

September 11, 2023

Capital Regional District

Att: Nadine Collison

Re: Letter of Support to remove English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) from CRD parks

Dear Ms. Collison

In the Spring of 2018, I accompanied District of Metchosin Parks and Trails Committee Chairman, Mark Atherton, on a walking survey of the holly problem in Metchosin parks. On April 17, 2018, Brenda and I made a presentation to the Metchosin Parks and Trails Committee to bring the holly issue to the attention of all the members of the Committee. At that same meeting there was a unanimous resolution passed to remove all holly from all Metchosin Parks.

A short time later, Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative (MISC) was formed and a short time after that MISC was successful in being awarded a four-year, \$20,000.00 Public Conservation Assistant Fund (PCAF) grant from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation. Over the course of those four years, we applied for and received a total of \$4,121.00 which we used to purchase several Pullerbears, loppers, etc.

To help us formulate a holly removal strategy, we consulted and had site visits with local experts such as recent Metchosinite and UVic-trained botanist James Miskelly, Forestry Officer, Natural Resources Canada; UVic Director of Restoration of Natural Systems, Professor Nancy Shackleford; Don Hare, Executive Director, Coastal Invasive Species Committee; Derek Hogan, Invasive Species Technician, Prov. B.C; and Nathan Fisk, Resource Management Officer, Parks Canada.

The goal of MISC is to remove as much holly as possible by hand or by mechanical means and, since 65% of the spread of holly is from the layering of lower branches, to remove all of the lower limbs of the larger trees so that no limbs can reach the ground.

On the advice of James Miskelly, all those trees that we were unable to pull were cut down and a small amount of Garlon (triclopyr) was immediately applied to the outer cambian layer of the stump. We estimate that 14 ounces of Garlon has been used to complete this work.

We are very pleased to inform you that all the known holly, thousands of plants, have been removed from the five, primary, District of Metchosin parks, representing an estimated 230 acres of park land, at no cost to the District of Metchosin.

We are extremely happy with the results, there has been very little resprouting, and the resprouting that has occurred has been very easy to deal with.

Best!

Neil West

*Chair, Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative*