

BACKGROUND

Cumulative impacts from a long history of industrial activity have had significant effects on subtidal, intertidal, riparian, and upland habitat in the Victoria harbour. Existing habitat quality in the majority of the study area is very low, with only a few small undisturbed areas remaining.

APPROACH

Our approach will be consistent with the recently developed "Green Shores" guiding principles, which include:

- Preserving the integrity or connectivity of coastal processes;
- Maintaining or enhancing habitat diversity and function (on a local or regional scale);
- Minimizing or reducing pollutants to the marine environment; and
- Reducing cumulative impacts to the coastal environment.

GOALS

We propose to minimize Pathway impacts while maximizing opportunities for habitat protection and enhancement along the Pathway and throughout the harbour. Our primary goals will include:

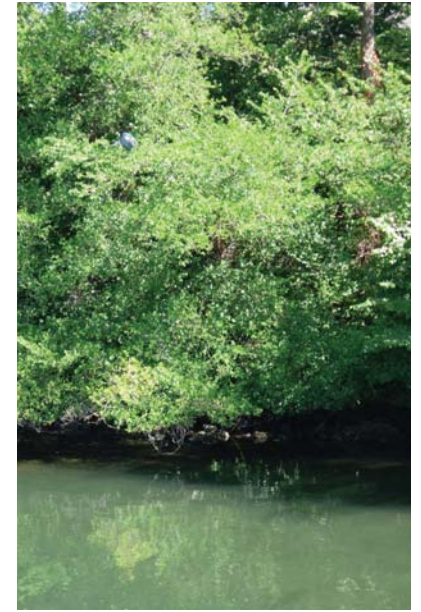
- Providing a net increase in both the quantity and quality of fish and wildlife habitat in the harbour area;
- Increasing the fish and wildlife species diversity in the harbour area; and
- Improving the overall ecological rating of the Harbours Ecological Inventory and Rating (HEIR) shore units in the Pathway project area.

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Our preliminary suggestions/recommendations for meeting these habitat protection and enhancement goals along the Pathway and throughout other areas of the harbour include:

- Avoiding, protecting, and restoring the few remaining natural habitats;
- Removing invasive plant species;
- Creating and/or augmenting upland habitat;
- Planting native vegetation along the existing top-of-bank wherever possible, in as wide a strip as conditions permit. This includes:
 - Planting in areas where the Pathway is not located near the waterfront;
 - Planting in any areas where the Pathway can be pulled back from the top-of-bank;
 - Planting on the water side of the Pathway wherever possible (including the use of planter boxes with overhanging vegetation.)
- Planting native vegetation in "ecopockets":
 - Within any new riprap placement; and
 - In existing riprap area where creation of pockets is feasible
- Softening of the shoreline wherever possible by:
 - Removing sheet piling and/or retaining walls; and
 - Creating vegetated banks.
- Creating intertidal marsh habitat;
- Creating intertidal "hard surface" habitat
- Creating subtidal "hard surface" (reef) habitat;
- Establishing pocket beaches wherever possible;
- Orienting "above-water" portions of the Pathway in north-south direction to minimize shading impacts;
- Recycling concrete slabs/sections as "hard surface" subtidal reef habitat;
- Cantilevering sections of the Pathway to reduce intertidal impacts;
- Minimizing "on-water" (floating) Pathway areas to reduce shading impacts;
- Daylighting historic streams by removal of culverts wherever possible;
- Providing interpretive signage along the Pathway route on topics such as:
 - Fishing industry;
 - Fish (resident and migratory);
 - Riparian habitat;
 - Intertidal habitat;
 - Subtidal habitat (especially in areas of reef creation);
 - Wildlife

Preliminary Environmental Recommendations are based on investigation undertaken by Pottinger Gaherty Environmental Consultants Ltd. Initial study 'Harbour Pathway; Environmental and Land Use Inventory and Analysis' (Jan. 2007) was undertaken by Westland Resource Group.



ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

VICTORIA HARBOUR PATHWAY • CITY OF VICTORIA



Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden
Urban Forum Associates
Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg
Landeca Services Inc.
Pottinger Gaherty Environmental Consultants
Coriolis Consulting Corp.
Beacon Construction Consultants

