

A5 - LEEDing Green Interventions 1: Green Shores For Coastal Communities

Presentation title: Green Shores for Coastal Communities

Presenters:

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Abstract

This session will discuss principles for 'greening' the coastal development market and tools for working towards more sustainable use of coastal ecosystems. The Green Shores program emphasizes community planning and site design that recognizes ecological features, functions and processes, and aims to minimize environmental impacts of the built environment by transforming the way shore developments are designed and constructed. There is a lack of comprehensive coastal development guidelines and regulations, yet communities in coastal BC are experiencing unprecedented levels of development, all while sea levels are forecast to rise as part of climate change. Traditional methods of shoreline development - 'hardened' shores, seawalls, rip rap - have often led to accelerated shore erosion and loss of ecosystem function and service. This is a critical time to work with communities and local stewardship organizations to protect coastal habitats, minimize the impacts of human settlement on shore systems and find options for adapting to climate change. The Green Shores Credit Rating System - modelled on the LEED Green Building rating system - will be introduced and the results of initial 'pilot projects' summarized. This tool is envisioned to be used on a voluntary basis to guide Green Shores design and assess design performance. A range of required and optional credits for building siting, vegetation buffers, sediment management, innovation, habitat conservation and restoration will allow a property to be certified to various levels, making the Green Shores label a selling feature. Governments could also adopt the rating requirements as part of development approval. The session will help coastal planning and design practitioners explore ways of reflecting the principles of Green Shores in planning, land use decisions, integrated site design, construction, and shore protection.

Speaker Biography

HARRIET RUEGGERBERG, B.Sc., M.Sc., MCIP Environmental and Land Use Planner, HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd. With degrees in biology and land use planning, Harriet started her career as a consultant in environmental assessment and policy analysis, managing projects for government agencies in B.C., Yukon and the Northwest Territories, before switching to local government as the City of Nanaimo's first Environmental Planner. After seven years with the City, Harriet joined Lanarc Consultants Ltd. - now HB Lanarc - where her work has continued in environmental policy and planning for local governments, as well as riparian area management, park and trail planning, habitat protection policy and watershed management. She has a keen interest in promoting a 'light footprint' in land use and development. The Green Shores project is an extension of this philosophy to the coastal environment, where Harriet has been providing advice on local government policy and legislative tools.