

## **Prioritise Pidcock Creek - A presentation to SRD, Nov 8, 2023**

Quadra Islanders are concerned about environmental impacts of development in and around wetlands in Quathiaski Cove, part of the Pidcock Creek watershed. We are seeking the SRD's cooperation in prioritizing Pidcock Creek, its wetlands and watershed, in their review of the Quadra OCP. We want to ensure these areas are protected under the Riparian Areas Protection Regulations, the Water Quality Act, and British Columbia's Watershed Security Strategy, and that such protections are followed in any projects. We are offering an opportunity for the SRD to be an ally in ecological restoration that has multifaceted benefits for the entire community. The SRD is uniquely situated both in its community planning role and as an owner of Pidcock Creek lands and structures, including the Pidcock dam.

Pidcock Creek is of key significance to Quadra - ecologically, culturally and historically as a salmon-bearing creek that contributed to the colonization and economic development of the island. As Quadra seeks to focus densification in the Quathiaski Cove Village area, we'll all benefit from putting the watershed first. As an island community where water defines and supports us in uncountable ways, the key role of the Pidcock Creek watershed on Quadra Island is only going to become more important in coming years.

The watershed does require protection, as a brief history shows. Its protected harbour and abundant fish attracted settlers who began logging in 1892. By 1904, the Pidcock Cannery produced 60,000 pounds of hand-lined coho. W.E. Anderson expanded both logging and the Cannery, until the close of the cannery in 1941. The south arm of Pidcock Creek was dammed in 1923, destroying the coho run, which had low economic value at the time. One hundred years later, that dam still prevents access to the historic spawning beds of the coho.

The Quathiaski Cove we know today was built on wetlands before their ecological importance was well understood. Bill O'Connor built a shopping center, homes and workshops on high points in the swamp, and created a subdivision by stripping and selling most of the top soil to Roy Dahlnas in exchange for fill and gravel. A sewer system was required because there is no 'perk', the ground being saturated much of the year. The gas station and school are situated on higher ground above the flood plain, and the remaining gap in buildings is a swamp, or as we say today, valuable riparian land.

The existing Quadra OCP and Quathiaski Cove Village Plan speak to riparian protection, but we need to put that language into action. We are concerned about wetland areas identified as CD2 in the Village map (p. 93 of OCP/ p. 44 of Schedule B, the QCVP) and the watershed as a whole. The approval of the Senior's Center project on riparian land is a recent project that (although a community asset) would have benefited from biological assessment, as per language in the Village Plan. Aniko Nelson stated in her email (Nov 6), "Quadra has yet to adopt through its OCP the requirement for Environmentally Sensitive Areas Development Permits," although the plan acknowledges the centrality of ecological protection, including in its list of Community Values (p. 8 of OCP).

SRD maps show incomplete and at times inaccurate mapping of riparian areas, and acknowledge that "ground-truthing is required to verify the existence and actual location of stream/wetland areas" (p. 63 of OCP / p. 15 of schedule B). Parts of the Whiskey Point bluffs are incorrectly shown as riparian, and areas behind the plaza are improperly identified. Historic wetland mapping is often incomplete, whether proper

assessments were never done or because wetlands took a backseat to residential and commercial needs. Correctly understanding our wetlands is crucial to water flow, flood management, and aquifer sustainability.

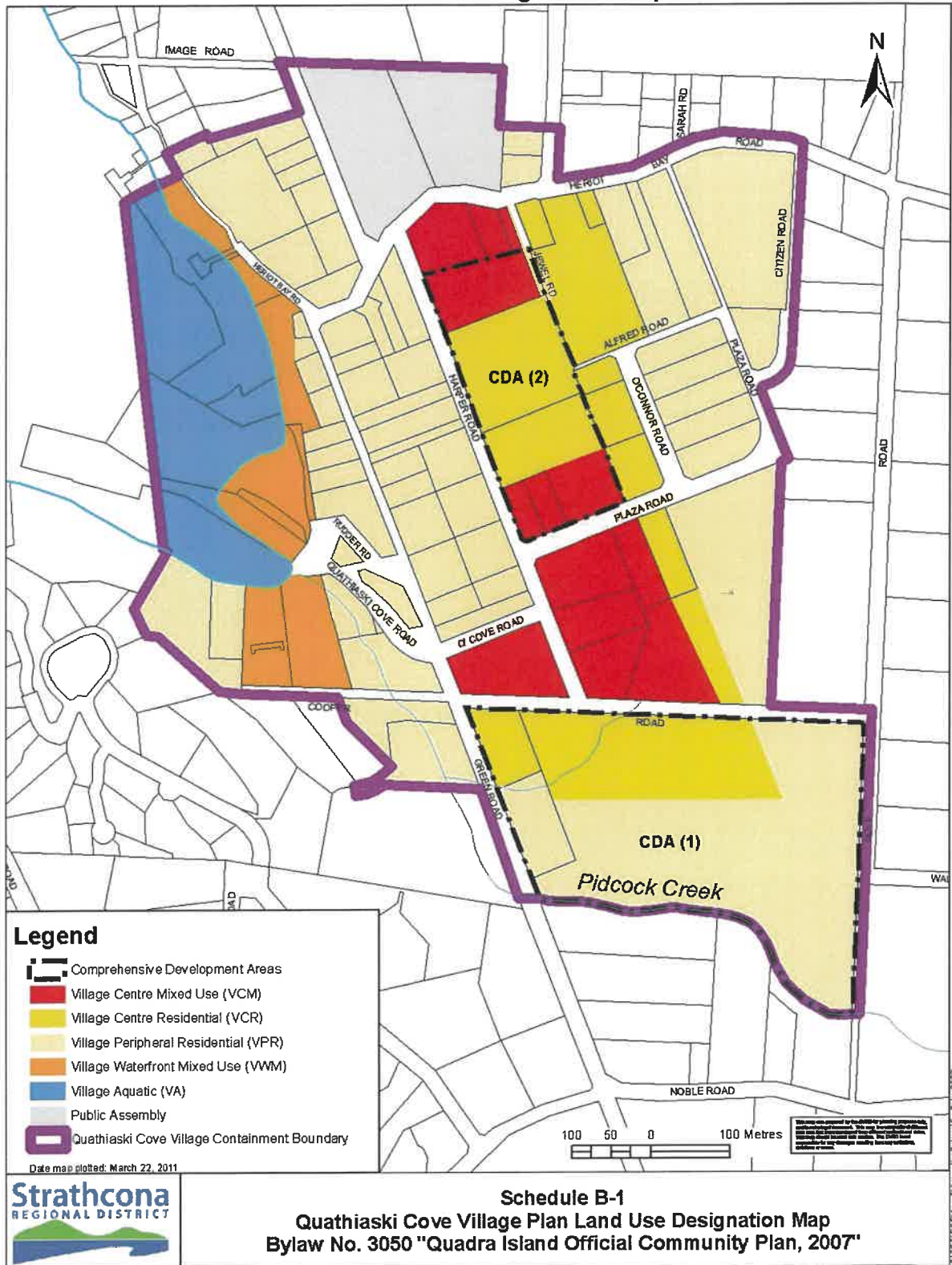
One reason we review community plans is to respond to a changing world. Climate change models have long predicted greater fluctuations in precipitation, long summer droughts and dramatic winter precipitation events. Recent years have fulfilled many of these predictions - we need to become more resilient to water fluctuations. Drought response has become a central focus for communities across BC, for fish and human needs. Future community planning must look at deep aquifer recharge during our rainy season and must anticipate big rainy events. We are learning to get creative and look to ecological solutions like beavers (35 trapped out of the Pidcock watershed area in 1997) to help wetlands gather and store water.

We are lucky to have concerned citizens, scientists, NGOs and GOs interested in Quadra watersheds generally and Pidcock in particular. The Discovery Islands Ecosystem Mapping (DIEM) Project, Quadra School, and others have contributed to our knowledge of the area. Community groups, including Island Climate Action Network (ICAN), Quadra Island Conservancy and Stewardship Society (QICSS), and Quadra Island Salmon Enhancement Society (QISES), help round out watershed stewardship. The Wei Wai Kai have expanded their Guardians program to Quadra Island and partnered with ICAN (with QISES input) on an island-wide stream monitoring project. Citizens are contributing tremendous volunteer time and expertise to understand and advocate for our community's waterways. DFO has sent a biologist and engineer to assess the creek and found its habitat promising for salmonids (it currently supports trout). The SRD's cooperation would be a welcome addition in planning and problem solving. We need to gather information on Pidcock, its dam, its role in our aquifers, and its wildlife.

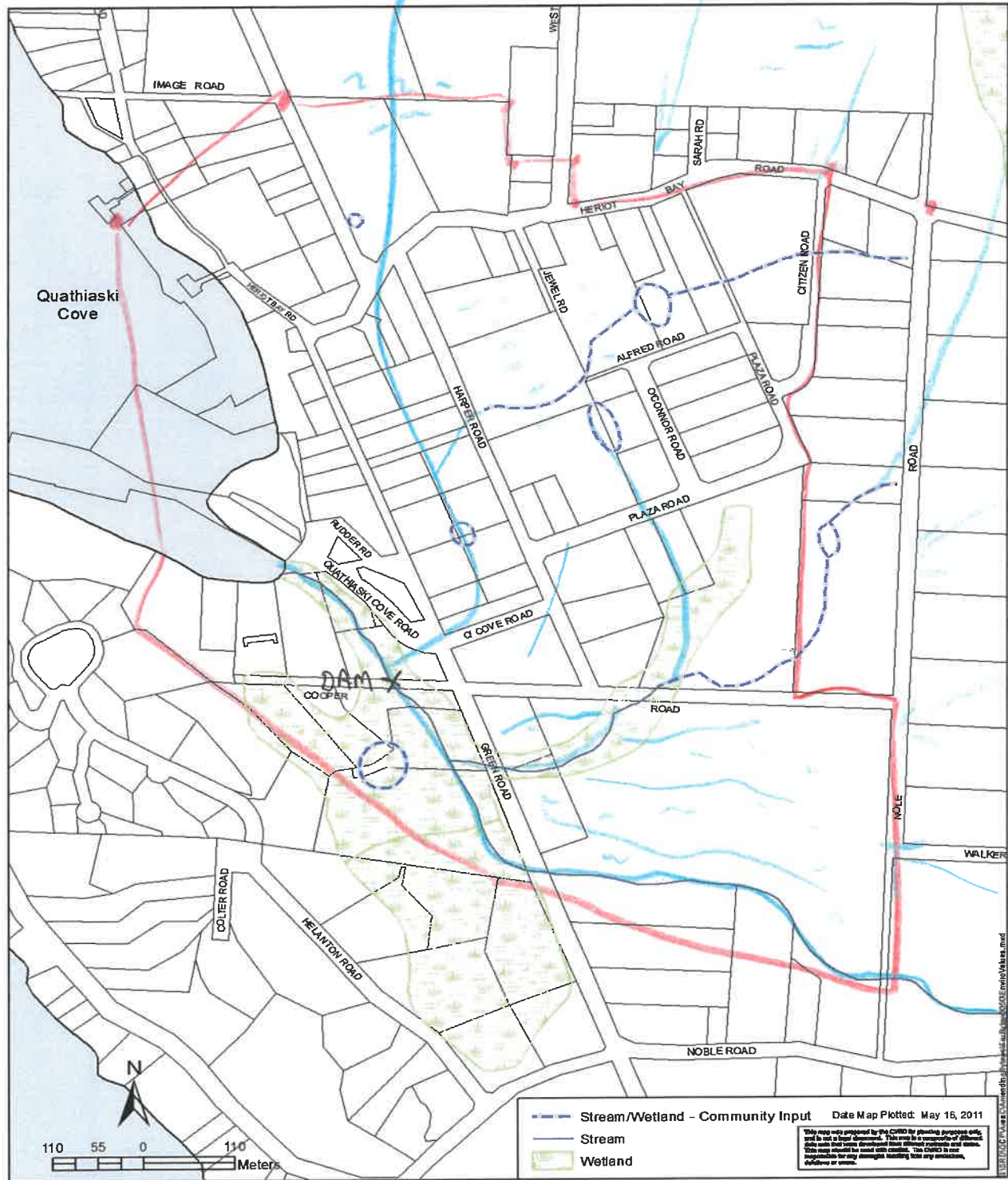
Our hope is that the SRD and the community can work together to guide development in Quathiaski Cove, giving waterways the prominent role they deserve. The scientific information currently being gathered must help direct future policy, creating a sustainable plan for the Pidcock Creek Watershed, at the heart of our island's community and ecology. Sustainability is key to a successful renewal of our OCP and this is a perfect place to start.

Paul Puddy & Lauren Miller

## Schedule 'B-1' Land Use Designation Map









## Part II

## COMMUNITY VALUES & OBJECTIVES

2.0 A community plan must recognize a wide variety of existing uses, yet be designed to guide future land use and community development in keeping with community values and aspirations. The following sections outline the values and the objectives as identified by the Quadra Island community.

### COMMUNITY VALUES

- 2.1 (a) To promote a strong rural community that reflects a diversity of lifestyles, economics and recreational opportunities.
- (b) To promote land use patterns which do not compromise the ecological integrity and rural character of the Island.
- (c) To recognize the unique natural characteristics of the Island, and to safeguard sensitive areas including the Island's groundwater recharge areas from inappropriate forms of development and sources of pollution.
- (d) To facilitate the participation of the Island community in local government decisions respecting the level and implementation of regulatory land use controls.

### OBJECTIVES – SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

- 2.2a (i) To maintain the rural nature of the Island and encourage a small, close-knit community.
- (ii) To provide for forms of development which are mindful of the capacity of the land to support such development and do not detract from the rural character of the Island.
- (iii) To encourage affordable and safe living and housing opportunities on the Island.
- (iv) To recognize that home occupations and home industries are important to the lifestyle of Quadra Island residents. To promote settlement patterns that minimize risks associated with natural hazards and that consider the surrounding environment.
- (v) To identify adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement while considering small-scale and infill opportunities in rural areas.
- (vi) The intent of the plan is to discourage the creation of new settlement areas.
- (vii) To implement the model of village structure, specific land use designations and the form and character guidance for new developments as provided by the "Quathiaski Cove Village Plan".

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### OBJECTIVES – HEALTH & PUBLIC SAFETY

- 2.2b (i) To encourage public health and safety as major considerations in all development proposals.

