

**From:** Scott Richardson  
**Sent:** February 20, 2023 9:51 PM  
**To:** Loranne Hilton <[LHilton@highlands.ca](mailto:LHilton@highlands.ca)>; Ken Williams <[KWilliams@highlands.ca](mailto:KWilliams@highlands.ca)>; [karel.roessingh@gmail.com](mailto:karel.roessingh@gmail.com); Karel@Roessong. Com <[karel@roessong.com](mailto:karel@roessong.com)>; Ann Baird <[ab.ecosense@gmail.com](mailto:ab.ecosense@gmail.com)>; Gord Baird <[gord@eco-sense.ca](mailto:gord@eco-sense.ca)>; Rose Stanton <[rose26@telus.net](mailto:rose26@telus.net)>; [leslie.corvidconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:leslie.corvidconsulting@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** SHLAP Correspondance

Mayor and Council...

I am pleased to learn that the District's work on SHLAP is now being brought before you for consideration.

I note that appended to the Planner's recommendations is some correspondence, including letters from the. CRD and the Ministry of Forests. For completeness, I wanted to ensure my response to the CRD's letter was recirculated with the letter from Ms. Hutcheson, so I have attached it. As to the letter from the Ministry of Forests (MoF), I have pasted below a portion of an email prepared for SHLAP colleagues in 2021, setting out a few of the arguments against the status quo, yes, the same that MoF is advocating.

Appreciatively,  
Scott Richardson

*Email to SHLAP dated September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

**2. Response to some of the comments made...**

*I am making the following comments in response to the suggestion that the Highlands would be better off maintaining the 2007 wording from the OCP, and in response to the implied suggestion that my comments of September 9<sup>th</sup> were motivated by a desire to penalize OKI, and not focussed on the good of the public.*

I wish that all members of the Task Force could have been present when Tsartlip elder Tom Sampson addressed our community (Including Mayor and 5 Councillors) at the Highlands Fling last weekend. He spoke about the land we were gathered on, - the Place of the Deer. He spoke about how the land had sustained his people and how the Ancestors are still here in the land. And he spoke about how in a short two hundred years so much has been destroyed. Science is telling us we can't continue. He shared his hope that here in Highlands we can find a way to work together to change that path, to restore some of what has been lost. He recognized this transition is a hard time.

I share this because my sense was that all present were touched by his plea to see land as more than a commodity, indeed as a life sustaining element of our home on Earth. It is such a simple irrefutable truth, really. How might we test the product of our discussions against this simple truth?

I also appreciated his acknowledgment of it being a hard time because I don't think it matters what side of the development debate you are on, it is harder than it ever used to be. I acknowledge that as likely ringing as true for OKI, GFL, MIP, and CRD as it is true for those opposed to development. Times of transition are hard.

By implication he was also referring to climate change. I highlight that here because although I know you all know this and there isn't a climate change denier among us, it is our common enemy! It is showing itself to be the most powerful force on earth today. It is progressing faster and more powerfully than our science based forecasts predicted. It is unrelenting, and worst of all, it doesn't seem open to negotiation. Close to home evidence includes – 104 degrees F in the Highlands on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 700 or more BC elders perishing under the heat dome, and the driest conditions ever on the

Island. Further afield, the peaks of Greenland received never before experienced rain early this month, while scientists began to detect signs that the Gulf Stream may be headed towards collapse. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/05/climate-crisis-scientists-spot-warning-signs-of-gulf-stream-collapse> . I share this because like any powerful enemy, it is requiring us to think decades ahead and begin taking as much evasive action as we can imagine today, right now. It is not overly dramatic to suggest that it is a call to 'arms' to all members of our species, whatever one's livelihood or occupation, to change. Unfortunately, change is arguably our species biggest weakness and hence our carbon output continues to increase, rather than decline. We urgently need to figure out how to change individually and globally.

This really is the 'tragedy of the commons' playing out before our eyes, as we sit seemingly helplessly transfixed by the disaster unfolding all around us, unable to think or behave in new ways, and unwilling to forgo our own piece of the 'commons' pie. This is sobering because there are a long list of 'commons' tragedies witnessed in the Americas (e.g. Easter Island, buffalo, and cod). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragedy\\_of\\_the\\_commons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragedy_of_the_commons). Is our Pacific salmon sadly on the same trajectory? Now the tragedy is playing out on a global scale through climate change. Can we acknowledge that? Can we self-regulate to the extent necessary? Can we at least take it into account in our long term planning?

I find it paradoxical that I don't think a single member of our task force would take issue with the preceding paragraphs and yet acting on those truths in our businesses is a much harder sell. I experience this myself on a relatively miniscule but personal scale, in respect of our small 'fold' of Highland cattle on our modest Highlands homestead (kindwood). It too is consuming a part of the global commons 'pie' that we have yet to reconcile in our long range planning for Kindwood. Back to what Tom said: "transition is a hard time".

I apologize for making you read through all of the above before getting to my main point. What I am really trying to say is that our choices in the South Highlands are bigger than the Highlands or even the CRD. The choices are bigger than the tax revenue, or the depth of the MIP quarry. It isn't about Mel or Scott, OKI or the HDCA. Just as the family bickering suddenly stops when the enemy is at the door, these are side issues that we can choose to see beyond, if we believe there is something even more concerning. The over-arching influence in long range policy decisions, for at least the rest of this century, will be our common enemy of climate change. It makes sense then for us to be thinking about climate change and adapting our policies in earnest now, to better prepare us for the future. Einstein said: "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." Is it not therefore essential that we bring new approaches and ways of thinking into play? In this way, what confidence can we have that the land use policy created for our commercial industrial lands in 2007 (e.g. Option 3), will be up to the task of addressing the climate change challenges we face today and likely for the next century? Instead of that, let's focus on how we co-create new land use policies more suitable for our rapidly changing environment, while supporting current landowners and stakeholders in finding funding for the transition?

As we feel the pressure of the CRD, and landowners on what land use policies to apply to the South Highlands let's listen just as carefully to the United Nations, which writes that the replacement of wild areas has a vital role to play in tackling climate change. Paving over the land to make batteries or other technological fixes destroys the natural systems that life depends on. Let's think globally and act locally in respect of our common enemy.

SR

Scott Richardson  
499 Millstream Lake Rd  
Victoria, BC V9B 6H5

Ms. Larisa Hutcheson  
General Manager Parks & Environmental Services  
Capital Regional District  
625 Fisgard St. P O Box 1000  
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6  
Via email: [lhutcheson@crd.bc.ca](mailto:lhutcheson@crd.bc.ca)

17 July, 2022

Dear Ms. Hutcheson:

**RE: MILLSTREAM MEADOWS – FUTURE LAND USE**

I am writing in response to your July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 letter to Ms. Lorraine Hilton for furtherance to The District of Highlands (“District”) Council.

I find a number of your points quite compelling, if viewed under a 2005 era paradigm. Your letter makes clear how the CRD has been diligent and single-minded in its quest to rehabilitate the MM site from the dumping that it and previous owners permitted under dubious Provincial oversight. The CRD can justify its expectations for how the District designates future land uses based on the agreements and assumptions in place circa 2005. I can therefore understand your organization’s frustration in being almost ready to deliver the ‘final product’, only to learn that the community’s vision, as set out in the draft South Highlands Local Area Plan (“SHLAP”) and supported by recent community surveys, has shifted considerably in the intervening 17 years. Indeed, it would seem that the climate emergency has placed us all in a different paradigm from where we were when the assumptions set out in your letter were first formed.

What I find curious about your letter is that even as your organization applies itself to take a needed regional leadership role on the topic of climate change, the above referenced letter seems singularly focussed on real estate, defining it as a commodity, whose “highest and best use” is to “provide economic value to the community”. Let’s allow for a moment that the drafters of the SHLAP report might have been aware of the economic contribution the land could make to the District. What then, might be so important to those having input to the SHLAP, as to trump short-term economic thinking?

Consider:

- The CRD signed the BC Climate Action Charter in 2008
  - *“... and is taking steps to adapt, mitigate, and reduce climate action impacts”.*
- The CRD declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set a goal for the region to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- The CRD created a climate action strategy in 2021, including committing to inter alia:
  - *Climate focussed decision making across all CRD programs and services;*
  - *Accelerating the energy efficiency in CRD buildings and infrastructure – including the development of a green building policy; and*
  - *Protecting conserving and managing ecosystem health and nature’s capacity to store carbon and adapt to climate change.*
- The CRD recently added the following statement to its website...
  - *“Stewardship is at the core of the UN Decade on Ecological Restoration, which runs 2021 – 2030. This proclamation is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of humanity and nature. Over the course of this decade, people around the world will work together to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. In Greater Victoria, partners are working together to respond to the growing need for ecological restoration within our region. Led by the University of Victoria, local partners will collaborate regionally on a collective*

*push to raise awareness of ecosystem restoration in our region, and will support hands-on action by regional agencies and residents. "*

*Note: Source CRD website.*

Now let's look at the SHLAP report as it relates to the Millstream Meadows property:

- Section 3.4.1 of the report designates the future land use for the Millstream Meadows property to be "ES-Environmental Stewardship", which is intended to:
  - *Prioritize environmental restoration, reversing impacts, account for eco-system services, and accommodate innovative and emerging solutions toward "Net Positive" land use outcomes".*
- Here it is I think important to note that the definition of "Net Positive" provided in section 2.3 absolutely does not equate to "No New Development" a term used 6 times in your letter. It is also inaccurate to equate ES land use as defined in SHLAP with "policies that prohibit development and are synonymous with park land use."

Admittedly, there is a potential gap between the CRD's real estate ambitions, based on almost two-decade old assumptions, with what might be allowed under an ES designation. Yet the potential revenue gap can be mitigated by inviting creative, eco-conscious thinkers to consider what could be designed within the ES land use envelope. Meanwhile however, there is almost no gap between the CRD's environmental policies noted above and the proposed ES land use. In fact, in a world where forward thinking environmental policies need to be pushed on the public by governments, one wonders why the CRD is not applauding the application of ES designation as a potential demonstration case for the community, region and province?

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you or members of your team, including the remediation aspects.

Sincerely,



Scott Richardson  
Highlands resident

Cc:

- District of Highlands Mayor and Council
- District of Highlands CAO
- Robert Lapham, CRD CAO