

**Parks and Natural Environment Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2025 7-9pm
1730 Crown Street – DNV Operations Centre**

Present:

Johanna Moretto, Chair
Karin Jensen
Adele Wilson
Glen Parker
Michael Cliff

Absent:

Amy Tsang, Vice-Chair
Charlene Seward
Katrina Laube
Hamish Fairweather
Councillor Lisa Muri

Staff:

Steve Jenkins
Monica Woods-Marshall
Matthew MacKinnon

Meeting called to order at: 7:05pm

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda.

Seconded.

THAT the June 18, 2025 Agenda is approved.

CARRIED

3. Adoption of February 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to adopt April 16, 2025 meeting minutes with minor revisions.

Seconded.

THAT the February 19, 2025 meeting minutes are approved.

CARRIED

4. Nature and Biodiversity Strategy Update

About:

The DNV is currently developing a Nature and Biodiversity Strategy. This strategy will guide how we manage natural areas and biodiversity in an ever-changing urban environment. Habitat restoration, climate resilience, and community values will all be addressed in the strategy. Our focus is on creating

actionable goals so that this is not just another document on the shelf. The goals of the strategy are to increase community awareness of nature and biodiversity in the District, identify and protect important ecosystems and corridors, and recommend policies, plans and practices that support long-term ecological integrity.

The project thus far:

- The team is using the ICLEI 5 Milestone Framework for Biodiversity management.
- From 2023-2024 the project was initiated by defining the project scope and goals, and engaging with District teams, First Nations, and environmental organizations. A consultant was also secured to assist with the strategy's technical assessment work.
- In 2025 assessments are underway to identify the current state of biodiversity in the District and potential threats to biodiversity.
- This assessment work is informing the development of the policies and actions to be included in the Strategy in 2025.
- Once the strategy is complete, the team will integrate goals and action items into existing program areas as the strategy is implemented beginning in 2026.
- Finally, monitoring will begin to analyze how the plan is working and if it needs to be adapted for greater success.

Key takeaways from engagement activities that will guide the project:

1. Everyone has a role in supporting biodiversity.
2. Community education is key to building understanding and support.
3. Proper funding, staffing, and resources are needed to succeed.
4. Measurable, trackable goals are a must.

Map layers:

Throughout the research process multiple map layers have been created by compiling data from various sources. A few of the map layers include Forest Stand Structure, Habitat Type, and Tree Canopy Cover. These layers will help determine priority areas for conservation and restoration, and will support ecosystem planning and projects like our restoration and street tree programs.

Next Steps:

- Create a biodiversity score to provide rankings for ecosystems. This will show us high value habitat areas and underrepresented ecosystems to guide conservation and restoration planning.
- Review DNV and other municipalities policies. Ensure that the recommendations of this plan are woven into policy moving forward.
- Ensure recognition of ecological assets through mapping and biodiversity scoring.
- Fall 2025 community engagement and drafting strategy. Create realistic action items.
- Continue to monitor and adapt as time goes on.

1. What do you think is already going well when it comes to protecting nature and biodiversity in our community?

- Committed staff with strong values
- Commitment to maintaining natural outdoor spaces
- Maplewood Flats education program
- DNV free plant program
- Hunter Park clean up
- Public concern about global warming and fear of forest fires provide motivators for public buy in
- Community groups are motivated and implement projects benefitting biodiversity

2. Where do you see room for improvement in protecting nature and biodiversity in our community?

- More pollinator gardens
- More public education – schools, libraries, NVRC workshops, educational walks to highlight issues and actions, interpretive signage
- Assess areas where ecological damage has occurred and consider restoration options
- Work with Province to ban the sale of invasive species in garden centers
- Track ecosystem health and quantity over time by collecting Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) data more frequently
- In addition to TEM data, consider using BC wetlands classification system
- Complete a dog strategy – implement and enforce it
- Prevent development in natural areas
- Create an app to track areas of interest
- Zoom in more on the DNV when planning so that pocket ecosystems like wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems become visible
- Promote backyard biodiversity
- Tracking tree canopy cover alone is not enough to measure biodiversity. We'll miss important ecosystems like wetlands. Maybe the consultant doing the TEM mapping can provide recommendations.
- Provide links to the [How to create a butterfly garden - David Suzuki Foundation](#) page and Metro Vancouver's [Grow Green Guide](#) in the plan and on our biodiversity webpage.

3. Are there any policies, programs, or approaches to environmental protection in other jurisdictions that we should explore?

- Restore fish passage under Mt. Seymour Parkway for McCartney Creek
- Develop Arbourlynn wetland and its link to Lynn Creek
- Protect the bridge crossing Lynn Creek from Arbourlynn to Inter River Park. Arbourlynn Creek enters Lynn right beside this bridge and the creek is starting to undermine the bridge footing.
- More community pollinator gardens
- More rain gardens to reduce toxic runoff

- Set up a “Buy Back” fund for purchasing habitat corridor areas. A specific fee could be attached to development permits for the District to put towards buying back habitat corridor areas.
- Improve fish passage into Parkside Creek. Fish can enter under limited conditions.
- Better enforcement of riparian protection areas. Many streams have encroachments.
- Look for and develop habitat corridors. Use flat bottomed culverts for mammal movement.
- Consider storm water management in this strategy
- Look at the value of wetlands for stormwater runoff
- Review the Metro 2050 document for regional guidance

Committee Questions:

How old is “old forest” on the stand structure 

At the time of the meeting, the answer to this was uncertain. Staff have since confirmed that the old Growth forest is greater than 240 years, and mature forest is 80-240 years.

Is fire prevention and management part of this plan?

No that’s covered in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. We’re also working with the DNV Fire Department to modify our Fire Smart program and make it more ecosystem and site specific. Coastal temperate rainforests are unique ecosystems, and Fire Smart is not a one size fits all program.

A lack of connection between biodiverse areas is seen on the maps. How will we address that?

We have noticed that lack of connectivity as well, particularly in an East to West direction. These maps will help inform work to increase connectivity between our biodiversity hot spots.

Can we promote the Wild Bird Trust’s Native Plant Nursery and educate residents about turning their own yards into native ecosystems?

Yes. Backyard biodiversity will be a big part of this plan.

Committee Comments:

There was a fish kill that impacted McCartney Creek. Because there is high biodiversity above and below that reach of the creek, fish populations have recovered to near historical levels. But without that biodiversity, the stream never could have recovered. Biodiversity creates resilience.

5. Grouse Bike Park Trail Development:

About:

Grouse Mountain Resort opened their new mountain bike park on June 6th. The current park is contained only within the resort boundaries (private property within the DNV). All tree work and permitting was completed through the DNV Environment and Development Planning departments. The

bike park provides increased, in demand mountain biking opportunities, increased tourism, and may help disperse mountain bikers across the community.

Grouse has proposed building a trail that will allow riders to bike all the way down to the parking lots. There are options for the trail to be on DNV land, Grouse land, or a mix of the two. The land owned by Grouse can only provide an advanced to expert level trail because of the steep and rocky terrain. The best option for an all-levels trail is for it to cross DNV land.

Managing rogue trail building is already a big issue for the DNV and if a ride out option isn't offered, it will likely be built anyway. Speaking to local riders we have learned that people are already making their way down to the Fromme trail network from the new bike park. Without a professionally built trail we could have higher risk of injuries, more conflicts between trail users, and more negative ecological impacts.

Opportunities if this trail is built:

- A professionally designed and maintained trail will be safer and have less negative ecological impacts
- We can leverage trail decommissioning support from Grouse for this area. And trail decommissioning is better tolerated when combined with new trail building.
- Forest restoration and protection opportunities exist along with trail building. This can be worked into an agreement with Grouse.
- Possible permit fees for Grouse to use DNV land
- Possibility for a second trail to link Fromme's trail network to this trail for public use
- We currently lack beginner-intermediate level mountain bike trails in the DNV. This trail could help fill that gap.

Challenges:

- The trail may provide access to new terrain which raises liability concerns
- There is still a risk of rogue trail building off this trail which could impact sensitive ecosystems
- Potential conflicts with hikers and dogs
- Potential conflict with residents over parking
- Environmental impacts of a machine-built trail (tree removals, drainage impacts, larger footprint)
- If a connecting trail from Fromme is not provided unsanctioned trails may be created through sensitive ecosystems to access the new trail

DNV drone footage through the proposed trail area shows a mix of a large open clearing from recent sewer upgrades (the location of the old Skyline trail), second growth hemlock dominated and cedar forest with dense canopy and little undergrowth aside from hemlock regeneration. The footage starts on the LGMH trail, then follows a low use, unofficial hiking trail, an unofficial mountain bike trail "Jetboy" that now sees mixed hiker/biker use, and the old Skyline trail clearing. The trail crosses old skid roads which may provide interesting historical narrative to the new trail (comment from PNEAC member). The lower sections of this area are heavily impacted by off-leash dogs and hikers. There is significant understory loss and a lot of trail braiding.

What is the District Doing?

- Spring 2025 - Baseline data collection including current forest conditions and mapping of all trails in the area
- Now - Gather feedback from PNEAC
- Summer 2025 - Engage with Grouse Mountain, NSMBA and hiking groups
- Fall 2025 – Redo data collection to compare to spring data
- Early 2026 - Use data to determine recommendations and next steps

Committee Comments and Suggestions:

- There is a lot of concern from the hiking community. Mountain bikers have taken over a lot of the hiking areas and there is fear this will now happen on Grouse too.
- If this trail is going to be built, also build a new hiking trail so that both communities are served.
- Ensure the trail is kept far away from any sensitive ecosystems and try to build on land that's already disturbed.
- Use old skid roads and provide some historical education through signage.
- Ensure implementation of features to slow bikers down at any trail intersections to reduce injuries and trail user conflicts.
- Find a way to address parking conflicts with residents.
- Address the monetary gain issue. What's in it for the District and residents? People need to trust that the District got a good deal in this, even those who aren't mountain bikers.
- Ensure proper maintenance of the trail and discuss who is funding this maintenance ahead of time.
- Address liability issues.
- This is opening the door to more commercial use of DNV Parks.
- What about the use of Powerline trail to get back to the parking lots. What does hydro think of this? How will we ensure this trail is still safe for hikers?
- Keep the trails open in the winter for snowshoeing, skiing, etc.
- Engage with the hiking groups (FMCBC, BCMC, North Shore Hikers, Seymour Trails Society, North Vancouver Outdoor Club, North Van Rec Trail Trekkers, Korean Trail Groups, MEC Trail Groups).
- There was general support from most committee members present for the District to work with Grouse to build an exit trail partially on District land. If this were to happen, most of the committee members had caveats such as building a hiking only trail as well, utilizing the most impacted areas, avoiding sensitive and riparian areas, ensuring there is a clear benefit for the District, explore multi use options, etc.

6. Round Table:

Request to go on a field trip for the next meeting. Some possibilities include:

- Thain Creek restoration by CNV with access via DNV land.

NOTE: If you hear people talking about this please spread the word that this is emergency work due to a landslide.

- Lower Hastings Creek
- Arbourlynn Wetland
- Cates Park/Whey-Ah-Wichen foreshore work

7. Next Meeting

Motion to hold the next meeting on Sept 17, 2025.

Seconded.

THAT the next PNEAC meeting will take place on Sept 17, 2025

CARRIED

8. Adjourned at: 8:56