

Marcy LaLande, CMC
Manager of Corporate Services
City of Colwood.

June 8, 2026

Dear Ms. Lalande:

As a member of the Colwood Creek Ratepayers, I am writing this letter in further support to our request that the City of Colwood pause to reconsider the current proposed community garden locations in Colwood Creek Park.

In reviewing a Staff Report dated November 24, 2025, to Gordon Beauvillier, Manager of Parks, a question arose in my mind that I feel is important to be addressed.

That question being, why would staff make the recommendation that “Council consider the partial removal of Colwood Creek Park from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to enable a balanced approach that meets both the needs of both community and urban agriculture objectives.”?

In the work leading to staffs’ recommendation, Madrone Environmental Services Ltd., along with Tritrin Solutions as supporting Agrologists, were retained to undertake a Land Capability for Agriculture (LCA) study.

Madrone’s report (October 2025) concludes that the vast majority of Colwood Creek Park possesses low to very limited agricultural capability, with major limitations including stoniness, drainage constraints, seasonal flooding, and poor moisture retention. Even with significant intervention, most of the site within the Park would remain Class 6P or Class 3W/I under ALR classification, meaning it is unsuitable for viable agricultural use and largely unimprovable due to hydrology, soil composition, and water-licensing constraints.

I can attest to this conclusion from my own personal experience living adjacent to the Park. When we purchased our house 35 years ago, and to the best of my recollection, there were about 75 young Shore Pines planted on this eastern section of the Park. Shore Pines are extremely drought tolerant and have adapted to grow in the harshest conditions. Despite the Community of Colwood’s efforts to water the newly planted trees, the vast majority died within a few years. The remaining surviving trees include the 6 located right behind my house, and a handful of others scattered throughout the Park.

My neighbour and I decided we would water the 6 trees closest to our property regularly. We also spread mulch around the base of the trees to supplement organic content and nutrients; all in an effort to improve the growing conditions. It took many years, but those 6 trees eventually established themselves and are thriving today.

The handful of other trees that also survived in this area of the Park likely did so because they happened to be planted close to the bog, or in depressions, where they were able to obtain enough moisture and nutrients to survive.

For historic and ecological reasons, I feel the 6 trees behind our houses, and the other Shore Pine survivors, should to be protected as they are the only remnants from the original 75 trees contributing to the ecology, beauty, character, and wildlife habitat of the Park.

During my 35 year career as a Registered Professional Forester in BC (now retired) I had significant dealings with the ALR and ALC.

It is my understanding that the lands in our Province be classified based on the potential "highest and best use".

Based on Madrone's report (and my anecdotal experience with the struggling trees in the park beside my house) I find it difficult to understand why any of the land in the Park would be included in the ALR given that agriculture is clearly not its potential "highest and best use".

To reiterate, I am requesting information from City Hall on the rationale supporting the decision to remove the majority of the Colwood Creek Park from the ALR while retaining the smaller eastern section within the ALR.

I am also requesting that you give a copy of this letter to the staff who are currently working a report for Council on the Colwood Creek Community Garden proposal, as well as including it on the agenda when it is next brought to Council for their decision.

If you have any questions on the above, or would like to have further discussion, please do not hesitate to contact me at _____ or _____

Thank you,

Jim Gowriluk
Member of the Colwood Creek Ratepayers