

North Cowichan Biodiversity Protection Policy Draft Policy Report



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Project Progression

- 2021 - Committee of the Whole workshop on North Cowichan biodiversity Council helped develop scope
- Staff directed to work with consultant to develop a biodiversity assessment report and biodiversity protection policy report
- 2022 - Field assessment and public engagement
- 2023 - Staff directed to include trail management with policy report
- Draft assessment report presented to Council and Environmental Advisory Committee
 - Engagement with First Nations staff
- 2024 - Engagement with First Nations staff
- 2025 - Engagement with First Nations Elders and communities
- 2026 - Presentation of draft policy report to Committee of the Whole

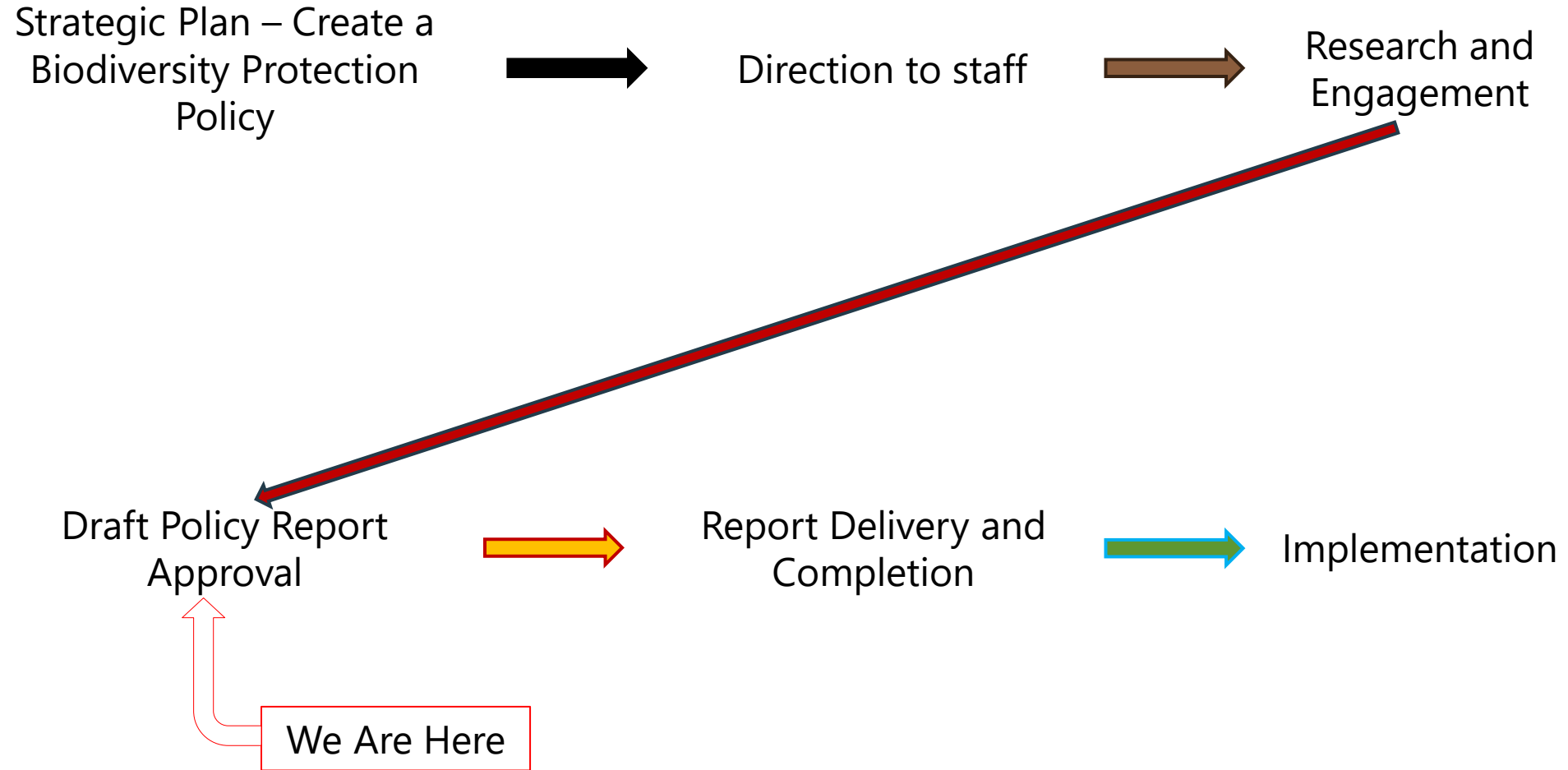
Biodiversity Protection Policy

Scope of Work

- Identify biodiversity conservation and restoration goals
- Identify monitoring and management programs to track progress on biodiversity targets and goals. Emphasize preventing the loss of local biodiversity
- Identify municipal roles within framework created by federal and provincial agencies
- Identify Municipal Policies to promote biodiversity



Project Timeline



Biodiversity Assessment Key Findings

- 635 km of watercourses
- 52% of North Cowichan is forested 15% agriculture
- Most of North Cowichan is in the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone
- Mountain forests, and Somenos Lake / marsh support the highest biodiversity in North Cowichan
- Significant lower biodiversity supported inside the urban containment boundary
- Habitat hubs in North Cowichan's largest contiguous forests
- More corridors connect habitat hubs in rural areas than urban areas
- Agricultural fields separate many of large natural habitat areas
- Threats to North Cowichan's environment include: climate change, invasive species, and development

Environmental Objectives from OCP

- Protect, connect, and regenerate ecosystems + mitigate threats to biodiversity
- Recognize and protect the special characteristics of marine areas
- Identify and connect ecologically sensitive lands and natural areas



OCP Objectives + Vision → Biodiversity Policy Goals

Official Community Plan Vision: North Cowichan's unique communities are set in spectacular natural environments defined by forests, rivers, lakes, coastline and farmland.... we will prioritize the conservation of our natural areas, provide supports for a thriving local economy and foster resilient, welcoming and inclusive communities.

Biodiversity Policy Goals

- Integrate biodiversity protection into urban growth and land use planning
- Protect and enhance watercourses and their riparian areas
- Protect and enhance terrestrial ecosystems
- Protect and enhance marine and shoreline ecosystems
- Provide and manage a trail network that maintains the ecological integrity of natural areas
- Strengthen education, stewardship, and knowledge to support biodiversity protection

Example of land development emulating goals advocated by biodiversity policy

- Parkside Daycare Garry Oak Habitat
- Original Garry Oak Area in Orange: many invasive plants, low connectivity
- Expanded and enhanced Garry Oak Habitat proposed for development in white: invasive removal, Native species planting, improved connectivity



Biodiversity policies currently implemented and their impact

- Weed and Invasive Control programs
- Water quality work in Quamichan and Somenos
- Somenos Service agreement
- First Nations engagement on:
 - *forest management,*
 - *natural assets, and,*
 - *biodiversity.*
- Wildfire prevention
- Climate adaptation
- Natural asset management planning
- Land use planning
- Conservation land acquisition



Project completion and implementation

- Review and completion of draft biodiversity policy report
- Delivery of final biodiversity assessment and policy reports to Council
- Presentation of biodiversity policy implementation report to Council to examine time frame and costs for biodiversity policies and actions
 - *Assess programs in place*
 - *Assess programs under development*
 - *Forecast future resource requirements*
- Council direction to staff on policy prioritization



Huy ch q'u / Thank you

