TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER

1979 FEBRUARY 13 OUR FILE: 15.109 /777

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FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

SUBJECT: FRASER RIVER ESTUARY STUDY - PHASE I REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Mr. G. E. Simmons, Chairman, Steering Committee for the Fraser River Estuary Study for his information.

REPORT

Appearing on the agenda is a letter dated 1979 February 06 from the Chairman of the Steering Committee for the Fraser River Estuary Study, Mr. G. E. Simmons, reflecting any comments the Municipality may have with respect to the first phase report of the Fraser River Estuary Study Group.

At its meeting of 1978 November 27, Council received the attached report dealing with this matter and adopted the two recommendations contained within that report. It would therefore be appropriate for a copy of this report to be forwarded to Mr. Simmons for his information.

A. L. Parr DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

JSB/sam Attachment

cc: Parks and Recreation Administrator Chief Public Health Inspector

	MANAGER'S REPORT NO. COUNCIL MEETING 1973	11 27	1
RE:	LETTER FROM THE HONOURABLE JAMES A. NIELSEN WHICH APPEARED ON THE AGENDA FOR THE 1978 OCTOBER 23 MEETING OF COUNCIL (ITEM 4g) FRASER RIVER ESTUARY STUDY (ITEM 12, REPORT NO. 74, 1978 OCTOBER 23)		1
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Attached is a report from the Parks and Recreation Administrator.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendations of the Director of Planning be adopted.

Planning Department 1978 November 15

TO: .: MUNICIPAL MANAGER

FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

RE: FRASER RIVER ESTUARY STUDY - PHASE I REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. THAT the Municipal Council endorse the recommendations (See Appendix II) as contained within the Fraser River Estuary Summary Report as a statement of support for the establishment of a Fraser River Estuary Management Plan.
- 2. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to The Honourable James A. Neilsen as an initial statement on the proposals for the next phases of the study program.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 1978 October 23, Council received a letter dated 1978 October 13 from The Honourable James A. Nielsen requesting initial comment on the proposed development of the management plan for the Fraser River Estuary.

In connection with this correspondence, Council approved the following recommendation of the Municipal Manager:

"THAT The Honourable James A. Nielsen be advised that the Fraser River Estuary Study will be considered by Burnaby Municipal Council following review by staff in two or three weeks' time."

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The purpose of the Study was to develop a management plan which recognized the importance of the estuary both for human activities such as urbanindustrial and port development, and for the preservation of its ecological integrity. Four work groups were established to report on land use, transportation and port development; water quality; recreation; and habitat.

The study program that has been established by the Study Steering Committee is based on a three phase approach. The reports completed during this first phase describe both the natural and man-made characteristics of the area and lay out existing and some proposed policies and practices governing utilization of the estuary. Phase II of the study will be primarily devoted to the organizational aspects of developing an estuary management plan while Phase III will be directed towards plan implementation, refinement and monitoring.

KEY FINDINGS OF PHASE I REPORT

Compared to the natural wetlands and marshes of the Fraser Estuary that existed before the Lower Mainland was settled, only about 30 per cent remains. Nearly all of this loss has been due to dyking over the years in protecting agricultural areas. Industrial development with its attendant urban expansion has accounted for a small portion of the total loss of wetlands, but it is considered that this will place the main pressure on what remains.

The river and estuary have suffered not only from the loss of wetlands but as well from its contact with urban development and the associated pollutants and toxic materials. Yet, in spite of these problems, the study groups have found the estuary to have been remarkably resilient so far. It continues to support the most valuable salmon run in North America and harbours a million wildfowl annually. However, a major concern expressed is that the estuary's resilience will not last unless measures are taken to protect it. It has been suggested that this does not mean that an eventual plan must be anti-development, but rather when development is permitted, it ought to take place within the framework of a basic policy position and supporting development guidelines. In this context, the Study Steering Committee has advanced the following basic policy position:

The Study's purpose is to determine how and to what extent the needs of a growing population, economy and industry can be accommodated while maintaining the quality of the Estuary's natural resources and preventing further deterioration. To accomplish this purpose one should, in developing a Fraser River Estuary Management Plan, integrate the needs of the economy with those of the Estuary's ecosystem by respecting environmental management principles. The basic characteristics of the regional ecosystem -- its capability for self-renewal, its carrying capacity, productivity and other aspects of environmental quality -- can be a guide to the determination of where, how, and what activities and interventions by man will be permitted.

In an eventual plan, a committment to such a policy position would be spelled out by more specific guideline policy statements. Chapter eight of the main summary report identifies a series of principal and supplementary guidelines relating to water quality, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat and rehabilitation, port development and waterfront land use that are supportive of the underlying policy position. An extract from chapter eight is included as Appendix I to this report.

While certain proposals such as the suggestion that existing foreshore development sites should be used exclusively for water-oriented developments can be readily supported, others such as those proposing a formal foreshore zoning, site - specific development controls or certain amendments to the Land Registry Act, will have to be analysed in detail by staff during the Phase II stage of

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the study in order to determine their appropriateness. These various proposals do point out the need for the Municipality to have representation during the Phase II and subsequent stages of the study program.

RELATIONSHIP TO BIG BEND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

From the outset of this study, staff have advised the Study Steering Committee of the adopted Big Bend Development Plan and the various implementation measures that have been effected to date. It has been conveyed that the open space and agricultural component of the Big Bend Development Plan are of primary importance and represent concrete evidence that these uses can coexist with other urban uses in the estuary system. It was further stated, however, that there is an equal Municipal concern that the large industrial estate sites within the area remain intact in order to accommodate substantial future employment growth within the Municipality. Having reviewed the Stage I reports, staff are of the opinion that the Big Bend Development Plan is highly supportive of the various policies and principles that have been advanced for subsequent review. It is recognized that the Development Plan should not be regarded as an inflexible concept and that some adjustments may be necessary with respect to its implementation actions in cooperating with the estuary management concept.

In their discussion concerning a proposed estuary plan and process, the Study Steering Committee has stated that intensive dialogue is essential before proceeding further in order to reach a position to which all levels of government can be committed. This position is based on the belief that it is more appropriate to deal with the existing jurisdiction through cooperative participation rather than by attempting to create a new agency that would attempt to legislate action by way of overriding statutory authority. Staff support this approach and believe that this Municipality, through the cooperative implementation of the Big Bend Development Plan, can be effective in assisting an estuary management plan.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROPOSAL

The Steering Committee has offered for discussion an organizational concept comprising three inter-acting groups:

- a "constituency" comprising all government agencies and nongovernmental groups that would meet at intervals to exchange views and understandings and to participate in task groups that may be established to resolve specific problems;
- a "policy group" comprising the key agencies with direct management powers and interests in the estuary. It will develop initiatives, explore means of reconciling conflicts, and make recommendations to the political level to which it is accountable. Unfortunately, representation on this group does not at this stage appear to include Municipal representation other than through a Regional District representative;
- an "Estuary council", a small political group bearing ultimate responsibility and accountability for formalizing policies for the estuary.

These three parts of the total "organization" are proposed to be served in ways appropriate to each by a Coordinator and a small staff group or "secretariat".

Given the statement of the Study Steering Committee that it wishes to utilize the existing jurisdictional structure through joint consultation and cooperation, it would seem reasonable that decisions made by the Estuary Council

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that would be of direct interest to the Municipalities, which by definition would be the implementing agency, should be forwarded to the appropriate Municipal Council for ratification. Regardless of the actual organizational structure which is ultimately agreed to, it is felt that the Municipality should have direct political and staff representation within the subsequent stages of the study. On the basis of this preliminary review, it would seem appropriate that Council should at least have representation at the policy group level.

A final proposal within the organizational framework relates to the establishment of a "clearing-house" to act as a repository for information on the estuary and as a readily identifiable body capable of referring information enquiries to the most appropriate agency. From the viewpoint of staff, this would be a useful facility in providing better access to consolidated materials relating to estuary management and development.

SUMMARY

In response to the request from the Minister of the Environment for initial comments on the proposals for the next stage of the Fraser River Estuary Study, staff would recommend that Council endorse the recommendations (See Appendix II) as contained within the Fraser River Estuary Study Summary Report as a statement of support for the establishment of a Fraser River Estuary Management Plan. By means of close staff and political involvement in the study program, together with a cooperative implementation of the Big . Bend Development Plan, it is felt that the Municipal contribution to the Estuary Management Concept can be an effective one.

Parr

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

JSB/hf

Attach.

C.C. -

 Parks and Recreation Administrator Medical Health Officer EXTRACT FROM CHAPTER 8, FRASER RIVER ESTUARY STUDY, SUMMARY REPORT

Water Quality

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The quality of water everywhere in the Study area should be maintained at a level suited to the preservation of aquatic and wildlife resources and to public use of these resources.

It is therefore prudent to limit the main threats to this quality, namely, discharges of metals and other toxic chemicals, until more effective ways of controlling these pollutants and safely disposing of them can be found. Extreme caution should be used in considering applications for new sources of disposal of such wastes into the Fraser River and Estuary.

With respect to recreation, water quality on the Banks and Boundary Bay should be safe for water contact recreation. In these areas of water-contact recreation, point and non-point discharges should be carefully controlled to meet necessary water quality standards.

Recreation in the Estuary Study Area

Action should be taken in those areas heavily used for recreational purposes, but which have not been specifically set aside or designated for recreational use at the present time, to preserve them as active recreation sites and to provide for their management.

To ensure that current and projected recreation activities will be compatible with the need for habitat protection, management measures should be instituted in areas where habitat protection is the major concern.

Greater efforts should be made, in conjunction with the muncipalities and private industry, to include public recreation opportunities in the design of foreshore developments (e.g. viewing sites, fishing bars).

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation

No further net loss of wetlands in the Estuary region should be permitted to occur.

Only those land and resource uses which are compatible with continued ecosystem viability should be encouraged.

No uses should be permitted whose harmful effects could be irreversible.

Uses proposed for specific locations and which may have potentially harmful but not irreversible effects in specific locations should not be permitted:

If reasonable alternative locations where the use would not be harmful can be found inside or outside the Estuary region, or

Unless it can be judged that the benefits to British Columbians and Canadians will be significantly greater and of longer duration than the social, economic and ecologic value of the resources being risked by such uses. 129

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Dredgeate/spoil operations, control, and procedures should encourage desirable land use in accordance with Estuary area designations (see Area Designation, p.83), and, where possible, help create suitable sites for additional habitat.

Port Development

Port expansion within the Fraser River and Estuary should be limited to areas currently designated for port and industrial development.

Specific design criteria must be established to govern any port expansion to manage direct impacts on vegetated and unvegetated wetlands and circulation of the waters. Expansion should not be permitted unless these criteria are met.

Waterfront Land Use

Urban and industrial expansion should first be directed to in-fill designated development zones along the non-productive foreshore. These developments should be restricted to water-oriented ones.

Guidelines have yet to be formulated for Control of Pollution Sources, Storm Water Runoff, and Water Transportation.

A number of Work Groups' recommendations have been incorporated in the policy guidelines above, or in the immediate action proposals outlined later in this chapter. In this section the other main points from Work Groups are set out.

Proposals of Work Groups

The Water Quality Group supports ongoing efforts by the Pollution Control Board to maintain water quality levels in the Fraser Estuary consistent with the preservation of aquatic and wildlife resources. They have documented recent actions by administrative agencies to help maintain water quality standards in the River and Estuary suitable for supporting aquatic and wildlife resources.

Since much additional data requires investigation, the group is conducting analyses of recently collected data and undertaking special studies (see p.58). This work is scheduled for completion by March 1979.

Upon the termination of these additional studies, recommendations will be submitted regarding further specific action consistent with existing policies and the water quality guidelines set out above. At that time the Group will also present recommendations to enhance efficiency and achieve better coordination among those agencies currently sponsoring data collection, sampling and monitoring programs in the Estuary region.

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Fraser River Estuary Study **Recreation Areas**

EXISTING "DESIGNATED" **RECREATION AREAS**

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PROPOSED "DESIGNATED" * RECREATION AREAS: "EARLY" PRIORITY

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PROPOSED DESIGNATED * RECREATION AREAS: "LATER" PRIORITIES

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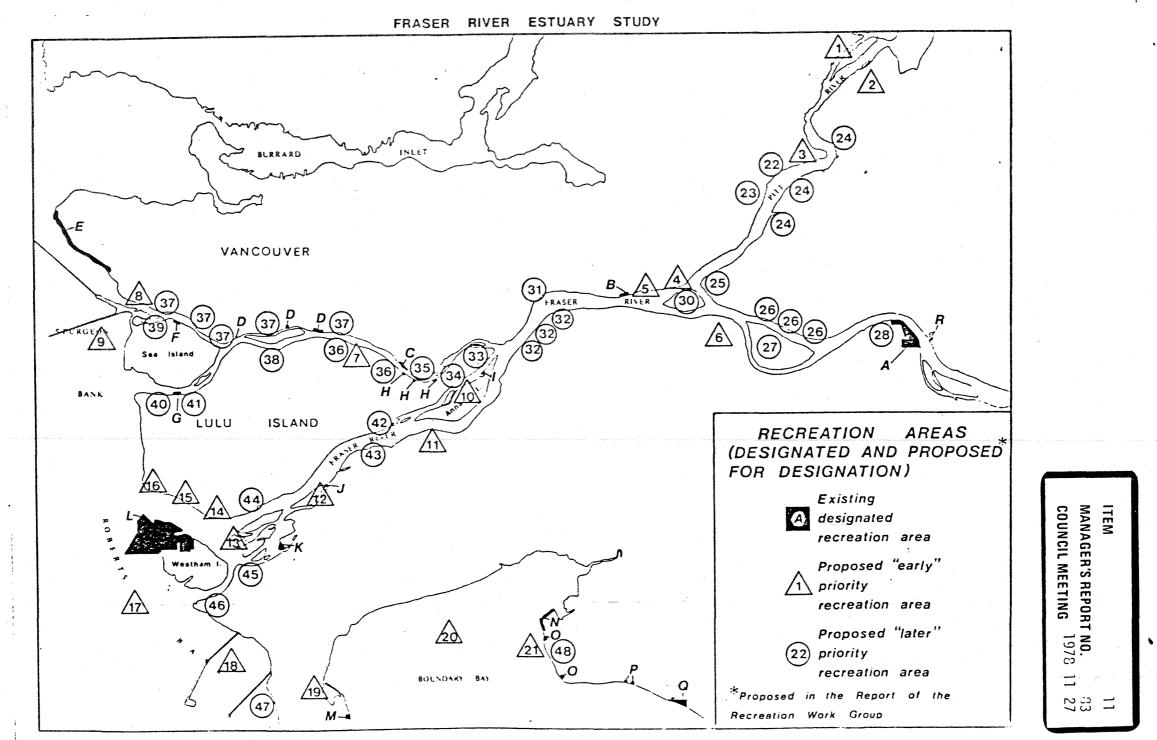
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The selection of these sites is based on several criteria. They include areas already used by the public for recreational purposes but needing designation to ensure that responsibility is established for providing adequate facilities for the continued enjoyment of the public. They also include certain natural areas which will guarantee the protection and management of the wildlife resources. In addition, they include areas of significant recreation potential which are as yet undeveloped but which require protection from alternative non-recreation uses. Many of these areas are presently zoned for uses other than recreation. Finally, the recommended sites include existing areas that are currently being developed or are being considered for development by the Regional Districts, the municipalities, or the City of Vancouver. 8327

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In addition, the Recreation Work Group recommends that a recreation opportunity handbook be published to inform the public about recreational opportunities in the Estuary.

The Work Group also recommends that recreation opportunity be considered in the planning and development of all transportation and transmission corridors such as highway crossings and power lines, within the Estuary.

And finally, the Work Group recommends that some form of formal foreshore zoning be established. The Group notes the lack of any foreshore-conservation zoning to protect the myriad of small areas of habitat which, because of their size, would not be considered for major area designation.

The <u>Habitat Group</u> recommends a program of both continued research and substantive action. Their action strategies include the proposals set out below.

All existing productive fish and wildlife habitats should be protected unless quantitative habitat utilization information is available that indicates that any habitat could be allocated to other forms of land use without net loss to the Estuary's fish and wildlife resources.

All prospective modifications to unvegetated foreshore, or diversions of river flow (by jetties, training walls, etc.) should be assessed in terms of their potential effects on processes essential to estuarine and wetland maintenance (e.g. patterns of erosion and sediment deposition, productivity, and the distribution of fresh and saline waters).

Important habitats currently in private ownership should be purchased by the Crown, consolidated with Crown reserves and dedicated to habitat management and compatible uses.

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The Group believes that further research will be required in order to refine and improve upon their proposed policies. Their research proposals include additional studies to gain a better understanding of the productivity of wetlands in the Estuary, and the utilization of these wetlands by fish and wildlife populations, the distribution of biotic resources, and the effects of channelization and other physical alterations on the River's ecosystem.

The Land-Use/Transportation Group recommends refinement of the present approval process so that a number of leading agencies could make initial decisions on specific development proposals according to Estuary management guidelines and refer details of proposed developments to a large number of other agencies.

The Group lists a number of options for implementing Area Designation, including land use regulations, restrictions on access and servicing, and alterations to tenure.

Specifically, they suggest that under the recommended Area Designation system (see p.83), proposed developments in areas classified as "grey" or "undetermined" (that is, areas classified neither as development areas nor as conservancy areas) would be subject to site-specific development controls.

Developments that require water access or that involve alterations to the foreshore would also be subject to these controls no matter where proposed. The Group proposes that a checklist of bio-physical criteria be prepared to guide this site-specific development control process.

The Group finds that research is required to find methods of flood protection that will avoid a loss of natural habitat. Research is also needed to establish methods of development that will help retain remaining natural waterfront features (in areas where development can be permitted) for the zone of transition between foreshores and adjacent uplands.

They suggest an amendment to the Land Registry Act to remove the common law right to ownership of lands inundated by water (such lands are referred to as "deleted" lands). A corresponding change in the law of accretion, however, is not considered to be warranted, because significant accretions are unlikely to occur in the River now that its flow and sediment deposition are more carefully managed.

In Roberts and Sturgeon Banks and in Boundary Bay accretion has occurred. The Group supports the recent Federal-Provincial Agreement to acquire remaining private lands outside the dykes as one way to protect valuable recreation and habitat areas.

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In concluding this chapter on suggested policies, guidelines, and immediate action programs for better management of the Estuary, the Steering Committee wishes to re-emphasize its view as to the status of these ideas: during the next phase of the Study, these ideas are to be discussed, refined, modified and added to, with the participation of municipalities and regional districts, other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. There is also a need, through this process, to define terms and specify criteria under which guidelines would be administered by participating authorities. Finally, there must be enough public and inter-agency support for the process and its purpose to enable the Study to reach its goal of a policy plan for the Estuary area.

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STUDY STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (Pages 125 and 126 of Summary Report)

Based upon the extensive but still far from exhaustive studies, discussions and investigations it has carried out to date, the Committee has concluded that an Estuary management plan and process would provide the best and most appropriate means of resolving conflicts and issues, and effectively integrating the economic and environmental demands being placed upon this vital area.

The Committee therefore recommends that:

- 1. The Government of Canada and the Government of the Province of British Columbia seek to reach an initial agreement as soon as possible on ways and means to provide for the development of a "Fraser River Estuary Management Plan", through an extensive and intensive "dialogue" on the findings and proposals set out in this report, together with such further studies and evaluations as may appear appropriate. The agreement should also provide for the development of the means and process by which both plan development and the eventual plan itself should be managed.
- 2. The initial agreement should provide for:
 - (a) Funding for the dialogue and other studies and activities proposed, and for the appointment of a study coordinator and supporting staff (including a liaison and information officer, all of whom should be based in the Estuary area), who would be responsible for carrying forward the plan process and the program of "dialogue", which, as one of the main actions proposed for the development of the management plan, should involve all agencies and nongovernment organizations interested in the Estuary;
 - (b) Administration of the early steps in the dialogue and study processes through an interim policy group or similar appropriate committee;
 - (c) The establishment of a plan development organization during Phase II such as described in Chapter Ten of this report, including these elements: a "Constituency", a "Policy Group", and an "Estuary Council";
 - (d) The completion of those activities remaining unfinished at the time of submission of this report.

(i) Completion of the Water Quality Work Group Report. NO. 11 27

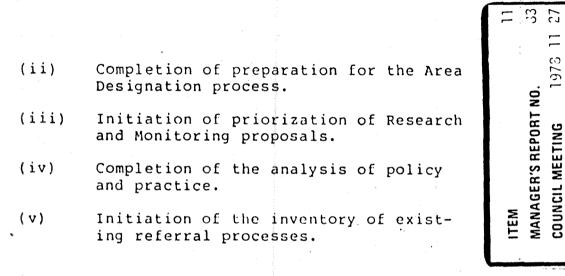
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- 3. The work plan elements outlined in the report for Phase II be undertaken as soon as possible after the initial agreement has been reached.
- 4. Arrangements be made either within or outside the initial agreement for the establishment of a "Clearing-house" to act as a repository for information on the Estuary and as a readily identifiable body capable of referring information enquiries to the most appropriate agency.

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TO: MANAGER

1978 NOVEMBER 15.

FROM: PARKS AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATOR

RE: FRASER RIVER ESTUARY STUDY

RECOMMENDATION:

 THAT Council be advised that the Parks and Recreation Commission endorses the recommendations of the Fraser River Estuary Recreation Work Group.

REPORT

At its meeting of 1978 November 15, the Parks and Recreation Commission received a copy of the letter dated 1978 October 13 from the Honorable James A. Neilsen regarding the proposed development of the management plan for the Fraser River Estuary.

The Commission also received a copy of the findings and recommendations of the Recreation Work Group, and fully endorsed these.

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DENNIS GAUNT.

c.c. Director of Planning.