



**Volume 2**  
**Consultation Process**

**Summary of Activities**  
**May 1998-March 1999**

**March 2000**

Prepared for:

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA**  
**Habitat and Enhancement Branch**

South Coast Division  
3225 Stephenson Point Road  
Nanaimo, B.C.  
V9T 1K3

Prepared by:

**ECL ENVIROWEST CONSULTANTS LIMITED**

204-800 McBride Boulevard  
New Westminster, BC,  
V3L 2B8

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In April 1998, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (FOC) contracted ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited (Envirowest) to develop a management plan for the Courtenay River Estuary. The Terms of Reference for the project required Envirowest to develop the Estuary Management Plan in an open and inclusive consultation process. This report summarizes consultation activities conducted between April 1998 and March 1999. These activities contributed to the first draft of the Estuary Management Plan, submitted to FOC by Envirowest in October 1999.

The primary objectives of the consultation process were to inform stakeholders (interested government agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations, and members of the public) about the Estuary Management Plan and to provide them with opportunities to participate in its development. Envirowest, in consultation with FOC, addressed these objectives by:

1. meeting and communicating with government representatives on an Advisory Committee;
2. conducting outreach and soliciting feedback from stakeholders through a mail-out process;
3. conducting outreach and soliciting feedback from stakeholders by holding public events; and
4. meeting with organizations and individuals at their request.

The following sections describe these consultation activities in detail.

## **2.0 ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

An Interim Steering Committee, established in 1997 by FOC, met with Envirowest in April and May of 1998. In July 1998, this committee adopted a new mandate as an Advisory Committee as it had fulfilled its original purpose of developing Terms of Reference and hiring a consultant. The primary objective of the Advisory Committee, as stated in its Terms of Reference, was to "provide advice and information during the development of the Management Plan regarding government agency policy, legislative authority and decision-making capacity."

The Committee agreed that membership would be defined by legislative mandate. Committee members were to represent key government agencies responsible for environmental, economic, land and water use, and/or social aspects of management of the estuary. The initial list of members included all agencies on the Interim Steering Committee. Subsequent additions to this list included the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission and the Islands Trust (see Appendix A). Advisory Committee meetings were open to the public.

The Advisory Committee met with Envirowest on July 16, 1998, December 09, 1998 and March 04, 1999. At the July 16, 1998 meeting, the Committee provided feedback on a proposed Consultation Process Framework document, proposed revisions to the Planning Area Boundary, and a preliminary draft of the proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives. At the December 09, 1998 meeting, a major issue was the relationship of the Estuary Management Plan to the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona Rural Comox Valley Official Community Plan. The Committee also discussed Habitat Classification, the Environmental Review Committee, the Consultation Process, Communications, and Land Status. Members of the public attended this meeting and participated in a question and answer session. The March 04, 1999 meeting followed a workshop format facilitated by a planner from Cornerstone Planning Group. This workshop focused on in-depth discussion of Estuary Management Plan components including the revised Vision, Goals and Objective, Administrative Models and Action Programs. Minutes of Advisory Committee meetings are presented in Appendix B.

### **3.0 REFERRAL LIST/MAIL-OUT PROCESS**

Envirowest initiated a referral list and mail-out process in July 1998. The objectives of this process included informing stakeholders about the planning process and inviting them to participate at key stages. The preliminary referral list, initially reviewed by the Advisory Committee, included the names of 99 agencies, businesses and organizations believed to have a public or private sector interest in the development of the Estuary Management Plan. Envirowest expected this list to expand as organizations and interested members of the public became aware of the planning process through word-of-mouth or participation in the associated public events. The final referral list comprised 215 names, including names of public agency representatives, businesses, non-profit organizations, and citizens-at-large.

Envirowest sent referral list representatives information packages on July 31, 1998, September 22, 1998, January 15, 1999 and March 22, 1999. The July 31, 1998 package contained an invitation to participate in the Estuary Management Plan planning process, as well as drafts of the Consultation Process Framework document, the proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives and the planning area boundary. The attached cover letter also contained a request for comments on the enclosed materials. The September 22, 1998 distribution consisted of an invitation to the October 01, 1998 public open house. On January 15, 1999 a package was distributed which contained summaries of responses from both the July 31, 1998 mail-out and the October 01, 1998 open house comment forms, as well as information on habitat classification and an invitation to upcoming public events. The final mail out, on March 22, 1999, contained summaries of the February 16, 1999 open house and February 23, 1999 public workshop.

Envirowest received over 40 written submissions, including letters and e-mails, during this period. More than half of these submissions included comments related to the planning process or to draft components of the Estuary Management Plan. The remainder were concerned with housekeeping issues such as accepting the invitation to

participate in the consultation process. Envirowest forwarded all of these submissions to FOC. Where appropriate, either FOC or Envirowest wrote responses<sup>1</sup>.

## **4.0 PUBLIC EVENTS**

Envirowest facilitated three public events, including two open houses and one workshop between October 1998 and March 1999. The purpose of these events was to provide an opportunity for referral list participants and members of the public to learn about, discuss and comment on draft components of the Estuary Management Plan. The first open house, held on October 01, 1998, focused on informing participants about the Estuary Management Plan concept and planning process, and on soliciting comments regarding the proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives. Envirowest added the names of participants of this event, as with subsequent events, to the Referral List. The February 16, 1999 open house presented a number of Estuary Management Plan components for review, including the revised Vision, Goals and Objectives, the proposed Habitat Classification System, Administrative models, and the status of land and water tenures in the estuary. Attendees of this event were invited to register for the public workshop scheduled for the following week. The February 23, 1999 workshop provided participants with an opportunity to further discuss their ideas and concerns. The summaries of these events are provided in Appendices C, D, and E<sup>2</sup>.

## **5.0 ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS**

Envirowest advised participants, initially in the July 31, 1998 mail-out, that Envirowest and FOC were available for individual meetings. Six meetings occurred, including meetings with the Comox Indian Band, the Comox Valley Economic Development Society, Denman Island Trustee Louise Bell, the Comox Valley Naturalists Society, Primex/Field Sawmill and Tourism Comox Valley. Summaries of these meetings are provided in Appendix F.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The objectives of the consultation process were to inform stakeholders about the Estuary Management Plan and to provide opportunities for participation in its development. These objectives were pursued in four ways: an Advisory Committee; a mail-out process; public events; and one-on-one meetings. During this process, many participants shared their ideas and concerns, as well as a considerable amount of information, with

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<sup>1</sup> As directed by FOC, the mailing list and correspondence associated with this process have been excluded from this document due to constraints related to the Federal *Privacy Act*.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, the summaries of the public open house events have been reformatted and reduced versions of display boards added; however, no substantive changes have been made to the text of these documents since they were originally distributed. As directed by FOC, the February 23, 1999 Workshop Summary appendices listing participants have been excluded due to constraints related to the Federal *Privacy Act*.

Envirowest and FOC. Some of these ideas and concerns have been addressed in the first draft of the Estuary Management Plan, to the extent possible. As is evident in the meeting summaries appended to this report, there were many differences of opinion among participants over issues that arose during the process. Additional time and effort will be required on the part of agencies and participants interested in the Estuary Management Plan to resolve them.



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**Appendix A**

**Advisory Committee Members**

## Advisory Committee Members

<b>Melinda Knox</b>	Administrator, Comox Indian Band
<b>Doug Bell</b>	Councillor, City of Courtenay
<b>Peter Crawford</b>	Planner, City of Courtenay
<b>John Marinus</b>	Councillor, Town of Comox
<b>Norm Reynolds</b>	Councillor, Town of Comox
<b>Tim Hall</b>	Planner, Town of Comox
<b>Rob Milne</b>	Planner, Regional District Comox-Strathcona
<b>Harry Harker</b>	Head of Planning, Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
<b>Joel Clarkston</b>	Director, Regional District Comox-Strathcona
<b>Louise Bell</b>	Denman Island Local Trustee, Islands Trust
<b>Peter Law</b>	Biologist, BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks - Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Protection
<b>Bill Heath</b>	Biologist, BC Ministry of Fisheries - Aquaculture and Commercial Fisheries
<b>Bill Harrower</b>	Biologist, BC Ministry of Fisheries - Aquaculture and Commercial Fisheries
<b>Jill Hatfield</b>	District Agrologist, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food
<b>Roger Cheetham</b>	Planning Officer, Provincial Agricultural Land Commission
<b>Chris Hilliar</b>	Habitat Partnership Coordinator, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Comox, BC
<b>Bev Bravender</b>	Research Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada-Marine Environment and Habitat Science Division, South Coast Region
<b>Rob Russell</b>	Habitat Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada-Marine Foreshore, South Coast Region
<b>Bruce MacDonald</b>	Chief, Habitat and Enhancement Branch, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, South Coast Region
<b>Karen Asp</b>	Research and Communications Coordinator, ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited
<b>Mark Adams</b>	Senior Project Biologist/Manager, ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited



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**Appendix B**

**Advisory Committee Meetings**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

***May 07, 1998***

# COURTENAY RIVER ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING AND UPDATE

1400 Hours, May 07, 1998

Regional District of Comox-Strathcona Office, Courtenay, B.C.

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**PRESENT:**

Peter Crawford	City of Courtenay
Norm Reynolds	Town of Comox
Tim Hall	Town of Comox
Joel Clarkston	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
Rob Milne	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
Peter Law	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
Chris Hilliar	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Mark Adams	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited
Karen Asp	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Melinda Knox	Comox Indian Band	250-339-7053
Doug Bell	City of Courtenay	250-336-8981
Peter Crawford	City of Courtenay	250-334-4241
John Marinus	Town of Comox	250-339-7110
Norm Reynolds	Town of Comox	250-339-7110
Tim Hall	Town of Comox	250-339-7110
Joel Clarkston	CSR	250-334-4358
Rob Milne	CSR	250-334-4358
Peter Law	MELP	250-751-3103
Bill Hollingshead	MELP	250-751-3103
Bill Heath	MAFF	250-334-1410
Bill Harrower	MAFF	250-334-1410
Bev Bravender	DFO	250-756-7206
Rob Russell	DFO	250-756-7162
Chris Hilliar	DFO	250-339-4612

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### 1. STAKEHOLDER DEFINITION AND LIST

- Discussion of the proposed definition focused on the meaning of the term ‘stakeholder’, the subjective aspect of identifying “economic” and “environmental” interests, and on deciding whose interests have priority.
- Generally, the proposed definition was considered acceptable by the Steering Committee.
- The Social Planning Council should be moved to the “environmental” or “economic” categories, or taken off the list; the Comox Valley Economic Development Society should be moved to the “economic” category.

- The following should be added to the stakeholder list: Chamber of Commerce, Comox Harbour Authority, Lafarge Cement, BC Hydro (Dams, Power Lines), Air Park (Dave Mellin, Pete Campbell), small marine way (Courtenay River), kayak company beside Portuguese Joe's, MELP Environmental Protection Department (John Brown - manager), Canadian Forces Sailing Association, Sea Cadet/ Navy League, Comox greenway group, Town of Comox Ratepayers Association (Pat Halliday), Farmers Institute, Agricultural Land Commission, Field Sawmill union, Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards (Angela Smailes), Puntledge Fish Hatchery (Chris Beggs - 338-7444)
- Envirowest would try to provide the Steering Committee with a revised stakeholder list next week.

## **2. LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT (MELP) REPRESENTATIVE INCLUDED ON STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Mark Adams reported that Bill Hollingshead, Manager of Land and Water Management (MELP, Nanaimo) had limited time available, but would try to participate.
- Peter Law offered to liaise with Bill Hollingshead as they work in same office.

## **3. BAYNES SOUND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA PROPOSAL**

- Peter Law reported that the Baynes Sound Wildlife Management Area (WMA) proposal overlaps with the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan (CREMP) and has been delayed until completion of CREMP.

## **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STAKEHOLDER PROCESS**

- Envirowest would try to provide the Steering Committee with a draft Terms of Reference for the stakeholder consultation process next week.

## **5. STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

- Mark Adams recommended that stakeholder and public meetings should not be held during the summer months. Any spring meetings should be held prior to June 22, 1998. The first stakeholder meeting may be delayed until the fall. We may be able hold a public open house in the second or third week of June.
- The Regional District OCP public process is under way. Meetings planned for May 25, May 27, May 28, and June 16. Need to avoid overlap.
- Generally, the Steering Committee agreed that an initial public open house is a good idea. Stakeholders should be advised of the event.

## **6. STUDY AREA**

- Mark Adams recommended that the Steering Committee revisit the proposed Management Plan study area. The surveyed 200 year floodplain boundary does not provide a consistent definition of the study area. A consistent definition would be based on an assessment of ecological processes and resources significant to the whole estuary. For example, the lower boundary of the Management Plan could be extended to include the whole Trent River delta, and Willemar Bluff, as these features are integral parts of the estuary. The upper boundary could be defined by the presence of *Carex lyngbyei* (Lyngby's sedge) in the Courtenay River as this species is indicative of significant tidal influence.
- The Steering Committee requested that Envirowest provide them with options regarding the boundaries of the Management Plan. It was agreed that the study area should be clearly defined and agreed upon prior to presentation at a public open house.

## **7. NEXT MEETING OF STEERING COMMITTEE**

- The Steering Committee agreed to meet again in two weeks to review the Management Plan options presented by Envirowest. Mark Adams said that Envirowest would try to provide the Steering Committee with study area options, as well as a revised stakeholder list and terms of reference prior to this date.
- The next meeting is planned for 1300 hours, Wednesday May 20, 1998, at the Regional District office.

## **8. ADJOURN 1540 HRS**

### **UPDATE SINCE MAY 7 MEETING**

- The May 20th meeting has been cancelled. Envirowest has encountered delays in the receipt of mapping information critical for interpreting the estuarine landscape. Committee members will receive a package from Envirowest by Friday, May 29, 1998.
- The stakeholder list and terms of reference are under construction. To date, Envirowest has identified over three hundred fee simple land owners who may be included in the stakeholder consultation process, depending on where the Management Plan boundary is located. Drafts of these deliverables will be forwarded to the Steering Committee on May 29.

*Minutes prepared by Karen Asp. Please notify writer of any errors or omissions.*

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

*July 16, 1998*

# COURTENAY RIVER ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING

1000 Hours, July 16, 1998

Regional District of Comox-Strathcona Office, Courtenay, B.C.

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**PRESENT:**

Doug Bell	City of Courtenay
John Marinus	Town of Comox
Tim Hall	Town of Comox
Joel Clarkston	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
Harry Harker	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
Peter Law	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
Bev Bravender	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Chris Hilliar	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Mark Adams	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited
Karen Asp	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited

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Bill Heath	MAFF	250-334-1410
Bill Harrower	MAFF	250-334-1410
Bev Bravender	DFO	250-756-7206
Rob Russell	DFO	250-756-7162
Chris Hilliar	DFO	250-339-4612

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### 1. INTERIM STEERING COMMITTEE/ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Members in attendance agreed that the Committee should pursue an advisory role in the planning process.
- The proposed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Advisory Committee should be amended to state that the Committee provides advice not “direction”.
- The TOR should state the limitations on membership.
- Include ‘land and water use’ in the TOR section on membership.

- Since Committee meetings are open to the public, notification of meetings should be posted in community newspapers.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans will not be a media contact for the Advisory Committee.

## **2. CONSULTATION PROCESS FRAMEWORK**

- The Islands Trust should be invited to participate in the planning process.
- The Referral List should include: the Baynes Sound Round Table; Gulf Trollers Association; Navy League; Flyfishing Club; Comox Greenway group. Envirowest will be making additional changes to the list.
- The word ‘commercial’ should be added to the last bullet on page 1 of the Consultation Process Framework document.
- The second bullet under section 2.3 should be removed. Members felt it was ambiguous.

## **3. PLANNING BOUNDARY**

- Some members stated that they could not support an estuary management plan boundary that incorporated extensive upland areas as presented by Envirowest in their memo “Proposed Boundaries of Management Plan” dated June 26, 1998. The Committee recommended the following amendments to the planning boundary:
  - the planning boundary should be revised to correspond the 200 year floodplain where it has been surveyed;
  - in the absence of a surveyed floodplain delineation, the planning boundary should generally correspond to the Comox-Strathcona Sensitive Habitat Atlas aquatic buffer zone;
  - the planning boundary should cross Trent River, Roy Creek and Millard-Piercy Creek along the Island Highway alignment;
  - the planning boundary should cross the Puntledge River at the Condensory Road bridge and the Tsolum River along the alignment of right-of-way Plan 759 as shown on the map appended to the Envirowest planning boundary memo referenced above;
  - the planning boundary should cross the creek situated in Port Augusta Park (Town of Comox) at Beaufort Avenue, and it should cross Brooklyn Creek at Balmoral Avenue/Lazo Road as shown on the map appended to the Envirowest planning boundary memo referenced above.

- In addition, some members stated they could not support the inclusion of Willemar Bluffs in the estuary management plan planning area. Mark Adams stated that the bluffs are an integral ecological feature of the estuary, as the sediment resulting from erosion of the bluffs is largely responsible for the formation and maintenance of the Goose Spit peninsula. However, members responded that the ecological linkage between the bluffs and the estuary provided by the processes of erosion, sediment transport and accretion was not a necessary condition for their inclusion, and that practical concerns related to erosion warranted exclusion of the bluffs from the planning area at this time.

#### **4. STATEMENT OF VISION, GOALS, AND PRINCIPLES**

- The list of goals should be amended to include the following statement: “Recognize the long term socio-economic needs of the community as they relate to land and water use decisions.”
- The phrase “Guiding Principles” should be replaced with the term ‘Objectives’.
- Under “Objectives for Integrated Management”, the following objective should be added: “Mixed, compatible environmental, economic and recreational uses should be a priority over exclusive uses where practical. This affords maximum benefit from existing resources. In some instances, single uses, such as habitat conservation or harbour facilities, may take precedence.”
- Under “Promote and Employ Consensus Based Decision Making” the final sentence should be amended to state that where consensus is not achieved, each agency shall exercise its mandate, where appropriate.

#### **5. NEXT MEETING**

No date was set for the next meeting.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 1230 hrs.

#### **UPDATE:**

The “Lands” Branch of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks has declined an invitation to participate on the Advisory Committee. Peter Law has been identified as the key contact for the Ministry.

*Minutes prepared by Karen Asp. Please notify writer of any errors or omissions.*

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

*December 09, 1998*

# COURTENAY RIVER ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING

0900 Hours, December 09, 1998

Regional District of Comox-Strathcona Office, Courtenay, B.C.

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<b>PRESENT:</b>	Melinda Knox	Comox Indian Band
	Elizabeth McLeod	Comox Indian Band
	Peter Crawford	City of Courtenay
	Doug Bell	City of Courtenay
	John Marinus	Town of Comox
	Norm Reynolds	Town of Comox
	Tim Hall	Town of Comox
	Joel Clarkston	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
	Harry Harker	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
	Rob Milne	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
	Louise Bell	Islands Trust
	Peter Law	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
	Jill Hatfield	Ministry of Agriculture and Food
	Bill Heath	BC Ministry of Fisheries
	Bev Bravender	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
	Chris Hilliar	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
	Bruce MacDonald	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Leslie MacDougall	Department of Fisheries and Oceans	
Mark Adams	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited	
Karen Asp	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited	
<b>OBSERVERS</b>	David Ferguson	Comox Valley Environmental Council
	Susan Holvenstot	Comox Valley Environmental Council
	Steph Nathan	Comox Valley Naturalist Society
	Betty Lunan	Comox Valley Naturalist Society
	Dianna Maloff	Comox Valley Naturalist Society
	Ronna-Rae Leonard	Area B Rural Residents Association
	Melda Buchanan	Friends of N.E. Comox/Lazo Forest Reserve
	Ruth Masters	--

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### 1. INTRODUCTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

- Mark Adams welcomed new Advisory Committee members and members of the public. Members of the public were requested to hold questions and comments until adjournment of the meeting. Members of the public were advised that formal presentations could be made to the Advisory Committee upon request.
- Additions to the Agenda included Communications, and Environmental Review Committee

### 2. DFO STEERING COMMITTEE

- A DFO steering committee has been formed to provide the consultant with technical and management guidance in order to ensure that the Estuary Management Plan is consistent with DFO policy on fish and fish habitat.

### **3. REGIONAL DISTRICT OCP AND ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN AREA DESIGNATION**

- Mark Adams advised that Area Designation within the context of the Estuary Management Plan would be postponed throughout the planning area until the Regional District completes the OCP planning process. Area Designation is a component of the Estuary Management Plan in which appropriate land and water uses are determined for a particular segment of shoreline. Postponement of the Estuary Management Plan Area Designation process is consistent with the Regional District OCP Moratorium on Marine Industrial development. It allows time for the appropriate agencies to engage in the study of Marine Industrial Zoning as defined in the OCP Moratorium. It further avoids the problematic scenario of parallel land/water use planning processes targeting the same landscape. Although the Estuary Management Plan Area Designation process is postponed, DFO will continue to pursue its mandate to protect fish and fish habitat. In this regard, any land/water use designations within DFO jurisdiction must be consistent with DFO policy.
- Norm Reynolds expressed concern that postponement of Area Designation essentially reduced the Estuary Management Plan to a technical exercise between DFO and the consultant, and that, as such, there was no point in the consultative process. Mark Adams stated that Area Designation is only one component of the Estuary Management Plan. The Estuary Management Plan will be comprised of many parts, including Vision, Goals and Objectives, Habitat Classification, a Coordinated Review Program, and a host of Action Programs, such as Water Quality Management, Habitat Restoration, and Log Handling and Storage. Postponement of Area Designation does not preclude the development of all other aspects of the Management Plan.
- Bruce MacDonald reiterated that Area Designation was still on the agenda and that when this component of the Estuary Management Plan is undertaken, public consultation will be pursued with respect to it.
- Joel Clarkston asked if what was being proposed was that Area Designation was being postponed until the Regional District Local Area Plans were in place. Mark Adams affirmed.
- Peter Crawford asked if Area Designation would still be pursued within the City boundaries. Mark Adams replied that Area Designation was on hold for the whole Estuary Management Plan area.
- Harry Harker stated that environmental issues would be on the table in the consideration of zoning in the Local Area plans and that Habitat Classification for the estuary would be incorporated in the deliberations on zoning. Mark Adams affirmed that the Habitat

Classification component of the Estuary Management Plan would set forth environmental criteria for reference in the consideration of land/water uses within the estuary.

- Elizabeth Mcleod stated that the Comox Indian Band's *Indian Act* Section 35 rights take precedence over all planning processes. For many years, the Band has participated in environmental protection initiatives related to the estuary and they are concerned that their efforts in this regard may be undermined. Melinda Knox said she has been involved in the Estuary Management Plan process since its inception, but that she was not informed of the Marine Industrial Zone issue related to the OCP. Melinda Knox also expressed concern DFO has not met with the Band Council regarding the Estuary Management Plan.

**Action:** Envirowest will organize a meeting with the Band in January.

- Harry Harker, Doug Bell and Joel Clarkston leave meeting.

#### **4. HABITAT CLASSIFICATION**

- Mark Adams described the Habitat and Development Classification currently being developed by Envirowest and DFO. The system serves the dual purpose of classifying existing habitats based on functional values, and of providing a guide for appropriate activity within the estuary. Three habitat zones are defined: subtidal (to minus 10 metres), foreshore, and riparian. This trizonal system contrasts with the Fraser River Estuary Management Plan approach, which classified the foreshore and riparian zones as a single unit. The system also uses three measures of habitat productivity, demonstrated by colour: red--high biological productivity; yellow--moderate biological productivity; and green--low biological productivity. These colour classifications are associated with environmental criteria for development. The system will be based on field work and interpretation of air photos.
- Louise Bell asked if the depth of the riparian zone varies. Mark Adams stated that there was no standard measure. The depth of the riparian zone will vary depending on site specific ecological values. These values will be determined in site specific ecological assessments facilitated by the proponents of projects, and referred to DFO and related agencies for review.
- Louise Bell asked if existing land uses would be affected. Mark Adams said that at this point Habitat Classification would let land owners in proximity to the foreshore know what ecological values DFO has attributed to their land. The Environmental Review Committee will use Habitat Classification as a guide in their review of development proposals within the Plan Area. The proponent/developer will be obligated to demonstrate that proposed activities will be consistent with the environmental criteria set out in the Habitat Classification system.
- Bill Heath commented that GIS mapping is presently being conducted for Baynes Sound and that it would be beneficial if there was compatibility between the mapping systems.
- Peter Law inquired if there was an opportunity for input into the development of the Habitat Classification system. Mark Adams said that in the process of consolidating existing resource information, he would be seeking feedback from people. Further, the Habitat Classification

system is not static. For example, if new habitat is constructed, the mapping would be altered to reflect the change. In every case however, Habitat Classification will always be based on fish and wildlife values.

**Action:** Envirowest will provide the Advisory Committee with three case scenarios of how the Habitat Classification system will be implemented.

#### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

- Mark Adams stated that the Environmental Review Committee will be comprised of Resource Agencies tasked with conducting technical evaluations of project proposals. The public will be provided with avenues for input into this review process. Typically, in the Fraser River Estuary Management Program, the Environmental Review Committee meets every two weeks and members of the public can arrange to make presentations to this Committee.

#### **5. CONSULTATION PROCESS SUMMARIES**

- Karen Asp presented reports on feedback from the Referral Process and first Public Open House. She said that the Vision, Goals and Objectives have been modified to reflect feedback from these two processes, and said the second draft would be available by December 15, 1998.
- Tim Hall inquired if the revisions to the Vision, Goals and Objectives included reference to agriculture. Karen Asp said that a goal concerning agriculture had been added.
- Louise Bell expressed concern that the feedback from the public was not being used in the development of the Estuary Management Plan. Karen Asp reiterated that the Vision, Goals and Objectives have been changed to address specific concerns and to reflect the general tone of comments from the open house and referral process. She advised that the revised draft would be mailed out for review and comment to all people who provided mailing addresses at the open house, as well as to the Referral List, and the Advisory Committee. Further, the revised draft will be presented as a draft at the next open house.

#### **6. COMMUNICATION**

- Norm Reynolds requested that a structural outline of the report be provided. This outline would contain a flow chart and indicate where inputs are being received, for what purposes and what the outcomes will be. Further, he requested that the outline indicate what types of recommendations will be forthcoming at the completion of the Estuary Management Plan.

**Action:** Envirowest will provide a structural outline for the next Advisory Committee meeting.

#### **7. LAND USE TENURES AND PRIORITIES**

- Karen Asp presented a draft of the Land Use Tenures and Priorities Map for the Estuary Management Plan. She said that the map contained two sets of information: information regarding current Crown land tenures, and some public and private tenures in within the Management Plan boundaries; and information regarding local government zoning and land use priorities. Other information, such as discharge permits will be incorporated as the information is received. The map will be complemented by a database, and will be referenced in a component of the Management Plan that addresses historic and current land and water uses. She noted that many people, including the Comox Indian Band have been consulted to date. Mark Adams invited anyone with information related to the human history or natural environment of the estuary to contact Envirowest.

## **8. REVISED TIMELINE**

- Referral List and Open House attendees will be sent a package in mid-December
- the DFO Steering Committee will meet in mid-January
- an open house will be conducted around the last week of January, 1999
- the DFO Steering Committee will meet in mid-February
- the Advisory Committee will meet in early March - tentatively 04/03/99 - packages will be provided to the Committee 10 working days in advance
- a first draft of the Management Plan will be submitted 31/03/99

## **9. FORMAL MEETING ADJOURNED 1050 HRS**

## **10. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM OBSERVERS**

- Dave Ferguson expressed concern that there was no one representing the public interest at the Advisory Committee table. Mark Adams responded that the Advisory Committee forum provides government agencies with the opportunity to confer and advise on the Estuary Management Plan, but that it was not mandated to provide direction or to steer the process. The Advisory Committee forum is part of the Consultation Process, and any interested person or organization can provide input either through the Referral Process, the Open House process, or in one-on-one meetings.
- Betty Lunan expressed concern that the Habitat Classification system only addresses issues related to fish habitat. Mark Adams stated that Envirowest, in consultation with environmental agencies and groups, is addressing plant community and wildlife habitat issues for the Management Plan. For example, during biological inventorying in the estuary, a species of management concern, the marsh hollyhock was identified in a particular area. The marsh hollyhock and its habitat would be identified in an Action Program in the Management Plan. Environmental agencies and groups will be requested to provide feedback.

**Action:** Envirowest will arrange a meeting with the Comox Valley Naturalists Society.

- Ronna-Rae Leonard expressed concern that the Estuary Management Plan will not result in a consensus between competing jurisdictions and interests as to how the natural values of the estuary will be conserved and protected. Mark Adams said that the Management Plan will, in part, address issues of conflict, particularly through the Coordinated Environmental Review Program. However, on any particular issue, consensus may not be reached among the agencies.
- Susan Holvenstot inquired if long-term phase-out of industry in the estuary was on the table. Mark Adams replied that this is a complex issue appropriately addressed in the Area Designation component of the Estuary Management Plan. It is conceivable that land/water uses considered inappropriate might be phased out over time. The way this might be pursued is to designate an area for conservation, define the existing use as incompatible with the designation, and if and when the tenants are willing and ready to vacate, commence securing of the land in question.
- Louise Bell expressed concern that while land use planning exercises can determine what can happen at a specific location, such exercises typically do not have the power to define the practices appropriate for the specific land use. Mark Adams said that while defining appropriate practices for the estuary is not within the immediate scope of the Estuary Management Plan, a major outcome will be the initiation of action programs that will address issues such as log storage and handling.

*Minutes prepared by Karen Asp. Please notify writer of any errors or omissions.*

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

*March 04, 1999*

# COURTENAY RIVER ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING

0900 Hours, 04 March 1999  
Coast Westerly Hotel, Courtenay, B.C.

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<b>PRESENT:</b>	Peter Crawford	City of Courtenay
	Doug Bell	City of Courtenay
	Norm Reynolds	Town of Comox
	Tim Hall	Town of Comox
	Joel Clarkston	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
	Rob Milne	Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
	Peter Law	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
	Bill Heath	BC Ministry of Fisheries
	Bev Bravender	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
	Chris Hilliar	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
	Bruce MacDonald	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
	Leslie MacDougall	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
	Rob Russell	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
	Mark Adams	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited
	Karen Asp	ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited
	John Marczyk	Cornerstone Planning Group (workshop facilitator)

<b>OBSERVERS</b>	Ronna-Rae Leonard	Area B Rural Residents Association
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### 1. INTRODUCTIONS AND CHANGES TO AGENDA

- John Marczyk introduced himself as the facilitator for the workshop. Issues regarding content would be addressed by representatives of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited. Participants were asked to introduce themselves.
- John Marczyk said that the objectives of the workshop were to:
  - a) enable Advisory Committee members to learn more about the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan initiatives, including public involvement, plan components, and scheduling;
  - b) ensure that Advisory Committee members have the opportunity to discuss how the Estuary Management Plan initiatives affects their agencies' interests and those of their constituencies; and,
  - c) provide the planning team with constructive feedback.

Anticipated results of the workshop include:

- a) feedback to the planning team members on three initiatives: Vision, Goals and Objectives; Management Program Options and Coordinated Review Process; and Action Programs.
- b) better understanding of the Estuary Management Plan initiatives, and key issues.

The product of the workshop will be a set of notes drafted by Envirowest with the assistance of Cornerstone Planning Group.

- John Marczyk presented the proposed agenda. There were no recommended changes.
- Norm Reynolds asked for clarification on the process for the workshop. He said that in his understanding the Advisory Committee was not meeting today to arrive at a general opinion or unified decision.
- John Marczyk confirmed that consensus was not an objective of the workshop. However, he said that one area where the group might try to reach consensus was regarding the Estuary Management Plan administrative models.

## **2. UPDATE ON PLANNING PROCESS**

- Bruce MacDonald said that a draft Management Plan would be produced by the end of March 1999. There would be outstanding items, such as Area Use Designation, which would be addressed at a later date. He said that he had recently met with the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona Comox (RDCS) Committee to address some of their issues. He planned to meet with Harry Harker, RDCS Director of Planning to further discuss RDCS issues. Once that meeting had occurred and the draft Management Plan was available, the Advisory Committee would be brought together to discuss completing the plan.
- Mark Adams referred to three action items from the Advisory Committee meeting of 09 December 1998. Action 1 was for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to meet with the Comox Indian Band. Action 2 concerned providing examples of how the Habitat Classification and Development System would work. Action 3 concerned providing information on the flow of information and decisions into the development of the Management Plan.
- Regarding Action 1, Chris Hilliar said that he met with Chief Ernest Hardy and Administrator Melinda Knox. They discussed the Band's concerns regarding the RDCS Rural Comox Valley Official Committee Plan, and the Band's concerns regarding protection of archaeological values, particularly the fish weirs in the estuary. The Band representatives said that their community's long-standing concern for environmental protection of the estuary was demonstrated by a voluntary moratorium on fishing in the estuary.

- Regarding Action 2, Mark Adams said that case examples of the Habitat and Development Classification System would be provided in the draft Estuary Management Plan as part of the section on Habitat Classification as an Action Program.
- Regarding Action 3, Karen Asp said that all input received during the planning process would be documented in a final consultation report. The draft Estuary Management Plan will address input received during the consultation process.

### **3. VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Karen Asp reviewed the development of the Vision, Goals and Objectives (VGOs) to date. She said that the first version was presented to the Advisory Committee in July, 1998 and was revised based on Advisory Committee comments. A draft dated July 17, 1998 was subsequently distributed for review to the organizations and individuals on the Referral List, posted on the Internet website, and presented at an open house on October 01, 1998. Based on comments received from these processes, a third draft, dated January 15, 1999, was distributed to the Advisory Committee and to the Referral List, and presented at an open house and a public workshop held on February 16, 1999 and February 23, 1999, respectively. Workshop participants were informed that they too would review the third draft.
- Tim Hall said that the word ‘people’ should be added to the series “plants, fish and wildlife” in goal 2.2.1. Joel Clarkston asked that the word ‘people’ be placed first in the series.
- Bill Heath said that the terms used in the Vision, Goals and Objectives needed to be defined.
- Norm Reynolds said that the purpose of the Vision, Goals and Objectives was to be short and succinct. Definitions were not necessary.
- Bill Heath said that there needed to be clarification, for example, what was meant by the term ‘harmful’.
- Mark Adams said that the Action Programs would provide appropriate definitions.
- Joel Clarkston said that he had difficulties with the Vision, Goals and Objectives as written. Acknowledging that the Vision, Goals and Objectives set the management intent for the planning area, Joel took exception to the term ‘paramount’, which suggested environmental protection was the primary focus. All decisions emanating from the plan would therefore have to be compatible with the plan’s environmental protection intent. He said that the Estuary Management Plan needed to reflect a balance.
- Tim Hall said that the term ‘paramount’ was too strong. A more appropriate phrase would be ‘a high priority’.

- Norm Reynolds said that a healthy estuary and a living ecosystem were paramount goals for the community.
- Joel Clarkston said his point was that the Vision, Goals and Objectives should not be written so as to commit the Estuary Management Plan to an exclusive direction. Flexibility was needed to accommodate activities upon which the community is dependent.
- Bruce MacDonald said that the Vision, Goals and Objectives had been reworded to reflect feedback from the public. Environmental protection was a major concern, and people wanted this issue addressed as a primary consideration.
- Chris Hilliar said that the Terms of Reference state that the Estuary Management Plan should give high priority to environmental protection.
- Bill Heath said that the Vision Statement should be amended to say 'high priority' rather than 'paramount'.
- Joel Clarkston said he agreed with Bill Heath.
- Bruce MacDonald said that if protection was more important than the Vision Statement was satisfactory. If not, the term 'protection' should be replaced with the word 'management' in the second sentence.
- Tim Hall said that if 'paramount' was changed to 'high priority' the Vision Statement would be watered down.
- Peter Law said that the strongest word in the Vision was 'protection' and that it should not be dropped.
- Joel Clarkston said that the phrase 'environmental protection is a high priority' indicated that environmental protection overrode other objectives. The phrase should read 'a priority'.
- Bruce MacDonald said that the phrase 'a priority' was vague, and did not provide clear management direction.
- Norm Reynolds said it was a non-statement.
- Rob Milne said that there was a conflict between goals 2.2.1 and 2.2.4. A development proposal with marginal impacts might encounter difficulties in the approval process if environmental protection was given one hundred percent priority. Implementation of these goals could be difficult.
- Tim Hall said that the goals did not conflict. The final clause of 2.2.4 '...provided they are compatible with the goals of conserving...' provided strategic direction for interpreting 2.2.4.

- Rob Milne said that there will be subjectivity involved in applying these goals, and that this may cause problems.
- Karen Asp asked for feedback regarding a proposed revision to goal 2.2.4 forwarded to her in February by Harry Harker. The proposed revision was as follows: ‘Accomodate the long-term socio-economic needs of the community as they relate to land and water use decisions, working cooperatively with the business community and local governments to mitigate potential negative impacts which may be detrimental to the goal of conserving and enhancing the estuary’s natural environment.’
- Tim Hall said that the amendment only addressed negative impacts associated with development proposals.
- Joel Clarkston said the issue should be addressed later, during the implementation phase.
- Rob Russell said that the statement was valid but should be addressed the Management Program.
- Doug Bell arrived at 1000 hours.
- Doug Bell said that the City of Courtenay Council required the protection of existing industrial and commercial uses and long term business interests or the City would withdraw its participation. He said that the consultant’s proposal was accepted in part because it was based on the Fraser River Estuary Management Plan model, but this model had been abandoned.
- Bruce MacDonald said that goal 2.2.4 addressed long term socio-economic interests of the community.
- Doug Bell said that it did not go far enough.
- Joel Clarkston said that language like ‘protection of the estuarine ecosystem is paramount’ was too strong and that there was no language in the Vision, Goals and Objectives strong enough to ensure protection of existing uses. He said that if the concerns of local governments could not be satisfied, the planning process would be futile.
- Norm Reynolds said it was his understanding that Field Sawmill executives had been consulted and they did not perceive the Estuary Management Plan as a threat to their continued operation in the estuary.
- Mark Adams said that Field Sawmill took great care to ensure they mitigated any impacts their operation had on the estuary. Field Sawmill was a model for industry on the estuary. The issue was whether environment agencies would allow new industrial developments to occur in the future.

- Joel Clarkston said his concern was that the language chosen for the Vision, Goals and Objectives would direct decision-making related to the estuary.
- Bruce MacDonald said that DFO recognized the importance of existing industrial and commercial uses in the estuary. Reconciling existing uses with the plan's intent to improve environmental quality called for wording changes. Only compatible businesses should be permitted. The plan should provide direction for the relocation of incompatible businesses.
- Doug Bell said that it was not realistic to pursue total protection of the estuary. Consideration for the establishment of new businesses should be provided for, as with the Fraser River Estuary.
- Tim Hall said that the Objectives addressed the present and long term future of business. Objective 2.3.2a 'Encourage Multiple Uses within the Estuary' was an example.
- Chris Hilliar said he was puzzled by the concern for existing industry. The RDCS had a long standing policy, entrenched in the 1981 OCP, that said industries on the estuary would be encouraged to relocate. This policy has not affected the status of existing industries.
- John Marczyk suggested that workshop participants were polarized on levels of use in the estuary and that it would be appropriate to explore interests around these positions.
- Norm Reynolds said he did not think Advisory Committee members were polarized. The goals captured both the concerns for environmental protection and the concerns for continued uses.
- Bill Heath said that the Objectives clarified the intent of the Goals.
- Joel Clarkston said he did not share Norm Reynold's approval of the Goals. A clear statement was needed regarding the security of existing businesses.
- Bruce MacDonald asked how the scenario of involuntary relocation would occur.
- Joel Clarkston said that, for example, if Field Sawmill were to start having a water quality problem, this problem may become the focus for an initiative, under the auspices of the Estuary Management Plan, to force the mill to relocate.
- Bruce MacDonald asked if the RDCS and the City of Courtenay would support an industry shown to be damaging the environment? In addition, Field Sawmill would take the necessary steps to achieve compliance with existing regulations. Both economic and community forces were pushing businesses such as Field Sawmill to adopt environmentally compatible business practices.

- Joel Clarkston said that as another example, dredging in the estuary could be defined as incompatible with the Estuary Management Plan. On this basis, a request might be made to the Canadian Coast Guard to stop dredging indefinitely.
- Bruce MacDonald said that the issue was whether existing uses were compatible with existing legislation. The Estuary Management Plan would be based on existing legislation. If dredging was found to be incompatible, it would be as a result of existing legislation, not as a result of the Estuary Management Plan.
- John Marczyk said that the Estuary Management Plan was a policy document, based on an interpretation of existing federal legislation and regulations. Plans however can call for revisions to existing laws or propose new ones.
- Doug Bell said that new legislation would occur.
- Norm Reynolds said that the Management Committee would not impose new requirements.
- Karen Asp asked if the following goal, suggested by an attendee of the February 16, 1999 open house, might work for Committee members: “Recognize the importance of existing industrial and retail and commercial activities within the Management Plan area for their role in the economic well-being of the community at large, and seek ways to help them reduce their impacts on the estuary, or to relocate outside the Management Plan area.”
- Doug Bell said that this goal was unacceptable, due to the last clause. Joel Clarkston agreed with Doug Bell.
- Norm Reynolds reminded participants that they were not required to reach consensus on these issues at the workshop. Providing Envirowest and DFO with feedback was the primary objective of the workshop.
- Doug Bell said that his point was that the Estuary Management Plan had to recognize the importance of both the economy and the estuary. One does not take precedence over the other.
- Joel Clarkston requested that it be recorded in the minutes that the Advisory Committee had not reached consensus on the Vision, Goals and Objectives and that more discussion was needed.

**Action:** Envirowest will review the feedback from workshop participants on the Vision, Goals and Objectives. Consideration will be given to exchanging the word ‘paramount’ for ‘high priority’ in the Vision Statement, and for adding the word ‘people’ to goal 2.2.1.

#### 4. ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE MODELS

- Mark Adams provided an overview of each of the four models presented. He said that an example of Model 1 was the Fraser River Estuary Management Program; an example of Model 2 was the Cowichan River Estuary Management Plan; an example of Model 3 could be found in the Conservation Authorities now prevalent in Ontario; and that Model 4 was based on the Fraser River Basin Council.
- Rob Milne asked how the administrative program would be integrated with the local government development review process?
- Mark Adams said that development proposals would be vetted through the local government before going to the Estuary Management Committee.
- Norm Reynolds said that he had participated in the Estuary Management Program models work group at the February 23, 1999 public workshop in a personal, private capacity. As a Councillor, he said that, with modification, Model 1 would most likely work. No agency actually surrendered authority. The Estuary Management Committee would proceed as a cooperative body. No decisions would be imposed on local government. The model provided a pragmatic approach to estuary management.
- Joel Clarkston said he agreed with Norm Reynolds. The community did not need another layer of government. Model 1 was the only one that would work. The other three models were too visionary for the Comox Valley.
- Tim Hall said that Model 1 should include aspects of Model 3. There should be provincial level enabling legislation to provide standardization of management across estuaries. The Agricultural Land Commission provided an example of the kind of umbrella agency which could provide uniformity. All local decisions would be vetted through this provincial commission.
- Bill Heath said that a new level of government should be avoided. It was important that the governance model enhanced the possibility for community input on a stewardship level. Community ownership of the issues and problems should be cultivated, and provisions made for community-based initiatives such as monitoring. Government resources were scarce. Strong local community support was fundamental.
- Mark Adams said that one of the deficiencies of the Fraser River Estuary Management Program was that it did not include a formal structure for public consultation. Model 1 provided for a standing Public Advisory Committee. In addition, depending on the initiative, the Ad Hoc Committees would include, and might even be comprised primarily of, members of the public.
- Norm Reynolds said that he agreed with Tim Hall regarding a higher level estuary management structure. Estuaries were as important as agricultural land, and a government agency was needed to assume responsibility for them.

- Peter Law asked whether the Campbell River Estuary Management Plan Management process had been reviewed. This process was driven by local government.
- Mark Adams said that the Campbell River Estuary Management Plan summarized several action programs, including restoration and industry relocation. The Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan was more ambitious, in terms of the policy framework and range of action programs.
- Peter Law said that in Campbell River, local government provided the Management Committee with its agenda. The Management Committee was seen as a committee of the local government.
- Joel Clarkston said that accountability was important in the design of the Management Committee. He assumed local government politicians, who are accountable to the public, would be involved in an Estuary Management Committee of local government. The Committee should not be strictly comprised of non-elected officials.
- Peter Law said that there should be less emphasis on senior government involvement in the Management Committee. Local governments should be allowed to take over.
- Rob Milne asked whether delays in processing applications were experienced in the Fraser River Estuary Management Program process?
- Mark Adams said it was a typical review process.
- Rob Milne asked whether a development rezoning application would go through the public hearing process prior to being reviewed by the Coordinated Project Review process?
- Mark Adams said that the RDCS would go through its first two stages of public hearings and then refer the proposal on the Coordinated Project Review process.
- Doug Bell said that municipalities would lose all of their power.
- Mark Adams said that this was not the case. The Coordinated Project Review process was based on the application of existing legislation, which affords specific authority to specific agencies. The mandates of these agencies would be exercised regardless of whether or not there was a process designed to facilitate the review process
- Rob Milne asked for clarification on how a rezoning process would occur. Typically twenty-four to forty agencies are referred in the local government process. How would the Coordinated Project Review process ensure that all appropriate agencies were referred and that no redundancy occur?

- Mark Adams said that the agency doing the referrals, e.g., the RDCS, would be aware of where there might be overlaps between the in-house process and the Coordinated Project Review process.
- Rob Milne asked for further clarification. Would the RDCS receive an application, take it through an in-house referral process, send it to first and second reading, and then send it to the Coordinated Project Review process?
- Mark Adams said that the logistics of the referral process would have to be clearly defined in the early stages of the Estuary Management Program implementation phase in order to ensure efficiency.
- Peter Crawford asked if the Estuary Management Committee would function in an advisory capacity to local government?
- Mark Adams said that this would be determined by the specific referral or initiative. In some instances, the Management Committee would be linked through its membership to the local governments, but would not be advisory to them.
- Bill Heath said that missing from the models was a depiction of a more proactive process of environmental conservation and enhancement. The models as shown focus on reaction to development applications.
- Mark Adams said that proactive programs would be addressed by the Ad Hoc Committees. Such committees would be struck by the Management Committee for the purpose of implementing Action Programs such as Water Quality Monitoring and Exotic Species Management.
- Norm Reynolds said that the flow charts should show how proactive programs fit into the models.
- Bill Heath agreed with Norm Reynolds. He said that proactive programs might not be encompassed by an Ad Hoc Committee structure, as they might be long term and ongoing initiatives, as was the Baynes Sound Round Table.
- Peter Law said that in the Campbell River Estuary Management Program, the Management Committee was advisory to the municipal government. The Management Committee was there to review local government initiatives, ensuring that municipal decisions were based on sound scientific and economic information. In this case, the local government referred issues to the Management Committee prior to submitting them to public hearings.
- Mark Adams said he would provide case histories of how municipalities associated with the Fraser River Estuary Management Program integrated their review processes with the FREMP Coordinated Project Review process.

**Action:** Envirowest to include case histories of how municipal review processes were integrated with the Fraser River Estuary Management Program review process.

- Rob Milne requested that Mark Adams also find out the typical timeline of such processes.
- Chris Hilliar said that the Coordinated Project Review process was a small component of the Estuary Management Program. In terms of the four administrative models, Model 3 might be achievable in the future, Models 2 and 4 were not achievable, and Model 1 was the most relevant in terms of the issues. The Campbell River Estuary Management Plan worked because the participants all reached an agreement on the vision and actions of the plan. The members of the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan Advisory Committee did not at present share a common vision. Perhaps in the future, Model 1 or Model 3 might be considered as appropriate for the management of the estuary. But at present, the best option might be to continue with a roundtable type of discussion process, similar to the Baynes Sound model.
- Joel Clarkston said he disagreed with Chris Hilliar, as progress was being made at the workshop towards a management program. Cutting off the discussion and jumping to a solution was premature. It was possible that an agreement regarding a Campbell River type model could be reached. Joel Clarkston said he was also concerned that the Estuary Management Committee, as shown by the flow charts, was executive in nature - a committee of bureaucrats and non-elected individuals.
- Tim Hall said that staff could not sign off on decisions of the Estuary Management Committee. This was the function of the political arm of local government.
- Bruce MacDonald said that if staff sat on the Estuary Management Committee, they would review the issues presented, and refer them to their political counterparts for decision.
- Doug Bell said that decisions can not be made unless municipal government politicians signed off on them. The Estuary Management Committee should be called an Advisory Committee.
- Tim Hall said the flow charts should indicate how local governments were integrated.
- Peter Crawford said that the integration of the Estuary Management Program with local government review processes would depend on the type of project under consideration. If the project required a land use bylaw amendment, then the Estuary Management Program process would have to be advisory to local government, because local government has legislative authority to determine appropriate land uses within its jurisdiction. For non bylaw land use projects the relationship between the Estuary Management Program and local government might be different.
- Norm Reynolds said that more time and information were needed to consider the implications of the Estuary Management Program models and Coordinated Project Review process. It would be appropriate to hold another workshop which would include representations from the

Fraser River Estuary Management Program and the Campbell River Estuary Management Program.

- Rob Milne said that the flow charts should be revised to describe the relationship between local government and the Estuary Management Program.
- Bill Heath said that the descriptions of the Estuary Management Program models should clarify the relationship of proactive projects in the administrative structure.
- Peter Law said that the representatives from Campbell River should be asked to prepare some examples of how they address issues.
- Tim Hall said that an example involving rezoning would be useful.

- Actions:**
1. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans to provide the Advisory Committee with another opportunity to meet and consider the administrative models. Fraser River Estuary Management Program and Campbell River Estuary Management Plan representatives should be invited.
  2. Envirowest to show how local governments and proactive programs are integrated into the models.

## 5. ACTION PROGRAMS

- Mark Adams asked if there were any questions regarding the Habitat and Development Classification maps.
- Tim Hall said he needed clarification on why the mapping only showed two classification zones on the creeks and three zones along the shoreline. This depiction of the zones was confusing.
- Mark Adams said the issue was one of finding an appropriate scale with which to depict the zoning. A significantly larger scale would be required to depict three zones along small creeks, resulting in a requirement for significantly more map sheets. The product on display had a scale of 1:2500 and encompassed fourteen mapsheets. However, the depiction of zones on small creeks would be reassessed.

**Action:** Envirowest to reassess the depiction of habitat classification zones on small creeks.

- Mark Adams said that discussion of Action Programs at the public workshop resulted in the development of the following list:
  - habitat and development classification;

- status of environmental quality - providing baseline information on issues such as contaminated sites, marshes, etc.;
  - biophysical inventory - providing information regarding physical and biological parameters;
  - public educations and stewardship - linked to existing stewardship initiatives;
  - exotic species management - such as purple loosestrife, cordgrass, and green crab;
  - dredging guidelines - dictating issues such as timing and appropriate dredge spoil sites;
  - log storage and handling guidelines;
  - water quality guidelines - e.g., septic systems, storm water conveyance;
  - publicly available database for scientific research;
  - local government fisheries strategy - linked to estuary species, e.g., herring;
  - area use designation - designation of shorelines in terms of uses; and
  - design guidelines based criteria for environmental sustainability - best management practices.
- Rob Russell said that restoration and enhancement opportunities and the issue of seal predation should be on the Action Program list.
  - Mark Adams said that restoration and enhancement opportunities was one of Envirowest's deliverables, and that it would be an Action Program. Marine mammal management would also be added to the list.

**Actions:**      1. Envirowest to Add restoration and enhancement opportunities to the Action Programs list.

                         2. Envirowest to add marine mammal management to the Action Programs list.

- Joel Clarkston said that Objective 2.3.1a refers to 'safe' levels. The standard for determining 'safe levels' should be defined.
- Mark Adams said that the issue of defining safe levels would be addressed in the Water Quality Action Program.

**Action:**      Envirowest to ensure that the water quality action program defines the phrase 'safe levels' and provide quantitative criteria in accordance with existing standards in British Columbia for human and non-human water use.

- Peter Law said that the determination of objectives and environmental quality indicators should be addressed.
- Mark Adams said that this would be part of the action program on the status of environmental quality

- Peter Law said that it was important to consider raising the standard for environmental quality objectives and to consider new and better indicators. These should address economic and social parameters as well as environmental parameters.
- John Marczyk requested that for the benefit of workshop participants who had to leave at 1230 hrs, Bruce MacDonald briefly review the next steps in the planning process.
- Bruce MacDonald said that there was uncertainty regarding what next steps would be taken to complete the plan. A draft Estuary Management Plan would be produced for March 31, 1999.
- Doug Bell and Peter Crawford left at 1235 hours.
- Tim Hall asked how Area Use Designation would be addressed.
- Mark Adams said that it had been a deliverable of Envirowest's contract, but was unachievable at this time. It would be addressed as an Action Program.
- Norm Reynolds said the implementation of a port authority should be considered in the Estuary Management Plan.
- Mark Adams said that what was needed was a coordinated strategy on issues such as shipping and bilge water for the entire Baynes Sound area.

**Action:** Envirowest to add study on function and feasibility of port authority to Action Programs list.

- Bill Heath said that typically, a threshold level of activity in an area triggered the implementation of a port authority. Would a port authority be viable in the Estuary Management Plan?
- Mark Adams said that the purpose of a port authority would be to provide for some kind of economic planning and management of wastes.
- Tim Hall asked if the Local Fisheries Strategy Action Program would include sport and recreational fishing?
- Mark Adams said that it would.
- Leslie MacDougall said that there should be a newsletter and related materials for the Estuary Management Plan.

**Action:** Envirowest to add communications strategy to the Action Programs list.

- Joel Clarkston asked who was going to pay for the implementation of the Estuary Management Plan?

- Mark Adams said that the Management Committee would have to decide on feasibility and funding.
- Peter Law said that the Cowichan River Estuary Management Plan program was funded by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. The Campbell River Estuary Management Plan program was paid for primarily by the municipal government, with some assistance from the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.
- Bill Heath said that it was important to recognize that there are parallel processes such as stream stewardship initiatives ongoing in the planning area. The Estuary Management Plan was not starting from a blank slate and should be designed to dovetail with these other initiatives.
- Tim Hall said that there should be a recreational plan for the estuary.

**Action:** Envirowest to add development of a recreational plan to the Action Program list.

- Karen Asp said there may be a need to identify action programs regarding agriculture in the planning area.
- Mark Adams said that farmland in the Courtenay Flats area suffered from serious drainage problems in part due to runoff from uphill developments. This was a real problem which could be addressed through an Action Program on drainage in the Courtenay Flats area. Another example of an action program was the development of agricultural practices guidelines regarding water quality and water use.

**Action:** Envirowest to add consideration of drainage issues in Courtenay Flats Area to Action Programs list and identify other possible agriculture related action programs.

- Peter Law asked if the proposed Wildlife Management Area process for the Courtenay River Estuary would be an action of the Estuary Management Plan.
- Mark Adams said that they were unrelated processes.

**The workshop was adjourned at 1250 hours.** John Marczyk thanked everyone for attending.



**Volume 2  
Consultation Process**

**Appendix C**

**October Open House**

# **Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan**

## **SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

**Public Open House  
Held on October 1, 1998**

Prepared for:

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA  
Habitat and Enhancement Branch**

South Coast Division  
3225 Stephenson Point Road  
Nanaimo, B.C.  
V9T 1K3

Prepared by:

**ECL ENVIROWEST CONSULTANTS LIMITED**

204-800 McBride Boulevard  
New Westminster, BC,  
V3L 2B8

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The first in a series of public open houses was held from 3:30 to 9:00 PM on Thursday October 1, 1998, at the Comox Indian Band Hall. The open house was promoted in a series of display advertisements in the Comox Valley Echo and Comox Valley Record, on the Shaw Cable 10 Community Calendar, and on posters placed in public venues in the community. In addition, notices were sent to everyone on the Preliminary Referral List for the Consultation Process.

The Open House display consisted of thirteen 24”x 36” full colour display boards focused on the Management Plan purpose and process, the Management Program concept, the proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives, and the Planning Area. Attendees were provided with a package containing the Consultation Process Framework document (Appendix 1), a reduced version of the display boards (Appendix 2), and the comment form (Appendix 3). Attendees were requested to fill out the comment form at tables provided in the venue, or to mail in their responses as soon as possible.

Seventy-four individuals (74) (excluding Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees) signed in at the Open House (Appendix 4). The majority of attendees (31 percent) reported affiliation with environmental or other public interest groups. Sixteen (16) percent reported affiliation with a business, business group, or labour organization. Government related affiliations were reported by 15 percent of attendees. Only 4 percent reported association with a recreational group. Thirty (30) percent of attendees did not specify an affiliation. Media representatives comprised 4 percent of attendees.

Thirty-eight (38) comment forms were submitted by attendees of the Public Open House. The compilation of responses is provided in Appendix 5. The summary of responses, presented in Section 2.0 below, focuses on identifying issues raised by respondents.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS**

### **2.1 Planning Area**

Respondents were asked if they had any comments regarding the planning area. Twenty-seven (27) responses to this question were submitted. Generally, the main focus of the responses concerned the scope of the planning area. Many respondents stated that the planning area should be expanded, encompassing areas further up river, south to Union Bay and east to Point Holmes. One respondent, however, was surprised by the extent of the planning area, noting that the owners of the Superstore would not expect their land to fall within the Estuary Management Plan area. Also on the theme of scope, some respondents commented that human activities in watercourses upstream of the planning area, and in marine areas adjacent to the planning area, have impacts on the health of the estuary, yet are beyond the scope of the Estuary Management Plan as defined by the planning area.

Some other concerns included lack of information about the rationale for the proposed planning area and lack of involvement on the part of Royston residents. One respondent noted that his family has owned the land at the mouth of the Trent River since the 1890's and that he wants to entrust it to the "proper group" for environmental conservation purposes.

## **2.2 Vision Statement**

In two separate questions, respondents were asked to identify what they liked and what they disliked about the Vision Statement. Many respondents provided comment under both categories. Twenty-six (26) responses expressed satisfaction with all or part of the Vision, describing it with phrases such as it is "fair", "easy to remember", couched in "attractive language", "comprehensive", captures the "essence", and provides a "foundation". Twenty comments (20) identified aspects of the Vision that respondents disliked. Some respondents felt that the language of the Vision was not strong enough to adequately conserve and enhance the environmental values of the estuary. As well, words such as "minimize" and "productive" were interpreted by some as signals of ongoing or increased development in the estuary. In contrast, 2 respondents felt the Vision was too strongly worded in favour of environmental protection at the expense of human activity.

## **2.3 Goals**

In two separate questions, respondents were asked to identify what they liked and disliked about the Goals. Twenty-five (25) comments were submitted regarding what respondents liked about the proposed Goals, and twenty-six (26) comments focused on dislikes. Many respondents provided responses to both questions. Many respondents stated that they liked the goal of conservation and enhancement; some also stated that this goal should be prioritized above all other goals. The goal of encouraging activities that protected and enhanced the estuary was also identified by many as satisfactory. Considerable attention was paid to the two goals in which the terms "recognize" and "economic" were used. Respondents felt that these goals were poorly worded, or, more directly, that these goals should prohibit or constrain economic activity so that it conforms with environmental priorities for the estuary.

## **2.4 Objectives**

In two separate questions, respondents were asked to identify what they liked and disliked about the Objectives. Twenty-six (26) comments were submitted regarding what respondents liked about the proposed Objectives, and thirty-two (32) comments focused on dislikes. Many respondents provided responses to both questions. Generally, respondents liked the objectives for conservation and enhancement. However, some had concerns regarding the statement that habitat lost as a result of human activity would be replaced, describing it as 'misleading', and countering with arguments such as 'habitat loss is not a rare event', and 'habitat replacement is impossible'. Another significant issue identified by many respondents was that the objective of 'multiple-use' would lead

to the predominance of economic activities over environmental conservation and enhancement. Respondents also expressed concern regarding the absence of a decision-making role for the public in the objectives.

## **2.5 Additional Comments**

Respondents provided an additional thirty-two (32) comments on a range of issues. These include:

- greater public involvement in the planning process, particularly in the Advisory Committee;
- greater public involvement in the implementation of the Management Plan;
- making conservation the priority of the Management Plan;
- need for a baseline biophysical study;
- greater public/pedestrian access to the estuary foreshore;
- choice of a Lead Agency/Environmental Review Committee with power to act for benefit of the estuarine environment;
- availability of government resources to implement the Management Plan; and
- phasing out of heavy industry, with low impact industries acceptable.

**Appendix 1**

***Consultation Framework***  
**Public Open House (October 1, 1998)**

# PROPOSED COURTENAY RIVER ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN

## CONSULTATION PROCESS FRAMEWORK<sup>1</sup>

September, 1998

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1997 a problem-solving committee of the Comox Valley Watershed Assembly released their final recommendations to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) on strategies to protect endangered salmon stocks in the Courtenay River. Key among their recommendations was for DFO to work with local governments to develop a management plan for the estuary. Based on this recommendation, DFO has initiated the proposed Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan.

The intent of this document is to provide all participants in the consultation process for the Management Plan with information regarding the consultation process framework.

### 1.2 Management Plan Terms of Reference

The purpose of the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan, as stated in Terms of Reference developed by an Interim Steering Committee<sup>2</sup> is to guide habitat restoration, human activity and economic development in the Courtenay River Estuary, and define a framework for on-going, coordinated management of activities in the estuary, giving high priority to the health of the estuary and its living resources.

Further, the Terms of Reference identify the following objectives for the Management Plan:

- define a common vision for the estuary;
- establish long term goals for human activities in the estuary;
- recognize the long-term socio-economic needs of the community as these relate to land and water use decisions;
- identify opportunities for restoration of degraded habitats and protection of existing functional habitats;
- consult the public and all stakeholders in the estuary through an open process;
- produce a long range strategy to guide development decisions within the planning area with intent to manage and mitigate against negative impacts on water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife habitat; and
- develop goals and actions to address the themes of:
  - environmental protection (e.g., water quality; fish and wildlife habitat); and

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<sup>1</sup> Appendices not included.

<sup>2</sup> An Interim Steering Committee was formed in September 1997 to develop Terms of Reference for the Management Plan and oversee the hiring of a consultant to develop the plan. Members of the committee included representatives from: the City of Courtenay; Town of Comox; Regional District of Comox-Strathcona; Comox Indian Band; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks; and Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- human activity (e.g., navigation and dredging; urban and commercial development).

## **2.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS**

The consultation process has been designed to achieve the objective of conducting an open and inclusive process, as identified in the Terms of Reference for the proposed Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan.

### **2.1 Participation**

To ensure that all stakeholders and members of the public are consulted, five types of participation activities will be pursued.

- an advisory committee comprised of major government stakeholders in the estuary

This forum will provide major government stakeholders the opportunity to confer at key stages in the development of the Management Plan and provide advice pertaining to their respective mandates.

- a referral process for circulation of components of draft Management Plan

The referral process will provide an opportunity for active, ongoing participation for individuals and organizations willing and able to respond in a timely manner to draft components of the Management Plan.

- three public open houses and a final public presentation

Three open house events and a final public presentation/meeting are planned to provide for public comment on the Management Plan at key stages in its development.

- workshops on habitat classification and area use designation

Two issue specific workshops on Habitat Classification and Area Use Designation will seek ideas, issues and concerns from key government agencies, organizations and individuals representative of the demographics of the region.

- one-on-one consultations as required

These events will focus on negotiations with key government agencies and stakeholders, particularly regarding Habitat Classification, Area Use Designation and the Estuary Management Program/Framework.

### **2.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

- Generally, the role of participants in the consultation process will be to provide factual information, and to consider and comment on the Management Plan in terms of the interests and values they hold and/or represent.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is the contract authority, and is responsible for overseeing the performance of the consultant.
- The Advisory Committee is responsible for providing the consultant with advice and information regarding government agency policy, legislative authority, and decision-making capacity.
- The consultant is responsible for developing and recommending a Management Plan for the Courtenay River Estuary in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

### **2.3 Decisions**

- Consensus will be pursued on specific elements of the Management Plan, including Habitat Classification, Area Use Designation and the Management Program/Framework.

### **2.4 Information**

- Draft components of the Management Plan will be deposited at public venues in the Comox Valley for access by members of the public
- The proceedings of open houses, workshops, one-on-one meetings and Advisory Committee meetings will be circulated among attendees and will be available to the public during the consultation process. All submissions received during the process will be included in the Final Report.

### **2.5 Media**

- The consultant will function as a general media contact.

### **2.6 Time Frame**

- The time frame for the consultation process is Spring 1998 to Spring 1999.

### **2.7 Final Report and Meeting**

- A final report on the consultation proceedings will be prepared in conjunction with the final draft of the proposed Management Plan. The final report will document any outstanding conflicts, and will include all correspondence and correspondence activities.
- The final draft of the Management Plan will be presented at a public meeting.

**Appendix 2**  
***Display Boards***  
**Public Open House (October 1, 1998)**

**(unavailable online)**

**Appendix 3**

***Comment Form***

**Public Open House (October 1, 1998)**

**Proposed Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan**

**PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE - OCTOBER 1, 1998**

**COMMENT FORM**

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**Thank you for attending the open house today. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans would appreciate your comments on the materials presented at this event.**

1. Do you have any comments regarding the **Planning Area** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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2. What do you **like** about the proposed **Vision** statement for the Estuary Management Plan?

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3. What do you **dislike** about the proposed **Vision** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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4. What do you **like** about the proposed **Goals** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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5. What do you **dislike** about the proposed **Goals** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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**...OVER**

6. What do you **like** about the proposed **Objectives** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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7. What do you **dislike** about the proposed **Objectives** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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8. Additional comments:

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If you need more room for comments, please help yourself to blank paper and staple the extra sheet to this form.

Please give us your address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your comments. If you wish additional information, or would like to mail your comments to us, please contact:

Ms. Karen Asp  
Research and Communications Coordinator

**Visit the Project Website**  
**<http://habitat.pac.dfo.ca/cremp/home.html>**

ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited  
204 - 800 McBride Blvd.  
New Westminster, BC, V3L 2B8  
Ph: (604) 521-6500; Fx: (604) 521-2208

**Appendix 4**

***Sign-in Sheet Summary***

Public Open House (October 1, 1998)

<b>TOTAL SIGNED-IN</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>TOTAL EXCLUDING DFO EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>74</b>

**REPORTED AFFILIATION (excluding DFO employees)**

**Government/Related [15%]**

Ministry of Agriculture and Food	1
Ministry of Environment Wetlands Program	1
Islands Trust	1
Regional District Comox-Strathcona	3
Town of Comox	2
Comox Valley Harbour Authority	1
School District 71	1
BC Hydro	1

**Media [4%]**

Comox Valley Echo	1
Comox Valley Record	1
CKLR 97.3 fm	1

**Environmental Organizations/Programs [19%]**

CV Naturalists Society	6
CV Environmental Council	1
Tsolum River Task Force	1
Millard/Piercy Stream Stewardship	1
Wildwood Watershed Society	1
Courtenay Fish and Game Society	1
CV Project Watershed Society	2
CV Waterfowl Management Project	1

**Recreational [4%]**

Komoux Valley Paddlers	2
Canadian Power and Sail Squadron	1

**Business/Labour [16%]**

Comox Valley Economic Development Society	1
IWA Canada 363	1
Envirochem	1
Thomas Dishlevoy Architecture	1
Field Sawmills	1
BC Shellfish Growers Assoc.	1
Affinity 1 Sunstar Yachts Ltd.	2
Courtenay Airpark Association	2
United Fishermen and Allied Workers	1
Strait Oysters Ltd	1

**Other Public Interest Groups [12%]**

Comox Town Residents Association	5
Area B Rural Residents Association	1
Area B Advisory Planning Committee	1
McDonald Wood Park Society	1
Raging Grannies	1

**No Affiliation Specified [30%]**

no affiliation specified	22
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**Appendix 5**

***Compilation of Responses***  
**Public Open House (October 1, 1998)**

### **Question 1. Do you have any comments regarding the Planning Area for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- Makes sense but raises issue of relationship to adjacent waters (e.g. Baynes Sound) and marine planning for Georgia Strait.
- Support Planning Area.
- I do not want the land at the mouth of the Trent River disturbed in any way. This land has been in the family since the 1890's. I would like it set up in trust by the proper group to protect its natural state.
- O.K.
- Keep it as intact and wild as possible so it can do its job for the wildlife and pure pleasure in its simplicity as it is. Set zoning so existing businesses conform but cannot be replaced.
- No.
- Activities in and around all the creeks and rivers entering the estuary will have significant impact on the health of the estuary - can the scope of the planning area be expanded to include these watercourses?
- I believe the bluffs should be within the planning boundaries as the Willemar Bluffs feed the Goose Spit.
- The Planning Area does not seem to encompass the entire watershed.
- Not really, except that the rivers, streams and watercourses feeding in, and the marine area to the south, have a rather profound influence on the estuary ecosystems. There should be some recognition of this.
- While I am pleased with the Area generally, I do wonder what local representation from the Royston area is involved. There is a local initiative to 'develop' the Shell Pier for parks/rec activity - is this being considered?
- Who is going to guide activities within the estuary? Why not no new development? So many groups advising each other? Integrated decisions?
- No.
- I don't understand the basis for the boundary: some parts seem very arbitrary. Does it include the entire tidal zone up to the Puntledge and Tsolum R.? Does it include all of the 100 year floodplain? It should.
- Area covered O.K.
- It seems to cover the area wholly comprising the C.R. estuary.
- The river which, to all intents, is dead as a fish habitat, is still central to most of any plans dealing with the Planning Area.
- It takes in considerably more land than most of the public would expect. Superstore would not be perceived as being included in this plan.
- Seems about right. However, an overall plan for the entire river system i.e. freshwater estuary, should be developed in the future since what happens upstream may affect the estuary - it is all one system.
- I think its important that it go upriver as far as possible and also to the outside boundaries of the harbour. Recognition that the Courtenay River estuary is part of the estuarine system of Baynes Sound as a whole would help us more toward integrated planning for the whole of

Baynes Sound. The area should go at least to the hydro dam, since this is one of the biggest impacts on the river, fish, etc.

- Should have included further upstream.
- Great.
- Good.
- Planning Area quite good but should include more of river and creek valleys.
- It is virtually impossible to deal with our estuary in isolation, without acknowledging the multitude of mistakes and abuses perpetrated upon this fragile treasure in the past, - ever since white “civilization” arrived here 136 years ago last month. Unless we make a start and continue correcting the butchery both in the watershed above the estuary, and the estuary itself, nothing much will change. You have produced a flossy Chamber of Commerce type plan, which on the one hand espouses lofty goals, but then goes on to indicate the estuary should be “managed” - sort of suggesting more developments, - but all sensitive to the environment, of course...! “multi-use” is the door opening for more scams.
- I was a bit surprised that the area did not extend farther up the Puntledge and Tsolum rivers - where agriculture, logging, mining and other activities which have a continuing affect on the lower estuary.
- None of the material I saw at this Open House describes the basis for the Planning Area. I’ve heard it’s the limits of the 200 year flood plain. I’ve also heard it was defined by group process and agreement. My concern is: could or do the waters south of the defined planning boundary influence the planning area via currents and tidal flows? Of particular concern are marine industry and sewage outfalls from Pt Holmes and L. River, etc.
- The area should go a bit farther than Copeman Creek and should go to Point Holmes.
- Great but should continue down to Union Bay.
- Looks fine.

## **Question 2. What do you like about the proposed Vision statement for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- Warm and fuzzy!
- Like Vision statement although somewhat ambiguous - needs clear statement of environmental value.
- Controls the Environment in a fair way.
- I like it except note that currently the Estuary is not natural - dredging, riprap, industry etc. And I’m not sure how productive it is - not productive for salmon at least.
- It is a foundation to start with. Management of Human activities to minimize impacts on ecosystems.
- The idea of placing the integrity of the ecosystem above human values. This places the cart behind the horse where it belongs.
- O.K. - motherhood.
- The Vision doesn’t correspond well with excluding the Willemar Bluffs from the Plan. I believe decisions should be ecosystem-based.
- It is a statement that is easy to remember - it is short, concise and seems to be to the point.

- Recognizes the need to manage and minimize human impact on the Estuary.
- Goals to conserve and enhance, maintain health of the estuary and habitat.
- Vision statement for the most part reflects what public wants. But “minimize impacts” is suspect. The door will be opened for all kinds of industrial uses.
- Mentions, plants, fish, wildlife and people.
- The Vision statement reflects the views of those of us who wish to protect the health of the estuary. However, is this statement possible to achieve in the context of the other statements?
- I like the statement about minimize impacts and restore historical elements of the system.
- The Vision is couched in attractive language.
- It has a noble sounding ring to it.
- The statement appears to capture the essence of what is needed.
- It is comprehensive in that it allow consideration of all factors impacting the environment. It does not give priority to economic activity.
- Short and easily understood - almost a logo so general public can quickly understand the foundation of the Plan.
- Protection of the ecosystem - fragile and irreplaceable as it is.
- Human activities to be minimized. Produce a natural and productive estuarine area.
- The first sentence is good. The second sentence destroys the promise of the first.
- Last sentence - “people” does not refer to sawmills, marinas, etc.
- Everything about protecting the estuary is right on. But then comes the suggestion that some developments can be considered. You are attempting to deal with what was originally one of the most abundant productive estuaries on the Pacific Coast, which has suffered unbelievable mis-management. If your plan does not call for rehabilitation, then you would do better to state plainly “hands off”.
- The notion of incorporating the element of timelessness is a good way of looking at a vision statement. Everything in life is in a constant state of flux, just as the waters of the estuary ebb and flow. As our abilities to ascertain the impacts of various activities and comprehend the complexities of the interaction of the various elements of an ecosystem improve, so should our ability to ensure the integrity of the natural ecosystem improves, so that all elements can survive.
- I think it’s great if it works.
- I heartily support the focus on and priority of the natural ecosystem. This must be the No. 1 priority.

### **Question 3. What do you dislike about the proposed Vision for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- Warm and fuzzy!! It’s fine as Vision statements go.
- “Minimize” impacts - No impacts.
- Ambiguous as to how productive relates to people - productive in fish? or does this include industry?
- I would not like this plan to be so rigid as to stop reasonable industrial growth (light industry) or (marinas).

- Nothing.
- I would like the Vision to reflect the idea that a very small percentage of the planet is estuary. We should protect this area from development because we have so little estuary habitat on the planet.
- I don't like wording that links "productive" with "people". There is too much implication of exploitation for human uses.
- Perhaps too little recognition of the possible human activities on the Estuary, such as park and recreational development of the Shell Pier in Royston. Not all human activities mean degrading the estuary.
- How do "you" propose to "manage to minimize impacts to the integrity of the ecosystem"? Think! Before multiple uses within the estuary - sounds like anything is possible. Equates opportunity?
- No real protection of natural assets. Language of protection not strong enough.
- "Program will not introduce further regulatory encumbrances" seems to indicate a plan with no teeth. The "Vision" seems rather cloudy. "The proposed Vision is timeless..."??? Suggest we will have to wait a long time for action? The identified statement ("a natural and productive estuary") is not a sentence so it is difficult to understand the meaning of it.
- You can't manage human activities.
- Possible development of pier on Dyke Road where helicopter fuel is now being unloaded (loaded?) onto a barge (pollution of estuary very possible).
- The "Vision" is just that, visionary, i.e. no meat or bones.
- Heavily biased towards the purely natural, portraying a zero growth/development attitude, generated in an idealistic vacuum - how can human values be ignored when we have all chosen to live here?
- Too vague. Sounds like it was intended not to offend anyone and at the same time doesn't say anything.
- Feel we need to stress reclamation as well. Check for "hot spots" on estuary, i.e. faecal count, erosion of lands and foreshore, effluent build up from Field Sawmill and the resulting fir chips altering water flow and natural plant life of estuary.
- Nothing.
- The Vision should state: preservation and restoration of the whole estuary (planning area) are the only objectives for this Estuary Plan if its to be credible.
- It is all airy-fairy motherhood stuff. If you had to deal with the local operators and entrepreneurs as long as we have, then you would realize there is nothing they will not tell us or do to make off with the resources of this valley for their own use. We have been snowed, conned, brushed off and lied to repeatedly. If this Management Plan is to be of any use at all, rather than to open the door for further mischief - it requires firm goals. Trying to please everyone won't work, and will only result in further deterioration. And you should consider the Purple Loosestrife weed, which is going to choke out natural vegetation.
- For 5 years, the citizens of the Comox Valley have been involved in land use planning. At every turn, we have been told that the human community cannot co-exist with the wildlife community. Every effort has been focussed on drawing the distinction in land use patterns that prevent the co-mingling of the two competing communities. This Vision appears to be the antithesis. It is obvious from the map that the human element is not going to disappear

from the estuary, but this Vision does not recognize the notion of the incompatible mix and the need for extreme mitigation measures of human activities for the preservation of the natural ecosystem. Placing “people” on an equal footing with “plants”, “fish”, and “wildlife” in this Vision is a sure recipe for the demise of the natural environment. It would be false to suggest that no matter what human values are placed on the estuary, the integrity of the natural ecosystem can be preserved and enhanced, without including in the Vision some recognition for the requirement to restrict and regulate human activity. Also, could we please have a full statement here, including a verb.

- Nothing, as a paddler, and user of the estuary.
- “productive for people”?
- Nothing, as long as it continues to give priority to nature over human activities.

#### **Question 4. What do you like about the proposed Goals for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- Fine.
- That conserving and enhancing for plants, fish and wildlife is first - could this be clearly made a priority?
- The plan to coordinate all groups into one overall body so there is no confusion between groups and who has the final say, fisheries versus Environment, Water Resources Branch, government, and so on.
- I like the 1st and 3rd goals.
- All of them, the last most. I.E. long term needs and water use issues.
- The focus on conservation and protection.
- There are too many escape words i.e. “may”.
- I like all of the goals, but as I read through the whole package, I can’t help but wonder how Field Sawmill and the cement plant owners are feeling about the futures. Do they have one?
- “Conserve and enhance”.
- Goals 1 and 3 are great statements. Goals 2 and 4 need more definition and detail as to intent.
- Recognition of human influence and community as well as natural habitat.
- Motherhood.
- Goals 1 and 3. But are they achievable without extensive monitoring.
- I can’t seem to pick any holes in it!
- Just that the goals are great.
- “Conserve and recognize” will contribute to the welfare of the community.
- Seems to limit the scope of human activity.
- That it will recognize the economic impact of industry in the estuary.
- Like - recognition of socio/economic/environmental importance - encouraging low impact environmentally friendly business will ultimately bring us more economic benefit than letting any more commercial or industrial businesses develop.
- Conserve and enhance.
- The first two goals are good.

- Conservation foremost - which should also go farther and include rehabilitation, - like sawmill relocating, dredging ceased, Airpark re-located (it's a micky mouse thing anyway, a disaster waiting to happen, and a total misuse of estuarine land. It used to be a salt marsh. For years the city trucks hauled old cement foundations, broken sidewalks, and old asphalt down there, then spread with a bulldozer now and then to create the runway. Then they rip-rapped the boundaries to contain the river. I saw it all happen, talk about dumb!)
- Goal # 1 - As humans, we can insure the conservation and enhancement of the quality of the estuary for our benefit. It is important to state this goal for those elements of the estuary which are at the mercy of the human element.
- These goals sound good to me.
- Suggestion that plants, fish and wildlife have priority.

### **Question 5. What do you dislike about the proposed Goals for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- Economic aspect will be contentious.
- The use of the word "enhancement" - it's hubris and an affront to the Creator.
- Again ambiguous as regards socio-economic needs - does this mean industrial development? Estuary has already been degraded - environmental factors most important - plants, fish, wildlife.
- The possibility of regulating my farming practices and public interference with my animals, dogs, motor bikes etc.
- I have problems with the term "economic". I need clearly stated "sustainable economic needs". The primary goal must be protection of the estuary. they are a tiny percentage of the land/water area of the planet. Can you document what percentage of land/water is classified estuary?
- Lack of enforceability.
- There is no mention of the possibility of ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration.
- I think we should not encourage economic activity in the estuary.
- I don't see anything discouraging or preventing human activities that are not appropriate.
- No need to encourage!
- Goals 2 and 4 need more definition and detail as to intent. Also, who is going to do all of this and on what budget?
- No verbs that imply action. Very soft, wishy-washy statements.
- Too vague - esp. long term socio-economic use - could mean anything to anyone.
- Use of the word 'recognize'.
- No real plans for rehabilitation of the estuary.
- Encourage and recognize are unachievable within this vision - name one human activity that will enhance the environmental quality of the estuary.
- Gives a huge loop hole to which would allow anyone to argue in favour of almost any activity based on "socio-economic needs of the community".
- It needs to stress the importance of reclamation and mitigation for areas of the estuary already stressed/endangered. Note: resident on Dyke Road (Comox Rd) states there are gas tanks still

in the ground from when a gas station operated near where the boat weighs now are. Need reference (i.e. commitment) to educating public.

- Concern about the possibility of major compromise under the guise of economic.
- The last goal has no place in this estuary plan. The industry/job situation allows the sawmill to remain in a location which is damaging to whole estuary and part of the Courtenay River.
- Economic activities in estuary should be kept to a minimum - they would seem to be counter productive to Vision.
- Encouraging “human activities” which “protect and enhance environmental. quality” - whatever that means. Our estuary has suffered from a lot too much “enhancing” already. Mistakes and pollution. One aspect you could stress is that the three marinas (Slough, on the river, and the big one at Comox) do not provide holding tank facilities - so they are all using the estuary as a big toilet bowl - to say nothing of all the toxics going in. It’s years since we could eat the shellfish in the estuary and Comox Bay. Everywhere you look, we are destroying our own life support systems.
- Re: Goal #2 - There needs to be an inclusion in this goal that recognizes the estuary’s role in the environmental well-being of the Comox Valley. Re: Goal #3 - Part of the environmental quality of the estuary may be seen as its ability to easily accommodate industry. Therefore, I cannot support this goal, as it is now written. If the intent was to direct human activities to protect and enhance the natural environment, as opposed to the human-built environment, then it should be more clear. Re: Goal #4 - This appears to leave the door wide open to give priority to decisions that do not consider the overall best interests of the estuary as a whole. By giving socio-economic needs of the community, out of context of the overall ecosystem, we could inadvertently damage other aspects of the estuary - and thus, a conflict with the first goal would be created, and, as well, the original intent to serve the needs of the community could eventually be thwarted. We need a goal that recognizes the need to conserve and enhance the natural environment for the long term benefit of the socio-economic and environmental needs of the community. We need to give priority to the natural environment’s conservation and enhancement and all actions would flow from that. then, if there is a conflict, mitigation or prohibition would be the requirement.
- Nothing, if they can be accomplished.
- The last goal could override the others. Economics must NOT be a factor.
- sounds like too many opportunities for interpretations which will allow human activities to take priority. Human activity must be recreational and have no negative impact on the plants, fish and wildlife.

### **Question 6. What do you like about the proposed Objectives for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- O.K.
- 1,2,5,6,8,9 - support these.
- To keep human activities from impacting the ecosystem.
- I like the first page of objectives.
- All the objectives stated look great.
- Good - net gain!

- Essential to have integrated decision making process with all agencies working together.
- Conserve and make estuary a recreation and wildlife zone. No marine industry in estuary.
- They are supportable.
- They all seem like laudable objectives, and nice to see.
- 1st page sounds good “conserving and enhancing the estuary”.
- Page 1 statement in para. 1 is O.K. Page 2 Mixed uses if compatible could be O.K. Monitoring is essential. Who will do it? On what budget?
- I like consensus-based decision process but don’t see it as an objective. Monitoring and review of management, progress, etc. Promoting partnership, stewardship in estuary management. Conserve and enhance habitat (although an objective for this is not clear).
- Like conserve and enhance habitat section - hope it’s not wishful thinking.
- In general terms the objectives sound as if they could be achievable. Industrial uses should be restricted to the shell fish industry and marine related business.
- The concern over the conservation and health of the estuary.
- Conserving and maintaining the health of the estuary is a fair statement of intent.
- “Health” should be paramount in any alteration to habitat.
- The statement “waste from...etc.” would be an argument to clean up the estuary (control stormwater, septic sewage etc.) to the point that the water is of approved shell fish growing standards (“safe for plants, wildlife and people”).
- Recognition of multiple uses.
- Like - establish and maintain informed management processes which recognizes importance of keeping public informed. The statement under Conserve and Enhance “replaced with greater quantity...”
- Good.
- Equitable access to estuary. Develop active partnership with public.
- Not strong enough to save our estuary and contradictory statements hard to find anything to praise without qualification.
- Conserve etc. When you say “maintain”, I gather you think the Estuary is in pretty fair shape now - which it isn’t. Para. 2 - Waste from human activities MUST not exceed safe levels etc. (The shellfish harvest ban is in effect for good reason.) And wood waste from the mill and booms lines the river and ocean floor with goop. As to replacement following loss of human activity, perhaps you know where to find such replacement? There is a 25.5 acre Provincial Greenbelt below Field’s Mill on the river, which needs careful watching - in case the City decides to “re-zone” it. It is definitely not “up for grabs”.
- Re: conserving and enhancing: it is good that it recognizes the deleterious effects of human activity and plans to restrict and mitigate. Re: integrated management: it is good to require accessing and using best available knowledge and keeping the public ‘in the know’. Re: fairness, equity and accountability: cooperation and working toward agreement is a noble aspiration. This will work toward promoting stewardship within agencies, as well as with the public. Also, accountability and monitoring management is good, but...
- I like the objectives.
- Priority for fish, wildlife, plants.

**Question 7. What do you dislike about the proposed Objectives for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- All the arguments will converge on multi-use.
- Multiple uses - this concept always falls to the most damaging.
- 3 and 4 are ambiguous - could open door to many uses - needs clarification.
- I worry about the lack of enforcement in regard to human waste. It would be nice to be able to eat the oysters in front of my place again. Clams too.
- What are safe levels?
- I'm concerned that 2nd page - Integrated Management - says "environmental, economic and recreational uses should be a priority over exclusive uses"(as practical, whatever that means?). Conservation is the best exclusive use of the estuary. 3rd objective - last sentence - "All interested parties, and the public are to be informed and advised..." It sounds like a one-way street to inform us, but not to give public opinion any weight. Can this be rectified in any way?
- Promoting integrated decision-making seems like the status quo. Where is the public's role at the decision-making table? I am skeptical about the concept of "multiple use" in light of its failure within the realm of forestry.
- Multiple use is not compatible with fish and wildlife. Just "inform" the public? Make them part of the process.
- The danger of single uses taking precedence - in most instances human activity wings out over habitat protection. "Where consensus is not achieved each agency shall exercise its mandate, where appropriate" - this sounds very difficult.
- Restore the health of the estuary. Limit noise pollution. We should actively work toward not letting our waste enter the estuary. "Rare event that habitat is lost due to human activity"!! This is not a rare event. Replacing a wetland or estuary is more difficult than it seems.
- They are supportable.
- Not at all clear as to how the rest of the objectives will achieve those on first page of objectives.
- Page 1 statement in para. 2 re "rare event...what was lost" is appalling. Page 2, para 2. The public must be involved, not just the agencies and local politicians. The public needs to be involved in decision-making, not just "informed and advised".
- How much access is "equitable"? 'Multiple use' not connected to principle of preservation and restoration of critical habitat. To restore ecological function, habitat values need to be given precedence; industrial facilities can be moved to less critical sites. % of them are about process not objective. Concept of health of the estuary is a function of control of human waste disposal seems to ignore habitat - population ecology.
- Multiple uses - "may" in last sentence is a weasel word - 'must' is much better.
- The objectives are not easy to respond to as there aspects built in which I dislike. There is an element of development which appears to be allowable if there is consensus. What is there to manage if we leave it alone to be natural habitat?
- I dislike the cop out that habitats "could be lost". Don't tempt fate.
- The last statement has no ring of truth for a society intent on the short term gain.
- Habitats lost should not be acceptable options. Habitat re-shaped should be the goal.
- Greater emphasis on habitat conservation needed - the priority suggested for multiple uses seems inconsistent with this. I suspect that habitat loss will be more than a 'rare' event.

- The suggestion that loss of habitat to human activity can be mitigated by replacement is very misleading.
- That if consensus based decision-making doesn't happen, individual agencies would basically do as their mandate says doesn't solve anything.
- Encourage multiple uses, especially recreation - would like to see non-motorized recreation only allowed in mouth of river - encourage canoes and kayaks.
- None.
- "Conserve and maintain" should be replaced by "improve" the health of the estuary. What are "safe levels" for human waste and pollution in this habitat? it is almost impossible to "replace with greater quantity" habitats that are lost.
- The implication that economic activities will be taken for granted in estuary - maybe they should be eliminated as much as possible. It appears that more than a method of maintaining these is required.
- "Conserve and maintain" implies that things are just fine as long as we keep them as they are. I would have been happier with wording that would indicate a willingness to enhance the health of the estuary which appears to have suffered degradation through human activity.
- Re: conserving and enhancing - Only fear is "the rare event" - prefer to see a "prohibition against" and "penalty imposed" rather than viewed as "negotiation tool". Re: integrating management - Not clear language. What are "environmental uses"? It doesn't seem feasible to aspire to conserve natural habitats with a desire to develop industry, housing, commerce at the same time and place. Having said that, if a housing complex were built next to industry, we might expect a more cautious industry. Also, we already have all the elements within the estuary. Is that the mix? If so, not a great aspiration to the "status quo"! Re: fairness, equity and accountability: who is going to monitor and be accountable with respect to overall management of the estuary? This should be spelled out within the objective. Re: equitable access: since when does a park or conservation area have to prove its economic sustainability?
- They need to be a lot more hard-hitting if your work is not to be another expensive exercise in futility. The last thing we need is to have "multiple uses" encouraged within the estuary. We have lost several million per year in fish value through hopeless mis-use of the estuary. And then you suggest "harbour facilities" for Gawd's sake. You are opening the door for more and worse treatment than we have already experienced. Already, defending the estuary from the ignorant sharks around here takes an abnormal amount of our time and energy. There have been two or three excellent estuary studies on our estuary, and I hope you have copies - Wolf Bauer, Ted Burns, and Norma Morton. District people have always treated the estuary as a big mud-hole which needs altering to be useful...
- I would like to see the word "should" changed to 'will' in "Waste from human activity in and around the estuary **will** not exceed safe levels for plants, fish, wildlife and people." In "Conserve and Enhance Habitat": Once habitats are lost to human activity, it is virtually impossible to replace them. Everything should be attempted not to lose them in the first place.
- Too many/conflicting/unrealistic.
- Sounds like too many opportunities for interpretations which will allow human activities to take priority. Human activity must be recreational and have no negative impact on the plants, fish and wildlife.

## Additional Comments

- Process notes inspired me for another project that has been giving trouble. Perhaps this structure should be more widely applied to interagency multi-interest issues. The Vision, Goals and Objectives are better crafted than most.
- The only objective/goal should be the preservation and restoration of the natural integrity of the estuary. Period.. We came here 10, 100, 10,000 years ago because of the natural bounty of the estuary. We have not honoured this bounty. Any use/activity that does not protect this bounty should take place elsewhere. That the Plan is based on Fraser River is a serious flaw - the Fraser River is so much larger and more resilient than Courtenay R.
- The only concern I have about the planning process is that the public will be involved only at a 'what do you think of this idea' level. I have been a commercial fisherman and outdoor ed. teacher (i.e. an educator) and yet the only way I can participate will be to comment on someone else's plan. Usually the options by this time have been narrowed down and generally agreed upon by the mentioned government and user groups. My understanding was the (article in the paper) impression that the public could have a greater impact.
- Environmental protection and enhancement is of prime importance. No more industrial development in estuary. Very important estuary, not only to the Comox Valley.
- Re: your 4th panel - Project Review - Environmental Review Committee must include members of citizens and/or non-profit organizations. I strongly suggest a 50% representation of non-regulatory agency bodies, i.e. direct representation of public interest groups - non-economic. Of course the current Advisory Committee also has this problem as well. How is this CREMP coordinated with the Marine Protected Areas strategy of LUCO? We need an objective about relocating industry.
- I would like to see public consultation replaced by shared decision-making.
- Where is public participation in or at the decision-making level? No industry zoning in the estuary.
- Choice of Lead Agency in Project Review process very significant. Great need for Environmental Review Committee to have "teeth" and to be able to act other than in just an advisory capacity. In order to determine if the health of the estuary is deteriorating or being enhanced, it will be necessary to do a detailed baseline study so that conditions as they exist today are known - are there plans or funding to conduct such an inventory?
- I hope we take this opportunity to preserve the natural values of our estuary. I would like to see more of the foreshore accessible to foot traffic and non-motorized transport. The salmon stocks of BC's most endangered rivers depend on the productivity and refuge available in this estuary.
- Statements such as "waste should not exceed safe levels for plants, animals, people" are self-evident and one wonders as to why they are needed. There is an implication that only Government stakeholders have a real voice.
- There needs to be a description of the present "baseline" condition of the estuary. Following this, a positive statement of enhancement objectives is needed. This aspect could be one of the objectives. I would like to see mention of visual integrity of the estuary. It should look natural as well as being natural (remove all inappropriate structures, maintain natural area buffer zones, etc.)

- Is the Indian Band involved fully since their use on the uplands can and will dramatically and directly affect the estuary? the Project Review seems to ignore local government involvement completely. Will the CREMP and its Environmental Review Committee override local government decision-making? The “slight” recognition of economic uses in the estuary makes me nervous. does this allow for future Field Sawmills or, does it suggest Fields will be “run-out” of the estuary at the 1st possible chance? I mostly have concerns about the involvement of local Royston representatives who have plans that can and will directly affect the Plan Area. I anyone aware?
- Please go easy. Error on the side of conservatism.
- Government agencies are currently understaffed and under-budgeted. Will Agencies have the resources to implement and monitor any of the proposals for the estuary.
- “in the rare event that habitats are lost due to human activity”? How long has the consultant been in Courtenay? When will this state be achieved? How do we change current development practices to stop filling in the estuary and start reclaiming it?
- Imperative that the public (the taxpayers) be involved.
- This is too late to change the Comox Council decision on floating buildings - a decision made in spite of much opposition. Pollution within the Estuary Plan Area will be difficult. It is good to know that steps are being taken to protect the health of the estuary.
- It is encouraging to see a management plan is up and going at last.
- To bring all of this high sounding plan to fruition will require a core of dedicated individuals with the power to act decisively.
- I am concerned that strongly lobbied, very intrusive uses will detract from the potential for more pedestrian community friendly developments. I believe that waterfront “industry” is no longer necessary, but our social need to interact along the water is stronger than ever.
- The proposal as presented seems like a good start to developing a management framework.
- I’m very concerned that the new “marine/industrial” zoning will prejudice the outcome of this process. Too many of the members of the Advisory Committee are party to the decision to include this zoning in then OCP for me to feel comfortable that the outcome will truly reflect the wishes of the community. Statements in “The Plan” “The Courtenay River Estuary is...etc.” leaves the impression that it is in great shape and we need to preserve it when in fact it is almost completely developed and degraded and we need to reverse the damage already done.
- Concern from residents on non-water side of Dyke Road that houses on water may be polluting beaches.
- We must conserve the integrity of the estuary: it is either a great natural wonder of biodiversity and fecundity or a trap to lure unsuspecting fish and other fauna to premature death (depending on our Plan and the execution of that plan.)
- The Courtenay River Estuary as defined by the Pacific Wildfowl Management Organization is one of the most important estuaries on the west coast for wildfowl. It supports 10% of the world’s population of Trumpeter Swans, and contains an abundance of other waterfowl. I would like to see the Comox Valley Naturalist Society represented in the planning process and to be able to submit input as to its future. No further marine or industrial development please!

- The objectives should be total conservation and restoration without any mixed or economic uses which need to damage any part of the estuary. There cannot be integrated/multiple uses when the plan is to “conserve and enhance”.
- Would hope that the Advisory Committee could have some members at large - the ordinary citizens, members of groups and clubs with an interest in ecology, etc. - other stakeholders. Comox Plan for walkways along beaches looks worthwhile providing no impact on nature. Hope legislation in works requiring holding tanks on marine craft.
- If all the mistakes made to our entire watershed, including the estuary were documented, the story would not go into a volume, you’d have a whole library. We’ve had these motherhood type of plans before, and nothing changes. Money is the only criteria our politicians, who all need a good course in environmental sanity - plus integrity...our whole watershed system has been severely depleted by habitat destruction from hopeless logging practices, which are continuing, resulting in warmer water temperatures than fish can tolerate, mine wastes have destroyed the Tsolum River, with its estuary. Hydro dams have vastly altered the fish migrations, while farmers and developers dammed up and poisoned tributary creeks. So the problems are far more extensive than any estuary plan will address. All your work amounts to mere piddling around on the surface, I regret to say. And I am sorry to sound bitchy - but I speak from long experience around here.
- Was there a baseline study done somewhere in the past to give some idea of historic pollution levels, flora and fauna diversity, etc.? Although we tend to assume that things are going to hell in a handbasket, perhaps the estuary is in better shape now than when folks had outhouses, horse droppings were washed into the watercourses in greater amounts than now, and people thought nothing of throwing everything into the water.
- As the Lead Agency, I would like to see an organization who has “balls” and is not afraid to fight for the good of the thproject. It should not let itself influence by business and politicians.
- The Plan must be simpler: To protect and restore. We must phase out “industrial” activity in the estuary. Low impact activity such as oystering is fine, but heavier activities should not be allowed.
- We must phase out industrial activity - low impact (shellfish farming is fine); - protect and restore.
- Focus should be on preserving the plants, fish and wildlife and improving their habitat. Industrial activity should be phased out when opportunity exists and no new industrial activity allowed. the estuary should be a “natural” habitat with non-consumptive recreational use by humans.



**Volume 2  
Consultation Process**

**Appendix D**

**February Open House**

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# Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan: Summary of Public Workshop

Comox Indian Band Hall, February 23, 1999

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*Prepared for:* Envirowest Environmental Consultants Ltd.  
And Fisheries and Oceans Canada

*Prepared by:* Cornerstone Planning Group  
Sidney, British Columbia

*Date:* March, 1999

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### APPENDICES

1. Attendance List for the Workshop
2. Registration List for Three Round Table Groups
3. Summary of Comments Workshop Evaluation Form

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

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***February 1999 Open House & the workshop were linked***

The second round of public consultation events on the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan (CREMP) consisted of an open house and a public workshop, held on Tuesday, February 16 and 23, 1999, respectively. The open house served to highlight draft CREMP initiatives for informal review by the public. Over 30 full colour boards were displayed on Land Use Tenures and Priorities; Habitat and Development Classification; Revised Vision, Goals and Objectives; Estuary Management Program Options; and Coordinated Project Review Process. Hand-out materials of information found in the display boards were also available to attendees.

At the Open House, members of the CREMP team representing Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Envirowest Environmental Consultants Ltd. were on hand to explain the initiatives and to answer questions on a one-on-one basis with interested individuals. Individuals attending the open house were provided the opportunity to register for the public workshop. Letters of invitation were sent to 145 individuals and organizations with interests in the estuary, including those who had registered at the first Open House.

***Goal of the workshop was to bring interested individuals and groups together***

The public workshop was held on February 23 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the Comox Indian Band Hall. The workshop, serving as an extension of the Open House, was designed around issues identified through discussions with team members and in written comment forms. The goal of the workshop was to bring together the diverse range of interests, consisting of interested Comox Valley residents, individuals and organizations representing commercial, industrial and business interests, public interest groups and representatives from government-related organizations and First Nations

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that play an important role in the development and implementation of the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan.

***Three workshop objectives***

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To enable the full range of interested publics to learn more about the draft CREMP initiatives;
- To ensure all interested individuals and groups had an opportunity to discuss how the draft initiatives affected their interests in the Courtenay River estuary planning area; and
- To enable the CREMP planning team to obtain constructive feedback from all workshop participants on draft initiatives, so that this input can be addressed in the planning process and the final plan.

Total attendance at the workshop was 43. The majority of attendees (30 per cent) reported an affiliation with a public interest group<sup>1</sup>. Twenty one per cent reported an affiliation with government related organizations or agencies. Business related affiliations represented 20 per cent and Comox Valley residents not reporting an affiliation accounted for the remaining 27 per cent.

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<sup>1</sup> The public interest group category consisted of 9 environmental interest, 2 resident association representatives, 1 recreation interest and 1 boating safety interest.

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## 2.0 PRESENTATIONS ON THE CREMP

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### ***CREMP in context of DFO programs & mandate***

Chris Hilliar, Habitat Partnership Coordinator with Fisheries and Oceans Canada put the CREMP initiative into context by briefly outlining the following three related federal fisheries programs:

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada's strategy to address endangered fish stocks, particularly the summer run Chinook and Steelhead runs;
- A major initiative on the Tsolum River to deal with acid rock drainage impacts associated with an abandoned mine on Mount Washington;
- Operation of the fish hatchery on the Puntledge River.

Chris Hilliar also pointed out that the Terms of Reference for the CREMP initiative includes objectives to find ways to meet Fisheries and Oceans Canada's mandate to protect and manage fish and fisheries habitat in the Courtenay River estuary; to provide direction for human activity in the planning area; and above all, to bring together all affected governments agencies and First Nations, interest groups, and interested Comox Valley residents to participate in the planning process.

### ***Draft CREMP to be prepared by end of March 1999***

Mark Adams of ECL Envirowest Environmental Consultants Limited provided a brief overview of the planning process and the draft products that had been developed to date. He indicated that a draft plan would be prepared by March 31, 1999 for Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The draft plan was to be based on several specific initiatives the CREMP team had developed in consultation with the public including:

### ***Four draft components of the CREMP were identified for public review***

- A management planning framework consisting of a statement of ***Vision, Goals and Objectives*** for

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the planning area;

- A **Habitat Classification System** that classifies existing habitats based on functional values these provide for fish and wildlife, and sets out environmental criteria to guide land and water use decisions within the planning area.
- A **Management Program** consisting of four potential models that could be used to organize and direct the implementation of the final plan.
- A **Project Review Process** to coordinate government agency reviews of proposed development projects in the planning area. The proposed process is to provide a “one-window” approach to prospective developers to ensure that limited time, financial and staff resources of government reviewers and prospective developers are used effectively and efficiently.

***Fifth component of the CREMP, Area Designation, to be completed at a later date***

Mark Adams also indicated that the **Area Designation**, the fifth component of the CREMP, would not be completed until the Local Area Plans were underway for the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona Official Community Plan.

***Public consultation on the CREMP was reviewed***

The public consultation program for the CREMP was reviewed by Mark. He indicated that Open Houses (on the four initiatives identified above) were held at the Comox Indian Band Hall on October 1, 1998 and February 16, 1999. He also stated that the feedback received from public on these initiatives has been documented in reports, and will be used together with the results of this workshop to produce the draft plan by the end of March.

Mark Adams indicated he could not speak on behalf of Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding the public consultation program for the remainder of the planning process, but believed meaningful opportunities for public review and comment would be provided in the months ahead.

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***Questions from participants***

In a short question period after the presentations, workshop attendees were advised they were free to review the four management program models and adapt these to local circumstances. Some attendees also expressed relief that they were being consulted during the development of the plan, and that their continuing involvement was encouraged.

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## 3.0 CONCURRENT ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

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***Three CREMP components for Round Table discussion***

Workshop attendees were requested to participate in one of three round table discussion groups held concurrently. Attendance in the three groups was roughly even at 14 members per group. Individuals who registered in each of the three round tables at the start of the workshop are identified in Appendix 2.

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**Group 1.  
Revised Vision, Goals and Objectives**

The proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives for the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan were reviewed by workshop participants. The proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives had been previously reviewed and revised through earlier consultation based on comments the Advisory Committee received from individuals and organizations on the mailing list, and from attendees of the October 1, 1998 Open House.

***Key issues identified in public consultation projects to date***

In an attempt to move the discussion of the Vision, Goals and Objectives forward, Group 1 participants were informed that the following key issues had been identified through previous public consultation:

- Balancing environmental protection with human activities;
- Existing uses in the planning area;
- Range of multiple uses in the estuary; and
- Wordsmithing the statements so that these reflect the “common ground” reached by all participants in the planning process.

***Environmental, government, business & recreation interests participated in Group 1***

Group 1 was comprised of a mix of interests, including representatives from Field Sawmill, Courtenay Airpark Association, Desolation Sound Yacht Charters, Haven Farm, Strait Oysters, Comox Indian Band, Komoux Valley Paddlers, Comox Valley Environmental Council, Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards and Macdonald Wood Park Society.

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The discussion centered on finding a balance between

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Summary of Group 1 Discussion

***Individual viewpoints of Group 1 covered a range of environmental & economic values and interests***

environmental protection of the estuary and ongoing human uses of it. In order for the group to appreciate the full range of interests in the estuary, each member was encouraged to present their specific viewpoints. These are summarized as follows:

- Restoration of the estuary is very important.
- Environmental impacts of industry/business should be minimized.
- Development in the estuary should be limited.
- Restoration of the estuary should use the precontact ecosystem (1850) as a benchmark.
- Industrial development in the estuary should be restricted to protect the Pacific Flyway used by migratory birds.
- Wildlife values in the estuary should be considered.
- Wildlife corridors/greenways should be established to connect estuarine ecosystems.
- Noise associated with air traffic over the estuary is of concern to residents.
- The Courtenay River channels should be redesigned to have more “natural” edges.
- Saving what is left of the estuary is important.
- Environmental quality of the estuary should be protected and enhanced to enable the shellfish industry to flourish.
- Agricultural land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) should be excluded from the planning area.
- Farmers in the estuary have a cooperative relationship with Fisheries and Oceans Canada on a day-to-day operational level. The CREMP initiative has potential to undermine this relationship.
- Tourism is important to the area’s economy,

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therefore there is an ongoing need for more infrastructure in the estuary, such as marinas. At the same time, it is recognized that an ecologically sustainable estuary is important for business purposes.

- The Airpark is a long term resident of the estuary and as such should be recognized in the plan's vision.
- The Field Sawmill operation is compliant with environmental legislation and regulations. If the community wants to keep the Sawmill operation, it has to find a way.

***Working together was an immediate challenge***

Group 1 participants agreed that the immediate challenge was to work together. They recognized that success is dependent on acknowledging the wide range of values and interests held in the community for the estuary, and finding suitable ways to address these. Improving and maintaining environmental quality was a shared interest.

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**Group 2. Plan Implementation and Project Review**

Four potential administrative models were reviewed by workshop participants. These models would serve to organize and direct implementation of the CREMP. A proposed process for the review of potential development projects in the CREMP area was also reviewed by the attendees.

***Key issues identified in previous public consultation***

To initiate discussion, the following issues (identified through previous public consultation) were noted:

- Level of public involvement;
- Consensus decision making;
- Legislative authority;
- Effectiveness and efficiency; and
- Participation of experienced and knowledgeable scientists.

Group 2 was comprised of interested residents and representatives from Comox Town Residents

***Residents, business and***

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***environmental interests and government reps participated in Group 2***

Association, Area B Residents Association, Canadian Power and Sail Squadron, Islands Trust, Field Sawmill, Comox Valley Naturalists, Town of Comox, Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

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**Summary of Group 2 Discussion**

The discussion centered on adapting the implementation processes so that they were effective, efficient, affordable and meet local needs of the Courtenay River estuary. The following specific points were raised by Group 2:

***Adapting existing models to meet the needs of the CREMP is key***

- Estuary management plans are unique. The CREMP must be adapted to local issues and circumstances. However, much could be learned by looking at other estuary plans in British Columbia and elsewhere.
- Model 1, based on the Fraser River Estuary Management Plans (FREMP), has no decision making structure. Agencies work within their legislative mandates, and do not deal effectively with conflicting management objectives. The Public Advisory Committee (PAC) has no decision making status.
- Model 2 has the public represented on the management committee so there is no need for a Public Advisory Committee.
- Model 3 shows some promise for the implementation of the CREMP, but needs an Order-in-Council to create the authority. Model 3 has proven to be inflexible and has other issues such as nominating mechanisms, cost – (Who will pay for authority?).
- Model 4, requiring the establishment of a non-profit society, should not be considered because it had no legislative authority.

In addition, if the role of government is advisory, accountability during implementation becomes problematic.

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***The core of Model 3 with elements of Models 1 & 2 was preferred***

Group 2 participants agreed that the *management authority component* of Model 3 should be combined with some features of Models 1 and 2. They also recognized that conservation was a common thread running through all four estuary implementation models.

In conclusion, Group 2 recommended that the CREMP team ensure the following principles are addressed in the development of an implementation process for the Courtenay River estuary:

***Group 2 developed principles to be considered by the CREMP team in the design of the management***

- Establishment of a local management authority ( e.g. simplified Model 3);
- Accessibility of the public to the decision making process;
- Ability to deal fairly with all local interests;
- Appointment of an Environment Ombudsman for review;
- Establishment of principles to guide local decision-making;
- Principal-governed management rather than management by competing interests;
- A need for firm consistent rules and mechanisms to apply these;
- A need for timelines built into process – clear, uncomplicated; and
- A need to monitor projects approved through the Project Review Process to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

Group 2 also recommended the establishment of a federal Pacific coast estuary management commission similar to the Agricultural Land Commission. This new body should have a mandate for estuary conservation.

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### Group 3. Action Programs

A host of Action Programs, such as Water Quality Management, Habitat Restoration, and Log Handling and Storage, will be addressed in the CREMP. The Habitat Classification system, developed and implemented as part of the current planning exercise, provided an example of an Action Program. Attendees explored specific management initiatives for the protection of environmental resources in the estuary. The following issues, identified through previous public consultation, helped to initiate the discussion:

#### ***Key issues identified in previous public consultation***

- Identification of appropriate initiatives;
- Identification of key components of these initiatives; and
- Prioritization of the various action programs identified by participants in the planning process.

Group 3 was comprised of interested residents and representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, B.C. Ministry of Fisheries, Department of National Defence, Comox Bay Marina, Comox Valley Harbour Authority and Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards.

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### Summary of Group 3 Discussion

The discussion focused on the identification of appropriate action programs.

The following values and interests were discussed by Group 3:

#### ***Group 3 covered values and interests ranging from information collection to specific guidelines***

- The need to establish a common database for the estuary consisting of a habitat and species inventory, etc;
- The importance of habitat restoration and enhancement;
- The need to understand the ecology of the planning area for restoration and interpretative purposes;
- The need to determine the status of environmental quality – threats to resources in the

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planning area;

- The need for public education and stewardship;
- The need for guidelines for exotic species management, dredging, log storage and handling, log waste management (i.e., dredging and disposal, ocean dumping off Lazo), sewage treatment, stormwater treatment from catchment areas upland of and within the planning area;
- The need to broaden the habitat classification to include terrestrial habitat and species in the planning area;
- The effects of bedrock on water quality – accretion;

***Group 3 reached agreement  
on a range of Action  
Programs***

Group 3 agreed that action programs should be considered by the CREMP team for the following:

- Establishment of a benchmark inventory so that status environmental quality can be determined over time;
- Modification of the habitat classification to look at terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems together;
- Establishment of a biophysical inventory that includes mapping and inventory of habitats and an organism inventory;
- An examination of ecological processes at work in the planning area
- Public education and stewardship;
- Exotic species management for monitoring purposes;
- Dredging guidelines;
- Log storage and handling guidelines;
- Water quality guidelines that address septic and storm water sources;
- Temperature requirements – watershed management approach for Tsolum & Puntledge

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river systems;

- Establishment of a common database on social, economic and environmental considerations which is accessible to the public and government agencies;
- The need for local commercial fishery strategies;
- Completion of the Area Designation component of the CREMP which will establish appropriate shoreline uses. This component of the CREMP is linked to the approved Official Community Plan and Local Area Plans; and
- The need for environmentally sustainable design criteria for development (i.e., Best Management Practices for foreshore development).

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## 4.0 SUMMARY COMMENTS

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***A commitment was made by the CREMP team to consider all public feedback***

The CREMP team acknowledged that the comments and recommendations made by workshop participants would be addressed in the preparation of a draft plan. The first draft of the CREMP was scheduled for completion by Envirowest Environmental Consultants by the end of March 1999.

It was evident by the end of the workshop that the participants' appreciated the opportunity to learn about the wide range of environmental, social and economic values associated with the planning area. Participants also recognized the importance of working together to ensure that their interests were acknowledged and given meaningful consideration by the CREMP team in the preparation of the plan.

***Continuing public consultation is expected***

As a final note, it is also very evident that there is a firm expectation among participants that the draft plan will be available for public review before it is finalized by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

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## 5.0 WORKSHOP EVALUATION

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***Workshop objectives were generally met***

At the end of the workshop, attendees were requested to evaluate how well objectives had been met. Of the eight respondents, one reported that the workshop was ‘excellent’ as it enabled a wide range of interests to be expressed and discussed. Five individuals reported that the workshop was ‘good’ because it brought a diverse selection of the community together to address common interests. Two individuals rated the workshop as ‘fair’ and qualified their rating stating they would have liked to have participated in all three groups or that there was not enough time available to fully discuss the issues. These comments are presented verbatim in Appendix 3.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**Attendance List for the Workshop**

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## APPENDIX 1

### Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan Workshop Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Reported Affiliation</u>
John Mackie	Canadian Coast Guard
Robert Dunn	Comox Valley Harbour Authority
Rick Senger	DFO Campbell River
Norm Reynolds	
Ronna-Rae Leonard	Area B Rural Residents Association
Frank Hovenden	Comox Valley Naturalists
T. Gray	
E.C. Pielou	
Bev Bravender	Department of Fisheries & Oceans
Lesley MacDougall	Department of Fisheries & Oceans
Louise Bell	Islands Trust
Ruth Masters	
Angela Smailes	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Jackie Sandiford	Comox Valley Watershed Assembly
Eric Krejci	Comox Bay Marina
Brian Bloomfield	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Michele Jones	Biologist
Don Hurford	Haven Farm
Thomas Finnbogason	Field Sawmill
Ken Huxham	Courtenay Airpark Association
Ken Brock	Canadian Wildlife Service
Pat Halliday	Comox Town Residents Association
Dave Ferguson	CVEC/Tsolum River Restoration
Peter Van Dinter	Courtenay Airpark Association
W. Pogue	Canadian Power & Sail Squadron
Chris Beggs	Department of Fisheries & Oceans
Norm Neiderer	Komoux Valley Paddlers

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Bill Heath	BC Ministry of Fisheries
Bob Allan	Department of National Defence
Barbara Porter	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Richard Porter	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Warren Fleenor	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Fran Johnson	Macdonald Wood Park Society
Terry Hamilton	Field Sawmills
Dave Schaff	Courtenay Airpark Association
Wayne Bradley	Oyster grower
Cathy Slater	BC Shellfish Growers Association
Barbara Frank	
Norm Frank	
Bob Stevenson	
Tim Hall	
Tim Up	
Melda Buchanan	

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**APPENDIX 2**  
**Registration List for Three Round Table Groups**

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## APPENDIX 2

### Registration List for Three Round Table Groups

#### Group 1 Sign-up:

- Peter Van Dinter, Courtenay Airpark
- Dave Ferguson, CVEC/Tsolum River Restoration
- Norm Neiderer, Komoux Valley Paddlers
- Michele Jones, Biologist
- Terry Hamilton, Field Sawmills
- Don Hurford, Haven Farm
- Barb Porter, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Fran Johnson, Macdonald Wood Park Society
- Wayne Bradley, Strait Oysters
- Norm Frank, Comox Indian Band
- Barbara Frank, Comox Indian Band
- Ken Huxham, Courtenay Airpark Association
- Dave Schaff, Courtenay Airpark Association
- Bob Stevenson, Desolation Sound Yacht Charters

#### Group 2 Sign-up:

- Norm Reynolds
- Ronna-Rae Leonard, ABRRA
- Louise Bell, Islands Trust
- Brian Bloomfield, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Richard Porter, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Jackie Sandiford, Comox Valley Watershed Assembly
- Angela Smailes, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Ken Brock, Canadian Wildlife Service
- Tim Up

#### Group 3 Sign-up:

- Bev Bravender, DFO
- Leslie MacDougall, DFO
- Chris Pielou
- Bill Heath, BC Ministry of Fisheries
- Bob Allan, DND
- Warren Fleenor, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- T. Gray
- Eric Krejci, Comox Bay Marina

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- Bob Dunn, Comox Valley Harbour Authority
  - Ruth Masters
  - Melda Buchanan

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**APPENDIX 3**  
**Summary of Comments**  
**Workshop Evaluation Form**

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**Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan  
Workshop  
Comox Indian Band Hall  
February 23, 1999-03-05**

**1. How well did the workshop meet its objectives?**

**Excellent    1        Good 5        Fair 2        Poor 0**

**Comments:**

- “A good start - a long road ahead! Keep up the good work.”
- “I am happy to be involved, but more time/discussion is needed.”
- “Excellent recommendations.”
- “Like the format. Our group had a good discussion. We were lucky to have a good facilitator.”
- “Not enough time to fully discuss options and plans.”

**2. What about the workshop did you like the most?**

- “Opportunity to speak individually.”
- “Diverse selection of community coming together to address the common issues.”
- “The diverse people and discussion.”
- “Focus”
- “Small group size.”
- “We managed to reach some good common ground on our interests.”
- “Wide range of interesting information from all the different members in my group (#3).”
- “Much good dialogue and ideas presented.”

**3. What about the workshop did you like the least?**

- “Would have liked input in all three areas. This is the reason for rating ‘fair.’ “
- “Noise level of hall.”
- “Hard to hear in this venue.”
- “Don’t use this venue!! Too much echo!”
- “The sound is terrible.”
- “The acoustics of the hall. Dreadful.”
- “Venue – sound problem.”

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#### **4. Other Comments**

- “Group input in area attended was ‘good+.’ “
- “Positive experience.”
- “Recommend to assign trained facilitators or input can be a disaster!”
- “Good work. Bring the politicians.”

**Appendix 1**

***Display Boards***

Public Open House (February 16, 1999)

**Appendix 2**

***Comment Form***

**Public Open House (February 16, 1999)**

**Proposed Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan**

**PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE - FEBRUARY 16, 1999**

**COMMENT FORM**

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**Thank you for attending the open house today. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans would appreciate your comments on the materials presented at this event.**

**If you need more room, please help yourself to blank paper and staple the extra sheet(s) to this form.**

1. What do you **like** and/or **dislike** about the proposed **Vision** statement for the Estuary Management Plan?

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2. What do you **like** and/or **dislike** about the proposed **Goals** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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3. What do you **like** and/or **dislike** about the proposed **Objectives** for the Estuary Management Plan?

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4. Do you have any comments regarding the **4 Administrative Models** for the Management Program?

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5. Do you have any comments regarding the **Habitat Classification and Development System**?

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6. Additional Comments

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Please give us your address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your comments. If you wish additional information, or would like to mail your comments to us, please contact:

Karen Asp  
Research and Communications Coordinator  
ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited

204 - 800 McBride Blvd.

New Westminster, BC, V3L 2B8

Ph: (604) 521-6500; Fx: (604) 521-2208; e-mail: [ecl@axionet.com](mailto:ecl@axionet.com)

**Appendix 3**

***Sign-in Sheet Summary***

Public Open House (February 16, 1999)

**TOTAL SIGNED-IN** 100

**REPORTED AFFILIATION**

**Government/Related [12%]**

Department of National Defense	2
Regional District of Comox-Strathcona	1
Islands Trust	1
City of Courtenay	2
Town of Comox	2
Puntledge Hatchery	1
BC Hydro	2
Comox Valley Harbour Authority	1

**Business/Labour/Related [52%]**

Fields Sawmill	26
IWA 363	1
Courtenay Airpark Association	21
BC Shellfish Growers Association	1
Sunstar Yachts Ltd	2
Haven Farm	1

**Public Interest Groups [14%]**

Comox Valley Naturalists	4
Comox Valley Environmental Council	3
Project Watershed Society	1
Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards	1
Comox Valley Watershed Assembly	1
Area B Advisory Planning Committee	1
Area B Rural Residents Association	1
Komoux Valley Paddlers	1
Canadian Power Sailing Squadron	1

**Education [4%]**

School District 71	1
North Island College	2
Arden Elementary School	1

**No Affiliation Specified [18%]**

No Affiliation Specified	18
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**Appendix 4**

***Compilation of Responses***

Public Open House (February 16, 1999)

## Question 1: What do you like and/or dislike about the proposed Vision statement for the Estuary Management Plan?

- I like the broad view concerning protection of the estuary. I dislike the restoration part of the statement and suggest more damage could be done by restoration than by leaving it alone.
- The intent is good by there has to be a balance between protecting environment and economic business.
- Satisfied.
- Vision is great.
- I agree with the vision statement as the estuary needs to be protected but will business and individuals be fairly compensated for their investments?
- Good strong statement.
- Excellent except that all the talk of 'plants, fish, wildlife and people' disregards the basic component, detritus, the plant remains whose decay fertilizes the water and maintains all active organisms.
- Good Vision.
- Like - protection of the estuarine ecosystem and that final vision statement recognizes this.
- Where you STRESS the environment. But then you go on to stress economic needs and our estuary has already been decimated by mis-use by commerce and industry.
- I am delighted with the apparent strong and paramount environmental protection in the vision statement!! We will be so grateful to this vision 100 or 200 years from now. Think of it.
- With regard to question # 1 -- The idea of sustaining a natural habitat for wildlife is commendable as it creates a natural cycle which we as humans can benefit from. As for the Vision which you write of there seems to be a lack of what is intended in what you refer to as Management. It seems as if you have made something simple into a complicated job.
- Good Vision.
- The preamble is good and the last sentence leaves me wondering - is it the Vision or part of the entire Vision including the entire paragraph???
- I like the word "integrity" and "irrespective of human values placed upon them..." Also "minimize impacts" and "restore..." could read 'avoid if possible or minimize negative impacts'.
- I like the noble idea that protection of the estuarine ecosystem is 'paramount'. The vision statement is short and to the point. I do not like the statement: "...irrespective of human values placed upon the system..."
- I do not like the Vision statement because of its wording on human activities.
- Human activities are to be managed - How? Does this mean recreational and industrial? Restore historic natural elements - How and where in this system?
- It would appear that the vision suggests kayaking as the only acceptable human activity. This leads one to assume no other activity could be considered as reasonable.
- I don't like that in the vision there doesn't seem to be much emphasis on the economic value of the estuary.
- Vision Statement could be more specific to future of existing development already in place and what could be expected in real terms of their future (i.e.: commercial and residential) as they exist today.
- Dislike - "irrespective of human values". It is interesting to note that in the vision statement, people come last.
- Get rid of preamble.
- It's verbose and fuzzy. The first sentence needs "ensuring" or "preserving" put between 'on' and 'the' for it to make sense. How about 'To protect and enhance the Courtenay River Estuary ecosystem for the benefit of plants, fish, wildlife and people.'

- The word Vision could be confused with delusion and should be deleted
- Somehow it must be pointed out that the estuary is a small part of a much larger system (i.e., Puntledge and Tsolum river watersheds and entrance to/exit from Baynes Sound/Georgia Strait.
- I don't understand the need for emphasizing timeless nature of the vision. It comes off as pompous.
- I like the easy to read and follow format, but a large map of the valley to follow would help. The tiny maps locating each individual chart are hard to see details

## **Question 2: What do you like and/or dislike about the proposed Goals for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- It is o.k.
- I like most of the stated goals but not the “enhancing” part under “Accommodate”.
- These goals seem attainable, so long as we remember humans are part of the natural process.
- In general goals are good but must work together with human activities already in existence specifically the sawmill and other business that have been well established. I agree the environment should be maintained but I also think coming up with a partnership with business that are already in existence to come up with solutions to concerns of pollutants should be pursued.
- I like the preservation of habitat and wildlife use, rather than only development. Restricted development and healthy ecosystems is most important.
- Satisfied.
- Goals are great as long as economic activities do not adversely impact on environmental qualities - stay true to vision.
- Good.
- The goals are reasonable.
- I like the statement about accommodating the socioeconomic needs of the community with regard to the importance of agricultural land within the management plan boundary.
- Like - statement # 3 “human activity...discourage activities harmful...” Somehow can't we access information from the RAMSAR organization to help us understand the economic benefits of our wetlands estuaries.
- I am delighted.
- Good Goals.
- 2.2.1 through 2.2.5 are fine. Add 2.2.6 ‘Recognize the importance of existing industrial and retail and commercial activities within the MP area for their role in the economic well being of the community at large, and seek ways to help them reduce their impacts on the estuary, or to relocate outside the MP area.’
- 1) Like the goal to enhance the quality of the estuarine environment. In fact, enhancement to benefit of plants, fish and wildlife also provides enhancement for all biological species including Homo sapiens (i.e., clean water, air, increased biodiversity). 2) Although we recognize the importance of Agricultural land, we must also concern ourselves with the nature of agricultural practices (i.e., herbicides, pesticides, marine control) and recognize that many things can be done on the agricultural land to benefit the estuary (i.e., stream beds NOT channelized - kept in a natural state with shrub and tree buffers).
- 1) I like # 1 as is, and # 3. 2) #2, 4, and 5 not so much. I would blend the “estuary’s role” in with # 1; I would blend the latter half of 2, 4 and 5 to ‘acknowledge human’s place in the natural environment and our responsibility of stewardship for a resource that houses, feeds and sustains us too!’

- Good Goals.
- Like: That conservation is primary. All changes are an improvement resulting in much stronger goals.
- Lofty goals - but all I want to see is correction of past misuses and mistakes and leave the place alone.
- Inconsistent with Vision. To encourage human activities will do nothing for the 'enduring integrity...'
- Goals and objectives are much the same - though commendable they are not practical.
- The goals set forth in the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan are headed toward protecting the integrity of the environment. I feel this is some what biased in that the social, economic and recreational uses are being left out of the picture. It's a little unnerving to me that people are the last priority.
- Considering existing human activities in this area - economic impact must be considered a priority. Taxes and economic benefit to all of the local people should be included in the plan. We should not lose site of the requirements for all industry and businesses in the area in question. Precedents have been set and must be considered first before any major proposals are approved.
- Dislike - People are again left out of the primary goal.
- 1. Discourage human activities harmful to this environment - How and what activities are we talking about? Are these activities occurring now or is this heading off anything in the future? Are we talking about industry or recreational activities? How do we discourage these activities? If an activity is harmful to the environment, why should we allow it? 2. Why not recognize the importance of industrial land - how industry is able to provide jobs with little or no impact on the environment.
- Would like to see some reference to reclamation under "Recognize".
- As things stand at present in the enclosed area of the estuary the wildlife and presumably tame ones we call humans and dogs have adapted quite well to one another. Even the geese are happy to share the airport with those of us who fly too. The goals you write about, other than preserving the sanctuary that presently exists offers no evidence of a new design intended. At present the flat land belonging to Ducks Unlimited serves two purposes. It feeds the ducks and swans in the winter months and supplies people with good food in the summer. It would be a shame to see it go for another Big Box like Super Store. Or for that matter any other commercial outlet. Maybe it could be leased to the local people in plots so they could grow their own veggies.
- a) There should be one goal relating back to the part of the vision statement about restoring historic and natural elements of the system. A short statement should be included about conducting thorough ecological assessments to determine the potential ecological productivity and the reduced viability due to past and current land use and land use practices. b) This is a beautiful estuary that many (if not most) people feel strongly about. Is there a stronger phrase than "acknowledge the estuary's role" that could be used to convey this feeling and intention to protect it. I can only think of "celebrate" at the moment - but there must be better words.
- If you are going to recognize the importance of agricultural land in providing wildlife habitat then you should also recognize the importance of park and vacant Crown lands for the same.

### **Question 3: What do you like and/or dislike about the proposed Objectives for the Estuary Management Plan?**

- Agree.
- I like the conservation plans and rehab if necessary.
- Objectives are fine as long as "acknowledgment" of economic activities relates to existing economic activities and does not envision more economic/industrial development. "Grandfather" existing industrial activities including Airpark - but don't permit more industry.

- The objectives are excellent although I think it is important that we preserve what habitat is left now, and repair what we can.
- I like everything about the plan except having to present environmental impact proposals when they are not defined as to what they should or should not include. Any proposal i.e. building permit approval or application should be accompanied by a specific set of guidelines for each development. The developer should not have to guess or estimate what would or would not be allowed to be built or developed. Also - present and existing uses of these areas should be subject to existing use first. Aircraft at Airpark and river, sawmill on river etc. Changes to Plan of area should be made only if they include continued use of established uses with little or no economic impact to businesses and/or people who now use the areas for their homes and living.
- I am curious as to the projected “enhancement” ideas for the estuary. I particularly agree with the encouragement of multiple uses within the estuary. It is also commendable that the plan leaves room for and encourages that all interested parties and the public be kept informed, and, most importantly involved in the planning management initiatives.
- I am delighted.
- Objectives are fine.
- “Current and sound knowledge of the estuary’s resources should be maintained, pursued and utilized” - excellent idea, points out the need to produce a current biophysical baseline study at the time the Management Process is put in place. Enhancement can then be measured from those details.
- Like: Proactive approach - it is difficult to replace habitat, better to protect, losses are no so “rare”. Like: Conserve/Maintain/Enhance as primary objectives.
- One objective that should be adhered to is the multiple uses objective. I believe there is room for fish wildlife plants and people too all use and care for this estuary without disrupting existing economical, social and recreational uses. The estuary didn’t get in the shape it is in now over night. It will take a long time to restore it. With the new environmental regulations I think the estuary is already recovering.
- 2.3.3 c Sentence #2 - and process consultants. 2.3.3 d - Yes!!. 2.3.2 c Establish and Maintain Informed Mgmt Processes - Sentence #1 should include “past bioproduction potential” and the establishment of baseline data from historical records. 2.3.3a Consensus - good idea - process needs to be defined including those parties disagreeing being responsible for coming back with a new decision that is likely to be agreed upon in a timely manner.
- Satisfied with Objectives for “Conserving etc.” and “Integrated Management”. In respect of Objectives of “Fairness etc.” I have difficulty in recognizing that “consensus based decision-making” is going to be effective in implementing the CRE Management Plan, however well thought out that plan may be.
- I don’t like the “consensus based” decision making. Generally I support the other objectives.
- How big are the groups who are expected to reach consensus, and how well qualified fare the people in these groups. To try for consensus among a large group of ill-informed people is a waste of time, and if you get consensus it’s not worth having. Disinterested scientific input is what is needed.
- Dislike - consensus-based decision making. It’s great to facilitate discussion - but eventually some “body” must have the authority and responsibility to enforce the decisions. Refer to the Environment Sensitive Atlas requiring update and referral to same - lets keep up the good work started on this process/mapping.
- 1. Promote and employ consensus-based decision making - remove last line from this paragraph. Decision must be by consensus.
- As in # 2. Goals and objectives are much the same though commendable they are not practical.

- I find the idea that we should turn the clock back “200 years” somewhat ridiculous!. Lets use some “common dog” and attempt to arrive at a reasonable status quo!
- No where is it said that existing users are protected.
- Restate it honestly! Objective is not further development and reduction of human use.
- Not strong enough. Who decides ‘safe’ levels in conserving and enhancing estuary? Objective for integrated management is good.
- Do not like “Encourage multiple uses within the Estuary”, “Equitable Access”. Would like to see gradual phasing out of industrial activities, especially harmful ones.
- Do not encourage industry in estuary and try to encourage what industry that is there to move out.
- Lofty objectives - but all I want to see is correction of past misuses and mistakes and leave the place alone. We do not and should not under any circumstances go for: 1. fish farms; 2. barge loading facility; 3. shingle mill; 4. fish and chip shop; 5. boatways; 6. marina; 7. dredging.
- a) An objective should be included that follows up on the goal suggested above re: restoring historic and natural elements of the system. b) Objective 2.3.2 c says something about knowledge but this should be given more detail (or made into a separate objective) to indicate the goal of the data/knowledge gathering - i.e.: i) to be able to determine as best as possible optimum productivity and restore the estuary to that level, and ii) to determine carrying capacity in terms of future human land use and practices. ‘More detail’ would include broad parameters of biological assessment and knowledge such as habitat, water quality, species diversity and abundance, effective impervious area, recent historical land use, First Nations historical settlement of the area. c) If we are going to consider environmental, economic and social implications of all activities within the estuary (Objective 2.3.2.b), we need to start using full cost accounting. Admittedly FCA methods (as far as I know) are still unwieldy and questionable in terms of accuracy. However, it is important we find the best model and use to begin to work out these implications in a systematic way (FCA can at least serve to focus discussion on competing values.)
- 2.3.1 a) Waste from human activities should be minimized. b) What is DFO policy re: habitat loss?

#### **Question 4: Do you have any comments regarding the 4 Administrative Models for the Management Program?**

- # 1 model I feel is the best - all interested parties are involved in the process - promotes fairness.
- Model 4 - Estuary council is worst option - too subject to pressure groups. Model 1 is preferred - especially if municipal amalgamation occurs and a unified valley voice emerges - otherwise Model 3.
- I prefer Model 1: I know public Advisory Committees slow a process - polarization is deadly. But, I feel this model has the most chance to maintain local interest and concerns while allowing government agencies to do their jobs.
- Very difficult to anticipate the pitfalls of each model. Model #2 appears to be the most inclusive and community oriented. It might prove to be too unwieldy depending on how many community groups were represented.
- Yes - #2! shared and equal decision making in authority! Consensus process needs to be timely, functional - with a default plan of the disagreeing party to come up with a new statement likely to reach consensus. And limited in time and which kinds of decisions.
- I tend to prefer Model 2. I don’t like Model 1 in that the public consultation is indirect via a subcommittee. Model 3 is dependent upon legislation which may be difficult to obtain.

- Presently, Model 2: Agency-Public Management seems most effective. Need for public involvement in decision making is important. The body needs to have clout, hence the “council” is questionable in terms of time and authority.
- Model 1 - Effectiveness very dependent on the mix of agencies. Model 2 - Can’t imagine how such a ‘dogs breakfast’ of agencies and interest and user groups could be workable. Model 3 - I’m more inclined to this model than the others, but have doubts about finding suitable governors by the process of “nominating by community”. Model 4 - Seems too weak a body to be effective.
- # 4 is useless - facilitative body is not what is needed. # 3 is the best option - provides appropriate channels - local participation. # 1& 2 lack local public participation. This must be beyond special interest politics and not merely agencies.
- I support plan implementation # 3 - but more feedback between groups needs to be recognized.
- I prefer legislated power so that the body’s decisions will be implemented effectively. I support public and agencies working together to achieve the “best of both worlds” (local knowledge and expertise) and a broad-based perspective. At this point, Model # 3 appears the best to me.
- I like model 4 but which ever model is chosen I would prefer the one with public input.
- All admin. models seem fragmented, however the Estuary Council model appears closest to what I would like to see. Models that are working well in the Comox Valley include Watershed Assembly and Baynes Sound Roundtable; there will always be conflicts, and dialogue with everyone at the table builds understanding.
- None of the admin. models seem great. The Estuary Council Model seems to be getting closest to the mark. Watershed Assembly and Baynes Sound Roundtable are good models to look at, dialogue with everyone at the table builds understanding.
- Merge 1 & 2 and import legislative mandate of #3. Needs work.
- Dislike #2 & 4. PAC in #1&3 is important. #3 may be more cumbersome due to separate GAC. #1 management committee as government may be more accountable. # 3 management committee may be more objective as less subject to political influence.
- As long as communication goes all ways it should work.
- The one with the most local input and the least legislation appeals! A good way to begin solid policy.
- The more input the better!
- Another level of bureaucracy.
- There are administrative models in effect at present with DFO and Courtenay City that are sufficient.
- It’s all designed to wear us out going to interminable boring meetings while the proponents persist and they never go away.
- As for the four administrative bodies and all the other affiliates I believe you have overdone it. The Puntledge River is a natural boundary that spawned fish in abundance at one time. If it no longer serves us in this way then that might be changed. I don’t know that the sawmill now negates this, or that stream conditions do. This is something you might examine. Maybe we have just eaten all the fish.
- 4 complex models are presented which are difficult for the uninitiated to evaluate without in-depth study. I could not grasp these in the time I spent at your open house.

**Question 5: Do you have any comments regarding the Habitat Classification and Development System?**

- Excellent.
- I’m not a biologist but I think if the fish like it, it should be good. Good.

- Seems to be a good plan.
- Habitat Classification and Development system is good it covers all aspects of the river system from bank to bottom.
- I like the idea of the 3 levels being yellow, red and green as they are easy to follow and make sense.
- Excellent. I would have liked main roads marked in. Also some idea of what goes in to some 'green' areas in the midst of red. I.e. Map 10 on creek.
- The maps are excellent except that they could have been much improved by adding street names here and there, e.g. 5th street on map 2, and the Mac Laing Park on map 13, to orient viewers.
- Seems fine.
- Looks good.
- DND wishes to discuss habitat classification of the riparian zone around Goose Spit. We believe that the riparian zone should be classified as 'green' for the following reasons: 1. DND has demonstrated responsible development over the last 50 years of occupation. 2. DND is bound by CEAA to mitigate any impact of projects and activities. 3. DND can achieve the environmental objectives for the riparian zone through existing policy and management practice. We believe we have and will achieve environmentally responsible development without being encumbered by a regulatory approval process through the CREM Program.
- Re - Maps 3&4 drainage ditches, sloughs and lowlands. ALR land must be used for farming as first priority. Ditches must be cleaned regularly to maintain drainage. Sloughs need to be taken out to facilitate economical farming in order to remain viable in the future. At present, lowlands and sloughs trap fish and fish die. A cooperative approach with personnel giving ideas could be beneficial to both fish and agriculture (i.e. sloped lowland drainage areas that are cropped would provide land drainage without destroying fish. Spring and summer rearing could be in main ditches that are properly maintained to shade the water and also provide land drainage. Ditches cleared out in fall of year.
- Royston log boom area should not be red. (Map 8) Bark from logs has spoiled bottom. Wrecks coloured red?/ Map 9 ok.
- How strong are these guidelines - or better yet what legislation exists or is being worked on to enforce as well as guide decisions on this?
- I would like to see some recognition of habitat potential of currently degraded areas.
- If a habitat is degraded and therefore receives a green ranking will that habitat ever then be able to be restored to its historic productive capacity through enhancement? In other words, can a green area ever become a red area? Or will the requirement only be to retain it at the green level?
- Some of the existing users that now have access through the proposed habitat classification must be protected and must have access to do maintenance, repair and replace docks and ramps.
- I agree with the system but would like the mapping to show the actual areas, not the nominal designations at the shoreline. I.e. below L.W. Zone - should be shown shoreline to shoreline. Foreshore Zone - should show between actual HW and LW. Riparian Zone - should show from H.W to EM Plan boundary.
- Local landmarks needed. Reverse the colours - green seems more naturally the colour to represent high biological diversity. Ingenious riparian line designations.
- This plan provides a great opportunity for students to examine the environment as part of their studies.
- The whole estuary needs cleaning up and leaving alone. Melda Buchanan and I cleaned garbage off Wigeon Islands this past fall and there are tons of bark smothering aquatic life compliments of Fields Mill.

- On one page of the brochure it is mentioned that there is an Application for Development of the Estuary. Then it goes on, quote “The Habitat and Development Classification system would be a primary technical reference.” There is nothing to explain what this means in layman terms. Are you planning on dredging out the bay and estuary? That might be a good idea. What then are these proposed works for development? How will they affect the wildlife in the area?
- Don’t really understand narrow band of colour when upland activity has impact on foreshore.
- I find the idea of regressive development unique. But not practical.

## Question 6: Additional Comments

- Because the Airpark has been in existence early 1900’s and is now a important part of the Comox Valley, we will be looking to have it protected in writing.
- With the Habitat Classification and Development System, why do we need an estuary management plan? All land use decisions have to go through Courtenay council, Comox council or the Regional District, as well as be approved by various agencies. You also mentioned tonight that there is already an Environmental Review Committee in place - so again, why do we need an estuary management plan.
- This process will only succeed by cooperation. We hope you can listen to reasonable people in business.
- Pleased to know that infrastructure/activities are to be grandfathered such as DND POL jetty within DL 214 and dredging at the HMCS Quadra site.
- I’m looking forward to the workshop next week.
- Don’t forget about the many people and families that make a living using this Estuary. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion and get the information that I need to make a decision.
- I prefer “grandfathering” all current uses, including the Airpark, but prohibiting any future additional industrial development. If ownership of any current industrial/commercial operation changes - their grandfathering should cease - i.e. gradually eliminate commercial/industrial operations.
- Do not want public (non-permission) access on farmlands. Land is private property and public litter is deadly to cattle. Also, public well-being is questionable due to cattle and equipment in use. Must be able to use all ALR land for farm purposes without any interference from any estuary ‘persons’ e.g. council, committees, authorities etc. The 200 year map used to outline the proposed estuary is not acceptable. Field Sawmills is and has been a plus to the local economy. The sawdust and shavings from the mill are used by local farmers for bedding purposes. “Agricultural Land Reserve” land has no business in the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan. Please remove these lands at once. In the early 1950’s the sawmill existed plus two other booming areas. There was abundant fish. The river was dredged in order for the barge facility to operate near the Courtenay River bridge. When the dam was built on the Puntledge River, the fish numbers were reduced significantly (no more tye fishing in the bay) Gone were the sights of all the salmon going up river.
- If possible, would appreciate copies of maps showing classifications as I am doing a term paper on the estuary dealing with development and environmental concerns. As soon as possible would be greatly appreciated. Thanks.
- 1. Historical context (pre-contact). 2. Ecological integrity missing. 3. Public process needs a lot more work.
- It may have been informative to have some information about some of the effects that the plan might have on existing commercial and industrial enterprises within the management plan boundary.
- What about a dredging plan and clean up plan on an annual basis for the estuary.

- I am concerned that the mapping does not clearly identify current uses. I am opposed to expansion of the Airpark facility. I am opposed to closing the Airpark facility. I am opposed to allowing night flying at the Airpark. I am concerned that environmental objective can evolve to be directives that adversely affect established uses.
- Lay off. Depending on the selection of the Estuary Committee, the place could have a chance. Nowhere do I see any mention of purple loose strife weed which is going to choke out habitat for both juvenile fish and waterfowl. May I reiterate everything I have said to this point, which is summarized as follows: Nothing anybody can do can improve on what was here to begin with, and nothing at all should be added - i.e. barge loading facility, fish farm, shingle mill, nor any of the other tricky developments people's heads are spinning with. The only changes I suggest are clean-up and repair, in the hope that eventually we can get back to the original productive estuary, which unpolluted and beautiful, provided habitat for countless birds and animals, and fish by the millions.
- Overall - impressive!
- As I read these pages I can't help but feel somewhat skeptical about what you are trying to tell us. Often when someone shows considerable interest in the environment it often means that they have plans of a commercial nature rather than a genuine interest in wildlife. But I could be wrong. Regardless, until I know more it would be of no use to judge one's intent.
- Unfortunate timing for "workshop" as Tuesdays are regular school board meeting days.
- Might be useful to explain to all participants in this process how existing uses will be dealt with through the Management Plan. Will they be grandfathered in or will they be required to make changes to processes impacting the estuary in a negative way?
- I understand the 1) Project Review as - intake of applications to municipality first (?) 2) Environmental Review Committee is made up of water/land use agencies? 3) Decision by Estuary Mgmt Committee. Good Process.
- We do not need to create more government - less and more effective would be preferable!
- The 200 year map used to outline the proposed estuary is not acceptable. Field Sawmills is and has been a plus to the local economy. The sawdust and shavings from the mill are used by local farmers for bedding purposes. "Agricultural Land Reserve" land has no business in the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan. Please remove these lands at once. In the early 1950's the sawmill existed plus two other booming areas. There was abundant fish. The river was dredged in order for the barge facility to operate near the Courtenay River bridge. When the dam was built on the Puntledge River, the fish numbers were reduced significantly (no more tyee fishing in the bay) Gone were the sights of all the salmon going up river.
- Now that the water quality in Comox Harbour is getting better, I could see developing more oyster and clam farms in Comox Harbour. It is a clean industry and given the community another reason to keep the Estuary clean.
- Project Review needs some work.



**Volume 2  
Consultation Process**

**Appendix E**

**Public Workshop Summary**

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# Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan: Summary of Public Workshop

Comox Indian Band Hall, February 23, 1999

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*Prepared for:* Envirowest Environmental Consultants Ltd.  
And Fisheries and Oceans Canada

*Prepared by:* Cornerstone Planning Group  
Sidney, British Columbia

*Date:* March, 1999

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### APPENDICES

1. Attendance List for the Workshop
2. Registration List for Three Round Table Groups
3. Summary of Comments Workshop Evaluation Form

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

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***February 1999 Open House & the workshop were linked***

The second round of public consultation events on the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan (CREMP) consisted of an open house and a public workshop, held on Tuesday, February 16 and 23, 1999, respectively. The open house served to highlight draft CREMP initiatives for informal review by the public. Over 30 full colour boards were displayed on Land Use Tenures and Priorities; Habitat and Development Classification; Revised Vision, Goals and Objectives; Estuary Management Program Options; and Coordinated Project Review Process. Hand-out materials of information found in the display boards were also available to attendees.

At the Open House, members of the CREMP team representing Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Envirowest Environmental Consultants Ltd. were on hand to explain the initiatives and to answer questions on a one-on-one basis with interested individuals. Individuals attending the open house were provided the opportunity to register for the public workshop. Letters of invitation were sent to 145 individuals and organizations with interests in the estuary, including those who had registered at the first Open House.

***Goal of the workshop was to bring interested individuals and groups together***

The public workshop was held on February 23 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the Comox Indian Band Hall. The workshop, serving as an extension of the Open House, was designed around issues identified through discussions with team members and in written comment forms. The goal of the workshop was to bring together the diverse range of interests, consisting of interested Comox Valley residents, individuals and organizations representing commercial, industrial and business interests, public interest groups and representatives from government-related organizations and First Nations

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that play an important role in the development and implementation of the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan.

***Three workshop objectives***

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To enable the full range of interested publics to learn more about the draft CREMP initiatives;
- To ensure all interested individuals and groups had an opportunity to discuss how the draft initiatives affected their interests in the Courtenay River estuary planning area; and
- To enable the CREMP planning team to obtain constructive feedback from all workshop participants on draft initiatives, so that this input can be addressed in the planning process and the final plan.

Total attendance at the workshop was 43. The majority of attendees (30 per cent) reported an affiliation with a public interest group<sup>1</sup>. Twenty one per cent reported an affiliation with government related organizations or agencies. Business related affiliations represented 20 per cent and Comox Valley residents not reporting an affiliation accounted for the remaining 27 per cent.

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<sup>1</sup> The public interest group category consisted of 9 environmental interest, 2 resident association representatives, 1 recreation interest and 1 boating safety interest.

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## 2.0 PRESENTATIONS ON THE CREMP

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### ***CREMP in context of DFO programs & mandate***

Chris Hilliar, Habitat Partnership Coordinator with Fisheries and Oceans Canada put the CREMP initiative into context by briefly outlining the following three related federal fisheries programs:

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada's strategy to address endangered fish stocks, particularly the summer run Chinook and Steelhead runs;
- A major initiative on the Tsolum River to deal with acid rock drainage impacts associated with an abandoned mine on Mount Washington;
- Operation of the fish hatchery on the Puntledge River.

Chris Hilliar also pointed out that the Terms of Reference for the CREMP initiative includes objectives to find ways to meet Fisheries and Oceans Canada's mandate to protect and manage fish and fisheries habitat in the Courtenay River estuary; to provide direction for human activity in the planning area; and above all, to bring together all affected governments agencies and First Nations, interest groups, and interested Comox Valley residents to participate in the planning process.

### ***Draft CREMP to be prepared by end of March 1999***

Mark Adams of ECL Envirowest Environmental Consultants Limited provided a brief overview of the planning process and the draft products that had been developed to date. He indicated that a draft plan would be prepared by March 31, 1999 for Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The draft plan was to be based on several specific initiatives the CREMP team had developed in consultation with the public including:

### ***Four draft components of the CREMP were identified for public review***

- A management planning framework consisting of a statement of ***Vision, Goals and Objectives*** for

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the planning area;

- A **Habitat Classification System** that classifies existing habitats based on functional values these provide for fish and wildlife, and sets out environmental criteria to guide land and water use decisions within the planning area.
- A **Management Program** consisting of four potential models that could be used to organize and direct the implementation of the final plan.
- A **Project Review Process** to coordinate government agency reviews of proposed development projects in the planning area. The proposed process is to provide a “one-window” approach to prospective developers to ensure that limited time, financial and staff resources of government reviewers and prospective developers are used effectively and efficiently.

***Fifth component of the CREMP, Area Designation, to be completed at a later date***

Mark Adams also indicated that the **Area Designation**, the fifth component of the CREMP, would not be completed until the Local Area Plans were underway for the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona Official Community Plan.

***Public consultation on the CREMP was reviewed***

The public consultation program for the CREMP was reviewed by Mark. He indicated that Open Houses (on the four initiatives identified above) were held at the Comox Indian Band Hall on October 1, 1998 and February 16, 1999. He also stated that the feedback received from public on these initiatives has been documented in reports, and will be used together with the results of this workshop to produce the draft plan by the end of March.

Mark Adams indicated he could not speak on behalf of Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding the public consultation program for the remainder of the planning process, but believed meaningful opportunities for public review and comment would be provided in the months ahead.

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***Questions from participants***

In a short question period after the presentations, workshop attendees were advised they were free to review the four management program models and adapt these to local circumstances. Some attendees also expressed relief that they were being consulted during the development of the plan, and that their continuing involvement was encouraged.

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## 3.0 CONCURRENT ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

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***Three CREMP components for Round Table discussion***

Workshop attendees were requested to participate in one of three round table discussion groups held concurrently. Attendance in the three groups was roughly even at 14 members per group. Individuals who registered in each of the three round tables at the start of the workshop are identified in Appendix 2.

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**Group 1.  
Revised Vision, Goals and Objectives**

The proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives for the Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan were reviewed by workshop participants. The proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives had been previously reviewed and revised through earlier consultation based on comments the Advisory Committee received from individuals and organizations on the mailing list, and from attendees of the October 1, 1998 Open House.

***Key issues identified in public consultation projects to date***

In an attempt to move the discussion of the Vision, Goals and Objectives forward, Group 1 participants were informed that the following key issues had been identified through previous public consultation:

- Balancing environmental protection with human activities;
- Existing uses in the planning area;
- Range of multiple uses in the estuary; and
- Wordsmithing the statements so that these reflect the “common ground” reached by all participants in the planning process.

***Environmental, government, business & recreation interests participated in Group 1***

Group 1 was comprised of a mix of interests, including representatives from Field Sawmill, Courtenay Airpark Association, Desolation Sound Yacht Charters, Haven Farm, Strait Oysters, Comox Indian Band, Komoux Valley Paddlers, Comox Valley Environmental Council, Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards and Macdonald Wood Park Society.

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The discussion centered on finding a balance between

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Summary of Group 1 Discussion

***Individual viewpoints of Group 1 covered a range of environmental & economic values and interests***

environmental protection of the estuary and ongoing human uses of it. In order for the group to appreciate the full range of interests in the estuary, each member was encouraged to present their specific viewpoints. These are summarized as follows:

- Restoration of the estuary is very important.
- Environmental impacts of industry/business should be minimized.
- Development in the estuary should be limited.
- Restoration of the estuary should use the precontact ecosystem (1850) as a benchmark.
- Industrial development in the estuary should be restricted to protect the Pacific Flyway used by migratory birds.
- Wildlife values in the estuary should be considered.
- Wildlife corridors/greenways should be established to connect estuarine ecosystems.
- Noise associated with air traffic over the estuary is of concern to residents.
- The Courtenay River channels should be redesigned to have more “natural” edges.
- Saving what is left of the estuary is important.
- Environmental quality of the estuary should be protected and enhanced to enable the shellfish industry to flourish.
- Agricultural land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) should be excluded from the planning area.
- Farmers in the estuary have a cooperative relationship with Fisheries and Oceans Canada on a day-to-day operational level. The CREMP initiative has potential to undermine this relationship.
- Tourism is important to the area’s economy,

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therefore there is an ongoing need for more infrastructure in the estuary, such as marinas. At the same time, it is recognized that an ecologically sustainable estuary is important for business purposes.

- The Airpark is a long term resident of the estuary and as such should be recognized in the plan's vision.
- The Field Sawmill operation is compliant with environmental legislation and regulations. If the community wants to keep the Sawmill operation, it has to find a way.

***Working together was an immediate challenge***

Group 1 participants agreed that the immediate challenge was to work together. They recognized that success is dependent on acknowledging the wide range of values and interests held in the community for the estuary, and finding suitable ways to address these. Improving and maintaining environmental quality was a shared interest.

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**Group 2. Plan Implementation and Project Review**

Four potential administrative models were reviewed by workshop participants. These models would serve to organize and direct implementation of the CREMP. A proposed process for the review of potential development projects in the CREMP area was also reviewed by the attendees.

***Key issues identified in previous public consultation***

To initiate discussion, the following issues (identified through previous public consultation) were noted:

- Level of public involvement;
- Consensus decision making;
- Legislative authority;
- Effectiveness and efficiency; and
- Participation of experienced and knowledgeable scientists.

Group 2 was comprised of interested residents and representatives from Comox Town Residents

***Residents, business and***

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***environmental interests and government reps participated in Group 2***

Association, Area B Residents Association, Canadian Power and Sail Squadron, Islands Trust, Field Sawmill, Comox Valley Naturalists, Town of Comox, Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

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**Summary of Group 2 Discussion**

The discussion centered on adapting the implementation processes so that they were effective, efficient, affordable and meet local needs of the Courtenay River estuary. The following specific points were raised by Group 2:

***Adapting existing models to meet the needs of the CREMP is key***

- Estuary management plans are unique. The CREMP must be adapted to local issues and circumstances. However, much could be learned by looking at other estuary plans in British Columbia and elsewhere.
- Model 1, based on the Fraser River Estuary Management Plans (FREMP), has no decision making structure. Agencies work within their legislative mandates, and do not deal effectively with conflicting management objectives. The Public Advisory Committee (PAC) has no decision making status.
- Model 2 has the public represented on the management committee so there is no need for a Public Advisory Committee.
- Model 3 shows some promise for the implementation of the CREMP, but needs an Order-in-Council to create the authority. Model 3 has proven to be inflexible and has other issues such as nominating mechanisms, cost – (Who will pay for authority?).
- Model 4, requiring the establishment of a non-profit society, should not be considered because it had no legislative authority.

In addition, if the role of government is advisory, accountability during implementation becomes problematic.

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***The core of Model 3 with elements of Models 1 & 2 was preferred***

Group 2 participants agreed that the *management authority component* of Model 3 should be combined with some features of Models 1 and 2. They also recognized that conservation was a common thread running through all four estuary implementation models.

In conclusion, Group 2 recommended that the CREMP team ensure the following principles are addressed in the development of an implementation process for the Courtenay River estuary:

***Group 2 developed principles to be considered by the CREMP team in the design of the management***

- Establishment of a local management authority ( e.g. simplified Model 3);
- Accessibility of the public to the decision making process;
- Ability to deal fairly with all local interests;
- Appointment of an Environment Ombudsman for review;
- Establishment of principles to guide local decision-making;
- Principal-governed management rather than management by competing interests;
- A need for firm consistent rules and mechanisms to apply these;
- A need for timelines built into process – clear, uncomplicated; and
- A need to monitor projects approved through the Project Review Process to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

Group 2 also recommended the establishment of a federal Pacific coast estuary management commission similar to the Agricultural Land Commission. This new body should have a mandate for estuary conservation.

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**Group 3. Action Programs**

A host of Action Programs, such as Water Quality Management, Habitat Restoration, and Log Handling and Storage, will be addressed in the CREMP. The Habitat Classification system, developed and implemented as part of the current planning exercise, provided an example of an Action Program. Attendees explored specific management initiatives for the protection of environmental resources in the estuary. The following issues, identified through previous public consultation, helped to initiate the discussion:

***Key issues identified in previous public consultation***

- Identification of appropriate initiatives;
- Identification of key components of these initiatives; and
- Prioritization of the various action programs identified by participants in the planning process.

Group 3 was comprised of interested residents and representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, B.C. Ministry of Fisheries, Department of National Defence, Comox Bay Marina, Comox Valley Harbour Authority and Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards.

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**Summary of Group 3 Discussion**

The discussion focused on the identification of appropriate action programs.

The following values and interests were discussed by Group 3:

***Group 3 covered values and interests ranging from information collection to specific guidelines***

- The need to establish a common database for the estuary consisting of a habitat and species inventory, etc;
- The importance of habitat restoration and enhancement;
- The need to understand the ecology of the planning area for restoration and interpretative purposes;
- The need to determine the status of environmental quality – threats to resources in the

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planning area;

- The need for public education and stewardship;
- The need for guidelines for exotic species management, dredging, log storage and handling, log waste management (i.e., dredging and disposal, ocean dumping off Lazo), sewage treatment, stormwater treatment from catchment areas upland of and within the planning area;
- The need to broaden the habitat classification to include terrestrial habitat and species in the planning area;
- The effects of bedrock on water quality – accretion;

***Group 3 reached agreement  
on a range of Action  
Programs***

Group 3 agreed that action programs should be considered by the CREMP team for the following:

- Establishment of a benchmark inventory so that status environmental quality can be determined over time;
- Modification of the habitat classification to look at terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems together;
- Establishment of a biophysical inventory that includes mapping and inventory of habitats and an organism inventory;
- An examination of ecological processes at work in the planning area
- Public education and stewardship;
- Exotic species management for monitoring purposes;
- Dredging guidelines;
- Log storage and handling guidelines;
- Water quality guidelines that address septic and storm water sources;
- Temperature requirements – watershed management approach for Tsolum & Puntledge

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river systems;

- Establishment of a common database on social, economic and environmental considerations which is accessible to the public and government agencies;
- The need for local commercial fishery strategies;
- Completion of the Area Designation component of the CREMP which will establish appropriate shoreline uses. This component of the CREMP is linked to the approved Official Community Plan and Local Area Plans; and
- The need for environmentally sustainable design criteria for development (i.e., Best Management Practices for foreshore development).

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## 4.0 SUMMARY COMMENTS

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***A commitment was made by the CREMP team to consider all public feedback***

The CREMP team acknowledged that the comments and recommendations made by workshop participants would be addressed in the preparation of a draft plan. The first draft of the CREMP was scheduled for completion by Envirowest Environmental Consultants by the end of March 1999.

It was evident by the end of the workshop that the participants' appreciated the opportunity to learn about the wide range of environmental, social and economic values associated with the planning area. Participants also recognized the importance of working together to ensure that their interests were acknowledged and given meaningful consideration by the CREMP team in the preparation of the plan.

***Continuing public consultation is expected***

As a final note, it is also very evident that there is a firm expectation among participants that the draft plan will be available for public review before it is finalized by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

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## 5.0 WORKSHOP EVALUATION

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***Workshop objectives were generally met***

At the end of the workshop, attendees were requested to evaluate how well objectives had been met. Of the eight respondents, one reported that the workshop was ‘excellent’ as it enabled a wide range of interests to be expressed and discussed. Five individuals reported that the workshop was ‘good’ because it brought a diverse selection of the community together to address common interests. Two individuals rated the workshop as ‘fair’ and qualified their rating stating they would have liked to have participated in all three groups or that there was not enough time available to fully discuss the issues. These comments are presented verbatim in Appendix 3.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**Attendance List for the Workshop**

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## APPENDIX 1

### Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan Workshop Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Reported Affiliation</u>
John Mackie	Canadian Coast Guard
Robert Dunn	Comox Valley Harbour Authority
Rick Senger	DFO Campbell River
Norm Reynolds	
Ronna-Rae Leonard	Area B Rural Residents Association
Frank Hovenden	Comox Valley Naturalists
T. Gray	
E.C. Pielou	
Bev Bravender	Department of Fisheries & Oceans
Lesley MacDougall	Department of Fisheries & Oceans
Louise Bell	Islands Trust
Ruth Masters	
Angela Smailes	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Jackie Sandiford	Comox Valley Watershed Assembly
Eric Krejci	Comox Bay Marina
Brian Bloomfield	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Michele Jones	Biologist
Don Hurford	Haven Farm
Thomas Finnbogason	Field Sawmill
Ken Huxham	Courtenay Airpark Association
Ken Brock	Canadian Wildlife Service
Pat Halliday	Comox Town Residents Association
Dave Ferguson	CVEC/Tsolum River Restoration
Peter Van Dinter	Courtenay Airpark Association
W. Pogue	Canadian Power & Sail Squadron
Chris Beggs	Department of Fisheries & Oceans
Norm Neiderer	Komoux Valley Paddlers

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Bill Heath	BC Ministry of Fisheries
Bob Allan	Department of National Defence
Barbara Porter	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Richard Porter	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Warren Fleenor	Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
Fran Johnson	Macdonald Wood Park Society
Terry Hamilton	Field Sawmills
Dave Schaff	Courtenay Airpark Association
Wayne Bradley	Oyster grower
Cathy Slater	BC Shellfish Growers Association
Barbara Frank	
Norm Frank	
Bob Stevenson	
Tim Hall	
Tim Up	
Melda Buchanan	

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**APPENDIX 2**  
**Registration List for Three Round Table Groups**

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## APPENDIX 2

### Registration List for Three Round Table Groups

#### Group 1 Sign-up:

- Peter Van Dinter, Courtenay Airpark
- Dave Ferguson, CVEC/Tsolum River Restoration
- Norm Neiderer, Komoux Valley Paddlers
- Michele Jones, Biologist
- Terry Hamilton, Field Sawmills
- Don Hurford, Haven Farm
- Barb Porter, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Fran Johnson, Macdonald Wood Park Society
- Wayne Bradley, Strait Oysters
- Norm Frank, Comox Indian Band
- Barbara Frank, Comox Indian Band
- Ken Huxham, Courtenay Airpark Association
- Dave Schaff, Courtenay Airpark Association
- Bob Stevenson, Desolation Sound Yacht Charters

#### Group 2 Sign-up:

- Norm Reynolds
- Ronna-Rae Leonard, ABRRA
- Louise Bell, Islands Trust
- Brian Bloomfield, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Richard Porter, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Jackie Sandiford, Comox Valley Watershed Assembly
- Angela Smailes, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Ken Brock, Canadian Wildlife Service
- Tim Up

#### Group 3 Sign-up:

- Bev Bravender, DFO
- Leslie MacDougall, DFO
- Chris Pielou
- Bill Heath, BC Ministry of Fisheries
- Bob Allan, DND
- Warren Fleenor, Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- T. Gray
- Eric Krejci, Comox Bay Marina

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- Bob Dunn, Comox Valley Harbour Authority
  - Ruth Masters
  - Melda Buchanan

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**APPENDIX 3**  
**Summary of Comments**  
**Workshop Evaluation Form**

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**Courtenay River Estuary Management Plan  
Workshop  
Comox Indian Band Hall  
February 23, 1999-03-05**

**1. How well did the workshop meet its objectives?**

**Excellent    1        Good 5        Fair 2        Poor 0**

**Comments:**

- “A good start - a long road ahead! Keep up the good work.”
- “I am happy to be involved, but more time/discussion is needed.”
- “Excellent recommendations.”
- “Like the format. Our group had a good discussion. We were lucky to have a good facilitator.”
- “Not enough time to fully discuss options and plans.”

**2. What about the workshop did you like the most?**

- “Opportunity to speak individually.”
- “Diverse selection of community coming together to address the common issues.”
- “The diverse people and discussion.”
- “Focus”
- “Small group size.”
- “We managed to reach some good common ground on our interests.”
- “Wide range of interesting information from all the different members in my group (#3).”
- “Much good dialogue and ideas presented.”

**3. What about the workshop did you like the least?**

- “Would have liked input in all three areas. This is the reason for rating ‘fair.’ “
- “Noise level of hall.”
- “Hard to hear in this venue.”
- “Don’t use this venue!! Too much echo!”
- “The sound is terrible.”
- “The acoustics of the hall. Dreadful.”
- “Venue – sound problem.”

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#### **4. Other Comments**

- “Group input in area attended was ‘good+.’ “
- “Positive experience.”
- “Recommend to assign trained facilitators or input can be a disaster!”
- “Good work. Bring the politicians.”



**Volume 2  
Consultation Process**

**Appendix F**

**Meeting Overviews**

# **One-on-One Meeting Summaries**

## **1.0 COMOX INDIAN BAND**

Karen Asp (ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited) met with Comox Indian Band representatives Ernest Hardy (Chief) and Melinda Knox (Administrator) on November 18, 1998 to seek information on historic and present First Nations land and water uses. Chris Hilliar (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) met with Band representatives Ernest Hardy and Melinda Knox at a second meeting to discuss the Estuary Management Plan. The Band representatives conveyed that the Band had a long-standing commitment to the environmental conservation and enhancement of the estuary. They were concerned about the composition of the Estuary Advisory Committee. They were also concerned about the impacts of human activities on the historic fish weirs in the estuary.

## **2.0 PRIMEX FOREST PRODUCTS/FIELD SAWMILL**

Mark Adams and Karen Asp (Envirowest) met with senior representatives of Primex Forest Products Limited including George Malpass (President), Shaun Sullivan (Vice-President), Ed Vervynck (General Manager, Sawmills), and Tom Finnabogason (Envirochem Services Inc.) on January 22, 1999. Primex representatives provided Envirowest with a detailed description of the Field Sawmill history and current operations. They conveyed that they had a good working relationship with DFO and that Field Sawmill was state-of-the-art in the industry with respect to environmental compliance.

## **3.0 LOUISE BELL, DENMAN ISLAND LOCAL TRUSTEE**

Mark Adams (Envirowest) and Chris Hilliar (DFO) met with Louise Bell (Trustee, Denman Island) on January 26, 1999 to address concerns expressed by Ms. Bell. Some issues discussed included: process concerns related to the Advisory Committee meeting of December 09, 1998; the proposed habitat classification system; and the need for representation of Electoral Area 'A' and environmental public interest groups on the Advisory Committee.

## **4.0 COMOX VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY**

Mark Adams (Envirowest) and Chris Hilliar (DFO) met with Norman McLaren (Executive Director, Comox Valley Economic Development Society) on January 26, 1999. On behalf of the Society, Mr. McLaren expressed concern that DFO had preempted the consultation process. The basis of this concern was a letter, dated December 04, 1998, from DFO to the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona in which DFO made some statements regarding land use in the estuary. The Society was

particularly concerned that DFO intended to pursue relocation of current industries and prevention of future industrial development.

## **5.0 COMOX VALLEY NATURALISTS SOCIETY**

Karen Asp and Mark Adams (Envirowest) and DFO representatives including Chris Hilliar, Rob Russell and Leslie MacDougall met with representatives of the Comox Valley Naturalists Society (Betty Levens, Frank Hovenden, Jean Hudson) to share information and discuss the Society's ideas and concerns regarding the Estuary Management Plan. At this meeting, held on January 27, 1999, the Society conveyed that the Estuary Management Plan should emphasize the importance of estuaries within larger ecosystems and the value of the Courtenay River estuary, in particular, for wildlife. The Estuary Management Plan should also endeavour to prevent new development that impaired the biological functions of the estuary and aim for the restoration of historic natural functions lost due to channelization, dyking, etc.

## **6.0 TOURISM COMOX VALLEY**

On February 17, 1999, Karen Asp, Mark Adams and Rachel Jones (Envirowest), and Chris Hilliar (DFO) met with Gwyneth Taylor and other representatives of Tourism Comox Valley. TCV representatives convened this meeting to seek information and to express tourism-related concerns. TVC's major concern was that the Estuary Management Plan would fail to achieve a balance between environmental conservation and maintenance of tourism amenities and opportunities associated with the estuary.