

August 8, 2023

Andrew Reeder, P.Eng
Senior Manager of Solid Waste
Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
101 Martin Street
Penticton, BC, V2A 5J9

Re: Zoning Bylaw Amendment of 1313 Greyback Mountain Road.

Mr Reeder,

I understand Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) is proposing an amendment to rezone for a “Food Waste Composting Facility” at 1313 Greyback Mountain Road, referenced as the “property”. The property, Electoral Area E; Plan KAP1190, SUBLOT 8, DL 2711; PID 011-781-441; 1313 Greyback Mountain Road; Currently zoned RA – Resource Area is 31.78 hectares in size. Portions of this property overlaps with both Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit area, and Agricultural Land Reserve. This memo focuses on the Environmentally Sensitivities of the property and the proposed Food Waste Composting Facility site.

The property overlaps with portions of eight polygons of the base 1:20,000 Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) original inventoried in 1995¹ and recently updated in 2012² to include Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI). Three sensitivities are noted within the eight polygons for the property; Grasslands (GR), Woodlands (WD), and non-sensitive (NS). Of these three sensitivities for the property, only two are sited in the location of the proposed food waste composting facility, 36% coniferous Woodlands (WD) and 64% Non-sensitive (NS). The coniferous woodland polygon was inventoried as 60% mature Ponderosa pine – Bluebunch wheatgrass – Idaho fescue forest (PW) and 40% mature Ponderosa pine – Bluebunch wheatgrass – Cheatgrass forest (PC). Conservation Data Centre (CDC) of British Columbia provincially ranks the Ponderosa pine – Bluebunch wheatgrass – Idaho fescue forested habitat as blue-listed, or special concern³. The non-sensitive feature inventoried for the property as drier than typical Cultivated field (CFx).

South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program in 2011 undertook a high level conservation view of RDOS landscapes⁴. Analysis of the proposed site fell into two biodiversity categories of Moderate and Low. Part of the 2011 conservation analysis looked at wildlife connectivity. Ranking the east portion of the property as “high” and the west side of the property overlapping the cultivated field as “low” and “moderate”. This aligned with early overviews from the 2004 Northeast Sector analysis from Ophiuchus Consulting showing the eastside of the property as “Potential Corridor” for California Bighorn Sheep

¹ Harper, W.L., E.C. Lea and R.E. Maxwell. 1996. Biophysical habitat mapping of the South Okanagan. Resource Inventory Branch, BC Environment, Victoria, B.C.

² Iverson, K. and A. Haney. 2012. Refined and Updated Ecosystem Mapping for the South Okanagan and lower Similkameen Valley. 36pp

³ B.C. Conservation Data Centre. 2023. BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer. B.C. Minist. of Environ. Victoria, B.C. Available: <https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/> (accessed Aug 8, 2023)

⁴ Caslys Consulting Ltd. 2011. Keeping Nature in Our Future: Volume 1 – A Biodiversity Conservation Analysis for the South Okanagan – Similkameen Region. 79pp.

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Mapping Solutions

from Penticton Creek and Okanagan Mountain Park⁵. The subject area is within the Ungulate Winter Range u-8-001 for Mule Deer. No further details are provided regarding this range.

I visited the proposed site on the property August 4, 2023. Two habitat types overlap the proposed site. The dominant habitat is the “Cultivated Field”, which was previously a feed lot; and a young Ponderosa pine – Bluebunch wheatgrass – Cheatgrass forest (PC) on the lower slope area. No detailed analysis was undertaken for this memo, however, I am confident the Environmental Sensitive Areas (ESA) rankings as laid out by RDOS terms of reference professional reporting for planning services would rank as ESA – 4 (cultivated field) and ESA – 3 (young forest).

No cavity trees, or stick nests were noted in the area of the proposed site.

While on site, I did observe a mule deer in the field.

Elk scat was also seen throughout the cultivated field area, with lesser amount noted in the adjacent wooded areas. The province has mapped Rock Mountain Elk habitat for area that contains the property as “moderate” winter suitability habitat. Summer suitability habitat for Rocky Mountain Elk was mapped as “low”. The proposed impact on elk with proposed rezoning and future development would decrease the overall supporting capacity of the area. Impacts are expected to be minimal as the decrease of area is expected to be 0.038% of the elk’s range according to provincial mapping.

No sign, scat or tracks, of California Bighorn sheep were noted while on site. Bighorn Sheep in 2004 were Blue-listed in the province of British Columbia, and this designation has not changed (Data search August 4, 2023). A stable population of bighorn sheep are known in the Penticton Creek area east of Campbell Mountain. Historically there have been observations on the east and south flanks of Campbell Mountain. Sheep were not likely to be currently congregating in the Campbell Mountain area due to the increase in recreational use, mountain biking in the early and late spring on Campbell Mountain and industrial activities from landfill.

My opinion is the proposed rezoning and future construction of the Food Waste Composting Facility will have insignificant impacts at the proposed location. I would recommend further biological studies in conjunction with the proposed design details, if rezoning is approved and project proceeds, so aspects of impacts are fully understood. If you have any questions or wish more information, please do not hesitate to contact myself at (250) 469-1087.

Sincerely,

John Grods, R.P. Bio
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⁵ Sarell, M. and A. Haney. 2004. Ecological Values of the Northeast Sector of Penticton. 14pp.