



To: Public Works and Transportation Committee

Date: November 30, 2010

From: Cecilia Achiam, MCIP, BCSLA
Interim Director, Sustainability and District Energy
Senior Program Manager, CPMG

File: 01-0005-01/2010-Vol
01

Re: Ramsar Designation of Provincial Wildlife Management Areas in Richmond

Staff Recommendation

That Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of support on behalf of the City, for the Ramsar designation of the two provincially owned Provincial Wildlife Management Areas (PWMAs) in Richmond, as shown in **Attachment 1**, to the report titled "Ramsar Designation of Provincial Wildlife Management Areas in Richmond", dated November 30, 2010.

Cecilia Achiam, MCIP, BCSLA
Interim Director, Sustainability and District Energy
Senior Program Manager, CPMG
(604-276-4122)

Att.

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO DEPUTY	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

In September 2010, the Mayor received a letter (**Attachment 1**) from Delta Mayor Lois Jackson, Chair of a working group composed of Environment Canada, the BC Ministry of Environment, Metro Vancouver and the Corporation, seeking the City's support for an application to include the two provincially owned Provincial Wildlife Management Areas (PWMAs) within Richmond (i.e., Sturgeon Banks and the South Arm Marshes Wildlife Management Area), as Ramsar¹ Wetlands of International Importance. A map of these PWMAs is provided in **Attachment 2**.

Background

Ramsar Designation

Ramsar is the International Convention on Wetlands. It is an intergovernmental treaty to support action and cooperation for the conservation and *wise use*² of wetlands. The treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. Canada became a signatory in 1981 and now has 37 designated Ramsar sites that comprise more than 13 million hectares, the largest area of designation internationally. The Alaskan National Wildlife Area, located in Delta, is one of three Ramsar sites in British Columbia and is one of the largest estuarine habitat areas on the Pacific Coast.

Locally, a working group has been established to coordinate the combined designation of Burns Bog and the provincially owned lands within the PWMAs in the Cities of Richmond, Delta and Surrey. The working group is composed of members from Metro Vancouver, the BC Ministry of Environment, Environment Canada and the Corporation of Delta. The working group is seeking official support from the member municipalities for the Ramsar application. The City of Surrey has already responded with its support (**Attachment 3**).

Analysis

There are two provincially owned PWMAs within the City of Richmond (**Attachment 2**): South Arm Marshes and Sturgeon Banks.

The South Arm Marshes PWMA is a complex of diked and intertidal islands, the former of which are actively farmed as a food source for waterfowl. The Sturgeon Banks WMA Plan recognizes that "the ecological integrity of Sturgeon Bank is dependent on maintaining nearby agricultural land uses." The plan also respects the need to ensure that any management prescriptions are reviewed with regard to their impacts on agricultural lands in proximity to the PWMA.

¹ About the Ramsar Convention. Available at: http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-about-ramsar/main/ramsar/1-36%5E7687_4000_0

² *Wise use* of wetlands is the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development (www.ramsar.org/pdf/lib/lib_handbooks2006_e01.pdf.)

The Ramsar designation application to designate Burns Bog and surrounding provincially owned PWMAs recognize the ecological values of a cohesive regional wetland complex that encompasses multiple jurisdictions. Through this collective designation, all partners are working collaboratively to acknowledge the unique ecological character of the wetlands complex and the multiple benefits they provide (biodiversity, flood control, shoreline stabilization/storm protection, recreation/tourism, etc.).

Procedurally, the application will be submitted by the federal government (Environment Canada) to the Ramsar Secretariat. The application will proceed independently from response from the City. It is anticipated that the application will be fast-tracked so that an announcement of the dedication can be made to coincide with World Wetlands Day (February 2, 2011).

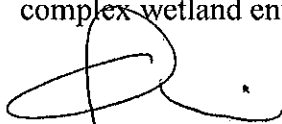
There are no costs or other obligations to the City for this designation. The lands involving Richmond are wholly owned by the province and already designated as PWMAs. No privately held or City-owned lands are part of this Ramsar application. The BC Ministry of Environment is a partner to the Ramsar application as the owner of the lands and a member of the working group. Any application in the PWMA is already subject to provincial environmental regulations. The potential Ramsar designation will not negatively impact activities already permitted within the PWMAs, such as agricultural practices.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Staff recommend that Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter in support of the proposed Ramsar designation on behalf of the City to recognize the unique ecological value of this complex wetland environment.



Cecilia Achiam, MCIP, BCSLA
Interim Director, Sustainability and District Energy
Senior Program Manager, CPMG
(604-276-4122)

- Attachment 1:** Letter from Mayor Lois Jackson dated September 24, 2010
- Attachment 2:** Map of PWMAs in Richmond proposed for Ramsar designation
- Attachment 3:** Letter of support from City of Surrey



THE CORPORATION OF DELTA

From the office of:

The Mayor,
Lois E. Jackson

September 24, 2010

Mayor Malcolm Brodie
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor Brodie,

Re: Ramsar Wetland of International Significance

At its September 13, 2010 Regular Meeting, Delta Council received a staff report regarding the designation of Burns Bog as a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance (enclosed), and unanimously adopted the following recommendations:

"THAT Mayor Lois E. Jackson write to Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Mayor Dianne Watts to seek support for the addition of the Provincial Wildlife Management Areas within the Cities of Richmond and Surrey for an application to designate Burns Bog and the surrounding Provincial Wildlife Management Areas as a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance.

THAT staff work with Environment Canada, BC Ministry of Environment, and Metro Vancouver to prepare a draft application for designating Burns Bog and the surrounding Provincial Wildlife Management Areas as a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance for Council's consideration."

The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) called the "Ramsar Convention" is an intergovernmental treaty that embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the "wise use", or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories. Canada is one of 159 Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention who have to date designated 1,886 sites as Ramsar Wetlands of International Significance. The Alaksen National Wildlife area on Westham Island is a designated Ramsar site. More information on Ramsar can be found at www.ramsar.org.

As part of the discussions on the subject of developing an application to designate Burns Bog as a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance, the concept of expanding the site boundaries covered under the application to include the nearby Provincial Wildlife Management Areas has been proposed. Since the Sturgeon Bank Wildlife Management Area and portions of the South Arm Marshes Wildlife Management Area are within the City of Richmond's boundaries, we felt it would be appropriate to seek your support for including these areas as part of the application.

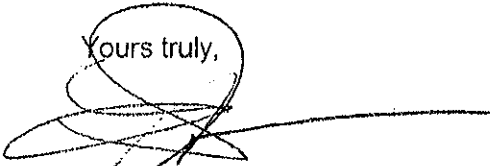
...2

RECEIVED
OCT - 7 2010
MAYORS OFFICE

It is our understanding that while a Ramsar designation would not impact how the Wildlife Management Areas are managed, it would recognize the international significance of this compilation of wetlands that collectively are integral to the biodiversity and ecological health of the Fraser River delta. The feasibility of adding the Wildlife Management Areas to an application for a Ramsar designation for Burns Bog is being investigated further by the Ministry of Environment and a working group has been formed to draft the application. We will keep the City of Richmond informed of progress in this regard and will consult with you throughout the application process.

Please contact my office at 604-946-3210 if you require any additional information or wish to discuss this further. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

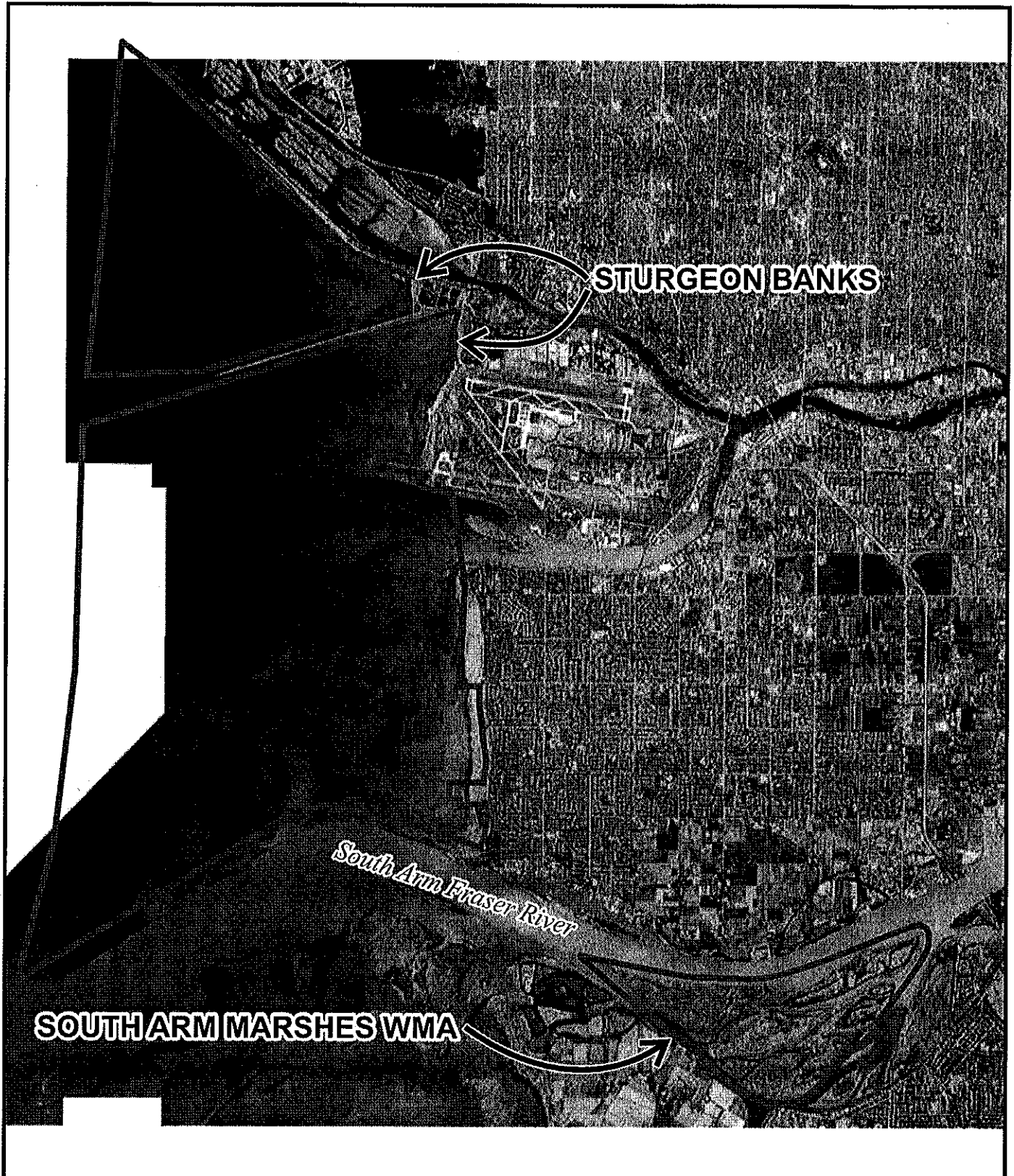
Yours truly,



Lois E. Jackson
Mayor

Enclosure

cc: Ramsar Designation Working Group (CSW, MoE, MV, Delta)
Delta Council
George V. Harvie, Chief Administrative Officer
Mike Brotherston, Manager of Climate Action and Environment



SOUTH ARM MARSHES WMA

STURGEON BANKS

South Arm Fraser River



Provincial Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)
in the City of Richmond:
Sturgeon Banks WMA and South Arm
Marshes WMA. Source: MOE 2010

Original Date: 11/30/10

Revision Date:

Note: Dimensions are in METRES

CITY OF SURREY

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

A genda
FILE # 06230-20-BBO

November 8, 2010

File: 0480-20

TYPE: Regular Agenda

DEPT: CA+E

A.T. #: 107374

Comments: December 6/10
Regular Meeting

Her Worship
Mayor Lois E. Jackson
4500 Clarence Taylor Crescent
Delta, B.C.
V4K 3E2

Dear Mayor Jackson:

Re: Ramsar Wetland of International Significance

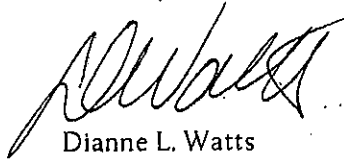
Thank you for your letter received by my office on Oct. 8 regarding the City of Delta's development of an application to designate Burns Bog as a Ramsar Wetland of International significance. I apologize for my late reply.

The City of Surrey recognizes the values of areas of high biodiversity and ecological significance. The Boundary Bay Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the Serpentine WMA in Surrey are two areas managed for ecological significance as they represent important habitat areas for birds utilizing the Pacific Flyway.

In response to your letter, the City of Surrey would like to offer its support to include these two WMA's within the current Ramsar application. A Ramsar designation would bring recognition of the international significance of these wetland areas and bring further attention to their ecologically significance.

I look forward to the City of Delta's continued consultation with the City of Surrey and to being informed of the progress of this application.

Sincerely,



Dianne L. Watts
Mayor

cc: Stephen Goodwin, Environmental Coordinator, City of Surrey



DIANNE WATTS
MAYOR

BUSINESS
P 604 591 4126
F 604 591 5175
MAYOR@SURREY.CA

WWW.SURREY.CA

