

SEI Update

A publication of the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory Project September 1998

Nanoose Bay OCP Identifies SEI sites

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) recently approved (at third reading) the Official Community Plan for Nanoose Bay – including the identification of a large portion of the community as a Sensitive Ecosystems Development Permit Area (DPA). All SEI sites are identified on the OCP maps.

The Sensitive Ecosystems DPA means that land use and development “should not necessarily encroach into natural environment features”. The onus lies with the applicant to demonstrate that any encroachment is unavoidable due to topography, hazards, etc., and to include appropriate restoration and mitigation measures.

The OCP requires that the application be accompanied by a vegetation and bio-inventory prepared by a registered professional biologist (or similarly qualified individual), who assesses the environmental impact of the proposed development and recommends any mitigative measures to protect habitat. The OCP also notes that the location and boundaries of SEI sites may be revised as site-specific information becomes available.

The protection of environmentally sensitive areas in Nanoose Bay will be supported by:

- Dedication and/or purchase as park land;
- Dedication to or purchase by a private land trust;
- Registration of a restrictive covenant; and/or
- The use of creative development proposals such as clustering or density averaging.

Nanoose Bay hopes to establish an “environmentally sensitive areas stewardship team” from government and non-government organizations as well as local residents, who will “ensure the maximization of resources and knowledge in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.” Community education initiatives will also be encouraged.

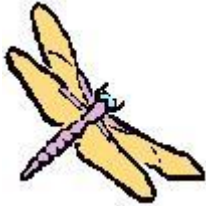
The RDN is currently preparing an application information bylaw to support the OCP.

For further information, please contact the Regional District of Nanaimo Planning Department at (250) 390-6510.

Updates

SEI Technical Report

We hit some unexpected delays with the production of the SEI Technical Report. This detailed report of the SEI methodology and results will be published shortly.



SEI Conservation Manual

A draft of the SEI Conservation Manual was circulated to some planners, conservation agencies and other interested reviewers over the summer. We have received a number of helpful comments, and will be working with consultants to prepare a new and improved version.

If you would like to receive and review the draft Conservation Manual, please contact Judith Cullington at (250) 391-8772.

Note For Digital SEI Users

Read-only TRIM files now available

The basemap, on which the SEI data is displayed both in hardcopy and digital formats, was developed using selected digital TRIM map layers, namely coastline, streams, contours, railways and roads. Due to the licensing agreement with Geographic Data BC, the SEI project managers are not permitted to redistribute digital TRIM data and many potential SEI users do not have sufficient resources to obtain TRIM for their own use. Users were thus limited to using the SEI data in hardcopy format only.

This obstacle has now been overcome by translating the digital SEI basemap into a read-only image which can be used in any GIS program. The map image is in tif format and is available now from Environment Canada's ftp site (ftp://www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/pub/dwight/SEI_tif), along with an index map showing the location of the 12 tiles which cover the entire study area. Due to the large size of the tiles (58-116 megabytes), please download and refer to the index map (index.doc) before selecting tiles for downloading.

It should be noted that these are raster images, and although they are spatially correct, the lines appear jagged. They are designed to be used at the scale of the hardcopy maps, 1:20,000. The SEI data must be superimposed on top of the basemap because the image is not transparent and will block out any data underneath it. All of the SEI data can be viewed against the backdrop of the image including the labeled polygons, study area boundary, municipal and regional district boundaries and air photo flight lines and photo centres.

NOTE: For ease of display, an image catalogue is also provided on the ftp site: imgcat.dbf. The catalogue allows the user to zoom in and out and pan the display without being concerned about loading individual tiles, because the relevant tile is automatically displayed. Before using this imgcat.dbf file for the first time, the path identified in the 'image' field of the .dbf table must be changed to reflect the user's directory setup (i.e. to show where the 12 files are stored in the user's computer). Add the imgcat.dbf as a theme to the display, remembering to change the type of the theme to the 'image' option.

*These read-only files contain TRIM base map images only - the SEI polygons do not appear.
For more information, or to obtain SEI digital data, please contact Peggy Ward.*

A New Tool for Land Use Planning

Developing a Methodology for Site Conservation Evaluation

Conservation-based land use planning decisions must be supported by sound ecological and biological information, gathered from on-site assessments. The Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI) project stresses that all SEI sites require detailed on-site assessments before planning decisions can be made. Even the SEI sites that have been field checked as part of the SEI project (approximately 30% of the total sites) require additional site-specific data in order to allow a comprehensive assessment of the site's conservation value.

The problem? There currently exists no formal methodology for this type of comprehensive conservation evaluation and site assessment. With this in mind, the BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' Conservation Data Centre (CDC) has undertaken a two-year project to develop formal criteria for ecological evaluation to ensure consistency in site assessment. This includes a module for ecosystem inventory, and a field form that includes ecological information regarding landscape condition, environmental characteristics, disturbance history (both natural

and man-made), adjacent land uses and other fields lacking on standard inventory forms. The data gathered is then used to evaluate the site; variables such as quality, condition, viability, representativeness, defensibility, size, threats, biodiversity significance and other values are discussed and ranked. The evaluation results are then summarized in written form.

The first year of the project saw the development of evaluation criteria, field forms and database standards. We are now beginning to implement the evaluation module, and a series of workshops to field test the methodology are planned. Please contact the CDC if your group would like to participate in this phase of the project.

For more information please contact Jan Kirkby, BC Conservation Data Centre, at (250 387-0732) or email at jkirkby@fwhdept.env.gov.bc.ca

This project was funded by the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund. The HCTF was created by an act of the legislature to preserve, restore and enhance key areas of habitat for fish and wildlife throughout B.C.



Direct to your desk

If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive the SEI Update, or would like your name removed from the list, please contact Judith Cullington: phone (250) 391-8772, fax (250) 478-6055, e-mail: jcullington@shaw.ca

May we present...

The SEI project team is willing to provide orientation sessions on the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory to councils and other organizations that would like to learn more. *For information please contact Judith Cullington at (250) 391-8772, e-mail: jcullington@shaw.ca*

New Parks in Langford Protect SEI Sites

The District of Langford has conserved parts of sensitive ecosystems through the creation of new parkland at Goldstream Meadows and on Selwyn Road.

A proposed 42-townhouse development for the Songhees Retirement Village, just north of the Trans-Canada Highway in Langford, included a terrestrial herbaceous ecosystem (HT:ro) with several Garry oaks. After a site visit confirmed its value, Council agreed to modify the proposal to include 28 townhouses, setting aside the Garry oak area as parkland. Public access will be permitted along a proposed trail, and planner Rob Buchan notes that it will be important to locate and manage the trail to prevent ecosystem impacts.

Staff and Council have also negotiated the protection of an SEI-identified wetland at Goldstream Meadows, creating 35 acres of parkland as part of a comprehensive development proposal.

Langford have also prepared bylaws to implement Bill 25 (Fish Protection Act) and Bill 26 (Local Government Amendment Act.) This will allow the creation of new DPAs based on SEI data, riparian zones and undeveloped greenfield sites. Using the new authority in Bill 26, the new bylaw will enable staff to require impact studies on traffic, stormwater and other environmental matters.

For further information please contact Rob Buchan, Municipal Planner for the District of Langford, (250) 474-6919.

For more information:

- *on the SEI project, change forms and groundtruthing:*

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks Conservation Data Centre

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- *on the SEI project and digital data:*

Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service

Peggy Ward

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e-mail: Peggy.Ward@ec.gc.ca

To order maps, please contact:

Clover Point Cartographics

Ph.: (250) 384-3537

Fax: (250) 384-2679

- *on the SEI project and consultants:*

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**Please replace your previous data with the revised data below
(changes appear in bold type)**

Polygon ID Sept 97 Version	Polygon ID Sept 98 Version	Map Sheet	Hectares	Ecosystem 1	Ecosystem 2
C0623C	C0623B	92B 053	1.00	FS	WN:wm
C1100	C1100F	92B 042	60.06	SG:co	OF:co
C1209	C1209A	92B 052	0.96	WN:sp	
N0089		92G 011	2.06	RI:1a	
N0089A		92G011	3.91	RI:1a	
N0568	N0208	92F 030	2.78	RI:6	
N0568	N0526A	92F 030	4.81	RI:5	
N1230	N1239	92F 038	100.14	SG:MX	OF:co
S0347A	S0347G	92K 004	10.38	RI:6:5	
S0413	S0413B	92K 004	0.23	WN:sp:ms	
S0430	S0430B	92K 004	3.69	HT:ro	SG:co
S0599A		92F 093	0.5	SV:cl	
S0693	S0693A	92F 094	1.71	WN:sp	
S0834		92F 094 , 093	3.1	SV:cl	SG:co
S0857	S0857A	92F 093	0.46	WN:sp	
S0911		92F 085	1.67	SV:sp	
S1088	S0108B	92K 014	3.55	CB:cl	
S56016	S56016A	92F 056	1.83	RI:5	
S85011	S85011A	92F 085	1.57	WN:sp	
S85011	S85011B	92F 085	0.28	WN:sp	
S85011	S85011C	92F 085	5.02	WN:sp	
S85011	S85011D	92F 085	2.02	WN:sp	
T1387		92F 049	41.65	HT:ro	SG:co
V0269	V0296	92B 081	0.72	WN:sp	

V0377	V0377A	92B 053	0.10	WN:sw:wm	
V0453	V0543	92B 071	12.3	SV:cl	
V0551	V0551A	92B 071	3.74	OF:co	
V0757	V0757A	92B 082	2.04	WN:ms	
V0757	V0757B	92B 082	0.11	WN:ms	
V1425B	V1425C	92B 062 ,062, 63	1.64	FS	

A revised database is available upon request. Contact Peggy Ward at (250) 752-9611.