



Shoreline Guardian

Portage Inlet Protection Society
*Representing waterfront residents on Portage Inlet, Gorge
Waterway and their tributaries*

May 2009

No. 19

online at: www.gorgepips.com

View Royal's Official Community Plan: waterway residents are involved

View Royal has begun a review of its Official Community Plan, an 18-month exercise which will pay increased attention to the local environment. The Town's Gorge/Portage Inlet shoreline residents will have the opportunity to participate, both as individuals and collectively through the **Portage Inlet Protection Society**.

The review, though technically a statutory requirement, undoubtedly will raise new issues growing out of the world's concern with climate and sustainability. The outline is already emerging.

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is sometimes thought of as a generalized, pro forma statement. In reality it is a legal document which, when adopted, has effect of law and is continually referred to in shaping a municipality's important decisions. It is a principal policy document.

The View Royal review, like all such, has a number of layers. It is democratic, bureaucratic and technocratic.

Its administration will be handled by CitySpaces, a Vancouver and Victoria community planning consulting firm which managed View Royal's first OCP in 1999. One of its three senior associates is Brenda McBain, a former trustee and Chair of the Greater Victoria School Board. CitySpaces also managed Esquimalt's recent OCP review. View Royal Council has approved a total project budget of \$175,000.

With the 1999 OCP in the background, CitySpaces must factor in Council's terms of reference (see below), provincial, regional and local law, and current policies and priorities. It will synthesize these into its own research, facilitate public input, make recommendations and draft the OCP. Target date for completion is September 2010.

However, it is already plain that this will become a new model, not a touch-up. Council has endorsed terms of reference drafted by Lindsay Chase, Director of Development Services, who came from Victoria in 2008.

"This is a major review with the expectation that the OCP will be completely rewritten," she declared.

Transportation, sewage disposal, economic development, housing, parks and the B.C. Climate Action Charter are some of the

reference points mentioned. More control of construction standards and development generally can be expected to emerge. CitySpaces is being asked to recommend new guidelines and maps for development permit areas (which include all shoreline).

PIPS has submitted its request to participate as a stakeholder group. **We point out that we are the only Gorge/Portage Inlet organization composed solely of shoreline residents.**

"Our members are front-line observers of the waters, the shoreline and the immediate uplands. We appreciate the environment more than most and have an understandable interest in preserving and enhancing it," we said in our submission.

View Royal Council is establishing an OCP Community Committee, with Ms. Chase as liaison with Council. The Community Committee's main activity will be to foster community engagement. It will identify stakeholders and community organizations, identify issues, and identify needs and opportunities.

It will comprise a broad range of local interests, geographic areas and Town committees, plus identifiable sectors of the community: environmental, long-time residents and seniors, major employers and small businesses, and other interests identified by Council. Meetings will be open to the public and written submissions will be accepted.

PIPS urges View Royal shoreline residents to think proactively about management of the waterway. Erosion and shoreline protection, runoff, construction setbacks, pathways and upland development are recurring issues. The OCP will affect decisions.

Don't wait for the open houses and public hearing in later 2010, by which time the new OCP has been drafted.

The future of the Gorge/Portage Inlet waterway is not static, fixed and certain. There are competing visions (see Veins of Life, elsewhere in this issue). PIPS' stance is that those who have the privilege of living beside the water have the responsibility of stewards -- caretakers. We know that only those who go out onto the water fully appreciate what we have. Access is part of that. We think that a home by the water, with a little dock or float, is a thing of beauty and a natural way of life.

For guidance this issue of the Shoreline Guardian includes our program.

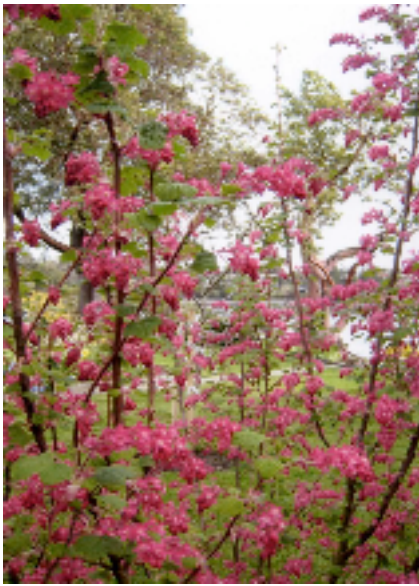
We'll keep you posted. Meantime remember: **Portage Inlet becomes whatever flows into it.**

The PIPS program

At their annual general meeting May 11, 2005, PIPS members unanimously adopted the following set of policies declaring the responsibility and role of shoreline property owners in stewardship of the Portage Inlet/Gorge Waterway.

1. The Portage Inlet Protection Society (PIPS) declares its active support and promotion of stewardship of the Portage Inlet/Gorge Waterway and its watersheds.
2. Activities will include, but not be restricted to: research; projects enhancing the health and beauty of the waterway; advocacy for both the waterway/watersheds and for shoreline property owners; education by example -- by workshops, by literature and various projects.
3. PIPS will assert its right to consultation with government in matters affecting the waterway and the uplands, as well as access to and enjoyment of the waterway as a natural lifestyle.
4. As appropriate, PIPS may initiate partnerships with municipal government in matters concerning the health of the waterway and uplands.
5. Consistent with its mandate, PIPS will work co-operatively with other groups interested in the waterway.
6. PIPS will maintain the Society's constitutional stance protecting the property rights of shoreline residents.
7. PIPS will work to create a social climate of stewardship among all shoreline residents.

Flowering red currant - beautiful addition to a native plant garden



Your 2009 PIPS representatives

Here is this year's PIPS executive and area contacts, elected at the annual general meeting January 21.

President: Terry Eckstein
12 Phillion Place
Victoria, B.C. V9A 4H9 (Esquimalt)
Phone: 250-388-0398
E-mail: TerryofPIPS@telus.net

Vice-president: Ian Stefaniec
2886 Glenwood Ave.
Victoria, B.C. V9A 2S2 (Saanich)
Phone: 250-388-5413
E-mail: dian@shaw.ca

Secretary-treasurer and membership secretary: Jackie Eckstein
12 Phillion Place
Victoria, B.C. V9A 4H9 (Esquimalt)
Phone: 250-388-0398
E-mail: Jackiee1@telus.net

Area representatives:
Saanich:
Shaun Lees
2806 Murray Drive
Victoria, B.C. V9A 2S5
Phone: 250-686-5756
E-mail: shaunlees@shaw.ca

Esquimalt:
Fern Spring
302 Uganda Ave.
Victoria, B.C. V9A 5X7
Phone: 250-475-0313
E-mail: fspring@shaw.ca

View Royal:
Bill Stavdal
137 Kingham Place
Victoria, B.C. V9B 1L9
Phone: 250-727-3236
E-mail: billstavdal@shaw.ca

Directors:
Diana Stefaniec
Doug Critchley
Bill Stavdal
Dick Faulks

Three swans in 2008; one in 2009



That's the sad story in Portage Inlet. For several years a few mute swans (the ones with orange beaks) have managed to raise cygnets to maturity. Then, it seems, they fly into power lines across the waterway at Tillicum and Admirals roads. For a review of this general problem refer to the Times Colonist website, page A3 of the May 10th edition.

VEHEAP and HEIR -- a briefing note

There are lot of acronyms floating about in the environment these days. Two -- VEHEAP and HEIR -- are of interest to local waterway dwellers.

The Victoria and Esquimalt Harbours Environmental Action Program (VEHEAP) was established in 1994 by the Capital Regional District. Original partners were the CRD and a number of federal and provincial government branches but not the municipalities.

VEHEAP's mandate embraces the Gorge waterway and Portage Inlet. It is a close relative (if not parent) of the Gorge Waterway Initiative (GWI), in which PIPS participates.

VEHEAP's concerns and objectives are mainly those which PIPS can happily support. The goals include environmental protection of the harbours, reducing contaminant inputs, protection of habitat quality, setting environmental quality objectives, and monitoring environmental quality.

A sixth priority in its undated pamphlet dwells on land use:

" -- prepare guidelines for improved land use, and promote guidelines with landowners and with jurisdictions that regulate harbour lands."

" -- work with municipalities to develop land use plans and policies that protect the harbours' environmental quality." (plus more)

A recent CRD document put it more pointedly: "Through VEHEAP, the role of the CRD is to lead and facilitate area-based initiatives in Esquimalt Lagoon, Portage Inlet and the Gorge Waterway."

In passing, another acronym to note is HEIR -- a VEHEAP project titled Harbours Ecological Inventory and Rating. Latterly it has become known as the Harbour Studies Program. HEIR has done a major inventory of the VEHEAP shoreline with a view to identifying areas amenable to remediation. Analysis is ongoing.

The CRD is currently in process of partnering formally with shoreline municipalities to support the Harbour Studies Program. What material outcomes might emerge remains unknown but we know that VEHEAP and HEIR have yet to consult shoreline residents.

Whatever happened to Veins of Life?

Once an environmental fixture of the Gorge waterway and Portage Inlet, it thrived for a time then broke up and vanished. Now it has bobbed to the surface again -- sort of.

The Veins of Life Watershed Society (VoL) was the single-handed creation of John Roe, who in 1994 with son Wesley began hauling rubbish out of the waterway. His enthusiasm attracted a board of directors, volunteers, his flair for publicity (those shopping cart photos) and his ability to obtain grants turned Veins of Life into an enterprise that at one point reported a budget of \$400,000.

VoL did admirable work for a time, such as identifying polluting storm drains. Mr. Roe recognized that the watershed is the critical element and earned much civic recognition.

Eventually contract work took him away from the waterway to marine mammal watching on the west coast. In 2002 he was appointed to work in the Maritimes under the Environmental Protection Act. VoL fell apart, its Esquimalt office abandoned, though a moribund website remained.

Mr. Roe eventually returned to the west coast but VoL remained a ghost. Some of his letters mentioned a Gulf Islands address.

Now he has revived his Marine Mammal Monitoring program. A new VoL website link shows him cruising the Canadian and U.S. waters in an inflatable, handing out "guidelines" to whale watchers. Funding seems to come from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and a Friday Harbor whale museum.

The renamed VoL website has tacked on his ideas for "remediation" of the waterway, going beyond his long-time hostility toward ordinary shoreline dwellers.

Mr. Roe suggests elimination of all homes along the waterway to create a park, and "no go" areas reserved for birds and marine mammals. See his website: www.salishsea.ca

PIPS has on file a VoL document from the 1990s advocating elimination of "...private docks, platforms and patios..." and banning of motor boats west of the Tillicum bridge.

That's John Roe's vision. He doesn't live here.

PIPS welcomes new members

The form below is included for your convenience if you have not already paid your membership fee. Please complete and send to:

Membership Secretary, PIPS, 12 Phillion Pl. Victoria, B.C., V9A 4H9

**PIPS 2009 FAMILY MEMBERSHIP
\$10.00 annual fee**

Name _____

Address _____ Email _____ Telephone _____

I am renewing my annual membership (\$10.00 enclosed)

I am a new member (\$10.00 enclosed)