

WEST MARSH ECOGIFT MONITORING REPORT (BUTTERTUBS MARSH WEST)



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Ecogift Requirements

As part of the ecogift designation, the ecogift recipient is responsible for the long-term management and conservation of the ecogift and their ecologically sensitive features. To ensure these conditions, the recipient must receive prior written consent from the Minister of Environment for any changes in use or disposition. Annual monitoring occurs to ensure that the ecogift regulations are met.

Background

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and the City of Nanaimo (City) are recipients of the ecogift at West Marsh. DUC has signed a lease agreement with the City for them to manage the property as per the management plan. The main goal for this property is to preserve, conserve, maintain and enhance the natural state of the land and its amenities in perpetuity as habitat for waterfowl, fish and wildlife. The land is managed by the City as a natural park and will provide passive recreation and education opportunities that are consistent and compatible with ecogift requirements and the conservation purposes for which the land was acquired. The key attributes important for the ecogift designation are the natural wetland and forest ecosystems on the property.

Property Description

Parcel Identifiers and Legal Descriptions: Section 12, Range 8, Mountain District, Except the Westerly 11.979 Chains thereof and Except that Part in Plans 25503 and VIP61854; PID: 009-456-601.

Access

There is a registered easement off of Jingle Pot Road that allows access to the property. If travelling east from the Nanaimo Parkway, turn left onto the first road/driveway on the left (directly across from Black Diamond Drive). Continue left and then a small driveway with a gate will be the first exit to the right. This leads into the property. Additional views and photos can be taken of the property from the Buttertubs Marsh Trail.

Reference Documents

1. Buttertubs West Marsh Ecogift Baseline. Oct 2012. Prepared by Ducks Unlimited Canada.
2. Management Plan for Buttertubs West Marsh Property (West Marsh). Aug 2012. Prepared by Ducks Unlimited Canada & the City of Nanaimo.
3. Bird Banding and Monitoring Report at Buttertubs West Marsh. Nov 2013. Prepared by Dr. Eric Demers, Vancouver Island University.

Map – property boundary and two identified zones.



Monitoring 2013

I visited the site on 5 December 2013. The City is operating this park as per the lease agreement and management plan. Currently, public access is limited as there has been no official development of trails. There has been a group from Vancouver Island University that is using the property to conduct bird surveys and banding. This use is compatible with the ecogift and provides valuable biological information about the area. A few temporary trails were cut in the grass and shrubs to facilitate this work. This group has also put in some posts for swallow boxes. Again, this is a benefit to the environmental value of the site.

This year, the City put a sign for West Marsh along the Buttertubs Marsh trail and old fences along this trail that had been put up by the previous landowner were removed. A nesting area was installed along the dike for Western painted turtles. There has been no other addition of structures.

Currently, there is still a small shack that appears to have been occupied by a squatter. This shack is planned for removal. In addition, there are existing areas of wood debris that were piled by previous landowner. These piles do not appear to have changed since the baseline report.

Invasive species such as broom and blackberry continue to grow on the property and general maintenance has reduced it along the access road. A management plan for these invasive plants should be developed in the near future.

A small number of alder trees were cut down and left on the southeast edge of the upland zone. The City is currently investigating who cut these trees and why. In this same area, an adjacent landowner has put new fencing along the property boundary line.

There have been no changes to the ecological communities in the two zones.

Wildlife Observed

Incidental observations of wildlife using the site include (very cold and snowy conditions):

Common Name	Scientific Name
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	<i>Poecile rufescens</i>
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>

Ecogift Statement 2013

There is no current change to the ecological functioning or environmental value of the property. The ecogift values for which the property was purchased remain intact and the ecosystems continue to support a variety of species. Activities that have taken place on the ecogift property in the past year are compatible with the ecogift values and there is no change in use for the site.

Photographic Record

Zone 1: Upland



Gate at property boundary



Access right-of-way



Brush/debris pile 1



Brush/debris pile 2



Squatter's shelter



Typical vegetation of wet forest subzone

Zone 2: Wetland & Riparian



Typical forest/field edge vegetation



Typical vegetation of old field



View of wetland from dyke



New sign on dike at east property boundary



New turtle nesting area on dike at east property boundary



Temporary trails made for bird survey and banding project



Cut trees on southeast boundary



New fence put in by adjacent landowner

Note that additional photos are on file at the Surrey office of Ducks Unlimited Canada.