

False Creek Watershed Society
2014 Survey of Election Candidates for Vancouver City Council and Park Board



To: Election Candidates for Vancouver City Council and Park Board
Subject: Water Issues and Your Election Platform
From: The False Creek Watershed Society
Date: Sunday 2 November 2014



The purposes of the False Creek Watershed Society are:

- To advance the education of the public about the rich natural and human history of Vancouver's False Creek watershed and to increase understanding of our common environmental problems.
- To help the members of our community (and be a good example to the general community) to implement positive environmental change.
- By all our efforts, to inspire and help the people in the watershed to live more sustainably.

And more specifically:

- Develop educational materials for children and adults that teach about the human and natural history of the area and encourage discussion on what we can learn from this history to make our world more sustainable today.
- Create celebrations, festivals and other events that encourage the public to learn about this history and inspire them to lead more sustainable lifestyles.
- Engage actively in implementing sustainable environmental change, and encourage other community organizations, businesses and individuals to join with us in our mission of celebration, education, and implementing sustainable environmental change.

The False Creek Watershed Society was incorporated as a non-profit society in 2005.

Two groups working with the Society on creek-related projects in the False Creek watershed are:

- St. George Blueway —working to daylight Mount Pleasant's creeks and reconnect to a biodiverse ecosystem (<http://mtpleasantwatershed.wordpress.com>).
- Gibby's Field Subcommittee — working to turn Gibby's Field in Kensington-Cedar Cottage, which contains a piece of original creek bed, into a viable community green space. (www.vcn.bc.ca/gibbys).

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False Creek Watershed Society
2014 Survey of Election Candidates for Vancouver City Council and Park Board



Name of Candidate: _____
Civic Party: _____
Standing for: Council/Park Board (circle as appropriate)
Date: _____



This candidates' survey consists of fourteen questions contained in three parts:

Part I: Water Issues in Metro Vancouver

1. Do you support the eight broad goals that would help to achieve "Supporting Salmon in the City" in Metro Vancouver's *Ecological Health Action Plan* (2011)?
2. Do you support Project 4 Enhancing Acadia Creek in Metro Vancouver's *Ecological Health Action Plan* (2011)?
3. Do you oppose expansion of the number of oil tankers using Burrard Inlet?
4. Do you oppose expansion of oil pipeline flows around Vancouver Harbour?

Part II: Water Issues in the City of Vancouver

5. Do you support daylighting streams in Vancouver?
6. Do you support the actions for stormwater management and on-site rainwater capture and re-use referred to in *Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future*?
7. Will you support the City of Vancouver's City-wide integrated stormwater management plan and on-site rainwater capture and re-use if the plan recommends them?
8. Do you support putting yellow fish on every storm drain in the city and making sure people understand what this yellow fish means?
9. Do you support the actions for shoreline restoration, advocacy for improving water quality, and advocacy for improvements to the Iona and Lion's Gate wastewater treatment plants referred to in *Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future*?
10. Do you support the Vancouver Water Opportunities Advisory Group being revived?
11. Do you support the scope of the City of Vancouver Blueways program being expanded to include surface water that is inland and not just coastal, i.e., waterbodies (such as creeks and lakes) as well as waterfront?
12. Do you support the scope of the City of Vancouver Blueways program being expanded to include surface water that existed in Vancouver in the past, not just surface water that is present, e.g., old creeks that might be daylighted?

Part III: Water Issues in the False Creek Watershed

13. Would you approve of the idea of re-introducing surface water to False Creek Flats and its watershed as part of the development of policy directions for the Eastern Core?

14. Would you support the idea of re-introducing some wetland areas to the False Creek Flats as part of the development of policy directions for the Eastern Core?

The False Creek Watershed Society would like to know, if you were elected in the 2014 Vancouver Civic Election, would you say “Yes” in answer to the fourteen questions? Please complete the questionnaire in the accompanying e-mail and return it to:

False Creek Watershed Society at: info@falsecreekwatershed.org

Feel free to add comments after each question and at the end of the survey.

Thank you for taking the time to read and complete this survey,

The Board and Staff of the False Creek Watershed Society

Part I: Water Issues in Metro Vancouver

This section concerns Metro Vancouver’s October 2011 *Ecological Health Action Plan* – or EHAP for short

(www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/ecologicalhealth/EcologicalHealthDocs/ECOHealthActionPlan.pdf).

EHAP contains a section on “Supporting Salmon in the City” (pages 25-26).

In a 1997 study Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) estimated that *over 100, or almost a third, of the streams in the Metro Vancouver area had been lost*, and of the *remaining 238 streams, 97 percent were either threatened or endangered*. The status of these streams have been affected by multitude of factors associated with the urban and economic development of the region and restoring and enhancing the remaining streams will require a new process of evaluating the trade-offs in terms of ecological health and other objectives. Towards this end, the detailed proposals for the projects in this section will include an estimate of the value of the ecosystem services derived from the restoration work. This will be useful in assessing each project’s relative merits as well as building greater awareness among decision-makers and the public of natural capital.

The restoration of healthy streams and riparian areas is an important contribution in building the Regional Green Infrastructure Network. Recreational and ecological corridors along salmon streams can be useful in building connectivity in this regional network.

What is needed:

To reverse this trend of stream habitat loss and degradation, coordinated action to protect and enhance critical spawning and rearing habitat is required. Specific strategies to achieve these broad goals include:

1. Improve biological integrity of existing watersheds
2. Protect the integrity of aquifers
3. Ensure adequate in-stream flows
4. Improve quality of surface waters
5. Integrate riparian habitat standards into new developments
6. Restore historic native fish distributions
7. Restore the hydrological regimes of watersheds

8. Restore and enhance habitat and productive capacity for native salmon. (Italics ours)

1. Do you support the eight broad goals that would help to achieve “Supporting Salmon in the City” in Metro Vancouver’s *Ecological Health Action Plan* (October 2011)?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

EHAP describes five projects for “Supporting Salmon in the City.” Project 4 is Enhancing Acadia Creek (page 30-31). (Please note that Acadia Creek inhabits the lands to the west of Spanish Banks – commonly called Wreck Beach – and it is on one of the best preserved and undeveloped foreshores of the whole miles-long Vancouver shoreline. It is, therefore one of the best places in Vancouver to restore a salmon-bearing creek.—FCWS)

Acadia Creek is located in Pacific Spirit Regional Park in the UBC Endowment Lands. The project has the following objectives:

- Enhanced access to high quality natural habitat for Coho.
- Public education on the value of restoring salmon habitat..

2. Do you support Project 4 Enhancing Acadia Creek in Metro Vancouver’s *Ecological Health Action Plan* (October 2011)?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

3. Do you oppose expansion of the number of oil tankers using Burrard Inlet?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

4. Do you oppose expansion of oil pipeline flows around Vancouver Harbour?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

Part II: Water Issues in the City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver has a "Restoring streams" web page (<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/restoring-streams.aspx>) which states the following:

The City works with volunteers to rediscover and possibly restore these streams to a more natural state above ground, in a process called daylighting.

Benefits of stream restoration

Recognizing that we live in a dense urban environment, daylighted streams will not function as they originally had before development. But even so, daylighting streams provide:

- An educational tool for stream and environmental stewardship
- A symbol of our natural history
- An aesthetic community amenity
- Enhancement to our natural environment

5. Do you support daylighting streams in Vancouver?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

The City of Vancouver is working on a City-wide integrated stormwater management plan (ISMP) (<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/city-wide-integrated-stormwater-management-plan.aspx>) which states that:

The plan will move towards best practices in water management and will:

- Treat Vancouver's abundant rainwater as a resource
- Reduce the demand for potable water by encouraging beneficial reuse
- Restore the role of urban watersheds to support urban and natural ecosystems and provide clean water

6. Will you support the City of Vancouver's ISMP and on-site rainwater capture and re-use if the plan recommends them?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

The Report *Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future* identified water as a significant factor in human health (<http://vancouver.ca/greenestcity/PDF/Vancouver2020-ABrightGreenFuture.pdf>).

The report suggests that actions to address water stewardship should include the following:

- Innovative stormwater management, including green roofs, infiltration bulges, pervious materials for bike paths, sidewalks and roads, and bio-swales that allow water to flow into the ground where it can be slowly filtered, instead of rushing straight into storm drains and creeks, causing

damage and pollution; and

- On-site rainwater capture and re-use. (page 55)

FCWS would also suggest putting yellow fish on every storm drain in the city and making sure people understand what this yellow fish means.

7. Do you support the actions for stormwater management and on-site rainwater capture and re-use referred to in *Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future*?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

8. Do you support putting yellow fish on every storm drain in the city and making sure people understand what this yellow fish means?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

Vancouver 2020 also noted that *Greenest City: Quick Start Recommendations* include the following water stewardship actions

- Restoration of shoreline (particularly along the Fraser River) and inter-tidal zones;
- Advocacy for federal and provincial assistance to improve water quality in English Bay, Burrard Inlet, the Strait of Georgia, and the Fraser River; and,
- Advocacy for expedited upgrades to the Iona and Lion’s Gate wastewater treatment plants, and incorporating integrated resource recovery into those projects (page 55).

9. Do you support the actions for shoreline restoration, advocacy for improving water quality, and advocacy for improvements to the Iona and Lion’s Gate wastewater treatment plants referred to in *Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future*?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

Engineering Services at City Hall has a “Blueways” program page (<http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/streets/blueways/index.htm>). Here are the first two paragraphs from that page:

Vancouver is known worldwide for its spectacular waterfront setting. Its 50 kilometres of shoreline and 2,000 hectares of water space support a wide variety of uses, including recreational and commercial boating, waterfront promenades, greenways and bikeways, and port transportation for a number of industries and businesses. The shoreline also

provides a diversity of natural habitat that sustains fish, birds, and other wildlife.

The Blueways program was initiated by the Vancouver Water Opportunities Advisory Group in response to concern over the loss of diversity on Vancouver's waterfront, and the need to develop a vision to preserve and enhance Vancouver's waterfront environments.

The Vancouver Water Opportunities Advisory Group, an initiative of then-Councillor Sam Sullivan, produced its Blueways draft report in September 1997 (http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/streets/blueways/pdf/Blueways_draft.pdf). The report was heard by Council in October 1997 at a meeting of the Standing Committee of Planning and Environment (<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/971009/pe1.htm>). According to the meeting minutes:

During the summer of 1996, four public meetings were held, each focussing on one of the four main water bodies surrounding Vancouver — Burrard Inlet, English Bay, False Creek, and the Fraser River. The meetings were well attended, generated lively discussion, and resulted in significant feedback and media interest.

The report is about waterfront use and preservation. According to the report's Table of Contents, a section of the introduction has the title "Vancouver's Waterfront *and Waterways — Past and Present*" (italics ours). The actual section has the title "Vancouver Waterways." The section contains the following paragraph (on page 6):

Note: To date, Blueways has focused on the major waterways and waterfront surrounding the City of Vancouver. The Water Opportunities Advisory Group wishes to acknowledge that although *streams* are a not a major focus of this document, they *are recognized as an important and valued natural resource within the City*, and are part of a program being undertaken by Engineering and the Greenways Team. (Italics ours)

There were a series of Policy Reports in October 1997, November 1998, and October 1999, each describing the work of the Vancouver Water Opportunities Advisory Group for the upcoming year and recommending the Advisory Group be given funding to do that work. The Advisory Group seems to have disbanded in about 2000.

10. Do you support the Vancouver Water Opportunities Advisory Group being revived?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

11. Do you support the scope of the City of Vancouver Blueways program being expanded to include surface water that is inland and not just coastal, i.e., waterbodies (such as creeks and lakes) as well as waterfront?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

12. Do you support the scope of the City of Vancouver Blueways program being expanded to include surface water that existed in Vancouver in the past, not just surface water that is present, e.g., old creeks that might be daylighted?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

Part III: Water Issues in the False Creek Watershed

False Creek used to extend as far east as Vernon Drive, one block west of Clark Drive. On 26 July 2011, Council passed a report “Viaducts and False Creek Flats Planning: Eastern Core Strategy” (<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20110726/documents/ttra2.pdf>) that defines a new planning study area, the Eastern Core, which includes False Creek Flats and some of its surrounding watershed. The report called for policy directions to be developed for the Eastern Core study area. Appendix B of the report suggests that the development of policy directions involves “arriv[ing] at high level principles and directions” on four issues: land use, transportation, urban design, and sustainability. Under land issues, the report notes “Open space patterning; opportunities for recreational and community facilities.”

A prior study in 2005, the False Creek Flats Scoping Study, reported considerable interest in water issues at initial community meetings (http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/fcflats/pdf/public/cgm_mtgs.pdf) and in the outcomes of a multi-stakeholder workshop held later on (http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/fcflats/pdf/public/msw_outcomes.pdf).

In the initial meetings, “All groups spoke to concerns about the impacts on natural systems and/or and sought actions that would support natural systems... Suggestions for supporting/revealing natural systems included daylighting streams; the possibility of revealing the tidal flats; establishing/maintaining ‘wild’ spaces for social well-being and wildlife areas/corridors (a local wildlife inventory has been done).” (page 6)

In the workshop outcomes, “***Green Spaces and Parks*** received attention from all groups and may well be considered a priority. In addition to green bridges, ideas included ... developing a greenway crescent or kind of “inland seawall” around the old shoreline edge. This desire for ***historic memory***, along with the desire for more natural parks/naturalized environments, led several groups to suggest creating and/or reintroducing ***water features*** (tidal flats, salt water marsh, daylighting streams) and, where feasible, making them part of greenways and rainwater management infrastructure” (pages 4-5, bold and italics in original)

People such as former Vancouver City Councillor and provincial government Cabinet Minister Bob Williams (www.straight.com/article-347233/vancouver/vision-transforming-false-creek-flats) and historian Bruce Macdonald have advocated for daylighting creeks that once flowed into False Creek, such as China Creek and Brewery Creek.

FCWS supports the idea of re-introducing surface water to False Creek Flats, with natural-looking water bodies bordered by native riparian vegetation.

13. Would you approve of the idea of re-introducing surface water to False Creek Flats and its watershed as part of the development of policy directions for the Eastern Core?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

14. Would you support the idea of re-introducing some wetland areas to the False Creek Flats as part of the development of policy directions for the Eastern Core?

Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

Further Comments (if Any)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____