TRITON
Environmental Consultants

650-1040 West Georgia Street P 604.631.2211
Vancouver, BC V6E 4H1 F 604.631.2213

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Will Dong, Tudor Project Ltd.
FROM:	Triton Environmental Consultants Ltd.
DATE:	12 November 2021
FILE #/NAME:	11145/V5277
RE:	**Site Visit, Truman Road Feasibility Study**

Background

Tudor Project Ltd. (Tudor) is considering the purchase of a partially developed 7.0 hectare property[1] for the purposes of developing a subdivision near Halfmoon Bay on the Sunshine Coast of south coastal British Columbia (BC). The property was initially subdivided in the 1970s with approximately 75 houses constructed on 90 lots throughout the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, plans to construct a road through the proposed subdivision began with clearing and blasting a path through the site (Will Dong, Tudor Project Ltd., personal communication, 15 October 2021). This unfinished road exists as a 6-metre wide trail extending east-west from the west side of the property on Truman Road near Natalie Lane for approximately 350 m into the site where it then curves southwest to meet Ross Road (Figure 1). The existing houses were built during Phase 1 in the 1980s after which further development was halted due to the passing of the owner. The widow has now decided to sell the lot.

Tudor is proposing to subdivide the property into smaller parcels, requiring a rezoning application be submitted to the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) to amend the Official Community Plan. A Feasibility Study is required as part of the application process to identify any potential issues that may be associated with the rezoning proposal.

The site[2] is a second growth forested area within the Coastal Western Hemlock (variant CWHxm1) biogeoclimatic zone that has been logged multiple times over the years. A geotechnical assessment conducted in 1981 described the site as exposed bedrock consisting of granite and a series of rock terraces formed by erosion during the last glacial period. There is little accumulation of granular soils anywhere on the property and the vegetation is typically shallow-rooting pines, firs, and underbrush (Golder Associates 1982).

To assess any potential effects of the proposed project on the terrestrial habitat, including any birds or Species at Risk wildlife or rare plants, a site assessment was conducted by

[1]DL 2394. Approximate area 7.0 ha (17.3 acres); see Photo 1.
[2]PID 013-272-047. Location: Halfmoon Bay, BC.

Triton Environmental Consultants Ltd. (Triton) on October 21, 2021. This Memo Report provides details of the assessment based on that site visit.

Methodology

An initial desktop assessment of the project area indicated no wildlife Species at Risk occurring at the proposed development site or close enough for potential indirect effects. A search of the Provincial database program (iMap BC) noted that a Red-listed[3] Ecological Community – Douglas-fir/Dull Oregon Grape (*Pseudotsuga menziesii / Mahonia nervosa*) occurs along the northern fringe of the property boundary (Figure 1).

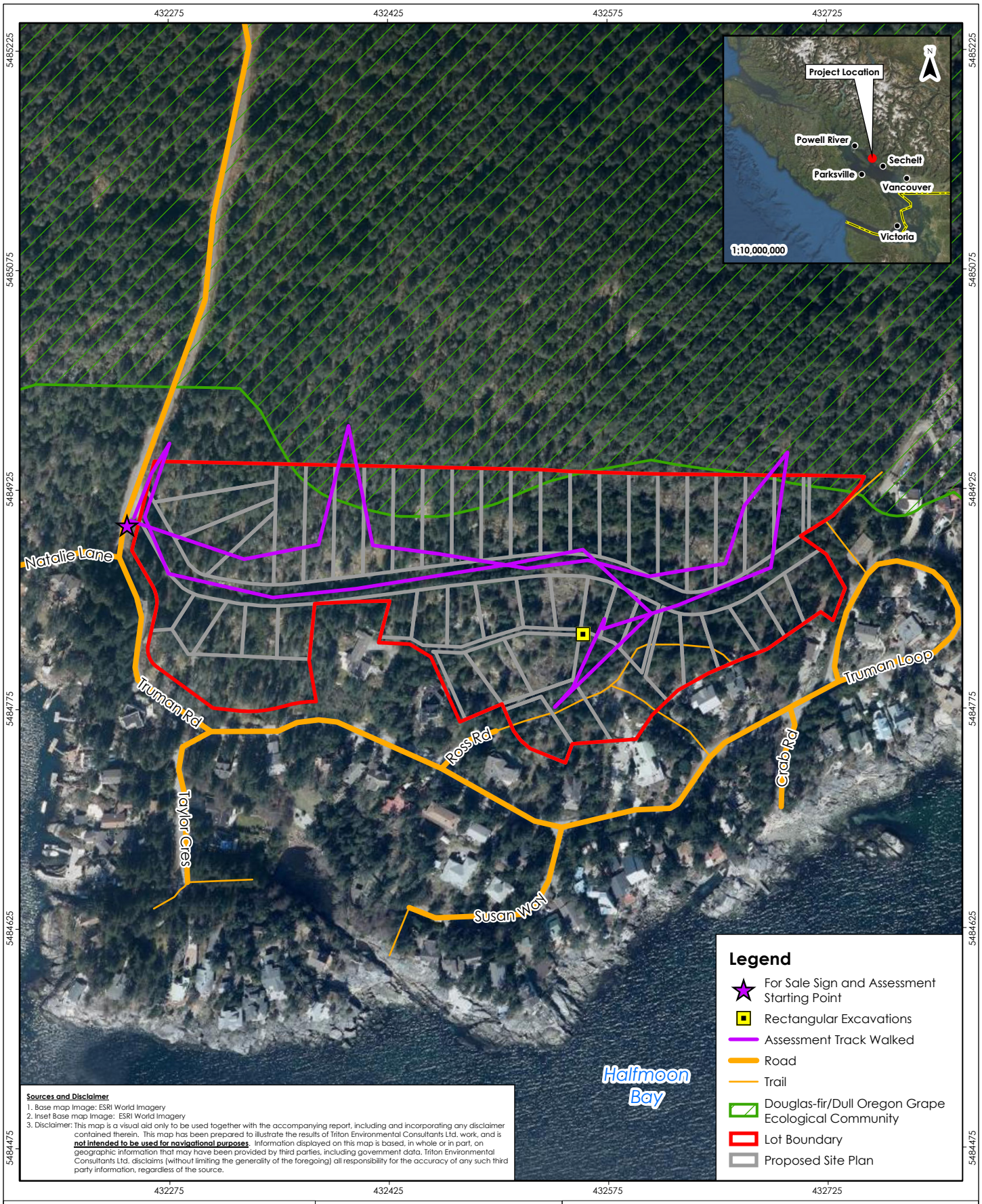
The site visit was conducted on October 21, 2021 by Triton Senior Wildlife Biologist, Brent Matsuda, R.P.Bio. At the site, as per Tudor's arrangement, Brent met with two Tudor contacts as a safety check-in and to confirm site location. Brent proceeded to walk the site at approximately 9:45 am under overcast skies, sporadic spitting rain, wind Beaufort 1, and air temperature 14°C.

The assessment proceeded easterly from the trailhead entrance on Truman Road near Natalie Lane, landmarked by a large For Sale sign (Photo 1). This approximately 6 m-wide trail proceeds through a grove of Douglas-fir pole-sapling-sized trees that was initially cleared to become a road prior to project shutdown (Photo 2). The trail continued easterly through the length of the site and curved southwesterly down to Ross Road (Figure 1). The assessment then back-tracked in a northeastern direction, again following a clearly-demarked wide trail to where it reconnected at the east-west corridor. Proceeding eastward from here the trail became a narrow footpath continuing to the eastern limit of the property boundary (Photo 3), then northward upslope on a foot trail marked by rock cairns (Photo 4; Figure 1). The northern portion of the path zigzagged along a lichen and moss-covered rocky terrain and open terraces (Photos 5 to 8) then turned back in a westerly direction paralleling the unfinished east-west road below. The site assessment ended by following the footpath, still marked by rock cairns (Photo 9), descending downslope to the east-west unfinished road at the western boundary of the property at the realtor's sign on Truman Road. A general outline of the transects walked on-site is shown in Figure 1.

Any visual indicators of wildlife presence were noted during the reconnaissance (e.g., tracks, scat, bedding areas, tree cavities), including sightings and vocalizations of any bird species while assessing the habitat for potential wildlife occupancy or use, and watching for indications of habitat use by any Species at Risk. Observations also noted the presence of any freshwater habitats at the site (e.g., wetlands, streams, ditches), to assess the potential for any fish or amphibian issues.

Neither a pre-clearing nest sweep nor a breeding bird survey were conducted as it was an inappropriate time of year to do so and Tudor has informed us that vegetation

[3]Any native species or ecological communities that have, or are candidates for, Extirpated, Endangered, or Threatened status in BC (https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/search.do).



Truman Road Development Proposal

Figure 1.
Truman Road Development Project

N W E S

Meters
0 30 60 90 120

File Path:
N:\ACTIVE\11088_TudorGroveRoad_BioAssessment\ArcProProject\11088_ArcProProject_20211012.aprx

GIS Technician:	GF
Project No:	11088
Date:	Oct 29, 2021
Scale:	1:3,500
Map Projection:	UTM Zone 10 (NAD 1983)

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clearing and other forms of habitat disturbance will not occur during the primary bird nesting season (i.e., March 15 to August 15). As such it was deemed unnecessary.

Plants were initially identified visually based on knowledge of the regional flora and supported by use of a smart phone plant app (i.e., iNaturalist Seek; https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app). Recognizing the limitations of a smart phone app biased toward American naming conventions, further confirmation of identifications specific to the region was done using the Pojar and MacKinnon field guide (1994).

A formal rare or invasive plant survey was not conducted so the species noted are only considered an informal inventory of vegetation observed during the assessment. While the surveyor is not a botanist or rare plant specialist, he is familiar with the local flora and is a former park naturalist who has assisted rare plant surveys in BC over the past 25 years.

In general, the site assessment included:

- Documenting all vegetation, fungi, and lichens observed;
- Documenting any bird nests if found, active or inactive, or potential nest sites (e.g., tree cavities), or habitat features or other suitable nesting habitat (e.g., large snags, wetlands, cliff sites);
- Observing bird behaviour (visual, auditory) indicating potential nesting or territory establishment;
- Watching for potential hibernacula sites (e.g., for snakes or bats);
- Watching for mammal burrows or dens (e.g., for bears), and mineral licks for ungulates; and
- Documenting any other signs of wildlife presence (e.g., tracks, scat, scrapes, browsed vegetation, bedding).

Findings

With the exception of the cleared trail/unfinished road, the majority of the property consists of steep, rocky terrain and second growth forest with open rocky terraces covered with moss and lichen dispersed throughout the property (see Photos 5 to 8). Some mature, older growth Douglas-fir (i.e., diameter at breast height >40 cm) sporadically occurs within the proposed upper lots where a footrail skirts the upper property boundary marked by rock cairns.

All vegetation species observed, including mosses (Bryophytes) and lichens, whether native or non-native, were recorded to the extent possible and are presented in Table 1. A total of 30 species were noted during the assessment.

Despite occurring in the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone, no Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) was observed on the property and the site is dominated by Douglas-fir, Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*), and Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*)

interspersed with Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*) and Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*). Dominant native understory vegetation included Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), Sword Fern (*Vaccinium parvifolium*), Bracken Fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), and Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*). Dominant non-native species occurring around disturbed areas (e.g., the trailhead entrance) included Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), Trailing Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), Hairy Cats-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), and Scotch Broom (*Taraxacum officinale*).

No rare plants or rare plant communities were observed, including Oregon Grape which according to terrestrial ecosystem mapping (TEM) should occur within the northern fringe of the site as it supposedly borders a Douglas-fir/Oregon Grape Ecological Community.

Table 1. Plant and Bryophyte (moss) species observed on October 21, 2021

	Common Name	***Scientific Name***
1	Arbutus	*Arbutus menziesii*
2	Bigrooted Geranium	*Geranium macrorrhizum*
3	Black Raspberry	*Rubus leucodermis*
4	Broom-moss	*Dicranum scoparium*
5	Common Wood Sorrel	*Oxalis acetosella*
6	Douglas-fir	*Pseudotsuga menziesii*
7	English Ivy	*Hedera helix*
8	Fern, Bracken	*Pteridium aquilinum*
9	Fern, Licorice	*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*
10	Fern, Sword	*Polystichum munitum*
11	Hairy Cat's-ear	*Hypochaeris radicata*
12	Hairy Honeysuckle	*Lonicera hispidula*
13	Himalayan Blackberry	*Rubus armeniacus*
14	Lodgepole Pine	*Pinus contorta*
15	Oceanspray	*Holodiscus discolor*
16	Plantain	*Plantago* sp.
17	Red Alder	*Alnus rubra*
18	Ribwort Plantain	*Plantago lanceolata*
19	Rock Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster horizontalis*
20	Rose	*Rosa* sp.
21	Rush	*Juncus* or *Luzula* sp.
22	Salal	*Gaultheria shallon*
23	Saskatoon Berry	*Amelanchier alnifolia*
24	Scotch Broom	*Cytisus scoparius*
25	Sedge	*Carex* sp.
26	Spike Moss	*Selaginella* sp.
27	St. John's Wort	*Hypericum* sp.
28	Trailing Blackberry	*Rubus ursinus*
29	Western Redcedar	*Thuja plicata*
30	Yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*

There were nine bird species detected during the site assessment (Table 2). None of the birds observed indicated any behavioural cues reflective of nesting. No sensitive species or Species at Risk were detected.

Table 2. Bird species detected during the site visit on October 21, 2021

	Common Name	***Scientific Name***
1	American Robin	*Turdus migratorius*
2	Cedar Waxwing	*Bombycilla cedrorum*
3	Common Raven	*Corvus corax*
4	Golden-crowned Kinglet	*Regulus satrapa*
5	Gull	*Larus* sp.
6	Northern Flicker	*Colaptes auratus*
7	Red-tailed Hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*
8	Spotted Towhee	*Pipilo maculatus*
9	Steller's Jay	*Cyanocitta stelleri*

While a pre-clearing nest sweep survey was not conducted since habitat will not be altered during the main breeding season, this assessment provided insight as to which species currently occur at the site and thus could potentially lose nesting habitat.

Based on the nesting calendar query tool provided by Birds Canada (https://www.birdscanada.org/apps/rnest/index.jsp?lang=EN), there are 312 bird species known to nest within the Georgia Lowland Ecodistrict which extends from Bowen Island near West Vancouver to Lund north of Powell River and includes the Sunshine Coast. Most of these species (90%) nest between March 15 and July 31 with only two species, Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) potentially nesting prior to March, and one species, Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), potentially nesting into early September. However, Golden Eagles and Turkey Vultures are unlikely to nest in the vicinity of the project site due to absence of sufficient habitat.

The only mammal detected during the site visit was a Douglas Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*) although it is likely that the site is also used or occupied by other rodents, mustelids (weasels, mink), and insectivores such as shrews and bats. Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*), Columbian Black-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*), Coyote (*Canis latrans*), and Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus*) also occur in the area.

While the site occurs within the range of several amphibian species including *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) Special Concern species such as the Western Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*) and Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora*), these species are unlikely to occur at the site given the lack of any wetlands or streams. Upon arrival at the site, a Pacific Treefrog (*Pseudacris regilla*) was heard vocalizing across the road from the realty sign, but this species is widespread throughout the area and highly mobile. Otherwise, there is no suitable aquatic habitat surrounding the project site for amphibians to breed, so therefore it is unlikely that other species occurring within the area such as the Rough-skinned Newt

(*Taricha granulosa*), Northwestern Salamander (*Ambystoma gracile*), or Long-toed Salamander are likely to move into the site given the lack of habitat connectivity.

A small, ephemeral pool of standing water was observed while traversing the upper slope near the northern fringe of the lot (Photo 10; UTM 10U 432442 5484880). However, this is likely a result of pooled rainwater within a depression underlaid by bedrock (thus no water permeability into the ground) as there were no wetland or riparian plants nearby to indicate long-term water presence. While it may be used for breeding by Pacific Treefrog and/or Long-toed Salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*) if present in the spring, there is low risk of habitat disturbance causing mortalities at this time of year (i.e., fall/winter). No amphibians were observed here and based on the lack of any vegetation, soil, or hydrological indicators, this would not be classified as a wetland.

A series of ground depressions within a gully parallels the east-west unfinished road on the north side within the grove of pole-sapling Douglas-fir trees. One depression contained water (Photo 11), but the absence of any water in the remaining depressions (Photo 12) given the amount of recent rainfall indicates that water likely does not pool here long enough for any wetland species to establish (i.e., riparian-dependent plants or animals). In addition, these ground depressions did not show any channel scour, alluvium, defined banks, or any signs of erosion to indicate water flow, nor riparian vegetation.

A narrow watercourse overgrown with vegetation formed by runoff from the road occurs on the east side of Truman Road north of the For Sale sign (Photos 13 and 14). Its origins appear to occur about 200 m upslope from rainfall over the bedrock and road runoff, and flows down and enters the property at the trailhead entrance by the realty sign, forming a small pool of water in this vicinity (Photo 15). However, similar to the water pool up top and the ground depressions observed further east along the unfinished road, there are no riparian indicators (i.e., vegetation) that would deem the pooled water as a wetland or as an ephemeral stream (i.e., erosion, scour, alluvium, etc.).

The Northern Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria coerulea*) and any of BC's three gartersnake species (i.e., Common Gartersnake *Thamnophis sirtalis*, Western Gartersnake *T. elegans*, Northwestern Gartersnake *T. ordinoides*) likely occur on the site given their prevalence throughout the area. However, they should not pose any issues to the project unless a snake den or hibernaculum is discovered, in which case a relocation salvage may be required to avoid contravention of the BC *Wildlife Act*.

There are no Species at Risk invertebrates (e.g., insects, spiders, mollusks) known to occur at the site or in close proximity, nor were any noteworthy invertebrates observed during the site visit. Given the time of year and weather conditions, few wildlife species were observed.

Five rectangular excavations were observed within the same 10 m^2 area (UTM 10U 432558 5484826; Figure 1) behind flagging (Photos 16 and 17) close to the area where the east-west trail curves southwest down to Ross Road. The source and purpose of the excavations is not known but may have been test pits dug to assess soil or substrate conditions.

Recommendations and Other Considerations

Although there were no potential issues identified, it should be kept in mind that lack of detection does not imply lack of presence, as occurrence will vary depending on time of year and several other factors, and conditions can readily change with climatic variability. As the site visit was relatively short consisting of a single day visit in late October, the assessment pertains to this particular period in time and is subject to change depending on environmental conditions and any species responses to such, including changes to distribution, abundance, or density that may make a species more (or less) detectable and/or vulnerable to any proposed project activities. For example, some plants have later phenologies (seasonal variations), and weather fluctuations such as extended precipitation may result in some plants appearing earlier or later than under average conditions (RISC 2018). Thus, the observations of this vegetation inventory are limited and should be considered as preliminary and not an exhaustive or complete inventory of the site.

Vegetation inventories, particularly for rare plants, should ideally be conducted at least twice a year by qualified vegetation specialists during the growing season when the diagnostic features to identify plants are most visible (RISC 2018). This usually involves an early- and a late-season field survey to detect different species.

The Red-listed Douglas-fir/Dull Oregon Grape ecological community that borders along the northern fringe of the property is a designation assigned by the BC Conservation Data Centre to protect Endangered or Threatened species and ecological communities in BC (SCCP 2014). Oftentimes this element occurrence is based on desktop terrestrial ecosystem mapping (TEM) conducted by the provincial government without ground-truthing. Many factors influence the reliability of TEM. Depending on the scale of aerial images used to capture the ecosystems, very small ecosystems and some types of disturbance may not be visible and thus will not be mapped. If the air photos used for TEM are not current, new disturbance that has occurred since the time of mapping and inventory will not accurately represent the current state of the landscape. Other factors, such as the skill and experience of the mapper, and the field survey intensity level will also influence the reliability of mapping[4]. In addition, this protection is not applicable on privately-owned land (Josh Malt, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, personal communication, 2 November 2021) and as previously mentioned, no Oregon Grape was observed during the site visit indicating that the mapping shown on the BC iMap website was likely derived from desktop evaluation without ground-truthing.

The wildlife assessment does not reflect wildlife use or presence during the breeding season (e.g., for birds). However, this will not be an issue so long as any habitat alteration, such as vegetation clearing, occurs outside the breeding bird window. Given the species known to occur in the area, it is recommended that any habitat alteration, including vegetation clearing, be conducted outside the March 1 to August 30 timeframe. Raptors such as Bald Eagle and some owl species may nest prior to this window, so it would be

[4] https://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/imap4m/

prudent to conduct a raptor nest sweep prior to any vegetation clearing occurring from mid-January onward, particularly for Bald Eagle, given the proximity to Halfmoon Bay. If a Bald Eagle nest occurs, then the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (MFLNRORD) should be contacted regarding mitigation measures, as Bald Eagle nests are protected year-round under the BC *Wildlife Act*, regardless of whether the nest is active (i.e., occupied).

If vegetation clearing must occur between March 1 and August 30, then a pre-clearing nest sweep survey should be conducted prior to any habitat disturbance. Usually March 15 to August 15 is considered to be the high risk breeding bird window for the Vancouver Lower mainland, but March 1 – August 31 provides a slightly extended buffer to account for the species more likely to nest within the more temperate Sunshine Coast region. Birds can nest in disturbed areas, including on the ground and within idle machinery that has been inactive and parked on-site for several days. Given the size and habitat complexity at the site, it is recommended that at least three nest sweeps be conducted, ideally on consecutive days under ideal survey conditions, by an experienced Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) familiar with nesting behaviour of the species likely to occur at the site. Clearing or brushing activities should then commence within 72 hours of the nest sweep completion.

In the absence of a QEP, if any nests or birds displaying nesting behaviour (e.g., carrying nesting material or food in their mouths) are observed within the site or in close proximity to areas potentially affected by project activities (i.e., within 30 m), observations should be noted with photo documentation if possible and provided to a QEP to assess status. In such situations, a non-disturbance buffer around a nest is typically delineated until the nest fledges. Buffer size will be at the discretion of the QEP depending on species, life stage, topography, tolerance levels, and other considerations. With raptor nests, Provincial best management practices (BMPs) recommend a 1,000 m setback distance/non-disturbance buffer during the nesting season. While there were no raptor nests observed during the assessment, the possibility could exist in some of the larger trees or in the surrounding area during the breeding season as vegetative growth obscured visibility during the site visit. Given the steep terrain, dense vegetation, and private lots outside the property, a single-day assessment did not allow a thorough assessment of potential raptor nests for a 1,000 m radius around the site. However, the likelihood appeared relatively low. Similarly, if any wildlife dens or hibernacula are discovered (e.g., bear dens, snakes within rocky areas, bats in trees), then work should be immediately halted until a QEP can assess the situation on-site.

It is important that work crews follow general BMPs regarding birds on-site, including the following:

- Be vigilant for birds and bird nests.
- Do not damage, destroy, remove, or disturb any active bird nests.
- Nests under construction (i.e., no eggs or chicks present) are considered to be active and live. If adult birds are present, they cannot be intentionally flushed from the nest. The QEP should be contacted about any nests discovered or suspected.

Work crews should be aware that except for crows, nests of most bird species are protected year-round, active or inactive, under the Federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act* (MBCA) or the BC *Wildlife Act*, and that disturbance to the birds, whether adults, chicks, or eggs, including harassment, flushing, or other stress, is a regulatory violation. With the exception of some specific non-native species (e.g., Norway Rat, European Starling), most native vertebrate wildlife in BC is also protected under the BC *Wildlife Act*. This includes native small mammals (e.g., rodents, weasels, bats, shrews), amphibians, and reptiles. While a salvage (i.e., relocation) will not be required for these groups prior to habitat alteration, exceptions may be required under rare circumstances such as the discovery of a snake or bat hibernaculum, active den, or similar situation that may arise during clearing or construction activities.

The proposal to install a functional ditch along the east side of Truman Road upslope of the property entrance and a culvert under what will become the property access road, should not require any specific approvals or authorizations under the Federal *Fisheries Act*. Since this would be a non-fish-bearing watercourse due to the gradient and because it is formed by road water runoff, it will be beneficial to the local community as pointed out by neighbours, in reducing erosion rather than water running over the road as is the current situation. These considerations should be included in any development permit applications being submitted.

Since the land has not yet been purchased, it is recommended that you investigate whether the lot is subject to any conservation covenants, if this has not already been done. A covenant is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization where a landowner protects the land in specific ways. The promises the landowner makes are attached on title to the land forever, regardless of who owns the land; the conservation organization monitors the covenant to ensure that the intentions and objectives of the covenant are being maintained[5]. Covenants associated with land title are not publicly available but can be obtained through a request submitted to the Land Title and Survey Authority of BC. This information may also be available through the realtor negotiating the property purchase (SCRD Planning Dept., personal communication, 29 October 2021).

Overall, based on the desktop assessment and site visit conducted on October 21, 2021, there were no environmentally related issues observed that may have bearing on the proposed plan to purchase or further subdivide the site.

We trust that the information provided in this memo will be of use in informing your decisions with respect to your proposal. If you have any further questions regarding the recommendations based on our site visit, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you,

Brent Matsuda

[5]http://conservancy.bc.ca/get-involved/protect-your-land/conservation-covenants/

Senior Wildlife Biologist, M.Sc., R.P.Bio.
BMatsuda@triton-env.com

References

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Photographs

Photo 1. Looking east into the property entrance/trail (left side of photo) at the western boundary on Truman Road near Natalie Lane

Photo 2. East-west cleared trail/unfinished road through grove of pole-sapling Douglas-fir trees

Photo 3. Eastern portion of the east-west unfinished road where trail narrows to a footpath to the eastern boundary

Photo 4. Foot trail marked with rock cairns (left side of photo) extending northward upslope at the eastern property boundary

Photo 5. Moss- and lichen-covered rocky terraces located throughout the property

Photo 6. Open rocky terraces in upper northern portion of the property

Photo 7. Moss-covered rocky outcrops in upper northern portion of the property

Photo 8. Lichen mat on rocky terrace located above the unfinished east-west road

Photo 9. Footrail marked by rock cairns descending down toward the property entrance on Truman Road along the western property boundary

Photo 10. Pooled water in ground depression in northern portion of the property

Photo 11. Pooled water in ground depression beside unfinished road in middle of property

Photo 12. Dry ground depression in the gully beside unfinished road in middle of property

Photo 13. Looking south along Truman Road near the property entrance (For Sale sign to left of truck) along the western property boundary. A naturally-formed watercourse drains toward the property entrance overgrown with dense vegetation (orange circle).

Photo 14. Looking north at the same watercourse along Truman Road overgrown with vegetation. The watercourse originates directly beside the road (orange circle) formed by runoff, then diverts away from the road and into the property near the trail entrance.

Photo 15. Water pooled in ground depression from rainwater runoff on Truman Road near the western property entrance

Photo 16. Rectangular excavation within flagged area

Photo 17. One of five rectangular excavations observed near the area where the main trail curves southwest toward Ross Road