

**Stephen Watson**

Sr Stakeholder Engagement Advisor  
Capital Project Communications  
P.O. Box 1500  
400 Madsen Road  
Nanaimo, BC, V9R 5M3

Office: 250-755-4795  
iPhone: 250-616-9888  
Email: [steve.watson@bchydro.com](mailto:steve.watson@bchydro.com)

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Dear Resident,

**Re: Victoria to Esquimalt Cable Replacement Project – Update #1  
Notice of field studies in and around the Gorge Waterway**

We have some upcoming activities in and around the Gorge Waterway that will be completed by the end of 2024. These include:

1. a marine and land geophysics survey within the Gorge Waterway, Cecelia Cove Park, Banfield Park, and the Galloping Goose Trail corridor – September 23 to 27;
2. land geotechnical drilling close to the Gorge Waterway – date to be determined;
3. marine geotechnical drilling work within the Gorge Waterway – late November to December; and
4. a sediment test within the Gorge Waterway – date to be determined.

All of this work will help us understand the soil conditions in and around the waterway.

For the marine geophysics survey, we are requesting the public to stay off the Gorge Waterway in the area close to the west of the Selkirk Trestle from September 23 to 27. Signage will be placed in key areas around the closure area, and the location and timing is provided below.

**1 September 23 to 27 – Marine and land geophysics survey**Marine

We will be doing a geophysics seismic reflection and refraction survey of the Gorge Waterway bottom from September 23 to 27. The survey will be done by boat towing equipment that acquires high resolution acoustic images. High pressure air released from the boat will penetrate about 30 metres down into the sediment and rock. There will also be crews surveying on the shoreline during low tide. These seismic survey techniques measure the travel time of the generated sound waves after they either reflect or refract from different sediment and rock. This work will help inform our new transmission cable routing under the waterway, as well as its constructability of either being shallow burial or horizontal directional drilling.

This work will happen over five days. All activities are focused on the marine bottom so there's no significant above water noise anticipated.

### Public safety during the Marine Geophysics Survey

For boating logistics and underwater safety reasons, we are requiring all swimmers and watercraft to stay away from the west side of the Selkirk Trestle area from September 23, 11:00 am to 6:00 p.m., and September 24 and 25, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The map below shows the approximate area where the geophysics work will take place and the Gorge Waterway marine closure. The Banfield Park Dock will be open.

Marine closure signage will be placed at public access areas around the Gorge Waterway work area, and BC Hydro staff will be available to engage with the public.



On September 26 and 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., a reduced marine area on the east side of the Gorge Waterway will be closed off to the public, with the area shown on the map below.



An underwater sound wave will occur when high-pressure air is briefly deployed. Swimmers will need to stay 50 metres away from the survey boat. This distance will prevent an unpleasant pressure change to a swimmer if their head is underwater. There is no risk of injury. BC Hydro staff will be at the Banfield Park Dock, and our contractor will have watercraft in the Gorge Waterway to advise people of the work and the closed marine area. The marine closure areas also allows for the highest quality of survey data if there are no nearby water disruptions.

### Land

There will also be geophysics testing within the Gorge Waterway foreshore and near trails at Banfield Park and Ceceila Cove Park. We will be placing geophones (an acoustic detector) in a line and striking a plate with a sledge hammer to create seismic waves similar to the release of high-pressured air in the water. The hammer strikes will take place numerous times per day from September 24 to 27. There may be short term closures to the intertidal zones when the tests are being completed.

## **2 Land Geotechnical Drilling**

Our land geotechnical drilling activities will take place this fall within Banfield Park and by Cecelia Cove Park. This drilling work will also help inform the ground conditions for cable replacement routing and constructability.

The map below shows the five approximate drill hole locations. Crews may be at a drill location for up to about four days, including mobilization and demobilization. They will be drilling in some locations to a depth of about 42 metres.



The drilling work should not interfere with the park trails. There may be a brief closure to move equipment in or out. Temporary safety fencing will be placed around our drilling work zone.

The daily hours of drilling are expected to be from 7:00 am to 7:00 p.m. For sound considerations, our contractor will use some noise mitigation techniques and noise monitoring will be in place.

### **3 Investigative marine geotechnical drilling work**

The planned marine geotechnical drilling activities have been moved to the late November to December period. For this work, over about three weeks, a barge and supporting boats and equipment will drill six investigative drill holes into the bed of the Gorge Waterway.

### **4 Gorge Waterway sediment test**

Later this fall, during the lowest tides, you may see the excavation of two small trenches that will be about a metre deep and about two metres long. The excavation will be done by suction. A silt curtain will be around the suction area as well as the sediment discharge area. The two days of work will be supported by a full-time environmental monitor.

Once the trench work is done there will be a few days of diver observations to see how the trench naturally infills.

The sediment trench analysis is to help inform the shallow burial design option within the subtidal environment. The results will help guide possible constructability and environmental mitigation measures during installation.

### **Community engagement and keeping up to date on the project**

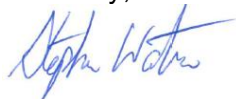
For project work in and around the Gorge Waterway we continue to consult with First Nations, work with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the City of Victoria, and other community groups like the Gorge Waterway Alliance.

You can visit the project website at [www.bchydro.com/victoriatoesquimalt](http://www.bchydro.com/victoriatoesquimalt) for updated project information, including the posting of the dates of the various marine and land studies.

This letter along with the first project letter in June 2024 to residents around the Gorge Waterway are on the website. We are planning to have our second virtual project open house in late 2024 or early 2025 to go over the cable routing and constructability method. Our project goal is to start project construction work in and around the Gorge Waterway as early as December 2025 so the new cable can be in-service in 2026.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or if you would like a presentation about the project.

Sincerely,



Stephen Watson