



Cowichan Estuary Restoration
& Conservation Association

15th of July, 2025

CERCA
1069 Khenipsen Road
North Cowichan BC
V9L 5L3
Phone number: 250 748 4878

Rob Douglas, Honorable Mayor of North Cowichan
Municipality of North Cowichan
7030 Trans-Canada Highway,
North Cowichan, BC
V9L 6A1

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of significant importance and public interest in our community.

In previous correspondence with **James Denny**, Senior Regional Specialist of the Water, Fisheries and Coast Division of the Water Management Branch of the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship's West Coast Region (WLRS) asking for permission to access the Blackley dike to remove invasive broom from the trail Mr. Denny suggested the following (quote from his letter):

"It might be of interest to you and the Cowichan Estuary Restoration & Conservation Association, to petition the District of North Cowichan to become the Diking Authority for Blackley Dike. If they were to become the local diking authority, they would be in the best position to work with local partners and to make local recreation decisions surrounding the dike. Local approaches to flood risk reduction, as well as recreation planning, are stronger when informed and directed by the relationships and values at the community-level."

This proposal presents a unique opportunity for our city to enhance our trail system by adding a new, already popular dike trail to our network.

Given the impending Dinsdale farm rehabilitation project, which will eliminate the dike trail at that farm, there will be increased pressure on the Blackley trail. Therefore, it is crucial that we take action to ensure the continued accessibility of this valuable recreational asset for our residents.

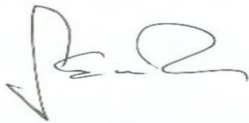
As the Dike Inspector recommended, I urge you to consider applying for the Blackley dike's responsibility. By doing so, we can proactively address the growing demand for outdoor recreational opportunities in our community and demonstrate our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for our residents.

During the past two years, CERCA, in collaboration with Nature Cowichan, has successfully removed the broom from the trail, which had crowded out native vegetation. More recently, CERCA, in cooperation with WFP, has added a wildlife viewing platform at a strategic location along the trail, significantly enhancing the visitor experience. The partnership of CERCA, WFP, and Nature Cowichan to continue to work on trail enhancement, providing maintenance services, planting native shrubs and herbs, and adding interpretative signage would improve wildlife habitat and enhance visitor experience. However, this would only be possible in cooperation with North Cowichan.

Therefore, advocating for North Cowichan to adopt the trail and take over legal responsibility seems like a logical step forward. Formal support from the municipality could pave the way for more extensive improvements. This would enhance North Cowichan's trail system, making it more accessible and enjoyable for the community while contributing to biodiversity conservation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your thoughts on this proposal and how we can work together to improve our city's trail system further.

Sincerely,



Dr. Goetz Schuerholz
Chair CERCA

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