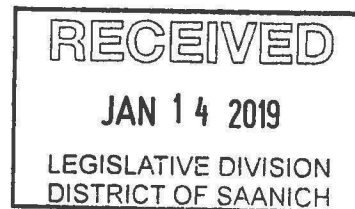




**The Corporation of the District of Saanich**

# Report

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Councillor Nathalie Chambers  
**Date:** 1/14/2019  
**Subject:** Conservation Strategy



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## RECOMMENDATION:

That Council direct staff to impose a temporary moratorium on tree cutting in Saanich specifically Garry Oaks but this must also include all native species.

That Council direct staff to look at options for the immediate implementation of a conservation strategy that would protect the same ecosystem assets as the Environmental Development Permit Area (EDPA) bylaw.

## PURPOSE:

When the EDPA bylaw was rescinded on April 23, 2018, important, and in some cases endemic, biodiversity was left without adequate protection. For instance, new developments no longer need environmental permits and the clock on our environmental protections was rolled back to 2012 (these 2012 protections were arguably insufficient even then). Climate change, adaptive management habitats and ecosystem resilience demand further protection. Biodiversity protection is our municipality's insurance policy for surviving and addressing the impacts of runaway climate change.

Council is at the forefront of a climate change emergency. Although \$150 000 was set aside, it will take approximately two years to rebuild a new EDPA bylaw, with an interim measure possibly taking a year.

## DISCUSSION:

Today, as never before our natural areas, especially wetlands are threatened in urban areas. These precious areas will only increase in value in the future, as we face the impacts of global climate change and the damage it will bring to natural areas like these environmental sensitive areas. All of us need to work at maintaining, creating and restoring natural habitats like these and the biodiversity they support if future generations are to continue to enjoy the beautiful lands and waters of Saanich and Vancouver Island as we do today. When the EDPA was rescinded, it left this critical biodiversity necessary for resilience, and adaptive management without adequate protection.

Saanich, British Columbia is nestled in the rain shadow of the Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges and enjoys a Mediterranean climate with ample rain, sunshine and mild winters. It is a

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nationally renowned marine and biological diversity hotspot with some of the most exquisite wildlife on the planet. This is the territory of the Straits Salish who managed these lands for 14 thousand years or since time immemorial. The land management techniques employed included the use of prescribed burning to maintain berry bushes and open camas meadows (etc). Camas was an important food of the Lekwungen speaking people of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. This area was is so special that it contains “endemic” plants, animals and trees that are grown here and nowhere else on the planet. The cultural use of this area has led to our current ecology, the Garry Oak ecosystem and the fertility on the Saanich Peninsula. There are 450 native species in British Columbia, 35-40 species of bumble bees (*Bombus affinis* has just made the endangered species list) and there are up to 117 “specialist” pollinators in the Garry Oak ecosystem. Each flowering native tree and shrub species contains their very own specialist pollinators. These specialist pollinators are only able to obtain pollen and nectar from the Garry Oak ecosystem. These specialist pollinators can be exclusive to the Garry Oak ecosystem and Dr. Eric Mader from Xerces, the Society of Invertebrates, recommends that both nesting habitat and foraging habitat needs to be located within 600 feet maximum to accommodate the smallest bee. Bees’ flight range is determined by size. 70% of these pollinators are ground nesters and 30% live in trees.

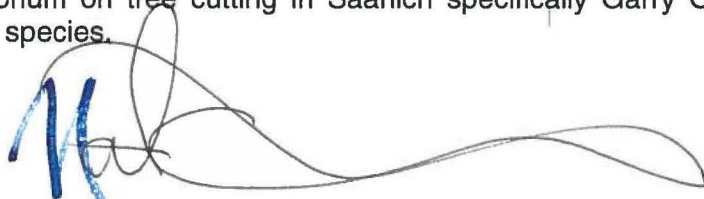
Biodiversity is also essential for insulating the District of Saanich from the effects of climate change and sustainable and chemical free agriculture. (agro-ecology)

The Environmental Development Permit Area bylaw was a conservation strategy that was developed as a way to protect this “rare culturally derived fertility”. Biodiversity provides the habitat needed for species to adapt to climate change, and provides biological resiliency and safeguards a cultural legacy for future generations.

The EDPA bylaw was rescinded based on faulty scientific process leaving this important biological diversity with sub-standard protections. New development in Saanich no longer requires environmental permits.

Although considerable funds were allocated to create a new EDPA bylaw that will take approximately two years, an emergency biodiversity strategy will take one year. As climate change leaders, that have taken the first steps of Reconciliation in respect of this endemic biodiversity, climate change and future generations, it is prudent that we employ intermediate measures.

THEREFORE, in the absence of a working EDPA bylaw, there is a need to install a temporary moratorium on tree cutting in Saanich specifically Garry Oaks but this must also include all native species.



Councillor Nathalie Chambers