



DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

AGENDA

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING

March 24, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

1. **Agenda, Additions, Approval**
2. **Presentations**
3. **Public Participation**
4. **Adoption of Minutes**
 - a) Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee, January 27, 2026 1
5. **Receipt of Minutes**
 - a) Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee, January 28, 2026 5
 - b) Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee, February 17, 2026 9
6. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
 - a) Biodiversity and Natural Assets Planning 13
 - On March 9, 2026, the Committee of the Whole made the following recommendations which will be considered by Council March 23:
THAT the Committee recommend Council direct staff to review the Biodiversity and Natural Assets Draft Plan and prepare recommended next steps.
THAT the Committee recommend MEASC hold an Open House to receive public input on the draft Biodiversity and Natural Assets Plan.
 - b) Mapping Sensitive Ecosystems 19
 - On February 9, 2026, Council made the following resolution:

THAT Council approve the preliminary mapping categories proposed by MEASC to describe Metchosin's Sensitive Environments, towards an update of OCP Map 4.
7. **Reports**
 - a) Chair's Verbal Report
 - b) Council Liaison Verbal Report
8. **Correspondence**
 - a) Nicole Shukin, Ecosystem Services and Uplands 23
9. **Other Business**
 - a) Roadside Ditching vs. Naturalized Roadside Infiltration
10. **Adjournment and Next Meeting**

District of Metchosin

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Select Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: Bill Cave, Councillor Steve Gray, Merrilee Hoen (Acting Chair), Andy MacKinnon (Recorder), Erin Van de Water

Regrets: Gary Fletcher, Anna Hall, Ric Perron

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

Moved and Seconded by Steve Gray and Bill Cave

THAT the Committee approve the agenda as presented.

Carried

2. Annual Chair Appointment

Moved and Seconded by Andy MacKinnon and Erin Van de Water

THAT Garry Fletcher will be MEASC Chair for 2026.

Carried

3. Presentations

None

4. Public Participation

None

5. Adoption of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Steve Gray and Merrilee Hoen

THAT that the Committee approve the minutes of the Environmental Advisory Select Committee meeting held on November 25, 2025.

Carried

6. Receipt of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Andy MacKinnon and Bill Cave

THAT the Committee receive the minutes of the Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee meeting held on November 18, 2025.

Carried

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Oil Tanker Moratorium ACT

i. Letter From Metchosin Council To Minister of Transport

- It's good to see MEASC's letter sent out.

b) Biodiversity and Natural Assets Draft Plan

- Councillor Gray drafted the plan from previously reviewed materials and will finish revisions with input from MEASC members before presenting to Council.

Moved and Seconded by Andy MacKinnon and Erin Van de Water

THAT the committee recommend Council direct staff to review the Biodiversity and Natural Assets Draft Plan and prepare recommended next steps.

Carried

c) MEASC Comments on Parks and Trails Draft Master Plan

Moved and Seconded by Merrilee Hoen and Bill Cave

THAT Councillor Gray pass along MEASC's review comments (attached) to PTASC.

Carried

8. Reports

a) Chair's Verbal Report

- None

b) Council Liaison Verbal Report

- Budget deliberations are well underway.
- Finance Committee is considering grant-in-aid- applications for organizations given municipal permissive tax exemptions.
- Councillor Sharie Epp has resigned effective February 1.
- Fire Chief Stephanie Dunlop has resigned effective February 20 to take up the position of Deputy Fire Chief in Central Saanich.
- No Council decision to allow use of Council Chambers for the Metchosin Biodiversity Project "Talk and Walk" series.
- Councillor will bring a report to Committee of the Whole on mapping categories for sensitive environments and green infrastructure.

9. Correspondence

None

10. Other Business

a) Review: Committee Terms of Reference

- Annually we review Committee Terms of Reference. Looks good.

b) Review: Respectful Workplace Policy

- Annually we review the Respectful Workplace Policy. Looks good.

c) AVICC Call for Resolutions

- No Resolutions identified for AVICC this year.

d) District road repaving 2026

- Provided for information. Where there's an opportunity, please include a cycle lane in all new paving.

e) Housing Capacity

- Members encouraged Bill Cave to publish an article in the Muse to generate community discussion and support.

11. Adjournment and Next Meeting

Moved and Seconded by Bill Cave and Erin Van De Water
THAT the Committee adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Carried

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday February 24, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

District of Metchosin

Minutes

Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.

Council Chamber

Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: Ron Aubrey (meeting chair), Jay Shukin (Councillor Liaison), Kathy Atherton, Caroline Donahue, David Shanks (recorder)

Regrets: None

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

- Annual chair nomination moved to end of meeting

Moved by Caroline Donahue

THAT the Committee approve the agenda as amended.

Carried

3. Presentations

- None

3. Public Participation

- None

4. Adoption of Minutes

a) Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee, November 18, 2025

- Regarding item 7.b), paving - Boblaw has significant Gorse infestation, enquire about removal during paving.
 - **Action:** Letter to inform CAO.

Moved by Jay Shukin

THAT the Committee approve the minutes of the Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee meeting held on November 18, 2025.

Carried

5. Receipt of Minutes

a) Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee, November 25, 2025

- Awaiting MEASC comments on the P&T Master Plan;
- Highlands P&T Master Plan completed within bylaw, to be distributed to committee for consideration in current District P&T Master Plan update process.
- Awaiting update on 3816 Duke Rd subdivision trail/park potential donation that included large arbutus.

Moved by Jay Shukin

THAT the Committee receive the above Advisory Committee Minutes.

Carried

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Trail Stewardship Program Update

- PTASC will provide recommendation on next steps.
- Anticipated to nominate Jim Nan as first stewards:
 - Other interested parties to be considered. All interested parties will be contacted.
 - Focus is to get Trail Stewards assigned.

b) Parks & Trail Master Plan Update

i. Draft Implementation Plan for Review

- Draft Implementation schedule requested based on November Council meeting feedback.
 - Format to be similar to that of the Climate Action Plan.
- Discussion of Cost Category ranges (need to align second “\$\$”)
 - For benches, possibility they are paid if Donors step forward
- Suggested to add “Longer term” action for 5-year review of P&T Master Plan.

ii. Review update – Next Steps

- Prepare next draft for May.
- Circulated to Metchosin Equestrian group and Seniors Resource Center for input.
- Consultation meeting with Friends of Metchosin Mountain community group was held on Dec 4, 2025.
 - Compile all received feedback.

c) Update on No Parking Signage at William Head & Happy Valley Roads

- Investigating options for permanent barrier to restrict parking on designated trails on these two roads.

d) Signage Update for Duke Road East Advisory Shoulder

- **Action:** To include this request in Letter to CAO (item 5a).

7. Reports

a) Parks and Trails Coordinator

- Many downed trees over last two months. Cleared by Kathy Atherton and public works department.
- Community member reached out about updated signage regarding ATV use on Gilbert-Graceland connector trail. Current sign is faded and needs to be replaced
 - Need to include wording and icons.
 - Evidence of ATV use on this trail.
 - Need to review and consider signage on wider trail network to assess those requiring update.
 - **Action:** Caroline Donahue to contact Tran Sign for draft and quote on required sign.

- **Action:** To prepare inventory of all trail signage for maintenance & determining additional sign needs.
 - Need to consider consistent style for signage in future.

b) Council Liaison

- **Buffer land**
 - Council looking to designate as park via a bylaw, with follow-up options to consider.
 - Would represent 113.5 acres of park land for PTASC to manage.
 - Friends of the Buffer Land held recent event for removal of broom by with 20 participants.
 - Annual reserve expected to be created, with funding of \$15,000/annually, from the tax-revenue sharing element of land swap agreement.
 - Funding intended to cover expected park management activities.
 - PTASC would like oversight regarding parks and trails matters in the Buffer Land but Council has overall responsibility with several significant decisions ahead regarding parkland designation.
 - Friends of the Buffer Land group representation on PTASC.
- Slough on Sea Bluff Trail during recent rain. Fence has been moved back following request by the landowner. Located on Provincial Land that is managed by the District.
- Talk & Walk Speaker series looking to resume, seeking location to hold meetings, school has been suggested.

c) Chair Verbal Report

- No updates

8. Correspondence

- None

9. Other Business

a) Review: Committee Terms of Reference

- i. **Discussion of Role regarding Active Transportation**
 - **Action:** defer this to future PTASC meeting

b) Review of Respectful Workplace Policy

- Highlighted important sections.

c) AVICC Call for Resolutions

- No items to raise.

d) Beckingham Trail

- **Action:** Seek to prioritize development of trail connecting Beckingham trail to Galloping Goose trail.
- **Action:** to prepare letter to CAO requesting status of Beckingham Trail completion and District Nature Trail standards.
 - Installation of trail surface (chips, gravel, etc.) has not occurred. Existing ROW is becoming overgrown.

e) **Draft Annual Parks & Trail Maintenance Plan**

- PTASC members to review and add suggested items for discussion at future meeting
 - **Action:** Future meeting topic re-engage William Head Penitentiary Work Parties.

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f) **District List of Planned 2026 paving projects**

- Glen Forest Way often receives comments about lack of shoulder
 - **Action:** To organize visit/walk about by some PTASC

g) **Mesh on District bridges on trails**

- Suggestion made for Public Works to engage CRD contact and visit sites of examples (e.g. Matheson)

10. Annual Chair Nominations

- Jay requested nominations for PTASC Chair for 2026.
 - Ron nominated David as Chair. No other nominations. Accepted and acclaimed.
- Jay requested nominations for PTASC Vice-Chair for 2026.
 - David nominated Ron as Vice-Chair. No other nominations. Accepted and acclaimed.

11. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

Moved by David that the Committee adjourn the meeting at 6:03p.m.

Carried

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.

DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

MINUTES

Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.
Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: David Shanks (Chair), Jay Shukin (Council Liaison, Recorder), Kathy Atherton, Ron Aubrey, Caroline Donohue (via Teams).

Regrets: None

The meeting was called to order at 4:35pm.

1. Agenda, Additions, Approval

THAT the February 17, 2026. Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee Meeting agenda be adopted as presents.

Carried by consensus.

2. Presentations

- No presentations.

3. Public Participation

Ian Baxter, Neild Road, member of the Friends of the Buffer Land, addressed the Committee to share an update from the group and for clarification regarding recent Council consideration of a reserve fund specific to the Buffer Land and the potential of \$15,000 annually being allocated to the fund, and the PTASC's role in how these funds are spent and trail maintenance for Buffer Lands. The speaker also noted that the next invasive removal event in the Buffer Lands is scheduled for March 21.

Committee Discussion:

- Promotion of invasive plant removal at Buffer Lands event.

4. Adoption of Minutes

a) Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee, January 28, 2026

Moved by Ron Aubrey

THAT the January 28, 2026, Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee minutes be adopted.

Carried

5. Receipt of Minutes

a) Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee, January 27, 2026

Committee Discussion:

- Members will review District of Highlands Master Plan, per MEASC's recommendation.

THAT the January 27, 2026, Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee Meeting minutes received.

Carried

6. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

a) Trail Stewardship Program Update

- The program has been authorized by CAO Payette;
- Jim Nan has applied as the Trail Steward for Blinkhorn Nature Park; and
- Parks and Trails Coordinator will look at additional volunteers to support specific parks/ trails in this role.

b) Parks & Trails Master Plan Update

- Work continues on incorporating stakeholder input into the plan, including: MEASC, Senior's Information Resource Centre and public;
- Councillor Jay Shukin to circulate a draft for PTASC to review; significant changes to be highlighted for further comment;
- Timeline to bring draft to the Committee of the Whole; and
- Draft placement on District website for community input.

c) Trail Signage

- Bike-pedestrian signs on Duke Road East, and no-ATV signs;
- Parks and Trail Coordinator has contacted sign company for estimates on sign replacement;
- Trail sign inventory and signage consistency:
 - Committee members will photograph and review;
- Policy for inventory and records management to be developed for signs, trail list and memorial donations:
 - Councillor Jay Shukin to discuss with staff about creating an accessible inventory record for PTASC.

d) Active Transportation

- Members discussed PTASC's role in Active Transportation (AT); and
- Members discussed AT's connection to climate action and environment.

e) Glen Forest Paving Project

- Members discussed support for expanding road shoulders, even gravel.

7. **Reports**

a) Parks & Trails Coordinator Verbal Report

- Resident concern: Cliffe Drive Trail is overgrown and needs maintenance;
 - Parks and Trails Coordinator to discuss maintenance plan with CAO.

b) Council Liaison Verbal Report

- Trails work at Sea Bluff;
- Forthcoming bench on Hillman Trail; and
- Upcoming Community Thank You Celebration for Fire Chief Stephanie Dunlop on March 15.

c) Chair Verbal Report

- Developing requests for CAO including:
 - Clarification on Duke Road subdivision, pocket park;
 - Clarification on Beckingham Road Trail; and
 - Utilizing William Head Institution inmate workgroups.

8. Correspondence

- None.

9. Other Business

a) Annual Maintenance Plan

- Addition of Cliffe Drive trail;
- Trail Stewards program;
- Councillor Jay Shukin to circulate and finalized plan for Committee of the Whole meeting.

b) Annual Report – Highlights and achievements of 2025

- Deputy Corporate Officer requested highlights of 2025 for the Annual Report. The following were listed:
 - Pedestrian safety improvements on Duke Road East with road shoulder widening;
 - Trails Master Plan: two public engagement sessions; draft 1 provided for review;
 - Advances the Trail Stewards Program;
 - Volunteer work on numerous trails to remove fallen trees and hazards; June work party on the Branson-Duke Trail, Buffer Land;
 - Many thanks to ‘retiring’ members Jim Nan and Karen Hoffman. Jim was named Metchosin’s Friend of the Earth in 2025.

10. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15p.m.

The next meeting will be held on March 17.

March 4, 2026

Opportunities for Greater Protection of Metchosin's Biodiversity and Natural Assets

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to acknowledge existing community efforts to protect Metchosin's biodiversity and natural assets, and to recommend how the District of Metchosin might further strengthen its approach to environmental protection.

Metchosin's Official Community Plan (OCP) emphasizes environmental stewardship, low-density, low-impact development, habitat conservation and sustainable land use practices. The OCP outlines strategies for maintaining the district's rural character, preserving natural features and fostering a sustainable and resilient community through community engagement.

Proposed 2026 priorities

- To develop more explicit policies, tools and practices to protect natural assets and their associated nature-based services (e.g. flood control, aquifer recharge, temperature moderation, shoreline protection from storm surges, soil health, carbon sequestration, pollinator species support) to secure important budget savings for the municipality
- To increase public awareness of the economic benefits provided by natural assets and of the costs incurred when natural assets are impaired
- To protect biodiversity through identification of sensitive environments, conservation corridors and buffer zones followed by the implementation of specific strategies and actions to promote long-term ecological health while supporting defined land use and other community goals.
- To engage the community in realizing Metchosin's conservation goals

Proposed Conservation Goals:

1. Conserve Natural Ecosystems and Species: Safeguard critical habitats, ecosystems, and species to ensure their sustainability, long-term presence in our community and ongoing provision of ecosystem services
2. Integrate Biodiversity and Asset Management into Land Use and Financial Planning: Ensure that biodiversity and the preservation of ecosystem features are considered in all land use development and planning decisions, guided by a District natural assets management plan
3. Engage, Educate and Listen to the Community: Foster an informed and active community engaged in biodiversity conservation and natural asset management
4. Improve Ecological Connectivity: Enhance conservation corridors and links between natural areas to support wildlife movement and climate resiliency
5. Restore and Revitalize Degraded Ecosystems: Implement active restoration programs for areas impacted by human activity
6. Using policy tools, work constructively with local non-profits and volunteer groups: Support their efforts to secure and sustain funding from larger environmental, conservation and stewardship NGOs.

Community-based volunteers

- Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin – analysis and advocacy
- Metchosin Biodiversity Project – wildlife surveys, promotion and education
- Metchosin Foundation – promotion and education, conservation corridors, securement of sensitive ecosystems via acquisition and covenant registration
- Bilston Watershed Habitat Protection Association (BWHPA) – monitoring and research, promotion and education, invasive plant removal, wetland and riparian restoration
- Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative (MISC) – invasive plant removal
- Devonian Restoration Volunteers – invasive plant removal
- Moralea’s Meadow volunteers – restoration
- Wild ARC (SPCA) – wildlife rehabilitation
- Rocky Point Bird Observatory – monitoring and research

- Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) – promotion and education, invasive plant removal and restoration, monitoring and research, covenant registration
- Friends of the Buffer Land – invasive plant removal, monitoring
- Metchosin Hall Society – monitoring and research (bat colony)

Land stewardship

- Metchosin residential property owners and farmers
- District of Metchosin – local parks and trails, beaches/shoreline
- Capital Regional District - Regional Parks
- YMCA Camp Thunderbird
- Victoria Motorcycle Club
- Department of National Defence
- William Head Institution
- BC Parks Foundation
- School District 62
- Westmont Montessori School
- Golf courses
- Pedder Bay Marina

Metchosin Advisory Select Committees

- Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee (PTASC) – promotion and education, subdivision referrals, invasive plant removal
- Agricultural Advisory Select Committee (AASC) – promotion and education
- Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee (MEASC) – policy and planning advice, subdivision referrals
- Healthy Communities Advisory Select (HCASC) – promotion and education

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Planning and Regulation

1. The District should prepare and maintain an inventory of Metchosin's Sensitive Environments (OCP 2.3.9) working with the BC Conservation Data Centre and the CRD
2. This Sensitive Environments inventory should inform the enactment of new Environmental Development Permit Area (EDPA) policies and designations

3. The District should map out a Green Infrastructure Network (incl. watercourses, the shoreline, connectivity corridors, the tree canopy, etc.) and take measures to protect these network natural assets by:
 - Updating Metchosin’s Tree Cutting Bylaw
 - Strengthening local riparian area protections through education, bylaw revisions and clear enforcement measures
 - Registration of eligible protected lands and parks in the BC Conservation Areas Database
 - Designation of the Buffer Lands as a park under the Community Charter and registration of a Sec. 219 conservation covenant in partnership with one or more qualified conservation entities
 - Establishing a new conservation park zone (P4) in Metchosin’s Land Use Bylaw and apply this new zoning, as appropriate
 - Require clustered development for subdivision approval, where appropriate
 - Expanded use of EDPA policies and designations
 - Updated Zoning Bylaw, as appropriate
4. The District should apply for No Registration Reserve status for our parks, identified sensitive ecosystems and network natural assets under Sec. 22 of the Mineral Tenure Act to prohibit mining claims in these areas
5. The District should support the 30% by 2030 national conservation targets

Tax Policy

4. The District should include ‘protection of forest canopy’ when considering eligibility for permissive tax exemptions with community non-profits with significant land holdings
5. The District should explore the use of tax incentives in support of Sec. 219 covenants on other private properties that provide ecosystem services to the District (e.g. flood control)

Administration

6. The District should maintain an inventory of natural assets and report annually on their status
7. The District should proactively engage and support (via policy) conservation organizations dedicated to education and local, high-priority conservation and restoration projects
8. The District should facilitate volunteer invasive species control and habitat restoration efforts on District parks and properties
9. The District should continue membership with the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP)

10. The District should implement the Metchosin Area Agricultural Plan and ongoing protection of Metchosin's agricultural land base and Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) lands

MEASC PROPOSAL FOR NEW OCP SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL MAPPING CATEGORIES

ISSUE: OCP protection of Sensitive Environments

BACKGROUND:

Metchosin's OCP (attached) requires protection of Sensitive Environments. Designation of areas as 'Sensitive Environments' carries considerable importance in the OCP Bylaw: "The Sensitive Environment policies and designations, identified on Map 4, supersede all other land use policies, and designations identified on Plan Map 3 with the exception of land located within the ALR where conflicts between agricultural and environmental objectives and policies shall be resolved in consultation and with the concurrence of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)." (Section 2.3.1)

Here's what the OCP has to say generally about environmental policies:

2.3 GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES (Bylaw 418, 2004)

Definition: Environmental management in Metchosin will be directed towards the preservation of a sustainable community in harmony with our Pacific Coast ecosystem. The policies of this plan have been developed in order to preserve the Sensitive Environments, as identified on Map 4, including lakes, watercourses, Riparian-wetland Areas, marine shorelands, wildlife habitat, unique and attractive vegetation, lands with erosion and flooding potential, and culturally modified heritage sites.

2.3.1 The Sensitive Environment policies and designations, identified on Map 4, supersede all other land use policies, and designations identified on Plan Map 3 with the exception of land located within the ALR where conflicts between agricultural and environmental objectives and policies shall be resolved in consultation and with the concurrence of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

2.3.2 In considering proposed development, Council shall have due regard for methods to maintain the Proper Functioning Condition of Riparian-wetland Areas; and for the protection of Sensitive Environments identified on Map 4.

2.3.3 In exercising his/her discretion in the review of subdivisions, the Approving Officer is encouraged to require methods to maintain the

Proper Functioning Condition of Riparian-wetland Areas; and for the protection of Sensitive Environments identified on Map 4.

...

2.3.9 The DISTRICT shall prepare and maintain an inventory of Sensitive Environments. A systematic process of review of the inventories for Map 4 shall be developed. The data collected in this inventory review process is to be forwarded to Council as an amendment to the OCP and Map 4 on an annual basis or as required. This environmental inventory research process should include but not be limited to:

- (1) native and rare species and habitat;
- (2) rare and endangered plant life;
- (3) review of introduced species and the protection of native species from introduced species;
- (4) Riparian-wetland Areas and lagoons;
- (5) unique and attractive vegetation;

Map 4 and the Inventory Review Process should inform and assist in the preparation of Development Permit Area policies and guidelines.

And so Map 4 is very important for environmental management and protection in Metchosin. Note that: “The data collected in this inventory review process is to be forwarded to Council as an amendment to the OCP and Map 4 on an annual basis or as required.” (Section 2.3.9) However, to the knowledge of MEASC, Map 4 has not been updated since Bylaw 258 was enacted in 1995.

A poor scan of Map 4 is reproduced at the end of the attached OCP document. Map 4 (SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS) maps six categories of Sensitive Environments:

- Inland wetlands
- Surface erosion potential
- Marine shorelines
- Land suitable for wildlife
- Unique & and (sic) attractive vegetation
- Community water supply area

Inland wetlands, Surface erosion potential, Land suitable for wildlife and Unique & and (sic) attractive vegetation all have asterisks after them, as if they’re defined or explained elsewhere. Community water supply area has a subtitle, but it’s partially cut off in this version of the map. Additionally, it’s difficult to relate the legend to the polygons – this is likely clearer in the original map.

It's not clear how the six categories in Map 4 relate to the five categories in Section 2.3.9.

MEASC proposes a new version of Map 4 with categories and their sources (Conservation Data Centre [CDC] or Capital Region District [CRD]) as follows:

- Sensitive ecosystems (CDC classification)
- Threatened and endangered species (CDC)
- Inland wetlands (CRD and/or CDC)
- Marine shorelands (?CDC)
- Riparian areas (CRD and/or CDC)

MEASC proposes also that our “Community water supply area” be mapped (similar to the current Map 4), to include areas draining into the aquifers that Metchosinites have wells on.

MEASC seeks Council’s direction before further work is undertaken to determine the most appropriate mapped databases for these map categories, and their availability.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve the new mapping categories proposed by MEASC to describe Metchosin’s Sensitive Environments.

March 10, 2026

Dear Garry, Councillor Gray and MEASC members,

I'm writing in response to the draft "Opportunities for Greater Protection of Metchosin's Biodiversity and Natural Assets" document that was on the agenda of the March 9 Committee of the Whole meeting. I watched the video of the meeting, and appreciated Garry's public comments around the tremendous value of natural assets, or ecosystem services. When assigned a monetary value for the benefits and savings they represent, ecosystem services massively out-perform conventional sources of "economic gain," as Garry noted.

The Sensitive Environments inventory proposed in the plan drafted by MEASC could definitely support the valuation of ecosystem services in Metchosin. More specifically, the inventory could help to protect areas that may be at greatest risk of development for economic gain in the future, as Metchosin casts around for sources of revenue. I'm especially interested in the ecosystem services provided by Uplands areas in Metchosin, which are described in our OCP as "a fragile and sensitive environment worthy of protection," one that constitutes approx. 40% of our land base (6.7 Uplands). Many of the larger properties in the Uplands lie off of Sooke Hwy, an area that for some may feel distant from the heart of Metchosin. Yet much of Metchosin's most at-risk biodiversity lies in sensitive Uplands areas, which are home to the headwaters of Bilston and Martin Brook Creeks, and which are also vital to Veitch Creek and the Veitch Creek Watershed. It was a 32-acre Uplands property off Sooke Hwy that the BC Parks Foundation purchased in 2024, describing the land on its website as "supporting so much key biodiversity, Coastal Douglas Fir forest, wetlands, and thousands of plants and animals." It is also on the Sooke Hwy side of Metchosin that Camp Thunderbird runs its YMCA camps on 100 acres of biodiverse-rich land that are ripe for Sensitive Environments inventorying, possible conservation covenanting, and valuation of its ecosystem services.

In my view, there's a strong rationale for making the Uplands area along the Sooke Hwy as a first priority for inventorying. If you look at the Centre Mountain business park and residential development that emerged out of the 2017 land swap and boundary adjustment, you can see how hundreds of acres of once-forested and rich habitat can be obliterated in the interests of conventional economic gain. Understanding the tremendous value of the ecosystem services served by the still-intact land along Sooke Hwy could help to prevent the spread of Centre Mountain-style development.

I'm looking forward to the opportunity for public input into MEASC's draft plan, and appreciate the chance to share these initial ideas ~

Sincerely,

Nicole Shukin