

**DATE:** April 11, 2019**FILE:** 5600-01/CVRWS**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Comox Valley Water Committee**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer**R. Dyson****RE: Management Plan for Comox Lake Land Acquisition**

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**Purpose**

This report is to provide an update regarding management of the 113-acre parcel of land at the east end of Comox Lake, purchased by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) for watershed protection purposes in October 2018.

**Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

This report is for information purposes only.

**Executive Summary**

In October 2018, the CVRD purchased a 113-acre parcel of land at the east end of Comox Lake for just over \$2 million. The land purchased includes approximately 6,800 feet of Comox Lake shoreline and is one of the last remaining, large, intact waterfront parcels in the most densely populated area of the watershed. See Appendix B for property map.

In 2016, the CVRD completed the Comox Lake Watershed Protection Plan, which was developed under the guidance of an advisory group composed of key Comox Lake watershed stakeholders. The acquisition of this lakefront parcel addresses a key recommendation of the plan to strategically purchase land in the watershed for protection purposes. With the acquisition complete, the next step is to develop a management plan for the property.

The land acquisition is located entirely within the Village of Cumberland, and formal access to the parcel is currently being negotiated with Comox Timber. While the property is undeveloped, it is the site of historic coal mining operations. Starting in 1891 the No. 4 Coal Mine operated on a portion of the property. The mine was closed in 1935 when a severe storm flooded the mine. Despite its status as private property, over the last few decades the beach has been a popular, though unauthorized, recreation destination for pedestrians, cyclists and off-road vehicles. Coal mining tailings left in heaps on the property have served as an attractive recreation area for dirt bikes and off-road vehicles, which are also frequently driven on the beach. The vehicular traffic has impeded the regrowth of the understory in the forest adjacent to the beach, in addition to presenting a risk to water quality. Illegal camping on this site also presents a risk to water quality. In short, there are many factors to consider in developing a management strategy for this property.

CVRD staff have identified Catherine Berris of Urban Systems Ltd. (resume attached as Appendix A) as a highly qualified individual to guide the process of developing a management plan for the Comox Lake parcel. Ms. Berris is a community planner and landscape architect with extensive relevant experience working with communities and multiple stakeholder groups to develop management strategies for land with a complex range of issues and comes highly recommended by municipalities across BC. The intent is to contract Ms. Berris and Urban Systems to undertake a

consultative process with the community and stakeholders, and to develop a management plan for the CVRD's recent land acquisition at Comox Lake. The proposed consultative process and resulting management plan will be founded on the objective of watershed protection.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

Concurrence:

***K. La Rose***

***M. Rutten***

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Zoe Norcross-Nu'u  
Engineering Analyst

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Kris La Rose, P.Eng.  
Senior Manager of Water/  
Wastewater Services

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Marc Rutten, P.Eng.  
General Manager of  
Engineering Services

Attachments: Appendix A – Curriculum Vitae, Catherine Berris, Community Planner and  
Landscape Architect at Urban Systems Ltd.  
Appendix B – CLLC property map

**Catherine R. Berris, RLA, RPP, FCSLA**  
**Community Planner and Landscape Architect**



Catherine is a Registered Landscape Architect and a Registered Professional Planner. She has an extensive background in community and environmental planning, landscape architecture, community engagement, and consensus-based planning. In a career spanning more than three decades, Catherine has been at the forefront of her disciplines, building relationships and preparing plans and designs that have enhanced communities and the environment. Before joining Urban Systems, she spent 28 years as principal of Catherine Berris Associates Inc. (CBA), an award-winning planning and landscape architecture firm in Vancouver, B.C. Her project experience spans shoreline planning; parks, recreation, and trails planning and design; environmental policy; design for stormwater/rainwater management; visual assessment; and site planning for First Nations, municipalities and land developments. In 1999, Catherine was honoured by being appointed a Fellow of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects.

#### EXPERTISE

Coastal, Environmental and Stormwater Planning  
 Community Engagement  
 Community Planning  
 Landscape Architecture  
 Parks, Recreation and Trails Planning

#### EDUCATION

##### 1982

Master of Landscape Architecture  
 University of Michigan  
 Ann Arbor, Michigan

##### 1977

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture  
 University of Guelph  
 Guelph, Ontario

#### EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND

##### Sept 2013 – Present

Community Planner and Landscape Architect  
 Urban Systems

##### 1985 – 2013

Principal  
 Catherine Berris Associates Inc.  
 Vancouver, BC

##### 1983 – 1985

Assistant Professor in Landscape Architecture Program  
 Colorado State University  
 Fort Collins, CO

##### 1978 – 1983

Variety of private sector positions in BC and the US

#### RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE

##### SHORELINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

*Nanaimo Estuary Management Plan (Nanaimo) and Somass Estuary Management Plan (Port Alberni, BC)*

The largest estuary on Vancouver Island, the Nanaimo River estuary has rich resources including salmon, herring, intertidal species, and a significant bird population. Major industrial and urban development and log storage have had significant impacts on the estuary's resources.

The Somass River Estuary, at the south end of the Alberni Valley, is located at the mouth of the second largest watershed on Vancouver Island. Today, only a small portion of the original delta remains relatively undisturbed.

Both of these Estuary Management Plans include a vision, objectives, habitat classification, management strategies, area designations, and implementation and monitoring plans. Steering Committees of the relevant First Nations and multiple government agencies guided the process. Interest groups were also involved in consensus-building and public consultation. Catherine Berris was the lead consultant and was responsible for facilitation of all meetings, GIS mapping, and preparation of the plan documents. Both of the plans are being implemented.

*Lake Windermere Management Plan – Regional District of East Kootenay, BC*

In this challenging contract, Catherine and her team prepared a Management Plan with input from a polarized community, two local governments, two First Nations, and other jurisdictions. There were high-impact land uses and significant motor boating use, mostly by recreational property owners from Calgary. The plan focuses on enhancing opportunities for lake use by the public and addressing the primary issues including impacts on water quality, shoreline structures degrading habitat, and safety on the lake. The Regional District of East Kootenay and the District of Invermere both adopted the Plan.

*Roberts and Sturgeon Banks Reach Overview, Phase 2 – Delta / Richmond, BC*

A Phase 1 study of Roberts and Sturgeon Banks, globally significant ecosystems, described the ecological features and functions. The Phase 2 project involved an analysis of water, shoreline and upland issues that transcend municipal and agency boundaries, and preparation of management strategies that consider changing conditions due to climate change and other emerging issues. The process involved working closely with FREMP, a stakeholder workshop, and a workshop with estuary scientists.

*YVR Amenities Plan - Vancouver, BC*

The purpose of this project was to prepare a 20-year plan for amenities on Sea Island to support YVR's 2057 Master Plan. The vision was to celebrate and enhance the

#### PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Canadian Institute of Planners  
Planning Institute of BC  
Canadian Society of Landscape Architects – Fellow, Past Director  
BC Society of Landscape Architects – Fellow, Past President  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
BC Recreation and Parks Association  
Funeral Association of BC

#### LECTURES (SAMPLE)

##### 2018

Reaching the Unreachable  
BC Recreation Foundation Symposium

##### 2018

Harnessing Community Energies  
BCSLA Annual Conference

##### 2011

Panel Member  
Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel Symposium

##### 2011

Do you Know your Tree Canopy?  
BCSLA Annual Conference

##### 2011

Trails and Greenways Weaving their Way  
PIBC Annual Conference

##### 2010

Speaker/Presenter - Experiences Planning with First Nations  
PIBC Annual Conference

##### 2010

Speaker/Presenter – Play in the City: Dogs Off-Leash  
BC Landscape Architects Annual Conference

##### 2008

Status of Coastal Planning in BC  
Coastal Zone Canada Conference

##### 2005

Increasing Biodiversity within Parks: Challenges and Methods  
BCRPA Annual Conference

##### 2004

Speaker/Presenter – Protecting Nature through Land Use Planning  
BC Land Summit

uniqueness of this island in the Fraser River that supports a world-class international airport. The plan focuses on meeting the needs of airport visitors, residents and employees, with opportunities for recreation, active transportation, plane spotting, public art, natural and cultural interpretation, environmental enhancement, and addressing future sea level rise.

#### *On Water - Non-Motorized Watercraft Strategy – Vancouver, BC*

Vancouver Park Board led this project to increase the public's opportunities to engage in non-motorized watercraft activities. Catherine's led the technical aspects of the work, including analysis of jurisdictions and uses, GIS mapping, and preparation of policies. She also supported stakeholder and community engagement.

#### *Nelson Creek Integrated Watershed Management Plan – Coquitlam, BC*

Catherine's team was a subconsultant responsible for the land use planning component. This included facilitation of advisory group meetings, developing appropriate low-impact development (LID) options, and preparation of graphics illustrating the rainwater management benefits to be derived from implementation of the various LID options. Our team has worked on numerous IWMP and ISMP projects.

#### **PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING**

##### *Minette Bay West Park – Kitimat, BC*

Kitimat is a waterfront community that lacked public access to the shoreline. Recently the District acquired property along the waterfront, and this exciting project involved preparing the park plan. The comprehensive process involved a drone base map, environmental and archaeological studies, climate change considerations, collaboration with the Haisla First Nation, extensive community engagement, and a Green Shores approach. There were significant controversies in the community initiated by neighbours concerned about the impacts of public use. Council approved the concept

plan and our team is currently preparing the detailed design for Phase 1, which will have a minimal footprint and significant community and environmental benefits.

#### *Black Mountain / Sntsk'il'ntan Regional Park Management Plan – RDCO, BC*

The intent of this project was to prepare a management plan for a new park co-managed by Westbank First Nation and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. The master plan focuses on environmental protection and the process included extensive community engagement.

#### *Fishtrap Creek Nature Park Conceptual and Detailed Design – Abbotsford, BC*

Catherine's team designed a nature-oriented community park around stormwater basins in this multiple award-winning project that became a showcase of design for stormwater management. Catherine's team also completed many other designs for stormwater management features within parks.

#### *Master Plan for Renfrew Ravine and Renfrew Community Parks, Vancouver, BC*

These parks are unique environmentally, and they support dynamic cultural and stewardship activities. Prepared through an extensive engagement process, the final Master Plan protects the valued features of the parks and adds new elements for recreation, environmental enhancement and nature education.

#### *Polson Park Master Plan and Phase 1 Design – Vernon, BC*

The Master Plan process for this City-wide destination park in Vernon included preparing optional plans, 3D visualizations, and subsequent detailed design of Phase 1 of the implementation, a park pavilion and outdoor exercise area.

#### *Swalwell Park Master Plan and Detailed Design – Lake Country, BC*

The Swalwell Park Master Plan, undertaken with full community engagement, was the basis for detailed design of a pavilion with a green roof irrigated with gray water from the

**PUBLICATIONS (SAMPLE)**

**Camp and the Spirit of Place**  
Canadian Camping Association  
Magazine, 2008

**Ts'enwecw Te Tmicw Our  
Sacred Land**  
Plan Canada, 2008

**The Role of Naturalization in  
Aquatic Habitat and Stormwater  
Management**  
Canadian Water & Resources  
Association, 2003

**Nature in Our Midst**  
International Federation of  
Landscape Architects, 2003

**Healthy Parks – Contributing to  
a Sustainable Park System**  
BC Recreation and Parks  
Association, 2003

**A Stormwater Wetland  
Becomes a Nature Park**  
In Handbook of Water Sensitive  
Planning and Design. Robert  
France, Ed. 2002. Lewis  
Publishers, New York.

**Logging in Kootenay  
Landscapes: The Public  
Response**  
Ministry of Forests Land  
Management Report No. 57.  
February 1989. Victoria, BC.

washrooms, butterfly garden at the pavilion entry, a water park with a recirculating water system, parking lot with on-site rainwater infiltration, and farmer's market area.

*Seylynn and Bridgman Parks Master Plan –  
North Vancouver, BC*

These two parks are located on either side of Lynn Creek in a proposed town centre. A comprehensive community process resulted in a conceptual master plan for revitalizing and connecting these parks.

*Blakeburn Park and Lagoons Master Plan and  
Detailed Design – Port Coquitlam, BC*

This project involved a Master Plan for old sewage lagoons and a neighbourhood park adjacent to an elementary school. The project also included detailed design and design services during construction for the neighbourhood park that includes multiple play environments and gathering spaces.

*Riverside to Pioneer Parks Management Plan –  
Kamloops, BC*

This project involved preparing a master plan for three interconnected parks along the riverfront. There was extensive engagement with stakeholders and the public.

*Lighthouse Park Management Plan and Entry  
Site Design – West Vancouver, BC*

This project involved preparation of a Management Plan for Lighthouse Park that provides principles and guidelines for the long-term management of the park's natural, cultural and recreational features. Catherine facilitated a consensus-building process with a multi-interest group with input also invited from the public. Some of the primary issues included the extremely high levels of use in this environmentally significant site and dog management. The plan was adopted by Council.

*Kelowna Linear Parks Master Plan – Kelowna,  
BC*

Kelowna's Linear Parks Master Plan identifies the goals and benefits, and provides a trail classification system with guidelines, trail class and phasing maps, and a detailed GIS database of trails. The plan had input from multiple stakeholders and the public, was adopted by Council, and won a CSLA award.

*Kamloops Parks Master Plan – Kamloops, BC*

This comprehensive 10 year Parks Master Plan for Kamloops will provide a framework for decisions related to parkland, park development, outdoor recreation, and park management. Workshops with interest groups and the public, and a Web survey, were completed.

*BC Parks Conservation Risk Assessments – BC  
Parks Garibaldi/Sunshine Coast District, BC*

BC Parks has an established method for assessing conservation values and threats in provincial protected areas. This project involved completion of Conservation Risk Assessments for all 56 of the protected areas in the Garibaldi/Sunshine Coast District. Methods included GIS analysis, consultation, and interpretation of park documents.

*Vancouver Island Values Identification Project -  
BC Parks*

The purpose of this project was to document the natural, recreational and cultural values of the study area, and to analyze how the existing BC Parks System protects those values. The VIVIP tools can be used to analyze how well the goals and objectives of the Protected Area Strategy (PAS) have been achieved. The tools include an automated GIS overlay procedure for integrating new data, a spreadsheet summary analysis process, and a customized GIS browser for specific queries and visual presentations.



