

YOUR VIEW

Reay Creek contamination is too high

Your article and editorial about Reay Creek (April 17) contains errors with respect to who knew what and when.

Your writing purports that I had known about the Reay Creek contaminated sediments for many years — this is not true. The first time I knew that there may be considerable heavy metal contamination downstream of the airport property was in 2010. Peninsula Streams commissioned two college students to conduct a pond survey which included a sample from the sediment surface and the results indicated high cadmium concentrations. I was surprised but not shocked as I had been present during fish kills from cadmium releases from the airport in 2003 and 2004.

In the spring of 2013, Peninsula Streams petitioned the Town of Sidney to partner to remove the (depth of the) sediment in Reay Creek pond and create more rearing habitat for coho salmon fry. At that time we were told by Sidney to first go and determine the levels of contamination in the sediments. With no funding support from Sidney, we embarked on a study of all contaminants in a 'core' of pond sediments at a cost of \$50,000.

As a result of the *PNR* article on the core sampling study in 2013, a CRD technician sent me an email with detailed sampling results in Reay Creek — I assumed water samples but in fact they were sediment samples taken at the mouth of Reay Creek and then later at upstream locations.

It wasn't until January 2015 that I

re-read the attachment and realized that CRD and the Town of Sidney were aware, since at least 1998, that contaminated sediments were throughout the creek.

Peninsula Streams is concerned that over the years we have organized several local student salmon releases in Reay Creek and had students work with the sediments to identify aquatic invertebrates. Had we known the level of contamination in the sediments, we would not have conducted these activities.

Peninsula Streams strongly recommends that Sidney not attempt to take a lead role in the contamination remediation of Reay Creek.

We believe that Sidney will quickly find that the cost of remediation is too high for Sidney taxpayers to accept, since the source of the contamination is clearly the airport property. Peninsula Streams recommends that the Victoria Airport Authority and Transport Canada take the lead role in testing the contamination and developing a remediation plan for the site, Sidney and North Saanich should work with them to ensure that their interests are met.

Based on the level of contamination our testing identified in the sediments of Reay Creek, Peninsula Streams believes that Sidney should be warning residents to reduce their exposure to Reay Creek sediments and that the sediments are not safe for children to ingest as was suggested in the *PNR* article.

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