

# Genstar requested to make history site

The Capital Regional District planning department will contact representatives of Genstar and ask if are willing to dedicate the historic site of Murray's Pond in Colwood as a park.

The motion, proposed by Metchosin director, Shirley Wilde, was carried at a meeting of the Local Planning and Zoning Committee on Monday.

A petition with 316 signatures was presented at the meeting to Colwood director, David Krauel, by Colwood resident Lois Gardner. An additional petition from students at Sangster school was also given to the directors.

The petition asked that Murray's Pond and the surrounding woodland should be obtained by the CRD for a park and retained in its natural state for the use of present and future generations.

An area bordered roughly by Wishart, Dressler and Latoria roads is owned by Construction Aggregates Ltd, whose parent company is Genstar. The company plans to extend their gravel mining operations over a large portion of the area, necessitating the draining of Murrays Pond.

The pond, which is a geological sink dating back to the ice age, and the surrounding trails have historically been used as a recreation area. Unusual plants and wildlife are found around the pond, which is listed as a con-

servation area in the local settlement plan.

A Save Our Swamp movement, spearheaded by Gardner, was formed after the area was fenced off by Construction Aggregates last month.

Ultimately, when the gravel has been removed, a subdivision is planned for the site. At that point the company will be bound to reserve some land as park and the SOS movement have argued for the donation of parkland now, while it is in its natural state.

"It would make a crummy gravel pit," Gardner told CRD directors.

The SOS movement envisage preserving about 40 acres in a keyhole shape around the pond in order to encompass the water-

shed, she said.

CRD chief planner Jim Masterton, said Genstar has a valid permit from the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources which, with certain restrictions on restoration, "gives them a clear go ahead."

After the meeting Gardner said she was pleased with the committee's decision but the next step would be to gauge the company's reaction.

The vast majority of people approached were willing to sign the petition, she said.

More than 80 per cent of households approached were willing to sign the petition and the remainder included the homes where there was no answer. A few did not agree with the petition "And one said his signature wouldn't look good because his name was Ridley," said Gardner.