

Our View: Waterway a gem worth managing

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The Gorge Waterway has come a long way from the polluted backwater that it was perceived to be only a few decades ago.

Once a dumping ground for industry, the Gorge has been rehabilitated through the effort of hundreds of thousands of people who volunteered their time. There's still work to do, of course, but this urban waterway is close to recapturing the kind of respect it enjoyed when it was the region's playground more than 100 years ago.

That's why it would be a shame if no one picked up the ball when the Capital Regional District cuts a position that is currently tasked with co-ordinating the "group of groups" working to enhance the Gorge.

The Gorge Waterway Initiative brings together diverse groups that all have a stake in the health of the waterway.

The problem is the CRD position is inappropriately funded by money targeted for liquid waste management. Clearly, the role has a broader mandate than sewage.

And while the Gorge has long been considered a regional treasure, a sensible solution would see the four municipalities that border the waterway find a way to retain the co-ordinator position.

Right now, the only municipal funds that go directly to improving the Gorge are those that involve maintaining the parks that border its shores.

The good news is that only a relatively small investment is needed to help maintain what has been a massive contribution from concerned citizens.

Over the years, volunteers from groups like the Gorge Waterway Action Society have spearheaded cleanups knowing that they were working with others who shared their vision.

The job is too big for any single group of volunteers and there is a real concern that without a co-ordinator the task at hand could prove overwhelming.