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Frequently Asked Questions

Gospel Rock – Block 7

Stop Work Order

When were Development Permits (DPs) issued for Gospel Rock – Block 7 and what type of DPs are they?

Two DP's were issued for Gospel Rock – Block 7 on October 19, 2020. One is for environmental protection ([DP-2019-08](#)), and the other is for the geotechnical hazards ([DP-2019-06](#)).

Why was a Stop Work Order issued at Gospel Rock?

In December 2020, the Registered Professional Biologist (RPB) hired by the developer to monitor the tree removal process at the Gospel Rock development notified the Town that tree cutting was imminent. In response, and prior to the proposed tree removal, a site visit was scheduled for December 21, 2020 with Town staff, the RPB, and a Registered Professional Forester.

The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the site's Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and tree root protection zones would be protected during tree removal. The group also planned to select a windfirm edge (a forest edge that is firm enough to withstand strong wind) and complete a hazard tree assessment along the tree edge.

At that site meeting, staff noticed that two trees in the lot's designated Conservation Area had sustained minor damage during tree removal earlier in December.

It was also discovered that a buffer zone at the edge of the protected area had been mistakenly flagged at what appeared to be five metres, instead of the 10 metres stipulated in DP-2019-08. As a result, at least one tree may have been cut in the root protection zone – the Town is waiting for a report from a qualified professional to confirm this.

As an Environmental Monitor was not present on-site to oversee the tree removal and trees in the root protection zones of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas may have been cut, a Stop Work Order was issued immediately.

How long will the Stop Work Order remain in effect?

The Stop Work Order will remain in place until the Town is confident that measures have been put in place to ensure that no similar incident occurs in the future.

Who will determine what these measures are?

Town staff, together with qualified professionals, will determine these measures. The property owners are currently working to remedy the situation.

If the flagging on-site was incorrect and, as a result, at least one tree was removed from the ESA, how will this be resolved?

The on-site marking will be corrected. If a tree was cut in an ESA, the Town will seek compensation recommendations from the qualified professionals. The Town's recently adopted [Tree Preservation Bylaw](#) may also be used to determine compensation.

Were the boundaries of the ESAs marked before the DPs were issued?

No. Boundaries like these are not typically marked before a DP is issued, as the DP outlines the requirements for marking the boundary. Subsequent to issuing the DPs, the boundaries were marked but were not confirmed by a professional as being accurate before the tree-cutting began.

Is the protection of the Conservation Area reliant on the covenant currently being negotiated with The Land Conservancy of BC?

No. On August 28, 2020, an environmental preservation covenant between the Town of Gibsons and the property owner was registered to the Title of the property to protect the Conservation Area and additional areas on the property with environmental value.

Staff understand that the property owner is currently negotiating with The Land Conservancy of BC to enter into a covenant agreement to manage the Conservation Area. To date, the Town has not yet received a draft of the covenant agreement.

If the conservation covenant had been registered before the DPs were issued, would the outcome have been different?

No. DP-2019-08 clearly stated the conservation requirements that needed to be met prior to any tree cutting. The registration of a conservation covenant would not have changed the outcome.

Will this affect the covenant agreement or related process with the conservation partners?

No. We do not expect this event to affect the covenant process or agreement.

What happens now?

Town staff are working with the owners and qualified professionals to accurately assess any damage, identify a course of action to remedy the situation, and lift the stop work order.

Updates will be shared with the community as they are available.

