional study on the Area's waterflow and storage and a robust environmental assessment to ensure aquifer and groundwater protection.

We have taken the opportunity of the last Area A OCP meeting, tonight, to bring this letter to the attention of the Director of Area A, Joe Burnett, and the OCP Citizen's Committee.

1) Attached please find an information brochure that provides an overview of our proposal for a Mid Island Biosphere Reserve. Interest has been expressed in developing the proposal so as to include areas of the Nanaimo River, Haslam Creek and Chase River watersheds, extending to the coast and marine areas, and Gulf Islands.

We will shortly be announcing meetings, and invitations to form a steering committee - and would invite any suggestions you may have, or reference materials you think appropriate.

2) With respect to another matter of some importance to the RDN and its residents we would draw your attention to the recent RDN Winter newsletter,

"This year the RDN asked residents, community groups, and local professionals to help identify areas of concern related to water resources. Staff used this information to develop a report addressing specific water issues in each community; the report is available at www.rdn.bc.ca. Residents are invited to comment on the report until January 21, 2011."

We take note that the RDN report has not been provided, and that the highlighted website box* suggests materials will be available by the end of January.

With respect to this MISSI would suggest that the process for public comment needs further attention. It also appears that there is no provision for public discussion or meetings after the report is provided. We assume however that the comment period, noting a January 21st deadline, is to be reconsidered.

With the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in the works for the spring of 2011, and water so important to VI and our communities, there would appear to be a need for additional time and public meetings to fully consider the implications once the RDN makes this report available.

MISSI would also request that other individuals and organizations with a similar interest in the RDN's water supply and quality, be contacted and made aware of this report, and the opportunity to comment further.

Just as a special effort is made to inform and involve business in matters relevant to their specific interests we believe it would be helpful, as well as aid in RDN goals for sustainability and community health, if the RDN adopted the practice and policy of notifying non-profit organizations with expressed interest in reports and related issues that the RDN may address.

3) For the sake of brevity we have summarized concerns particular to the regional district's OCP for Area A. We are prepared to elaborate at your request.

MISSI raises these matters now because of time considerations, it being our understanding that no additional opportunity will be available to bring such matters to the attention of the RDN until after the 1st & 2nd Reading of the Area A OCP is passed by Council.

In keeping with MISSI's mandate for stewardship, MISSI is concerned about the protection of the Cassidy aquifer as a key resource for Area A water supply and potentially other jurisdictions;

- Not enough is known on the status of the Cassidy aquifer and its implications for sustainability.
- There are strong indicators that this aquifer is vulnerable and more study is essential, (for instance what would be the impact on the aquifer if a chemical spill took place on airport land as a function of industrial activity?)
- All plans for future development of land near or above the aquifer, (including an Accord between the RDN and NAC) should be reserved until such time as more definitive understanding of the groundwater of the area is known, with specific reference to undertaking all assessments necessary to ensure long term protection of this vital resource. We cannot afford a mistake.

We must also note the expressed interest by the City of Nanaimo, the Town of Ladysmith, and the proposed Cable Bay and Timberwest/Cassidy developments among others, to draw upon the Cassidy aquifers for their future water needs. This, while keeping in mind the present Harmac mill water intake from the aquifers and river, suggests a growing and ongoing future demand.

MISSI is also aware that a new BC Water Sustainability Act is expected in the near future. This, and Bill 27 requirements for the RDN to address climate change impacts, raises concerns about water shortages that are predicted on a seasonal basis, and new regulations that will be coming into effect. The Cassidy aquifers, and related water supply for the region, will be affected accordingly.

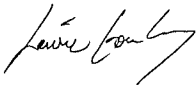
MISSI believes a precautionary, or prevention, principle would be the best and highest guide in addressing matters relevant to water and watershed protection in Area A and the region. In this respect we were pleased to see related concerns raised under the RDN's highlighted notice*,

"The quantity and quality of surface and groundwater are directly affected by human activity, whether that is land development, resource extraction, water consumption, or discharge of pollutants. All of these activities are on the rise in the Regional District of Nanaimo. These activities have already led to negative changes in many watersheds and reduced and or contaminated ground water sources in a number of areas." <<http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wpID=1748>>

MISSI would then offer these comments and recommendations with the hope that a cooperative approach might be fostered for the benefit of residents and communities in the RDN, and so that sustainability and stewardship might be ensured in deliberations before the Area A OCP is given 1st and 2nd Reading.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions, or require additional information. We are of course prepared to work with the CoW, and other RDN channels, to foster public interest in these matters.

Thank you,



Laurie Gourlay, President
Mid Island Sustainability & Stewardship Initiative
P.O. Box 333, Cedar, B.C., V9X 1W1
(250 722-3444) <www.missimidisland.com>

Biosphere Reserves are 'working areas', where jobs and economic activities are advanced within a framework of long-term prosperity and sustainability.

Furthering economic development, while addressing social costs and benefits, are essential goals of biosphere reserves.

Economic & Ecological Sustainability

...thinking globally, acting locally.

Agri-tourism and food security are fostered, balanced growth and community sustainability advanced ...and responsible, locally-appropriate, low-cost solutions put in place to address regional and global challenges.

The benefits of biosphere reserves and a transition to sustainability include efficiency and preventive approaches that help cut the expensive costs of cleanup, while protecting health and ecological benefits.

Conservation of renewable resources and appropriate development minimize waste, maximize efficiency and recycling, and avoid the use of hazardous materials and processes.

This cooperative approach helps public and private interests work together for us all...

A Necklace of Historical, Cultural & Natural Pearls...

Consider the possibility of a mid island UNESCO biosphere reserve and buffer, from the Southern Gulf Islands National Marine Park to Ladysmith Harbour to Nanaimo estuary ...& points between.

Parks, walkways and heritage features would provide major eco-tourist and economic benefits. Water-front, marine environment and harbour developments would be improved with shorelines, wildlife, conservation and natural resource goals in mind.

****Three Key Goals Balance a Biosphere Reserve:***

• Economic

• Social

• Environmental



A designated UNESCO Biosphere Reserve would protect biodiversity and habitat, and also generate substantial interest in protecting special places and species in the mid island region—our 'pearls' of historical, cultural and natural importance.

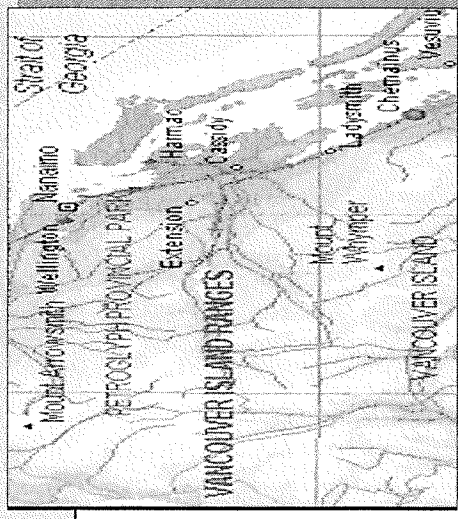
Please consider adding your voice to this initiative ...and to leaving a living and lasting legacy!

Please direct inquiries to: *Mid Island Sustainability & Stewardship Initiative*, <www.missmidisland.com>

Mid Island Biosphere Reserve

Ladysmith...

Yellowpoint... Cedar...



Special Places, Diverse Communities,

Green Lands & Blue Seas.

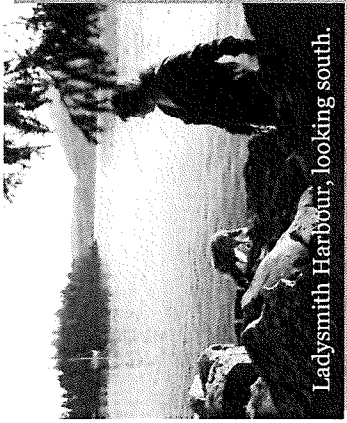
Leadership in Conservation and Sustainable Development!



This innovative initiative began in 2006 with a discussion about the need to foster long-term economic and ecological solutions for community planning and development in the mid island region.

We wanted to retain special places that are close to home, and to keep those recreational, heritage and green spaces that are nearby -so that we could all continue to enjoy them.

A biosphere reserve proposal opens the door to such solutions, and to further steps we might take together to share our coastal beauty, quality of life and a sustainable economy for the mid island communities of Vancouver Island.



Ladysmith Harbour, looking south.

'Mid Island' Biosphere Reserve A proposal for Ladysmith... Yellowpoint... Cedar...

A sustainable, economically-rewarding, job-creating and conservation-oriented working reserve for the mid island region would encompass the lands and seas that extend along the narrow east coast of Vancouver Island, between the coastal mountain range and Gulf Islands.

From the rural countryside south of Ladysmith to the southern urban boundaries of Nanaimo the green lands, marine waters, communities and towns, would all be embraced within a larger UNESCO Biosphere plan.

More information about this proposal, upcoming meeting dates as well as opportunities to get involved, can be found by contacting the Mid Island Sustainability & Stewardship Initiative, P.O. Box 333, Cedar, B.C., V9X 1W1

(250) 722-3444, (Thistle@shaw.ca) <www.missimidisland.com >

(Fall, 2010)

Your Comments...

Please jot down your thoughts and ideas, and forward to:

Mid Island Sustainability & Stewardship Initiative
Laurie Gourlay - MISSI President,
P.O. Box 333, Cedar, B.C., V9X 1W1
(Thistle@shaw.ca) <www.missimidisland.com >

We encourage all who love Vancouver Island's beauty and welcoming spirit, to consider the protection of special places and to positively contribute to sustainable development and our quality of life - where you live, work and play!

For instance, talk with friends and family about the 'pearls' you find important to your community ...and along Vancouver Island's east coast.

And too, please look for means to retain these special places and linkages--so all will benefit. You may be surprised at how many agree!

Please consider supporting this proposal for a Mid Island Biosphere Reserve. Our economy and future prosperity is furthered as you help.

Your support, suggestions and ideas are always welcome!



MISSI
Mid Island Sustainability & Stewardship Initiative