



Powered by Clickability

Goldstream News Gazette

Colwood park eyed as wetland for flood control

By Amy Dove - Goldstream News Gazette

Published: March 03, 2009 1:00 PM

An old idea might be the new solution to flooding in Patterson's Pit.

The privately-owned undeveloped land in Colwood is the receiving ground for storm water draining off Triangle Mountain. In the past that meant annual flooding for neighbouring residents. Work by the City has alleviated some of the water load, but in extreme cases, it still rises past property lines.

The best option — both financially and ecologically — might be to create wetlands in Colwood Creek Park, said a Colwood engineering report.

It was a decade ago that the City proposed a similar concept. A past council contemplated routing water from Triangle Mountain into a series of wetlands and ponds in the park. That discussion was done with little to no consultation with the public, said Coun. Gordie Logan.

“Council of the day did a very poor job in selling the plan,” he said. “Whether they were perceived risks or real risks there really wasn't a good dialogue with residents.”

Residents voiced concerns over the possibilities of drownings, and the potential influx of mosquitoes and rats due to the stagnant water. There were also concerns over bringing possibly contaminated water into the park and creek.

With no public support the wetland idea was shelved. Over the winter of 2006/07 the City spent \$300,000 to divert water away from the pit through retention ponds.

That winter there was no flooding, but a spike in rain and snowmelt this year saw water once again cresting resident's backyards.

Using funds already borrowed for Triangle Mountain drainage issues, Council approved spending up to \$50,000 for a study on the most ecologically and financially sound way of diverting water into Colwood Creek Park.

Such a plan would entail running piping from the pit to the park and into a created wetland. From there the water would be naturally filtered before entering the creek.

"It may mean expanding on already existing wetlands to other areas that don't have any recreation value and are already flood areas," Logan said. "First and foremost it's going to need a complete (consultation with residents.)"

Consulting with the community first will allow a consultant to see if their wishes for the park mesh with possible drainage options. Depending on where the residents place recreational value, creating wetlands may not be possible, said city engineer Michael Baxter.

"We need the right approach and the place to start is in the neighbourhoods," he said.

The City needs to find a long-term solution to the problem, councillors agreed. Diverting the water to Colwood Creek Park might be the answer, but it's a contentious issue. There are also concerns that the creek is already at capacity and adding more water would only create more problems, Logan said.

If done properly the wetlands could benefit the creek by adding more habitat, said Coun. Judith Cullington. They act like sponges, naturally filtering and storing excess water, she noted.

“It is the best solution provided,” said Coun. Cynthia Day. “It has to be implemented carefully.”

reporter@goldstreamgazette.com

Find this article at:

http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/goldstreamgazette/news/40658293.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright Black Press. All rights reserved.